Teaching English Rhythm: The Importance of Rhythm and Strategies to Effectively Incorporate Rhythm Practice within Content Lessons

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TEACHING ENGLISH RHYTHM:
THE IMPORTANCE OF RHYTHM AND STRATEGIES TO EFFECTIVELY INCORPORATE RHYTHM PRACTICE WITHIN CONTENT LESSONS

by

Angela L. Reinard Haasch

A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements For the degree of Master of Arts in English as a Second Language

Hamline University
Saint Paul, Minnesota
December, 2016

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To my daughter, Hazel Jane, for always being such a positive light. You took your first steps and lost your first tooth, supporting Mama and her “homework” all the while. For my son, Milo Stephen, for always being the most excited when I come back home. May you both remember every day and every place can be a “nature walk”; there are limitless things to learn and explore! I love you two to the moon and all the big numbers.

And to my husband, Ryan, for always striving for positivity. Your conviction has allowed us to persevere during our era of graduate work. Thank you for supporting my ambitions, caring for our family, and for recording all the firsts.
Ordinary people who know nothing of phonetics or elocution have difficulties in understanding slow speech composed of perfect sounds, while they have no difficulty in comprehending an imperfect gabble if only the accent and rhythm are natural.

— Alexander Graham Bell

The trick to speaking English with clarity and impact is understanding the melody and rhythm that is specific to English, but differs in other languages. Therefore, without the music of the English language, pronunciation is a mistake.

-- Erin Corrigan, Pronunciation Specialist
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

It is not a rare instance that an English learner (EL) attempts an utterance only to be asked to repeat it. Many of my adult students have admitted frustration due to this. Some have described times when the native speaker (NS) listener eventually gave up and walked away, unable to understand the EL. This breakdown in communication leaves ELs to fend for themselves without the answers they originally sought, or disheartened, unable to establish a human connection with the listener. “Intelligible pronunciation is vital to successful communication” (Levis & Grant, 2003, p. 13), so when communication is unsuccessful, many ELs blame this unintelligible communication simply on their "accent". However, when they speak to someone like me, a sympathetic listener familiar with the various accents of their first languages (L1s), I am not thrown off by accent; however, I often encounter a different phenomenon leading to a breakdown in communication. A student will speak, and at first, it sounds incomprehensible. I hear the utterance, but before registering its meaning, I must go through a mental process. I pause, replay it in my mind's eye, decipher the syllables I heard, recognize the error in stress placement, and then repeat the utterance with correct stress placement. Without a trained ear, a layperson may not employ the skills necessary for this mental processing of stress errors, thus a breakdown in communication ensues. Furthermore, research shows
such errors might affect successful communication more than errors in individual consonant or vowel sounds (Munro & Derwing, 1999).

According to Munro and Derwing (1999), heavily accented speech may sometimes be intelligible, while suprasegmental errors (stress, intonation, and rhythm) may have more of an effect on intelligibility than segmental errors (phonetic errors). For example, if a speaker were to say begetables instead of the word vegetables, they have made a segmental error by mispronouncing /v/ as /b/. Compare this to an error in the word prefer. If a speaker were to say PREfer, instead of preFER, they have made a suprasegmental error by using incorrect syllable stress placement. Apply misplacement of stress on a larger scale and a speaker may be unintelligible. When the speaker fails to use correct placement of syllable and word stress in conjunction with accurate vowel reduction, thus not creating the expected rhythm of English, communication often breaks down. This chapter introduces the issues associated with understanding the importance of rhythm and the tools necessary to effectively teach rhythm in English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction thus ELs may improve intelligibility.

**English Rhythm**

Rhythm, in the English language, is closely tied to the way in which speakers place stress on syllables. In unstressed syllables, the vowels are reduced whereas in stressed syllables the vowels are longer and louder (Burns, Avery, & Ehrlich, 1992), as well as higher in pitch, although not all three characteristics are always present in any given stressed syllable (Celce-Murcia, Brinton & Goodwin, 2010). Stressed and unstressed syllables combine to create a regular, patterned beat similar to the rhythm of a
musical phrase. Rhythm makes up one of the key elements in English pronunciation (along with stress and intonation) that may increase (or decrease) the intelligibility of ELs’ speech (Avery, Ehrlich, & Jull, 1992). In fact, rhythm, specifically appropriately lengthening stressed syllables and shortening reduced syllables, is the most common pronunciation issue for ELs, according to Chela-Flores in her 1993 study on Spanish speakers learning English as a second language (as cited in Celce-Murcia et al., 2010).

