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President's Message

My dear colleagues and fellow VATESOL members,

As the new President of VATESOL, I would like to take a moment to briefly introduce myself to all of our members as well as discuss the good things on the horizon for our organization.

I am Ada Chrisman, and I have been teaching for over 10 years. I began teaching Spanish in private schools and to home schoolers. I worked as an Adult Ed ESL volunteer with Literacy Volunteers of America. I moved to teaching in public schools as an Elementary Ed ESL teacher, and then into Secondary as both ESL and Spanish teacher. Finally, I moved to teaching Higher Ed, and am now Teaching/Research Faculty at the Virginia Tech Language & Culture Institute IEP.

With this varied background, I always look forward to the VATESOL newsletter when it comes out, wishing to read all the Special Interest Group sections. I have found that methodologies that work for one group of learners often resound with another as well, and it is always good to find practices and hear stories from the variety our membership represents. I hope you all continue to offer your submissions as we are enriched by them.

As for the good things that are happening, the VATESOL board is in planning mode for our annual conference. This year it will be in Newport News, VA, at Christopher Newport University, October 9th & 10th. More information will be coming soon, but I think it is safe to say that the venue and the conference will be topnotch this year. If you have any interest in assisting with planning or volunteering during the conference feel free to contact me!

Between now and then, please take some time to think back over your academic year. I know that when summer comes, our first inclination is to jump at the chance to relax and not think about work for a while. However, it is also a good time to reflect on what practices that worked, which assessments best informed your teaching, and what you learned from your students. These are things your colleagues want to know about! I would like to see you sharing at the conference, whether it is a presentation, a poster, or a special interest group session, your experiences are valuable to us all.

In closing, I would like to personally thank Laura Ray, our Past President and Nominating Chair, for stepping up to steer the boat as I am transitioning to this new role. She is an invaluable asset to this organization.

Happy summer,

Ada Chrisman
VATESOL President
ablount@vt.edu

Special Interest Group (SIG) News

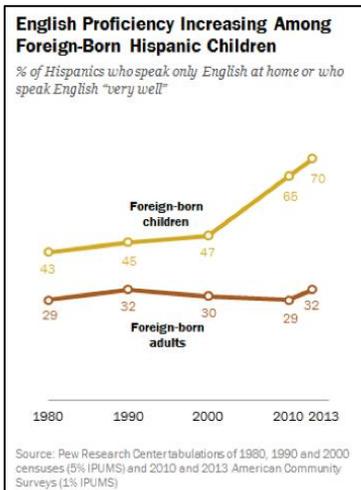
Teacher Ed/Program Admin SIG Chair, Jo Tyler

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A report released in May 2015 by the Pew Research Center shows that 68% of Hispanics in the U.S. speak English proficiently, up by 9% since 2000 (Krogstad, Stepler & Lopez, 2015, p. 4). This trend parallels an increase in the percentage of Hispanics who were born in the U.S. In 2000, 40% percent of Hispanics were born in the U.S., but that figure increased to 65% by 2013 (Pew Research Center, 2015, p. 1)

One of the most dramatic statistics revealed in this report is the change in English proficiency among foreign born Hispanic children, from 47% in 2000 to 70% in 2013, up by 23%. In comparison, the increase



From Krogstad et al. 2015, p. 9

from 1980 to 2000 was only 4% (Krogstad et al., 2015, p. 9). Among the Hispanic children born in the U.S., the increase from 1980 to 2013 was 15%.

This data is a testament to the improvements in ESOL teaching and teacher education over the past two decades. Keeping up with demographic statistics is a

must for ESOL professionals. Learning about the trends in immigration, education and language usage enables us to understand the changing environment in which we work. One of the best resources for this information is the Pew Research Center which provides at-a-glance charts as well as detailed reports on its website at <http://www.pewresearch.org>

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Jo Tyler is chair of the Teacher Education/Program Administration SIG of VATESOL and professor of linguistics and education at the University of Mary Washington.

Higher Ed. SIG Chair, Kama Offenberger

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One of the greatest challenges of teaching is continually finding new ways to make the classroom as fun and engaging as possible. For today's student populations, many of the best strategies incorporate technology.

In March of this year, several faculty and administrators at the VTLCI attended and presented at the TESOL convention in Toronto, and they brought back information about some amazing resources. My two

particular favorites have already begun to make regular appearances in my classrooms.



Kahoot!

This is a surprisingly easy program that can be used to create quizzes for your students. I have used it several times as a review activity for vocabulary and grammar, and it is now greeted with great excitement and competitive gusto.

To use Kahoot, you first need to create a free account. You can then develop quizzes, surveys, or discussions. Quizzes are multiple choice and can include audio, video, or images. Students access the quiz using a unique PIN and can answer questions using their cell phones or tablets.

