

VATESOL May Newsletter



VOLUME 7 ISSUE 3

Contents

Helping Hands: Helping ESL teachers with hands-on learning	1
Crossing the Border through Service-Learning: Transformative Relationships in the Latino Community	1
Partnership ECED & ESL:	7
A Three-Tiered Project --	7
Engaging future teachers in shared expertise, promoting better learning conditions for second language learners, and increasing ESL parental involvement in school .	7
American University's Summer TESOL Institute	7
The Workforce Improvement Network	8
2004 Summer Institute	8
Old Dominion University Announces the Appointment of Alfredo Aruza ..	8
University of Virginia Offers ESL/EFL Teacher Training Institute .	8
TESOL: Teaching English as a Second Language	9
NEW SEMINARS FOR TEACHERS AND VOLUNTEERS	9
Call for Presentations	10

Helping Hands: Helping ESL teachers with hands-on learning

Members of VATESOL in Southwest Virginia gathered on April 24th at the English Language Institute of Virginia Tech to attend lively sessions on:

- Designing Writing Assignments
- Music in the ESL Classroom
- Collaborative Learning Strategies
- Crossing the Border: Closing the Gap -- Service/Learning projects in the Roanoke Hispanic community
- Finding Alternative Funding Streams for ESL Programs
- Reading Strategies

Regional meetings are important sources of information, support, and exchange of ideas, especially for those who live in communities with relatively small LEP/ESL/ESOL/ELL populations. Our thanks go to Margaret Whitt for her energetic efforts to promote professional growth.

This meeting was dedicated to the memory of Ronald Mayfield, an ESL teacher in Roanoke.

Crossing the Border through Service-Learning: Transformative Relationships in the Latino Community

Gresilda A. Tilley-Lubbs, Ph.D.
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

The service-learning course that I developed at Virginia Tech emerged from my life experiences, my academic background, and my passion for all things Latino; but more important than any of the impetuses that came from my own personal interests was the grassroots needs in the Latino community. In the summer of 1999, I was fortunate to be admitted into a community that has since become a vital part of my life, and one that has given immeasurably and richly to my students at the university, providing them with experiences that could never be replicated without the Latino community that has embraced and nurtured us in

academia for the last five years. It is to this community that I dedicate this article.

During their twice-weekly visits with the families, the students taught ESL, tutored and mentored the children in the families, helped with transportation to and interpretation at medical and social service appointments, translated documents, made phone calls, and served as cultural mediators as was needed.

That summer my journey into service-learning began when I received a phone call from David Maxey, who at the time was in charge of arranging for interpreters at the Health Department through the Office for Refugees and Immigration, an arm of the Catholic Diocese in Richmond. The regular interpreter was visiting her family in Bolivia, so they needed someone to fill in for the few weeks that she was gone. Thinking the proposition sounded interesting, I accepted, interpreting for young Mexican and Honduran women who were clients at the Prenatal and the Family Planning Clinics at the Health Department. Contrary to what I had expected, the “clinics” were times in the day when only women with specific needs were seen. At that time, there were so few Latinas that they were included with other women who did speak English. Consequently, I spent countless hours in the waiting room with the women and their children, forging friendships that continue to this day.

As my responsibilities increased to include visits with the MIC nurses and interpreting for the WIC program, I became aware that for many of the women, I was their only personal contact with the Anglo world. It became routine for me to hand them my card, and they began calling me for help in navigating the culture in which they found themselves living. By the fall of 2000, I was overwhelmed as I increased my time at the Health Department to between 15-20 hours per week while at the same time working fulltime at Virginia Tech

as a Spanish instructor where I was also a fulltime doctoral student in Education and Curriculum.

In a casual conversation, I mentioned to my department head that I wished my students could be in the community with the Latinos, serving as interpreters, cultural mediators, and ESL instructors. She suggested that I design a course that would provide the opportunity for the students and Latino families to interact, and from there emerged the course, Crossing the Border through Service-Learning. As part of a Curriculum class in which I was enrolled, I developed the course, based on sound educational theory. The course was approved, and the first class became a reality in Spring 2001.

