Three Rivers TESOL Newsletter

Winter 2020

Dr. Thomas Farrell: "Reflecting on Our Practice"

by Megan Evangeliste, Duquesne University

Thomas S.C. Farrell, Professor of Applied Linguistics at Brock University, Canada, served as the plenary speaker at the Fall Conference at Duquesne University on October 19th, 2019. The session entitled "Reflecting on Our Practice" prompted teachers to actively challenge their routines. In this plenary, Dr. Farrell discussed what reflective practice is and how it can be accomplished.

Dr. Farrell began by sharing that gaining teaching experience is not enough to provide automatic professional development alone, as teachers learn more from reflection than the act of teaching itself. Reflective practice involves teachers systematically looking at what they do, how they do it, why they do it, what the outcomes are in terms of student learning, and what actions they will take as a result of knowing all of this information. Experience combined with systematic reflection can lead to professional growth so that teachers are ultimately more effective.

Teachers are called to identify an issue in the classroom, suspend immediate judgment, and consider issues with curriculum and/or teaching style. Dr. Farrell urged that when teaching, considering the guiding ideas through different lenses, such as teacher, colleague, student, and literature, and be open to conversations about how the lesson went. He also invited the conference attendees to engage in reflective inquiry after teaching. Using these questions, consider: *What did students learn? How do I know? Do I need to re-teach? What did they learn?*

Finally, Dr. Farrell shared that reflection is dangerous! There is a duality in reflection, in that it is a cognitive act and a set of attitudes. Remember to be open-minded: heed facts and admit that teachers could be wrong. Be responsible: consider consequences, as actions impact students. Be wholehearted: continually reflect throughout a teaching career. *Reflective practice is a way of life!*

3RT Fall Conference attendees engage in the presentation by Dr. Thomas Farrell at Duquesne University.

Affiliate Complimentary Memberships

Seven raffle tickets for affiliate complimentary memberships were drawn at the end of the 2019 Fall Three Rivers TESOL Annual Fall Conference. The winners included Jonathan Fisher, Terra Merkey, Dalia Reda, Miriam Saxton, Ashley Smith, James Thayer, and Xingjian Xue.

Raffle winners are required to be a new TESOL member or someone who has not been a member in more than five years. Renewing a TESOL member or being a current TESOL member does not qualify.

3RT Spring Seminar and Spring Election for Vice President

Tentatively, the theme for the 3RT Spring Seminar is future directions for ESL teacher education and the seminar is scheduled on Saturday, April 18, 2020, at Chatham University.

In addition, the 3RT board elections will conclude in the spring seminar. A position for 'vice president' needs to be filled for 2020-2021. 2022 TESOL International Convention and English Language Expo, hosted by 3RT, will be held from 22-25 March in Pittsburgh. The future elected vice president 2020-2021 will become the 3RT president 2021-2022 and play a significant role in the 2022 TESOL Expo. Please consider nominating someone or yourself for the great leadership opportunity! For more information about 3RT Executive Board Elections, see the last page of the newsletter.

3RT Professional Development Grant

Do you have an idea for a professional development activity that serves the ESL/EFL community? If so, apply for the Three Rivers TESOL Professional Development Grant!

Applicants must complete the grant application form and must submit a project proposal that includes:

1) an outline of the goals, objectives, and rationale of the project. The goals and objectives should be reasonable, measurable, and well-written, with a detailed description of how the proposed PD project benefits ELL students.

2) a detailed description of the implementation plan and projected budget. If the project has multiple steps, descriptions of each are required. The implementation plan should include the evaluation methods used in the PD project.

3) a proposal for how the PD project will be shared with a wider audience. For further information about the grant guidelines, see: https://threeriverstesol.org/wp/grants-awards/

Please forward questions and comments to president@threeriverstesol.org. Applications are reviewed by the board, and award amounts of up to a maximum of $500 are available. The annual deadline for the grant is **31 May 2020** and it is open to both 3RT members and non-members.

The Three Rivers TESOL Professional Development Grant is open to both members and non-members, so feel free to share this information with colleagues as well.

Universal Design for English Learners

by Christie Vanorsdale, Duquesne University

Christie Vanorsdale is an Instructional Designer and Teacher Educator for face to face and online learning environments. Christie received the 3RT Professional Development Grant in 2018.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a framework for lesson design, instruction, and assessment that draws from multiple fields such as: neuroscience, education research, instructional design and educational technologies (Meyer, Rose, Gordon, 2016). This framework recognizes that the curriculum, materials and learning environments should be adapted to meet the needs of the learners rather than requiring the *learners* to adapt to the curriculum. "We shifted our emphasis to recognize the disabilities of schools rather than the students" (Meyer, et. al, 2016). UDL borrows from a product design concept that emphasizes accessibility for all users, not just those with special needs. To put this into context, one might consider a ramp at the entrance to a building as an alternative to stairs. While the ramp may have been designed for those who use a wheelchair, there are many types of people who find the accessibility beneficial. In this same way, UDL provides a lens for educators to prepare for the varying needs of all learners at the outset of curriculum design. It helps reframe our decisions about planning, instruction and assessment to an asset perspective rather than attempting to retrofit adaptations to accommodate deficits (Hall, Meyer & Rose, 2012).

Given its major goal of making education more accessible to all, UDL has recently caught the attention of those who work with language learners. Caroline Torres and Kavita Rao (2019) published "UDL for Language Learners". In 2017, "Culturally Responsive Design for English Learners: The UDL Approach" was also published (Ralabate, Nelson). As noted by Torres and Rao (2019), there are currently a variety of resources and frameworks that exist to support the instruction of Language Learners (LLs). Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), World Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) are two of the most popular tools referenced for instructional support of LLs (McCall, 2018). In addition, there are many other methods, that are often recommended such as Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA), Communicative Language Teaching (CLT; Richards, 2006), Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT;Ladson-Billings,1995) Comprehensible Input (CI; Krashen, 1982), etc. Over the last several decades, we have been presented with many methods and tools to help support the needs of those with linguistic and cultural diversities, yet those students continue to fall behind nationally in our K-12 systems. Additionally, international student enrollment in American higher education institutions are at an all-time low.