While recent research supports the importance of teaching rhythm in an English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom (Morley, 1979; Avery & Ehrlich, 1992; Chela-Flores, 1993; Derwing & Munro, 2003; Levis & Grant, 2003; Fischler, 2005; Schaezler and Low, 2009; Celce-Murcia et al., 2010), it has not always been thought to hold such importance.

During the popularity of the grammar-translation method in the early part of the 20th century, pronunciation was rarely taught. While pronunciation was highlighted with the Audiolingual Method of the 40’s, 50’s, and 60’s, it was mostly drill and practice of pronunciation features or scripted conversations. Using language labs, the goal was perfect pronunciation (Fischler, 2005). According to Morley (1987), explicit attention to teaching pronunciation in ESL/EFL instruction began to fade in the late 1960’s. As those in the field of teaching English became dissatisfied with current approaches to pronunciation teaching, many programs eliminated pronunciation work altogether. Pedagogy shifted to focus on language functions and communicative competencies, where activities and materials were authentic. Pronunciation lost its appeal as it did not seem to fit the curriculum nor did the results seem worthwhile. It was at this time
mindsets began to change and there was a renewed interest in learning and teaching pronunciation.

By the mid-1980’s, there were only a handful of widely-circulated pronunciation pedagogy books: Bowen’s *Patterns of English Pronunciation*, (1975), Morley’s *Improving Spoken English*, (1979), Gilbert’s *Clear Speech*, (1984), and Prator and Robinett’s (4th edition) *Manual of American English Pronunciation*, (1985) (Morley, 1987). According to Naiman (1992), there was a shift from an emphasis on teaching segmentals (individual vowel and consonant sounds) to teaching suprasegmentals (stress, rhythm, and intonation). This shift is well documented in the 1987 TESOL publication *Current Perspectives on Pronunciation* (Morley et al., 1987). In her notes from the 19th Annual TESOL Convention in 1985, Morley (1987) noted the following themes from the presentations: 1) pronunciation within communication practice (not separately), 2) how suprasegmentals communicate meaning with segmentals receiving lesser importance, 3) the structure of syllables, linking, thought group chunking, and phrasal stress and rhythm, 4) a learner awareness of his or her speech and the ability to self-monitor, 5) speech activities that provide meaningful practice and authenticity, and 6) natural speech modeling, avoiding hypercorrected modeling or speaking like a foreigner. Moreover, as the trend shifted to emphasize suprasegmentals in the ESL classroom, teacher preparation would also need to change. Morley noted two needs regarding the preparation of ESL/EFL teachers: 1) a solid background in phonetics and phonology of the English language and how it is addressed in ESL/EFL instruction, and 2) methodologies for teaching pronunciation as communicative language.
Although the importance of teaching pronunciation, namely suprasegmental features taught in meaningful communication, was firmly supported in the late 1980’s and throughout the 1990’s, a gap continued to exist in the practice of pronunciation teaching in ESL instruction.

A study by Breitkreutz, Derwing, and Rossiter found 67% of ESL teachers had no formal preparation to teach pronunciation (as cited in Derwing & Munro, 2005). MacDonald (2002) revealed a lack of knowledge, skills and confidence as the bases of many teachers failing to teaching pronunciation (as cited in Derwing & Munro, 2005). In 2003, Levis and Grant described the (then) current situation in classrooms as one in which teachers often began with speaking practice with little structure before moving to pronunciation. They believed teachers were addressing pronunciation unsystematically, often as corrective measures in response to prominent student errors. It was also believed that teachers lacked the knowledge on how to incorporate pronunciation teaching into a listening and speaking or all-skills course without taking up too much of the course, thus neglecting remaining objectives. Perhaps most surprising is that they believed the situation resembled the decade prior. In other words, little had changed from the 1990’s to the 2000’s.

More recently, research suggests teachers are continuing to be inadequately trained in pronunciation pedagogy. In a survey by Derwing, Diepenbroek, and Foote (2012), it was found only 20% of the participants had taken a course devoted to teaching pronunciation, as opposed to a linguistics course or simply a unit within a general ESL pedagogy class. The lack of instruction seemed to have a direct effect as teachers
reported spending less than 5% of instruction time on pronunciation (some as little as 1%). Furthermore, 75% of teachers surveyed indicated a desire for more pronunciation training, suggesting they were not receiving sufficient professional development to feel entirely comfortable teaching pronunciation.

In her study on teachers’ beliefs and practices, Baker (2011) found that those without pronunciation pedagogy as part a teacher preparation program taught no suprasegmental features, but focused solely on segmental features. In addition, Baker found all teachers, including those who had completed a course on pronunciation pedagogy, felt they struggled with teaching pronunciation, namely, how to put theory into practice. She described this theme as an “undercurrent of uncertainty or perhaps even lack of confidence” in that they were aware that suprasegmental features were important but needed more learning on how to teach them (Baker, 2011, p. 284). They expressed a desire to learn more (readings, professional development [PD], colloquium) to systematically teach suprasegmental features within content lesson plans.