The class represented the intersection of academia, community, and teaching-learning. The students read approximately 55 articles, all of them in English, dealing with issues of service-learning, issues of being Latino in the United States, and issues of social justice. We met once a week on campus, engaging in rich discussions and activities that related the readings to the experiences the students were having as they spent time with their partner families in the community. The class meetings and weekly journal reflections were primarily in English; the community experience varied, depending on the student’s proficiency in Spanish. The class meetings on campus included guest speakers from the community: Latino families, representatives from Easter Seals who were working with the children in our program, the Latino representative from the Diocese of Richmond, an ESL specialist, an immigration

specialist, and nurses from the Health Department.

During their twice-weekly visits with the families, the students taught ESL, tutored and mentored the children in the families, helped with



transportation to and interpretation at medical and

social service appointments, translated documents, made phone calls, and served as cultural mediators as was needed. Many of the students found themselves acting as advocates for their families in situations as diverse as negotiating rental contracts or registering children for the Salvation Army Christmas gift program.

The students who were preparing to be ESL teachers were unanimous in their praise of the experience they had with their families. Many of them spoke little or no Spanish, which actually enabled them to be more effective teachers since they could not rely on communicating in a common language.

The capstone experience of the semester was the final fiesta, providing a social occasion for the students to know other families as well as to provide closure for the families. In the course of time, the students decided to develop a Latina Empowerment Group in response to the concerns the women in the program expressed. For three semesters, the students organized and ran meetings that included guest speakers who addressed issues such as alcoholism, domestic violence, child development, sexual health, buying a house, using the bank, taking care of your car, just to name a few of the topics. At all times, the Latinas and the students co-constructed the meetings; they suggested all the topics, and commented constantly on how much they had learned. In addition, the families commented on how much they appreciated being able to meet other Latinos, lessening the isolation that sometimes shapes the life of Latinos living in the Roanoke and New River Valleys.

Since that initial class, approximately 150 students have taken the course, some of them at Novice-Low or Novice-Mid, and others at Intermediate-High in Spanish, according to the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines (www.actfl.org). The students represent a variety of backgrounds and disciplines, but about 25 have been in the Teacher Education program at Tech, preparing to be ESL and/or Spanish teachers.

I finished my doctoral program in August 2003, writing a dissertation that investigated the reciprocal relationships that developed between the students and the families over a period of five semesters. Some students repeated the course, and others took the course only once. Some developed close, ongoing relationships with their families; others enjoyed the experience for a semester, but had no intention of continuing the relationship beyond the confines of the semester.

In analyzing the reflections and transformation papers, several themes emerged. The students commented on how they came to see themselves as the “Other” through the eyes of their partner families. They talked at length about their motives for participating in the program; in their early reflections, they talked about “becoming more fluent in Spanish” and “helping the less fortunate.” By the final transformation papers, they wrote about how much they had learned from their families; many expressed a belief that they had learned far more from their families than their families had learned from them. They spoke of the cultural understanding they had developed, as well as the linguistic acquisition. Many of the students spoke of the sadness they felt at ending the semester, realizing that with their hectic schedules, it would be difficult to maintain the close relationships they had enjoyed during the semester. By the end of the semester, they commented on the exchange of information, language, culture, and life experiences they had experienced while developing personal relationships.

The theme that the course should be required for all pre-service teachers, especially those who plan to teach ESL, ran through the reflections and transformation papers of all the students who were in the Teacher Education program.

The students who were preparing to be ESL teachers were unanimous in their praise of the experience they had with their families. Many of them spoke little or no Spanish, which actually enabled them to be more effective teachers since

they could not rely on communicating in a common language. Since many of them had expressed a desire to work with children, I placed them with families who had school age children. They became advocates for the children, acting as mediators with the public school system. Those whose Spanish was adequate acted as interpreters for parent-teacher meetings. They helped the children with homework, and they also helped the parents to wade through the quagmire of paperwork that came home from school every day. They became aware of the lives the children led in circumstances often quite different from their own middle-class backgrounds.