For several years now, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) has recognized that LLs require additional support and has mandated that all certified teachers take one course to help meet their needs in the mainstream classroom. In this course, The PDE requires knowledge of the five Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) domains which are: Language, Culture, Instruction, Assessment, Professionalism, and Teaching (education.pa.gov, 2019). Suggestions to implement these domains come in the form of considerations for 'comprehensible input', 'realia', 'knowledge of language', 'authentic assessments', and use of 'culturally appropriate materials'(Wright, 2019). These methods may not be sustainable because they lack the intersection of learning sciences, affective considerations, and instructional technologies that prepare the instructor to be agile and flexible to individual and varying needs of real LLs. Are we only training our educators to treat this population as a singular, normative LL, all with the same type of learning needs, cultural backgrounds and creative preferences? Are we essentially just trying to use the same deficit approaches with LLs that we have tried and failed to use with special education students in a different context?

These barriers can be overcome when we stop trying to adapt our students to our curriculum and start adapting our curriculum to the students by targeting the three brain networks: The Affective Network, The Recognition Network and The Strategic Network. ELs especially can benefit from learning environments that support these networks because it increases sense and meaning of the language and content while sustaining motivation. It also provides context for instructors about the dynamic complexities of language learning and of the individual variability of their students (Meyer, Rose & Gordon,2016).

To synthesize our understanding of the dynamic complexities of both the neuroscience of *how* we learn with the individual variability of LLs Torres and Rao (2019) provide a UDL cycle for working with LLs:

Step 1: Identify the Barriers, Preferences, and Needs of the Learners
Step 2: Identify Clear Goals
Step 3: Design Flexible Assessments in Relation to Each Goal
Step 4: Develop Flexible and Engaging Methods and Materials

When designing a UDL lesson, we are asked to keep these three premises at the top of mind:

(1) Learner variability is the norm in the classroom.
(2) Variability is systematic and predictable.
(3) Barriers to learning can be reduced when curriculum is designed from the outset to account for individual variability.

(Torres, Rao, 2019; Meyer, Rose& Gordon, 2014).

The UDL cycle provides a backwards design framework for planning and the UDL guidelines provide the operational definitions and context for its application. The UDL guidelines focus explicitly on providing multiple means of engagement, representation and action and expression. Each of these guidelines "emphasize areas of learner variability that could present barriers, or, in a well-designed learning experience present leverage points and opportunities for optimized engagement with learning" (Meyer, Rose & Gordon, 2014). In addition, each group of guidelines emphasizes specific factors for strengthening executive functioning and building affective skills to create learners who are: purposeful and motivated, resourceful and knowledgeable, and strategic and goal oriented. In short, UDL helps to reframe our thinking to consider all learners from a holistic perspective with an emphasis on *expecting barriers* as the norm rather than retrofitting them as outliers. In addition, it provides context and functions that we can operationalize that go above and beyond *making input comprehensible* for working with LLs in any environment.

LESLLA Symposium: Attendance Reflection

by Mariana Syrotiak, Gannon University

Mariana Syrotiak is the Director of English Language and Global Training at Gannon University. Mariana was represented 3RT at the 2019 LESLLA Symposium.

I have been fortunate to be the raffle winner of an LESLLA conference registration. I had not heard of LESLLA until a message from 3RT came into my inbox inviting name submission for the chance of winning a registration. I submitted my name on a whim as I usually don't win anything. But this time I did – and it was much more than a conference registration.

LESLLA stands for Literacy Education and Second Language Learning for Adults. It is an international organization that began in 2015 at their first annual symposium in Tilburg, Netherlands and ever since has held yearly meetings around the world. The 2019 symposium took place in Pittsburgh, PA, and the 2020 will be held in Malmö, Sweden, August 5-7. There is time to think of a conference proposal.

But first, I need to reflect on my first attendance. The LESLLA Symposium offered me a true i+1 experience. Although, I doubt that anyone in this field needs an explanation, i+1 stands for input that matches the learner's level plus 1 (Krashen, 2003). LESLLA and I met at the second language learning level, and I was introduced to literacy education within the second language learning domain. Many of us, teaching within university-based ESL programs, do not have to think much about the level of literacy of our students. After all, that has been met and vetted through the rigorous application process. LESSLA teachers work with learners with varying degrees of literacy from interrupted education to no literacy at all.

The 2019 Symposium, hosted by Literacy Pittsburgh, offered a wide array of presentations; working with various learners profiles, access to education, the impact of learner's background – such as trauma - and experience in the classroom, culture and its implication in learning, specific teaching tips, and much more. It was difficult to choose between the topics; fortunately the other presentations can be accessed via the LESLLA website.

In many ways being at LESLLA helped me connect with my past professional experiences in conflict-transformation, peacebuilding, and art. While I worked in these fields at one time or another, I have yet to engage them all at once. LESSLA seems to be a professional intersection that welcomes a diverse background. In this field, being specialized only in language teaching is not enough. Both ESL and LESLLA teachers have to be proficient in cultural understanding and communication, know the implication of trauma in the classroom, be able to facilitate transition and adjustment in a new learning environment, and more.

In general, conferences offer both lofty professional goals as well as humble reminders. It is always helpful to go back to the beginner's mind and see the process of learning from that perspective. Here are few reminders:

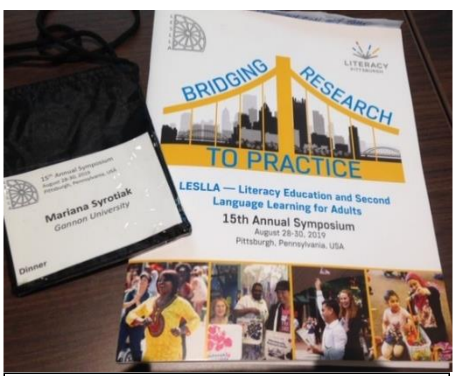
- Have deeper awareness of the learners' background
- Meet students where they are
- Start from concrete and known
- Limit formal teaching
- Use awareness and noticing
- Limit worksheets & use of paper
- Enjoy the learning experiences (as in teachers learning from their new context)

(Courtesy of Jenny Field, Waikato Institute of Technology, Hamilton, NZ. Source: Van Lier's (1996) – framework for teaching adults with limited L1 education)

There is always so much to process during and after a conference. I would like to propose that conferences have a built-in time for reflection and synthesis. To engage in this process, I always go back to my favorite framework - the Experiential Learning Cycle:

- Concrete Experience CE - **WHAT**: conference attendance
- Reflective Observation RO: **SO WHAT**: making sense
- Abstract Conceptualization AC & Active Experimentation AE – **NOW WHAT** – how does it fit into what I know, and how might I apply it?