Some students may initially struggle with the method of choosing the answers on their phones by looking at the colors and pictures for the answer choices on the screen, but in my experience they usually catch on and actively participate after the first one or two questions. In addition, Kahoot has thousands upon thousands of public quizzes created by other users that you can also use with your students. Visit the site at <https://create.kahoot.it/#login>

Today'sMeet

Unlike Kahoot, Today'sMeet does not require that you create an account. Instead, you simply choose a name for your room, select the length of time you want the room to exist, and create it. Students then access the chat by going to the website (with the room name included). Finally, students can make up their own nicknames and become part of the conversation.

This is an incredibly versatile tool that students can use, for example, to write and share sample sentences in class, to participate in a game in which they are racing to give the correct answer first, or to hold out of class discussions. Students can access it with their phones, tablets, or computers. Visit the site at <https://todaysmeet.com/>.

A huge thank you to Mary Freday and Elizabeth Bowles from the VTLCI for bringing back these excellent activities from TESOL. If you have recently found any great technology or tools, please share them! Email them to me at kw9703@vt.edu.

Kama Offenberger is an instructor at the Virginia Tech Language & Culture Institute in Blacksburg, VA.

Adult Ed SIG Chair, Jenna Kelly

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Happy Summer everyone! As Adult Education and Literacy programs have been preparing for the implementation of WIOA, the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) have become a hot topic. The CCRS were developed by the Department of Education in 2013 and were adopted by Virginia's Adult Education in

2014. The standards are based on K-12 Common Core and focus on ABE/ASE learners and aren't directly written for ESOL. Therefore, the part that is the most applicable to ESOL is the Language Arts Standards.

There are four strands within these standards: Writing, Speaking/Listening, Language (grammar, punctuation, word usage, etc.) and Reading. The standards recommend an integrated model where you are teaching them together instead of individually.

There are three key shifts from the way we traditionally teach ESOL. 1. Complexity of the text: Allowing learners to work with complex texts instead of using simplified texts. 2. Evidence: Focusing in on the text and finding the answers within the text instead of focusing so much on opinion. 3. Knowledge: Using informational texts instead of literary texts. These shifts are so that learners will be well prepared for either a career or college track. There are many good resources

on the VALRC website for more information, or feel free to contact me if you have questions! Keep up the good work and please let me know if you have specific questions of topics you would like me to address. You can contact me at jkelly@wm.edu.

Jenna Kelly is the IEL/Civics Program Manager for Literacy for Life, School of Education

College of William and Mary. She has fifteen years of teaching experience, both collegiate and in Adult Education programs.

Elementary Education SIG Chair, Stephanie Sebolt

sselolt@gmail.com



Greetings and happy summertime! It is hard to believe this school year is over. I enjoyed a wonderful year watching my ELL students grow and learn. Each summer, in an attempt to relax and rejuvenate, I gather a stack of books to read and would like to share some of the titles with you.

[Why We Teach](#) by Sonia Nieto

[Other People's Children](#) by Lisa Delpit

[The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life](#) by Parker J. Palmer

[Advocating for English Learners: A Guide for Educators](#) by Diane Staehr Fenner

[Engaging Students with Poverty in Mind](#) by Eric Jensen

I would love to hear about the books you plan to read over the summer and recommendations for any "must reads". Please share by emailing me at stephsebolt@gmail.com so I can compile a list and share in a future newsletter.

On another note, I have ended my 19-year career as an elementary ELL teacher with Roanoke County. I have taken a position as an Assistant Professor at Mary Baldwin College beginning this fall. Although I will miss my students and colleagues, I am excited about my new adventure and look forward to working with the future teachers of Virginia.

Have a wonderful and relaxing summer! Stephanie

Stephanie Sebolt is ESL teacher of K-5 ELLs in Roanoke County. She is also an adjunct for the University of Mary Washington and Virginia Tech.

Secondary Education SIG Chair, Naadira Mubarak

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I took on the chair position of the Secondary Education Interest Group because I realize that secondary ESL students entering American schools are in a challenging position. Specifically, I am referring to adolescent students who are newly arrived from other countries. The most critical cases are

students who are coming from countries embroiled in civil war, drug wars, natural disasters, or other catastrophes that have interrupted their schooling. Many of our newly arriving adolescent ELLs have not had a "school experience" so not only are they facing the challenge of learning a new language, but they are also facing the 'culture shock' of navigating the American school system. It is next to impossible to expect these students to earn all of the high school credits they will need to graduate when they are trying to learn English at the same time. Our high school

teachers, administrators, and policy makers will need to create other options for these students such as bilingual vocational education programs. If these students are offered classes that lead to meaningful work, they may have the motivation to stay in school. We want to develop our ELLs into citizens who can succeed in our society. I will bring more discussion on this topic in our next issues. Feel free to send your thoughts to me at nmubarak@nps.k12.va.us