The students realized that not all families have disposable income that ensures participation in field trips and extracurricular activities. They became aware of the gulf that could develop between parents whose developing English could not keep up with that of their children who were learning English in school.



As they helped the children with homework, they realized the plight of children whose parents were unable to function at an elementary school level of language and/or education to help their children with schoolwork.

They became advocates for children and parents, often becoming angry with teachers whose attitudes were less than sympathetic to children who were struggling with language barriers while trying to learn their academic subjects.

In the course of the semester, the students wrote 13 journal reflections in which they related the academic readings they were doing for the class to the experiences they were having in the community. At the end of the semester, they wrote transformation papers in which they traced their journeys through the semester after spending 50 hours partnered with a Latino family. The theme that the course should be required for all pre-service teachers, especially those who plan to teach ESL, ran through the reflections and transformation papers of all the students who were in the Teacher Education program. The reasons regarding the importance of including the course varied from helping pre-service teachers understand the

backgrounds of diverse students to enabling them to discover a means of personally understanding cultural differences. The course provided an opportunity for students and families to develop an understanding of and appreciation for diversity.

Googling in the Rain

Jo Tyler, Chair, Teacher Education/Program
Administration SIG

Associate Professor of Linguistics and Education
Mary Washington College, Center for Graduate and
Professional Studies

It's a cool, rainy Sunday afternoon in Fredericksburg. The daffodils have turned brown and the azaleas have yet to bloom. It's a good time to prepare for the coming week's classes, and I start by following up on last week's discussion of reading. After about two hours on the internet, Googling my way through numerous websites, I have discovered the hard way that the best information on the internet is sometimes the most difficult to find.

I began my excursion looking for the National Reading Panel's report, frequently cited as *Put Reading First*. In fact, the first thing I discovered on my web quest was that the official report of the National Reading Panel (NICHD, 2000a) is actually entitled *Teaching Children to Read: An Evidence-based Assessment of the Scientific Research Literature on Reading and Its Implications for Reading Instruction*.

The NRP report has been widely criticized in education circles for its influence on NCLB legislation which, critics say, is "controlling the research agenda" by mandating randomized experimental research.

There is a more detailed report also available under the same title, and subtitled *Reports of the Subgroups* (NICHD, 2000b). These two reports were promulgated, not by the Department of Education, but by the National Institute of Child Health and Development, a branch of Health and

Human Services. Finally, I found out that the report entitled *Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read: Kindergarten Through Grade 3* was not issued by the National Reading Panel, but by the Partnership for Reading (2001). All three reports are available on the NRP's website <<http://www.nationalreadingpanel.org>>.

The NRP report has been widely criticized in education circles for its influence on NCLB legislation which, critics say, is "controlling the research agenda" by mandating randomized experimental research (McCracken, 2004, p. 108). The National Reading Panel's report was cited as an example: "... over a thousand studies were available to the panel, but only a few hundred were considered to be sufficiently 'scientific' for review" (ibid., p. 107). Many of the criticisms of the NRP report and its impact on NCLB are voiced in the January 2004 issue of *English Education*, published by the National Council of Teachers of English, and available to members on the internet at <<http://www.ncte.org/pubs/journals/ee/contents/106735.htm>>.

I wanted to discover if this was true—had the panel actually excluded everything but randomized experimental research, and what were the studies that they did include? I was first surprised to find that there are no bibliographic references to any studies in either of the NRP's reports, so it is impossible to tell first hand how accurate the critics' claims are. However, the panel's own description of their research methodology seemed to confirm the critics' reports. They limited their research to reviewing only "experimental or quasi-experimental research studies" (NRP, 2000a, Methodological Overview, ¶ 1). The report goes on to explain that:

"The evidence-based methodological standards adopted by the Panel are essentially those normally used in research studies of the efficacy of interventions in psychological and medical research. These include behaviorally based interventions, medications, or medical procedures proposed for use in the fostering of robust health and psychological development and the prevention or treatment of disease.