A big shout-out to all the presenters, they were all phenomenal, and especially to the event engine, aka Symposium Chairperson, Allegra B. Elson.



Mariana and Kathy Lipecky, 3RT Vice President (not pictured), attended the 2019 LESLLA Symposium on August 28-30.

List of intercultural books – recommendations from LESLLA presenters

- Emmanuel's Dream: The True Story of Emmanuel Ofosu Yeboah, by Laurie Ann Thompson
- Paper Son, by Helen Foster James and Virgina Loh-Hagan
- A long walk to water, by Linda Sue Park
- Malala, a brave girl from Pakistan, Iqbal, a brave boy from Pakistan, by Jeanette Winter
- Dreamers, by Yuyi Morales
- Circuit, by Francisco Jimenez
- Inside Out and Back Again, by Thanhha Lai
- Refugee, by Alan Gratz
- La Mariposa, by Francisco Jimenes
- Stepping Stones, by Margriet Ruurs
- The Journey, by Francesca Sanna
- La Frontera: El Viaje Con Papa, Deborah Mills
- Brothers in Hope, The Story of Lost Boys of Sudan by Mary Williams, R. Gregory Christie
- Four Feet, Two Sandals, by Karen Lynn Williams
- The Name Jar, Yangsook Choi
- My Two Blankets, Irena Kobald
- Where do I live, by Neil Chesanow
- Family Pictures, by Carmen Lomas Garza
- One Green Apple by Eve Bunting
- The Bracelet, by Yoshiko Uchida
- My Family Divided, Diane Guerrero
- Baseball Saved Us, by Ken Mochizuki
- Grandfather's Journey, by Allen Say
- Gleam and Glow, Eve Bunting
- The Invisible Boy, by Patrice Barton
- Most People, by Michael Leannah
- The Harmonica, by Tony Johnston
- Jars of Hope, by Jennifer Rozines
- Roy (about Irena Sendler)

Beno
Night of Broken Glass, by Meg Wiviott

Developing Critical Listeners: Listening Beyond the PowerPoint Slides

by Julia Salehzadeh, Duquesne University

Julia Salehzadeh is the Associate Director of ESL at Duquesne University. Julia presented "Developing Critical Listeners…" at the 3RT Fall Conference.

Academia values the ability to evaluate, to explore and analyze different perspectives, to think critically. In EAP contexts preparing students for academic coursework, we stress critical reading and writing. Students read and analyze texts and discuss whether the writer has achieved their goal. Students write argumentative and summary-response papers to develop and display their understanding and critical thinking. However, there may be another area of student learning that is not adequately addressed in EAP. An average undergraduate will spend about 200 hours per semester listening to lectures. Don't students also need to listen critically to lectures (as well as documentaries and other audio/visual presentations) and evaluate the arguments they are *hearing*? What does listening critically mean in an era when PowerPoint slides are nearly ubiquitous? If the slides contain the main points (as is commonly assumed), what else should students listen for?

One first step towards understanding what critical listening means is to consider why we have lectures at the university. Students readily recognize that we have lectures because through them, lecturers make complex material more understandable and more interesting and allow opportunities for students to ask questions. Indeed, these are some intended lecture purposes. However, one common assumption among students is that lectures are merely a transmission of facts and if they can just get all the facts, they will understand everything. However, lectures are not merely a transmission of facts; they are also value-laden arguments (Lynch, 2011). If lectures are argumentative, then they, like many of the texts students read and write, provide significant opportunities for students to learn how academics think, how they create, shape, support and critique arguments. The argumentative portions of lectures, also known as evaluative segments, are where speakers weigh lecture material. Yet students may miss this important lecture purpose.

There are several reasons students are likely to miss ways speakers evaluate lecture material. First, during lectures students face the heavy, simultaneous, cognitive demands of needing to read the PowerPoint slides, think, organize, and take notes. All of these demands compete with each other forcing a listener to switch attention rapidly to accommodate each demand. In this situation, the visual material on the slide takes precedence over the verbal (Levasseur and Kanan Sawyer, 2006; Field, 2011). This means that viewing PowerPoint slides competes with and can actually supersede listening. In addition, evaluative comments, where lecture content is weighed or critiqued, may not be on the slides. In fact, an important corpus study on conference presentations found that evaluative features are eight times more frequent in the spoken mode than on the slides (Rowley-Jolivet, 2012). If evaluative comments in lectures follow this pattern, it is likely that students miss the evaluative portions of lectures because their focus is on the visual material.

Another reason students may miss evaluative segments is that they can take place at a variety of "locations" in a lecture. They may occur at the very beginning where a speaker may set up their intended purposes or indicate ideas to think about during lecture. Evaluative segments may occur at the end of a lecture to indicate possible problems and issues. Evaluation may also take place in the middle of a lecture or after several lectures where a speaker may compare and critique examples, theories, or solutions.

Another challenge for students is that methods used to emphasize and evaluate lecture material are also varied and complex and include both linguistic and paralinguistic elements. A useful starting place for common linguistic forms can be drawn from research on language used in the 160 lectures of the British Corpus of Spoken English (Deroey and Taverniers, 2012). While the words and phrases mined from the corpus are not an exhaustive list, and the work did not include attention to stress, rhythm, intonation, or other non-verbal information, they are a good place to start to create an awareness of linguistic forms (*see charts*).