While the importance of teaching suprasegmental features, such as rhythm, in an ESL classroom has been highlighted for decades, it seems there continues to be a lack of explicit pronunciation teaching and possibly an insufficient amount of continuing education. A number of factors may be inhibiting the actualization of teaching pronunciation in the ESL classroom.

My Experience with Obstacles to Teaching Rhythm

The reason for the gap of explicit pronunciation instruction, namely suprasegmental features, may be multi-faceted. In some cases, teachers may find it
difficult to fit pronunciation into given time constraints while maintaining course objectives. Others may have limited knowledge about suprasegmental features and how to incorporate them into ESL curriculum. Some teachers may not have had extensive education surrounding pronunciation pedagogy in their ESL licensure program. Some may have feelings of inadequacy and avoid pronunciation altogether. Finally, for those who desire more training in the area of pronunciation, perhaps a lack of PD exists.

In my experience, I had not decidedly excluded teaching rhythm, but reading and writing happened to take precedence over listening and speaking altogether. During my time teaching at the secondary level in a metropolitan area in the Midwest, I attempted to focus instruction on all four modalities: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. However, I never had enough class instruction time. While reflecting, I noticed a pattern; listening and speaking skills were rarely the objectives of my lessons. Graduation standards included the passing of standardized tests in the areas of reading, writing, and math. Many ESL students were forced to retest repeatedly due to failure, sometimes multiple times each year over several years. The reading test proved to be the most difficult. On a few occasions, ELs did not graduate because they had not passed the reading test despite having earned all necessary graduation credits. I observed traits of low self-esteem and depression among students with multiple failures. This was disheartening for both me as the teacher and for the student.

As a result, teaching pronunciation took a backseat to the modalities of reading and writing. I believe the lack of speaking instruction was a grave disservice to my students. Practicing pronunciation, namely rhythm, may have benefited them both in
navigating daily life in American society, as well as embarking on their careers as young adults. Morley (1999) asserts the severe errors in pronunciation may negatively affect ELs’ education, occupations, professions, and functioning in society.

I have since had the opportunity to teach Listening and Speaking classes for over three years at an Adult Education (AE) program for a large metropolitan school district in the Midwest and am now teaching an ESL general-skills class, level four. Because the objectives of my class were limited to the modalities of listening and speaking, and I did not have the added pressure of preparing students to meet graduation standards in reading and writing, I was able to focus on teaching pronunciation.

I believe a major obstacle to teaching suprasegmental features is a lack of teacher training. In the past, I have attempted to discuss pronunciation with colleagues, noticing that many will entertain the discussion briefly and attempt to change the subject. When they do add to the discussion, I find they are teaching segmental features of pronunciation and some teach aspects of intonation. Rarely do I hear about instruction of stress or rhythm or any indication of knowledge about stress-timed versus syllable-timed languages. Mostly, I notice many teachers do not believe they are knowledgeable in the area of pronunciation; they are insecure in their abilities to discuss the topic, and thus lack the tools to effectively instruct their students on how to improve rhythm in English. Research on teachers’ perceptions of teaching pronunciation has found similar results. In her study, Baker (2014) found teachers may feel they lack expertise in the area; they feel insecure in their abilities to analyze student speech problems, as well as provide strong instruction and a variety of techniques to help students to improve.
Another possible obstacle may be a teacher’s feelings of inadequacy to teach suprasegmental features of pronunciation. Baker’s (2011) interview study revealed that when teachers had a pronunciation pedagogy course as part of their ESL program, they prioritized suprasegmental features in their pronunciation lessons. Even then, however, they felt they lacked confidence to teach some features. In my experience, I had minimal pronunciation instruction before taking a pronunciation course. At the time I received a State of Minnesota K-12 ESL teaching license, I had studied only phonemic sounds and placement. Four years later, I took Phonetics and Phonology, one of the final courses of my Master of Arts in ESL degree. The amount of information that was completely new to me was staggering. I believe all licensed ESL teachers should be required to complete a pronunciation pedagogy course such as this. Imagine the numbers of ESL teachers who are practicing without this information; lacking the expertise and skills to teach pronunciation is a great disservice to ELs. Furthermore, although I learned a tremendous amount regarding features of pronunciation and pronunciation pedagogy, I had little opportunity to practice implementing techniques. Since then, I have continued to learn more about pronunciation instruction and strategies; however, I believe teaching speaking and listening focused classes has forced me to hone my skills in these areas. This may have not been the case had I been teaching ESL content classes, such as ESL levels 1-5, which focus on four modalities of language: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Assuming other institutions are also unable to emphasize this vital aspect of language learning within their ESL Education licensing programs, I believe there exists a grave need for further teacher training.
Finally, I have observed a lack of professional development in the area of teaching pronunciation in ESL. I have attended state and regional conferences multiple times, and have noticed very few, if any, sessions on pronunciation. Furthermore, in twelve years of teaching in settings with ELs present, I have not seen one in-house offering.