"It is the view of the Panel that the efficacy of materials and methodologies used in the teaching of reading and in the prevention or treatment of reading disabilities should be tested no less rigorously. However, such standards have not been universally accepted or used in reading education research. Unfortunately, only a small fraction of the total reading research literature met the Panel's standards for use in the topic analyses." (¶ 1-2)

The most well known finding of the NRP was that "systematic phonics instruction produces significant benefits for students in kindergarten through 6th grade and for children having difficulty learning to read."

Not only does this confirm the reports of the critics, it raises doubts about the validity and reliability of the research findings of the NRP. Had this report languished in some government archive, as is typical of much federally funded research, no one would be the wiser. However, this flawed study has had wide and immediate impact. For example, as a direct result of the NRP study, Virginia is developing a Reading Instructional Assessment that will be required for all elementary and special education teachers effective July 1, 2004.

The most well known finding of the NRP was that "systematic phonics instruction produces significant benefits for students in kindergarten through 6th grade and for children having difficulty learning to read" (NRP, 2000a, Phonics: Findings and Determinations, ¶ 1). Not many decision makers seem to have read beyond the first paragraph of the report, however.

The author predicted, with acute foresight, that following issuance of the report "bad things will happen. Summaries of, and sound bites about, the Panel's findings will be used to make policy decisions at the national, state and local levels. ...

The NRP concludes its section on phonics with the warning that “while phonics skills are necessary in order to learn to read, they are not sufficient in their own right. Phonics skills must be integrated with the development of phonemic awareness, fluency, and text reading comprehension skills” (§ 14).

Few are aware, too, that the report of the NRP contains a minority report. The “Minority View,” is the final section of the detailed NRP report subtitled *Reports of the Subgroups*. Written by one of only two practicing teachers on the 14-member panel, this section provides a good deal of insight into the panel’s research procedures as well as the limitations that constrained them. The author predicted, with acute foresight, that following issuance of the report...

bad things will happen. Summaries of, and sound bites about, the Panel’s findings will be used to make policy decisions at the national, state and local levels. ... Unfortunately, most policy makers and ordinary citizens will not read the full reviews. (Yatvin, 2000, p. 2).

These predictions were borne out with publication of *Put Reading First* a 64 page summary of the NRP’s report designed to “help parents, teachers, and policymakers identify key skills and methods central to reading achievement” (Armbruster, et al., 2001, Introduction, ¶ 3).

Googling in the rain takes you around and around and back again. My rainy day journey did not end at the end of the NRP report. I discovered more when I returned to the Introduction to the *Reports of the Subgroups* and discovered that they started their investigation by reading a report of the National Research Council entitled *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*. Unfortunately, this is one of those reports that has languished in dusty government archives. Edited by Catherine E. Snow (1998), an expert on literacy and bilingual education, it is 448 pages long, and does not reach facile conclusions. Rather, it is a detailed, complex study of a diffuse and complex issue. Had the NRP been guided by this exemplary research document, perhaps their findings would not have been interpreted so simplistically. It can be found on the website of the National Academies Press <<http://www.nap.edu>>. The same website contains

hundreds of research documents about education, dating from 1982 to 2004.

Taking the time on a rainy afternoon to search through the internet can transport you beyond summaries and sound bites to a more thorough understanding of what research really tells us about reading and reading instruction. It also provides a revealing look at how policy decisions are made, and can help teachers understand more than what the policymakers themselves are aware of. Knowledge is power, and Googling in the rain is one way to become empowered.

References

- Armbruster, Bonnie B., Lehr, Fran & Osborn, Jean. 2001. *Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read: Kindergarten Through Grade 3*. Washington, DC: Partnership for Reading.
- McCracken, Nancy Mellin. 2004. Surviving shock and awe: NCLB vs. colleges of education. *English Education*, 36/2:104-118.
- National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. 2000a. *Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read: An Evidence-based Assessment of the Scientific Research Literature on Reading and Its Implications for Reading Instruction* (NIH Publication No. 00-4769). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. 2000b. *Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read: An Evidence-based Assessment of the Scientific Research Literature on Reading and Its Implications for Reading Instruction: Reports of the Subgroups* (NIH Publication No. 00-4754). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Snow, Catherine E., Burns, M. Susan & Griffin, Peg (Eds.). 1998. *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*. National Research Council,



Washington, DC: National Academies Press.