Some common emphasis forms in lectures from corpus studies (Deroey & Taverniers, 2012; Rowley-Jolivet, 2012)

			nouns
Adjectives	important, key, big, significant	main, interesting, beautiful	thing, issue, problem, point, question
Adverbs	very, critically, extremely	quite, significantly	
Remembering words	keep in mind, bear in mind…	remember, don't forget,	
Main idea references	the bottom line is, the message (idea, point, question) is…	the thing is that,	

Some common evaluative & emphasis forms in lectures (Deroey & Taverniers, 2012)

Attention words	bring attention to, draw attention to, focus attention on,	pay attention to, point out, notice, note	
Concluding words	go away with, take home, take away		
Special grammatical construction: Wh Cleft	What you should see here is, What you want to notice is		

Beyond a list of phrases however, students need opportunities to practice listening to evaluative segments within the context of authentic, fifty-minute, academic lectures. Students need to experience the multitasking demands of reading the PowerPoint slides, listening for important commentary and taking notes as they will in academic classes. Students must work to sustain their attention for an hour or more, not only for the 15 minutes of practice included in many EAP texts presently. Therefore, students should watch whole lectures, watch them repeatedly, and receive guidance to identify important evaluative segments.

The challenges of helping students understand academic lectures and the evaluation of lecture content are plentiful, but we can and should raise awareness of some ways lecturers critique material. By doing this, we demonstrate how lectures are argumentative, thus helping students to think more critically for themselves and use language appropriately to evaluate what they read, write and hear.

Among All Others, Sometimes the Teaching is the Easy Part

by Brian How and Mariana Syrotiak, Gannon University

Brian How is the Staff Instructor at the English Language and Global Training at Gannon University.

When we are in the process of becoming teachers, we learn a lot of teaching skills, such as: second-language acquisition, teaching approaches, curriculum design and assessment, and much more. When we learn these skills, we imagine a full class of eager students waiting to receive the knowledge that we prepared for them. What we don't learn much is how to handle disruptions that have a direct effect upon our teaching. When we think of disruptions we think classroom management, but these types of disruptions do not necessarily happen within the boundaries of the classrooms, but come in and out of it.

With the fluctuating number of ESL students – mostly toward the negative side – programs find themselves shrinking, which leads to smaller and often multi-level classes. According to Open Doors, the number of new international students decreased by 7% from 2018 (Open Doors, 2019). Small classes, multi-levels, and late arrivals are challenges within themselves. But when other things happen on top of that, it makes for a challenging ride. These things are: student attendance, impromptu school events, announced fire drills, student family responsibilities, medical and psychological crises, and other unexpected events. ESL teachers may find themselves caught between anxiety and sensitivity while trying to meet the needs of the student, follow the design of the curriculum, and fit the curriculum into the tight timeframe of the semester. These challenges differ from class to class and from program to program. Knowing how to handle them without being swept off track is the feather in a teacher's cap.

Some teachers are brilliant and intuitive and on the ball and are able to address these challenges on the spot with no problem while some others may find themselves torn between having to stop the lesson as planned and spend time to catch up the student who missed a day or two. Where is that sweet spot between rigidity and flexibility that will allow teachers to move as planned and students not fall behind and have to struggle on their own to catch up?

There is something amazing when teachers come together and share both their experiences that contain both challenges and solutions. It makes for a most efficient crowdsourcing. And that's what we did at the Three Rivers TESOL conference. In a facilitated session, our understanding of the many reasons for which a teacher can't follow through as planned, has expanded. In addition to the above mentioned, the following may be the curveballs of a lesson plan: pulled out ELLS, small classrooms with students with limited commitment, students with little opportunity for formal education, students dealing with health, employment, and familial challenges, and transient students.

But also the strategies offered during the session were valuable and plentiful. The participants were offered a sample scenario – one that was challenging and potentially prevented them to follow through as planned – for the *N*th time. The short presentation session did accommodate for brief introductions, group discussion and debriefing. Below are some of the problems and solutions brought up during the session.

CONTEXT	CHALLENGES	SOLUTIONS
Elementary Schools Pre-reading and young ESL students	Retained in another classroom "pulled out"	Have a plan A, B, and C. First of all reassure students. Then, follow with a stand-alone activity or a previously learned lesson. Have these activities available at all times in specifically designated containers.
IEP - adults	Small classrooms Limited commitment	Teachers should: • Be self-aware • Think on their feet • Decide that students are responsible for their own learning • Model student behavior • Expect/accommodate student complications due to their life circumstances. • Have activities to engage on-time students, save the lesson for when everyone is present
University-level Secondary	Communicating the importance of attendance – the structure collapses.	Independent learners can work alone freeing teacher to give individual student attention.
Primary/Secondary	Transient students	Awareness of who the students are in the class

Refugee Resettlement Adult Education		Non-sequential lessons Being flexible enough to accommodate for the multi-level classroom. Contact on Zoom, put students in teaching roles. Free speaking activities
All levels	Limited literacy in L1	Do not be punitive for absences or lateness Social emotional development kept in mind Especially younger students
Technology failure, glitches. Ex. Power point	Ss use cellphones – can be used to access info instead	Have a plan B for technology issue. Anything can fail Consistency in Routines help Lower stress in students STRUCTURE

Student success depends on many factors, not only the teaching, but we always feel responsible for their progress no matter what. There are no certainties on how the lesson plan will go, what students will learn, and what they will remember. Tapping into more teaching wisdom, we find out that the teachers, who consistently get students exited and engaged, are the ones who have two rules: clarity and consistency (Chandler, 2018).

3RT attendees participating in "Among All Others, Sometimes Teaching is the Easy Part" at the 3RT Fall Conference.

Implementing Accreditation Standards to Guide Professional and Program Development

by Heather McNaught and M. Christine O'Neill, University of Pittsburgh

Heather McNaught is the Assessment Supervisor at the University of Pittsburgh ELI. Heather presented "Implementing Accreditation Standards…" at the 3RT Fall Conference with M. Christine O'Neill.