Naadira Mubarak is the ESL Specialist for Norfolk Public Schools. She has had a varied career in general education and ESL. In addition, she has taught and provided teacher training in Kuwait and Qatar.
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Treasurers Report



Treasurer's report:

BB&T balance as of May 7, 2015: \$38,611.65

PayPal balance as of May 19: \$13,613.09

Member Articles

See and Learn: Benefits of Visual Thinking, Learning, and Teaching Strategies Jo Tyler



This article presents 5 key reasons to teach with visual learning strategies

If you are a fan of "The Mentalist" you have probably seen the show's main character, Patrick Jane, explain his extraordinary memory skills, which come from visualizing a building in which every room contains a detail to be

remembered. In order to recall the details, he uses his mind's eye to pass through the rooms of that building. This is an ancient memorization technique called the Loci Method, but more popularly known as a memory

palace. It is also the "brain attic" referred to by Sherlock Holmes in the stories by Arthur Conan Doyle (Zielinski, 2014).

Another visualization technique has been used by famous athletes such as golfer Tiger Woods, Wimbledon champion Billie Jean King, and many Olympic champions to enhance their sports performance. They visualize themselves performing their most difficult athletic feats. One theory about why these mental imagery techniques work is that they create the same neural pathways in the brain that actual physical practice creates. Indeed, recent brain studies show that mental imagery improves more than just physical performance, but also attention, perception, planning, and memory (LeVan, 2009).

The use of mental imagery to enhance memorization and performance are just two of the many benefits of visual thinking and learning. Education and brain research has shown that visual learning helps students of all learning styles in several ways (Inspiration Software, 2010):

- Make abstract ideas visible and concrete
- Connect prior knowledge to new concepts
- Provide structure for thinking, writing, analyzing, interpreting and reporting
- Focus thoughts and ideas



Nevertheless, school has always been a place where verbal-sequential learning is valued and required for success (Clayton, 2003). As Thomas West (2004) points out: “For some four or five hundred years we have had our schools teaching skills that are basically those of a medieval clerk—reading, writing, counting, memorizing texts” (p. 15). Those who succeed most consistently in school are the students who learn best in a verbal-sequential learning style. They are the students who follow step-by-step instructions, attend to details, prefer discrete facts instead of complex, fuzzy ideas, and present work that is neat, accurate, well organized and on time. Most teachers were this kind of student (Silverman, 2002).

But these are not the majority of students. If we continue to emphasize verbal-sequential teaching and learning methods, we will perpetuate achievement gaps. Research has shown that students’ grades improve when they are taught in their preferred learning style (Dunn & Griggs, 1999, as cited in Clayton, 2003). By increasing visual techniques, we can better reach many populations of underachieving and at-risk students. Statistics reported by Golon (2008) show that approximately 30% of students are visual-spatial learners, while only about 25% are verbal-sequential learners; boys tend to be more spatially oriented, while girls tend to be more verbal; and more than 70% of students identified as gifted and 90% of students with disabilities are visual-spatial learners. Other research has shown that visual learners are at-risk for social and academic difficulties, and that they are less likely to attend college than more verbally oriented students with the same IQs (Silverman, 2002).

As those of us who work with ELLs already know, another advantage of visual teaching and learning addresses the increasing linguistic and cultural diversity of our students. Different learning styles are valued in different cultures (Clayton, 2003). Moreover, students who are being instructed in a language that they do not know, or do not know well, simply cannot learn through traditional verbal channels—listening to lectures and presentations, reading textbooks, taking notes, and writing reports. How are we to reach these students and assess what they know if we rely entirely on verbal teaching and learning methods? By using teaching strategies for visual learning we can help our beginning level ELLs access the curriculum even while they are struggling with English. These visual strategies can also benefit students with dyslexia, autism, and other learning disabilities (Silverman, 2002).

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the global economy is now “moving from an old world of education and work based largely on words and numbers to a new world largely based on images that are rich in content and information” (West, 2004, p. 16). He adds that in the 21st century workers are needed with strong visual skills to perform pattern recognition, develop new technologies, find unexpected solutions, and make connections between seemingly unrelated phenomena.

Virtually all students have some visual-spatial learning abilities, since these are primarily in the right

hemisphere of the brain (Silverman, 2002). But for many these skills need to be developed so that they can succeed not only in school but in 21st century careers. Some suggestions for reaching visual learners and building visual-spatial thinking skills among all students include the following, and hopefully this list will spark your creativity to discover even more visual-spatial teaching techniques.