Partnership ECED & ESL: A Three-Tiered Project -- Engaging future teachers in shared expertise, promoting better learning conditions for second language learners, and increasing ESL parental involvement in school

Solange A. Lopes-Murphy & Doris Martin

Objectives: The primary goal of the proposed project is to create a partnership between two programs – Early Childhood and English as a Second Language, and stimulate collaboration, communication, and interaction between pre-service teachers in these two programs to better assist second language learners in the classroom and increase involvement of non-native parents in their child's education.

The end result of this collaborative initiative is the creation of dual language resource kits to be used by classroom teachers and parents to facilitate the learning process for second language learners and enhance teacher - parent interactions.

Project Justification & Significance:

Collaboration is an important aspect in teaching. Studies show that collaboration leads to a greater degree of critical thinking, motivation to plan and prepare, enjoyment of the teaching process, and better relationship among classmates (Shindler, 2002; Sharan, 1990). As a result, if teacher educators want to promote the value of collaboration among their students, they must teach and model collaborative pedagogy within their programs.

Our rationale is then to help pre-service teachers increase their learning by working together, their understanding on teaching for diversity, and their ability to create a learning

community by increasing home-school communication.

The goals of the proposed project are in line with the university's mission to prepare effective educational professionals for a changing, pluralistic, democratic society within a context of a strong, supportive, and collaborative community of learners that crosses the university and reaches the extended educational community.

Procedures: The design of the proposed project has two phases. Phase I involves establishing the foundation of the project. The foundation phase is comprised of:

1. *Organization of pre-service teachers' teams* - Each team consists for an ESL and an ECED pre-service teacher. Each individual on each team will bring his/her special knowledge, skills, and abilities to work with second language learners in the early grades.

2. *Development of dual language resource kits* - Each team will create materials and activities that promote linguistic, academic, emotional, and social development of the student.

The project's Phase I will be executed in spring 2004.

Phase II consists of home visits and the start of a family literacy program. During this phase, teams will conduct frequent home visits and share activities that parents can perform with their children to enhance their opportunities for learning.

The total amount of the collaborative grant is \$1,500 and it will be used towards the creation of the bilingual resource kits which will include books, videos, tapes in the child's native and target languages.

American University's Summer TESOL Institute

First Sessions classes start the week of May 10th.
--if you had planned to take some of these courses or

--if you want to take advantage of the Summer TESOL Institute's two intensive 7-week Summer Sessions to earn a TESOL Certificate in a single summer, now is the time to register.

If you need more information or assistance with

registration, contact Christina or Tiffany at 202-885-2582 or email to tesol@american.edu

Courses offered First Summer Session are:

[TESL-500 Principles of Linguistics](#), Tuesday-
Thursdays, 5:30-8:00 May 11th-June 24th.

Instructor: Robin Barr

[TESL-501 English Language Teaching I](#), Monday-
Wednesdays, 5:30-8:00 pm, May 10th-June 23rd.

Instructor: Sharyl Tanck

[TESL-524 Reading and Writing in the ESL/EFL
Classroom](#), Tuesday-Thursdays, 5:30-8:00 May
11th-June 24th. Instructor: Karen Schraum

Also if you were interested in taking any of these
courses by alumni audit, you must register this
week! Go to:

[http://alumni.american.edu/contentviewer.asp?bread
crumb=25,6,45,49](http://alumni.american.edu/contentviewer.asp?breadcrumb=25,6,45,49)

The Workforce Improvement Network 2004 Summer Institute

The Workforce Improvement Network will hold its
2004 Summer Institute on June 21 and 22, 2004, at
James Madison University in Harrisonburg,
Virginia. All adult and workforce educators are
invited to attend.

Dr. Yvonne Thayer, director of adult
education and literacy for the Virginia Department
of Education, will give the welcoming address and
participants will be able to choose from two
workshop tracks: GED Learning in the Workplace
and Building Websites for ESOL Students.