The Commission on English Language Accreditation (CEA) is a specialized accreditation agency, which means that it accredits only English language programs, unlike other accrediting agencies which can accredit a variety of organizations. CEA consists of three main bodies: the commission, staff, and peer reviewers. Staff are CEA employees who ensure smooth daily operation of the organization. Peer reviewers are trained volunteers from the profession who visit the schools undergoing accreditation. The Commission is a body of 13 elected volunteers who review and make accreditation decisions.

Although CEA was established with the purpose of accrediting English Language programs, it's carefully constructed? Well thought-out standards, available at the CEA website, can be used by professionals and programs in order to promote professional development without going through the accreditation process. CEA's standards comprise 11 standard areas: 1) Mission, 2) Curriculum, 3) Faculty, 4) Facilities, Equipment and Supplies, 5) Administrative and Fiscal Capacity, 6) Student Services, 7) Recruiting, 8) Length and Structure of Program of Study, 9) Student Achievement, 10) Student Complaints, and 11) Program Development, Planning and Review. Each standard area is consists of one or more standards; for example, Mission, Facilities, Equipment and Supplies and Student Complaints each have one standard whereas Administrative and Fiscal Capacity has 12 standards. In total, there are 44 standards.

M. Christine O'Neill is the Standards Supervisor at the University of Pittsburgh ELI. Christine, alongside her colleague Heather, presented "Implementing Accreditation Standards…" at this year's conference.

The first step to using accreditation standards as a professional development tool is to analyze the language of the standard. Most of the standards are only one or two sentences in length, but they actually contain many components and a great deal of detail. For example, the first standard, Mission is "The program or language institution has a written statement of its mission and goals, which guides activities, policies, and allocation of resources. This statement is communicated to faculty, students, and staff, as well as to prospective students, student sponsors, and the public, and is evaluated periodically." Looking carefully at the standard, it quickly becomes apparent that there are four main components: 1) must be in writing, 2) must guide activities, policies and allocation of resources, 3) must be communicated to stakeholders and 4) must be evaluated periodically. Using this standard as a springboard for discussion related to your own program, could have a number of fruitful results.

Teachers, for instance, might begin to engage with the mission and how it relates to their daily activities or, it might become clear that the program has all components of the standard with the exception of periodic review, something that can be remedied.

Using other standards such as Faculty Standard 2 or Curriculum Standard 2 to guide discussions or personal reflections on professional development are good standards to start with. Faculty Standard 2 states: "Faculty have experience relevant to teaching students at the postsecondary level in their areas of assignment and demonstrate an ongoing commitment to professional development (author's emphasis)."Creating and participating in accessible and affordable professional development opportunities should be a core goal for individual instructors as well as programs. Using the discussion of the standard as a launching point, it is apparent that there are many easy, inexpensive, time-saving options there are for professional development.

The Curriculum 2 Standard can be extremely beneficial when analyzing and implementing an effective and appropriate curriculum. It reads, "Course goals, course objectives, and student learning outcomes are written, appropriate for the curriculum, and aligned with each other. The student learning outcomes within the curriculum represent significant progress or accomplishment." Analyzing this standard and using its components to guide the creation, modification, and/or implementation of the curriculum, even in an established program, can highlight areas at the level of the individual teacher (aligning activities to SLOs) or at the level of the program (aligning the curriculum across levels and skills).

Regardless of whether or not a program is accredited or seeks accreditation, accreditation standards can be used to guide professional development for individuals and programs alike.

(Home - The Commission on English Language Accreditation. (n.d.) Retrieved from https://cea-accredit.org/.)

My Accent and My Social Identity: Self-perceptions of L2 English Speakers in the American Context

by Douglas López & Shumaila Memon, Penn State University

Douglas López, Penn State University, presented "My Accent and My Social Identity…" at this year's conference.

I. Introduction

Nowadays, in a globalized world with a deep process of social transformation, speaking a language other than the native might seem an advantage over people who do not have such skill. Specifically, English has become one of the most spoken languages all over the globe and has led people to learn it and to communicate through it, in order to find better job opportunities or to improve their life quality. However, what happen with those non-native people who leave their hometowns and move out to an English-speaking country? Is it mandatory to act or even speak (get the accent) like the members of the new speech community? Or conversely, do they have to preserve their background and social identity? These seem to be tough questions, nevertheless, in countries like The United States, where ideologies are imposed and even persuade people to change their beliefs with the idea of standardizing and mold their behaviors that mostly, they do not necessarily reflect who they really are.

From my own experience, when I first came to the United States and I started talking to my fellow international students, I could notice there were several accents in the way they spoke English (including mine) and sometimes they felt ashamed or hesitated when expressing themselves. Therefore, this fact led me to think that it would be interesting to study the way they perceived their L2 (second language) accents, considering that they were living in a new country, exposed to a new speech community and interacting in a language different from their mother tongue. Another reason that encouraged me to conduct a research on this topic was, that I had heard these foreigner people complaining and feeling frustrated all the time for not to sound like the new social group (so called standard accent), thus, it would be challenging to figure out what they thought about that fact and how it affects their everyday life in terms of interaction in academic or social scenarios.

Exploring "the world of accents" is a topic that definitely made me curious, for that reason, I wanted to go deeper into how one single language can have such many variations, and furthermore, if foreigner people (L2 English speakers) were able to sound like Americans, taking into account that they are adults, and to acquire some linguistic features of the target language perfectly at that age, might be quite hard but not impossible. Regarding this, I have the presumption that for adult people, it turns out difficult to abandon their original accents (sound house), and perhaps those people may start communicating through L2 without leaving aside some features of their mother tongue reflected on the way they speak English (social identity). By conducting this research, I would prove if my hypothesis was right or wrong.