- have students doodle or draw instead of taking written notes
- use and have students create games related to content material
- associate new vocabulary with pictures or abstract images
- use word clouds
- have students make comic strips or reports in graphic novel style
- use lots of gestures, facial expressions, and expressive voice
- incorporate photography into assignments
- use portfolio assessments
- have students use PowerPoint to prepare and reorganize outlines
- use lots of manipulatives and realia
- role play, reader's theater, imaginative interviews, historical reenactments
- use concept mapping, graphic organizers, charts, graphs, maps, timelines
- connect visible movement to new concepts
- use lots of colors for highlighting concepts, for organizing objects and handouts
- incorporate visuals in assignments with digital story-telling, PowerPoint, YouTube, foldables, posters, etc.

In conclusion, the benefits of visual-spatial learning and teaching are to 1) improve memory, 2) enhance performance, 3) close achievement gaps, 4) reach culturally and linguistically diverse students, and 5) promote 21st century skills. There are numerous teaching strategies that can engage visual learners and improve the visual-spatial skills of verbal learners. These are also great ways to make your teaching more imaginative and fun!

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<https://abagond.wordpress.com/2012/10/15/of-mixed-race-identities/>

Jo Tyler is chair of the Teacher Education/Program Administration SIG of VATESOL and professor of linguistics and education at the University of Mary Washington.

"What's New?" ... A Technique for Heterogeneous Adult Classes

Elizabeth Claire



I had a heterogeneous class of adults a few years back: Fifteen adults ranging in age from eighteen to mid seventies; their educational backgrounds ran the whole gamut: from housewives, home health aides, construction workers and PhD engineers. All were

recent arrivals. Some were beginners, a few had studied English in their home countries. Several had trouble forming the letters of the English alphabet. The class was five days a week, but many students had part-time jobs, or medical appointments, and couldn't come to class each day.

By trial and error, I discovered a technique that would meet the needs of these diverse students. I called the technique "What's New?"

Students sat in a horseshoe formation so they could all see each other. I had a large write-on chart so our work could be preserved for later days for review. I used puppets to present this conversation several times: Puppet One asks "What's New?" Puppet Two answers "Nothing much." I had students repeat this mini conversation in chorus and then practice it: Person A asked person B "What's new?" Person B answered "Nothing much," and vice versa.

Then I had a student ask me, What's new? and I told them: "I started teaching English at Englewood Adult School." I wrote this on the board in the third person: "Elizabeth started teaching English at Englewood Adult School." I let them help each other understand the sentence, or use their bilingual dictionaries. We read it chorally, then individually.

Then I asked individuals: "What's new with you?" The beginners could contribute: "Nothing much," and more advanced students gave some news: "I started studying English with Elizabeth" "I moved to Fair Lawn." "My daughter got married" "I went to get a job," "My house has no electricity."

I coached each speaker with any grammar points and wrote their sentences on the chart paper with the students' names. The class read them in chorus after me, then students read them individually. I gave mini pronunciation drills as needed.

I asked questions based on the information, and expanding on it: Whose daughter got married? Do you have a daughter? Who went for a job? What's your job? and so forth. I asked questions, and let other students ask questions to get more details: What can you do when the electricity is off? (call the landlord) How old is your daughter? Where was the wedding? I supplied the vocabulary they were struggling with.

After a few days of limiting themselves to saying "Nothing much," the beginners got into the act. Lev, a 65-year old retired engineer said "Me, big fish." and used his hands to show the size of the fish. I modeled the sentence, "I caught a big fish," helped him pronounce it correctly, and wrote on our chart, "Lev caught a big fish." Students asked Lev questions, so by gestures, pictures, and stick figures, Lev understood the questions and we found out that Lev caught the fish in a river; Lev's wife cooked the fish; his friends came over to eat it. These all became sentences for our What's New chart.

Students copied the sentences and I gave mini lessons to those who needed help in forming letters. The advanced students helped the beginners in this.

I hadn't planned it, but the class became like a little soap opera, with daily developments in people's lives; and the focus was on the relationships and each others' stories. Each level of student got something out of the lesson, as they could express and get coaching on their own level. There was a smorgasboard of grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary building, spelling, handwriting, self expression, and cultural awareness. I think attendance was good not only because they could feel their progress in English, but because they were engaged with each other and formed a caring support group.

The young man with no electricity at his house was later able to report that he called his landlord and

found out: Ahah! He had to pay the electric bill to get the electricity turned back on.

The best part of this was that I did not need to prepare multiple lessons for the multiple groupings. The students' language needs became apparent, and I could teach them on the spot, tuck in grammar and pronunciation in between the real part of the lesson, sharing ourselves. There's no way a textbook could have met all of these needs.

Elizabeth Claire, MA TESOL, is a teacher trainer and the editor and chief writer for Easy English NEWS, a monthly newspaper for adult and young adult English language learners. www.Elizabethclaire.com.

(Previously published in WATESOL)

Please send email to vatesol@gmail.com if you need to contact VATESOL or any board members