More information on the Summer Institute 2004 and
a downloadable registration form can be found at:

[http://vawin.jmu.edu/news/announcements/summer
2004.php](http://vawin.jmu.edu/news/announcements/summer2004.php)

Old Dominion University Announces the Appointment of Alfredo Aruza

The M.A. Program in Applied Linguistics at Old
Dominion University has hired a new faculty
member, Dr. Alfredo Urzua. He will be teaching
TESOL methods, discourse analysis and first and
second language acquisition as well as developing
some new courses for the program. New courses in
the program include ENGL 676 Semantics and
ENGL 595 Linguistic Field Studies: Basque
Language and Culture, an asynchronous course
which includes a trip to Basque country over Old
Dominion University's spring break. More
information is available at:

<http://courses.lib.odu.edu/engl/jbing/MAAL.html>

University of Virginia Offers ESL/EFL Teacher Training Institute

Dudley J. Doane
University of Virginia

The University of Virginia's Center for American
English Language and Culture will offer a six-credit
certificate program in the teaching of English as a
second or foreign language, July 12 – 29, 2004.

Two theoretical streams, describing language
and acquiring language, inform an examination of
teaching methods, classroom practices, materials
development, and assessment.

Opportunities for classroom observation and
practice teaching are scheduled as part of the Institute. A
review of professional resources and standards is
included as is an overview of prospective employers and
teaching contexts.

The ESL/EFL Teacher Training Institute is an
excellent opportunity both for individuals considering
overseas work and for those who intend to work with
English language learners in the U.S.

Non-UVA students are welcome to apply. The
program is limited to 18 participants. Applications will
be processed on a first-come, first-served basis.



application is available at
www.virginia.edu/provost/caelc/teacher.html

For more information contact CAELC at
caelc@virginia.edu or 434/924 3371. The Institute

Center for Culture & Language (CCL)
Northern Virginia Community College, Manassas Campus
Office of Continuing Education
6901 Sudley Road, Manassas, Virginia 20109

TESOL: Teaching English as a Second Language

NEW SEMINARS FOR TEACHERS AND VOLUNTEERS

Introduction to Teaching ESL (ENGL 1962-01M)

Thursdays, June 3 – June 24, 2004

7:00—9:00 p.m., 0.8 CEU, Tuition: \$60

Students will observe ESL classes, participate in class discussions, and learn practical strategies for working with non-native English speakers.

Grammar Review for ESL Volunteers (ENGL 1590-01M)

Thursdays, July 8 – July 29, 2004

7:00—9:00 p.m., 0.8 CEU, Tuition: \$60

A basic grammar review for ESL teachers and volunteers.
Topics: nouns, verbs, articles, gerunds and infinitives.

Additional TESOL Seminars in FALL 2004
will include Cross-Cultural Communication and Tutoring Adult Learners.

All CCL classes are available as contract training at your site or ours.

***To register: visit our website at www.nvcc.edu/manassas/continuing or call 703-257-6630
or visit the registration window in Howsmon Hall, Room 313,
Monday-Friday, 8:30 am-5:00 pm.***



Student centered. Community focused.

Call for Presentations

Reaching Out to the Whole Learner

VATESOL Statewide Conference

October 16, 2004

University of Virginia

Charlottesville

(Please submit by August 27, 2004)

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Affiliation: _____

Address: _____

_____ Email: _____

Names of Co-Presenters and Affiliations: _____

Title: _____

Description (up to 50 words): _____

Intended Audience: Elementary____ Secondary____ University____ Adult Ed____ All____

Presenters will have one hour. Please allow 10-15 minutes of that time for discussion.

Equipment Needs: _____

Each room is equipped with a computer work station, DVD/VCR, projector, OHP, and blackboard. Computer work stations operate on the Windows XP platform, are networked, have a CD bay, and support a thumb drive/USB drive. The work stations do not have a floppy drive or a zip drive.

Return presentations to CAELC at P.O. Box 400161; U.VA. Charlottesville, VA 22904-4161; Fax: 434 924 1483; Email: caelc@virginia.edu.