II. Background

To start with, I will mention some studies and literature that were taken as a reference to illustrate a theoretical frame that supports the ideas and concerns that I have as a researcher. First, Lippi-Green (1994) stated that accent is "how the other speak" and much of linguistic variation is structured around social identity. The author explained as well that when people reject an accent, they also reject the identity of the person speaking his or her race, ethnic heritage, national origin, regional affiliation, or economic class (p. 163). Hence, I take the idea that an accent reflects the speaker's linguistic background as the fundamental premise, and I define an accent as the way a speaker sounds, which reflects the speaker's linguistic backgrounds. Based on this premise, Kumagay (2013) looked at the perception that Asian people have about their accents in English and how it is closely related with social identity. By analyzing data collected from a group of students at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, who manifested not to feel satisfied with the way they sounded in English. This idea supports the intention of the present research, which is to evaluate the perception that foreigners have about their accents in English and their social identity.

On the other hand, the paradigm of World Englishes has evolved; the need for studying English language learners' language varieties and their identities has increased. Norton-Peirce (1995) pointed out that the theory of second language acquisition needed to engage more in language learners' complex social identity. This notion influenced other researchers (including myself) to conduct studies about L2 English speakers and their identity. In terms of L2 English speakers' accents and identity, there have been several studies, which investigated the relationship between the two. The previous studies have shown that different perspectives of identities are influenced by different perceptions of accent.

For example, Derwing (2003) demonstrated that English as second language learners, who participated in the study, had negative impressions on their own English accents, because their accents caused some communication problems. She also found that these participants explained that they wanted to change their accents close to the "native speakers," and they did not desire to retain their accents as an indication of their own identity, because they had their own national identity with their first languages. A last finding was that accent is the strongest stereotype and might cause frustration if people do not feel comfortable by having it.

Another major study in this field is Jenkins' (2007) study investigating "non-native" English-speaking teachers' perceptions of accents and their identities. She found that when their English teacher identity was concerned, the participants felt that their accents needed to be as "native-like" as possible, whereas when the idea of English as a Lingua Franca was involved in their identities, they felt more comfortable with their own accents. These studies demonstrated the multi-dimensional and fluid nature of L2 English speakers' perceptions of identities, and the relationship between these perceptions and their perceptions of accents. Also, Marx (2002) conducted a longitudinal study on her own experiences with her second language demonstrated the fluid nature of identity perceptions (loss and gain of identity), and the impact of these perceptions on her accent perceptions. To sum up, after a deep reflection process, some research questions emerged as follows: 1. How do you perceive the way you sound when speaking English? 2. How do you think the way you speak English defines you? 3. Would you like to change your accent in English? Why? Why not?

Shumaila Memon, Penn State University, presented "My Accent and My Social Identity…" at this year's conference.

III. Methodology

A. Demographic Information of the Participants

Out of the eight participants who joined the present study, seven of them were female while one of them was male. Their demographic backgrounds varied considerably. While two of them were from an Asian country, three of them were from South and Central American countries and other three were from two different European countries. The time of their stay in the United States ranged from three months to more than eighteen years. Five of them were Salve Regina international students, and the other three were foreign non-students belonging to Salve Regina community. Detailed information for each participant is illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic information about participants

SUBJECT	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**
AGE	18	19	19	19	21	28	40	44
GENDER	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	M
NATIONALITY	Japanese	Ecuadorian	German	French	Chilean	French	Salvadorian	Indian
FIRST LANGUAGE	Japanese	Spanish	German	French	Spanish	French	Spanish	Malayalam
OTHER LANGUAGES SPOKEN	Chinese, English	English, Portuguese	English, Spanish (beginner)	English, Spanish (beginner)	French, English	Spanish, English	English	Hindi, English, Tamil, Kannada
Learned English at…	Middle School	School	International School	School	School	School	The workplace, listening to other people	Seminary, during formation to priesthood
Time living in the U.S.	6 months	1 year	1 year	3 months	3 months	3 months	18 years	13 years
Most interaction in English with…	Friends	Teachers and classmates	Friends, teachers	American / International students and teachers	American / International students and teachers	Students, Colleagues	Everybody	Students, staff, faculty and community members

B. Methods

This study employed a semi-structured survey to collect data from the participants. A format of a typical five-level Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree) was used to determine the degree of agreement or disagreement of the sample, on some statements related to the perception of their own accents in English, satisfaction with the way they sound, ability to communicate effectively in English, reflection of some features of their first language when speaking English among others.

The data collection process was carried out between November 25th and December 02nd, 2017 and consisted on providing the survey on paper to the participants and they had filled in the blanks with the information requested as well as interact with the interviewer through a pre-survey, a reading and listening activity and a post-survey, all this with the aim of exploring in their viewpoints about their own accents in English and how tied the participants were to their cultures and social heritage.

By following these steps, the data was collected:

1. Selecting participants: eight participants from different nationalities were selected intentionally; they all had a cultural profile that suit perfectly with the nature of the present research. All of them are members of Salve Regina Community (Faculty, staff and students) they are foreigners who have been living in the United States for short and long periods who accepted to be part of the study by signing a consent form and they also considered important to conduct researches on this topic.

2. Taking survey: this was made personally and it was divided into three stages: a) Pre-survey: each one of them had to answer general questions related to age, gender, nationality, first and other languages spoken, the way they learned English, stay in the U.S. and interaction with people in English. After that, they had to take a 10 statements survey in which they ought to choose an option from the five-level Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree) for each one of them. b) Interaction: in this stage, the participants were asked to read a short text aloud and say something brief about themselves while they were being recorded, then, they had to listen to their playbacks and take the same survey one more time, this with the intention to double check if after doing so, their opinion changed

in terms of perception of their accents in English. c) Post-survey: in this stage, the participants had to take the survey again and make an introspection by expressing how they perceive their accents in English and put it context by pointing out some specific situations where they have felt comfortable or uncomfortable when speaking English. In this way, I was able to measure how aware they were about their accents in English (most of them did not know they had one) and how important is for the communication process.

IV. Results and Discussion

Data Analysis

The present study was carried out by applying a survey to eight people of foreign origin concerning to the perception they have about their accents in English. For the analysis, I proceeded to tabulate and graph the data by establishing percentages per each one of the statements in the survey according to the five-level Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree) employed to obtain the results described as follows:

Figure 1. Statement #1 (Pre-survey)

Figure 2. Statement #1 (Post-survey)

As we can see, in the first statement participants were asked if they considered they were able to communicate effectively in English, in a previous stage (pre-survey) six out of eight expressed to be "strongly agree and agree" while only two of them stated a neutral position. After the interaction activity (reading a paragraph while recording and listen to the playback) there was a slightly modification in the options (post-survey) one of them changed from "strongly agree" to "agree" but keeping the same range of agreement. In general, 75% of the participants expressed, they were able to communicate effectively in English and the other 25% was neutral.

Figure 3. Statement #2 (Pre-survey)

Figure 4. Statement #2 (Post-survey)

In this case, participants were asked about their degree of satisfaction with the way they speak English and in the pre-survey, a half of the participants said they were "strongly agree" and "agree" and the other half expressed their disagreement by choosing "neutral "and "disagree". After the interaction activity, participants who stated a neutral position (two) changed their opinions; one for "agree "and other for "disagree" having then at the end 62,5% of the participants in agreement and 37,5% in disagreement. It seems that most of them are satisfied with the way they speak English and a minority expressed unconformity.

Figure 5. #Statement 3 (Pre-survey)

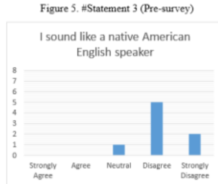
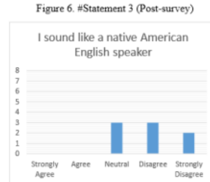


Figure 6. #Statement 3 (Post-survey)



In statement 3, in the pre-survey there was a tendency to disagreement, 87,5% of the participants expressed that they definitely do not sound like a native American English speaker, only one out of eight preferred to stay neutral. After reading aloud, listen to the playbacks and take the survey again, the percentages moved slightly towards neutrality, however, the level of disagreement it is still shown in here.

Figure 7. #Statement 4 (Pre-survey)

Figure 8. #Statement 4 (Post-survey)

Regarding this statement, in the pre-survey, most of the participants expressed agreement and neutrality when they were asked if the way they speak English represents who they are, however, after the interaction activity (post-survey) percentages moved slightly towards agreement, 67,5% coincided in the fact that the way the speak English probably represents their backgrounds and not necessarily they may sound like Americans when speaking English.

Figure 9. #Statement 5 (Pre-survey)

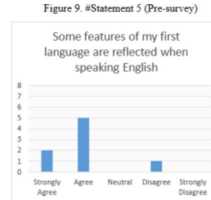


Figure 10. #Statement 5 (Post-survey)

In this statement, a high level of agreement is expressed in here. In the pre-survey, seven out of eight participants admitted that some features of their first language are reflected when speaking English, something similar happened after participants performed the reading and listening activity and took the survey again, the same percentage (87,5%) agreed with the statement.

Figure 11. #Statement 6 (Pre-survey)

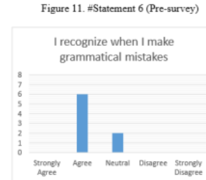
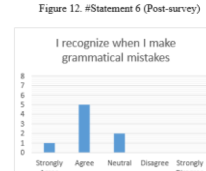


Figure 12. #Statement 6 (Post-survey)



When participants were asked about the degree of consciousness when making grammatical mistakes, the majority of them did not hesitate in expressing their agreement, the same percentage was obtained in both pre-survey and post-survey, this seems to be a positive aspect since they are able to monitor themselves, correct when necessary and avoiding fossilization.

Figure 13. #Statement 7 (Pre-survey)

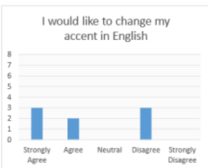
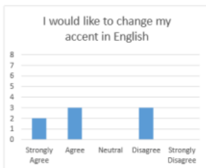


Figure 14. #Statement 7 (Post-survey)



In statement 7, 62,5% of the participants said that they would like to change their accents in English because of unconformity when speaking. Both results were the same in both surveys (pre and post) what means that the perception of accent did not change after reading and listening playbacks. However, there was a minority but not less important, who expressed disagreement with the idea of changing their accent in English, this might mean that they feel comfortable with the way they speak English.

Figure 15. #Statement 8 (Pre-survey)

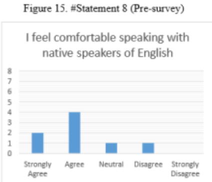
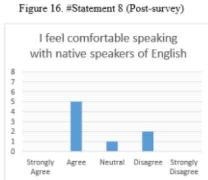


Figure 16. #Statement 8 (Post-survey)



When participants were asked about the sensation of confidence they had when speaking with native speakers of English, in the pre-survey, six out of eight said that they felt absolutely comfortable speaking with native speakers of English, no matter the accent but having a good attitude. On the other hand, after reading the paragraph, listening playbacks and taking the survey again, percentages varied considerably, moving towards a tendency of agreement but with important number of participants who expressed neutrality or disagreement when speaking English with natives.

Figure 17. #Statement 9 (Pre-survey)

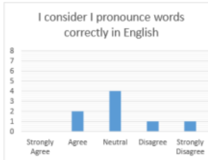
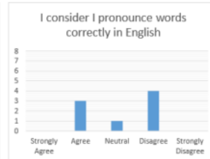


Figure 18. #Statement 9 (Post-survey)



In statement 9, participants were questioned about the pronunciation of words correctly in English and in the pre-survey, most of them expressed neutrality, they might think that do not pronounce appropriately, however, after the interaction activity (post-survey) five out of eight considered neutrality and disagreement, what means that after listening to their playbacks, they found that indeed the pronunciation of some words was not the most accurate.

Figure 19. #Statement 10 (Pre-survey)

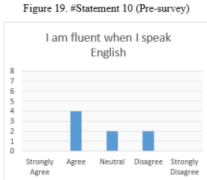
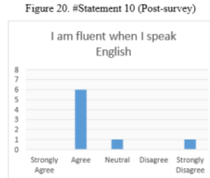


Figure 20. #Statement 10 (Post-survey)



Finally, in this statement we can see clearly how most of the participants after taking both pre-survey and post-survey expressed that they are fluent when speaking English. After finishing the survey, the participants were asked to answer in a qualitative way some questions that were helpful to contextualize in a better way each linguistic reality.

Table 2. Perception about accent and social identity

SUBJECT	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Perception of the accent	Weird, it's a little different when I speak and when I listen to it directly	I have a Hispanic accent, but it is understandable	Fluently enough to feel comfortable and accurate	Hesitant, unsure, I don't pronounce every word correctly	I can express myself good, but my Spanish accent is very strong	It sounds as a foreigner speaking English	I think I sound very funny	I am satisfied and I think I do a good job
The way I speak says about me…	I feel I can speak English, but I need to improve more	It holds my background story; you can hear how it sounds like singing	I sound like a native from America. No German accent	It says that I am not a native English speaker	It says that I am a Spanish speaking person	Where I come from due to my accent	It represents my culture	My determination and hard work
Reasons I would / would not change my accent in English	Yes, definitely. My friends always point out my English accent and correct me.	No, you can understand me clearly without missing the fact that I am a Hispanic.	No, I sound fluent, I know what I am saying, that's all that matters	Yes, to sound more like an English speaker.	Yes, because to be totally fluent in a language, the accent should be included too.	Yes, definitely because people sometimes do not understand what I say, and I want to sound more professional	No, I feel comfortable speaking as I do.	I don't want to change my basic accent as an Indian
Discomfort when speaking with native speakers of English (Example)	When a native speaker asks me to repeat my sentence because he didn't get it	In the airport, a police officer pulled me over for inspection; it was hard to communicate with them.	When they use high vocabulary or speak a weird accent	I don't like when I see that they don't understand me	In presentations in class.	In some conversations, I do not feel comfortable because I do not understand	Some native speakers make fun of me when I speak, and they do not correct me.	Over the phone with elderly people, many of them have hearing problems

This table illustrates the cultural diversity of the participants and the different ways in which they perceive their accents in English, how tied they are to their backgrounds and how they are reflected on the way they speak English. Summarizing the information provided, to describe accents, we can find adjectives like weird, Hispanic, hesitant, strong, foreigner and funny; but on the other hand, adjectives like fluent enough and satisfied were also found. Six of out eight used negative adjectives to refer to their accents and the other two employed positive ones.

In the case of social identity (what the way I speak says about me), most of the participants coincided with the words "culture" and "background" and without any doubt, their linguistic roots are reflected in the way they speak, of course, they have said that they would like to change their accents in English but, so deep inside, they are very tied to their heritage and it is going to be difficult that they leave aside what runs through their veins. Going back to the point of changing accents in English, some of the reasons they manifested for doing so were: be understood, sound professional and being more fluent; while some reasons for not to change their accents in English were basically because they feel comfortable and they are fluent speaking as they do.

On the other hand, participants feel uncomfortable speaking with native speakers of English in some situations. For instance, when they ask to repeat what they said because did not get it, when saying a high vocabulary or speaking a weird accent, when they make fun of my accent and when speaking on the phone and the other person cannot understand what you are saying. All these situations might turn out to be frustrating for most of them, however, they insisted that it has been quite challenging to adjust to the new speech community, coexisting with some ideologies that they must follow in order to be socially accepted.

V. Conclusions

• First, the majority of the participants have a negative perception of their accents in English, however, even though they do not sound like a Native American English speaker, they affirmed to feel comfortable speaking as they do and only would change their accents to sound more professional or to find good job opportunities. • Second, cultural background is an important aspect to understand the linguistic features of someone's speech, if a person learns English and is able to communicate, probably he may become an optimal user of the language but, he will sound different from the rest of people due to his phonological apparatus and because it is his second language and he might not be used to interact all the time by using the target language (English). • Third, there are some struggles between the ones who would like to change their accents in English and the ones who feel comfortable with the way they speak the language; in this sense, each human being has the freedom to decide what he wants to do, and it is going to depend on each one's perspective if they strive for changing their accent or if they keep speaking as they do. • Fourth, some limitations were found in the making process, I wish I had had a bigger sample in order to increase the credibility of the data collected and the results, because of the time, I could not enlarge the number of participants for conducting the present research. • Finally, this research seeks to encourage the conduction of future studies on this interesting topic, exploring the nature of accents is a fascinating field that deserves to devote time to analyze it, contextualize it and understand it, this is a good start and without any doubt, it could feed my curiosity on this matter.

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3RT Executive Board Elections

Consider taking a leadership role in the field! Three Rivers TESOL serves the Central and Western Pennsylvania area and is an affiliate of International TESOL. The organization's goals include stimulating professional development in the areas, encouraging and improving the teaching of ESL in the areas, establishing national contacts through affiliation with TESOL and providing an opportunity for group study/discussion of problems. The Three Rivers TESOL Executive Board is comprised of volunteers, typically those serving the ESL/EFL community, filling the following offices:

2019-2020	Commitment	2020-2021
President Soyoung Burke	1 yr. (not typically elected; filled by rising Vice President) president@threeriverstesol.org	Kathy Lipecky
Vice President Kathy Lipecky	**1 yr. initially (followed by year-long commitments as President and Past President)** vp@threeriverstesol.org	
Past President Suzanne Meyer	1 yr. (not elected; filled by exiting President) pastpres@threeriverstesol.org	Soyoung Burke
Secretary Megan Evangeliste	2 yr. secretary@threeriverstesol.org	Megan Evangeliste
Treasurer Michael Burke	2 yr. treasurer@threeriverstesol.org	Michael Burke
Webmaster Megan Reiley	2 yr. webmaster@threeriverstesol.org	Megan Reiley

Elections will be held in March – April 2020 for the **Vice President** position. According to the 3RT Constitution, the position must be included in the election for an official assignment of a two-year term. **If you are interested in running for a position, feel free to contact the current board members with your questions at the addresses included above.**