Multiple factors may be contributing to the lack of teaching suprasegmental features, such as teachers lacking the knowledge and skills necessary to plan and instruct lessons in and ESL classroom. Perhaps their licensure programs did not include a course on phonetics and phonology and perhaps there are few opportunities for further PD. Whatever the case, suprasegmental features, such as rhythm, are an important aspect of an EL’s speech and should be taught in ESL lessons.

**Guiding Questions**

In order to overcome the above obstacles, ESL teachers need professional development in the area of pronunciation pedagogy, namely suprasegmental features, such as rhythm. They need to become knowledgeable about pronunciation instruction and to be equipped with strategies to explicitly focus on rhythm throughout content lessons. Content lessons refer to any lesson presented to ELs, including those found in ESL all-skills classes (i.e., ESL Level 5), ESL focus classes (i.e., ESL Writing, ESL Science), and co-taught classes (i.e., Social Studies). As part of this capstone, I will investigate research on rhythm, textbooks on teaching pronunciation, and existing curriculum designed to teach rhythm in ESL instruction. Based on the findings, I will attempt to delineate effective strategies that are easily applied to adult education (AE) ESL content
lessons. I will then create PD materials with which I will educate teachers in the future about rhythm and the recent literature pertinent to its importance, and I will provide strategies for effectively incorporating rhythm practice within content lessons. The core research question is *How can PD materials be developed to educate AE ESL teachers about English rhythm and to provide effective strategies to incorporate rhythm throughout content lessons?* The following questions guided my review of the literature:

What is English rhythm? How might it be different from the rhythm of ELs’ first languages (L1s)? How does English rhythm affect intelligibility and why is it important for ELs to master this skill? What are the barriers to teaching rhythm? Which strategies from curricula aimed at explicit rhythm teaching could be easily adapted and applied to existing content lessons? Which are the most effective strategies considering recent research? Once these questions are explored, I will use the discoveries to create materials for a PD session for AE ESL teachers that I will teach in the future.

**Chapter Overviews**

In Chapter One I introduced my research by briefly establishing the significance of suprasegmental features, such as rhythm, in ELs’ speech, as well as the possible obstacles to teaching rhythm. Finally, I highlighted an existing need for PD on pronunciation instruction for ESL teachers. In Chapter Two I provide a review of the literature relevant to English rhythm, obstacles to teaching rhythm, and existing strategies to teach rhythm that may be easily incorporated into content lessons. Chapter Three includes a description of the design and methodology that guide the creation of PD materials to educate teachers about pronunciation pedagogy surrounding rhythm.
Chapter Four presents the PD materials I have created. In Chapter Five I reflect on the process of designing the PD session and how the process relates to the literature review, I recommend modifications for implementation of the session, I discuss the limitations of my project, I explain the dissemination of the PD session, and finally, Chapter Five concludes with my personal reflection of my capstone work. It is my greatest hope that this Capstone may provide an effective PD session in which teachers are equipped with an understanding of English rhythm, empowered by the knowledge of its uniqueness and affect on intelligibility, and prepared with effective strategies to help their students vastly improve their pronunciation.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate the importance of teaching English rhythm in ESL instruction. The core research question is *How can PD materials be developed to educate AE ESL teachers about English rhythm and to provide effective strategies to incorporate rhythm throughout content lessons?* I will explore the research regarding pronunciation pedagogy, including the components involved in the teaching of rhythm, rhythm’s affect on intelligibility, and which barriers currently exist to teaching rhythm. After that, I will explore research regarding pronunciation implementation and existing strategies to teach rhythm. Finally, in the following chapters, I will create a professional development unit for AE ESL teachers in order to provide them with a firm knowledge base surrounding rhythm, as well as instructions on how they can apply strategies within their existing content lessons to improve the rhythm of their ELs’ speech.

What is Rhythm?

Rhythm is a complex feature of pronunciation. When considering the components that make up English rhythm, the definition can be very technical. Rhythm, in English, is comprised of stressed and unstressed syllables, the reduction of function words (Avery, Ehrlich & Jull, 1992), and features of connected speech (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). Connected speech, alone, is comprised of contractions, blends, and reductions, as well as
linking words and phrases, assimilation, dissimilation, deletion, and epenthesis (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). Rhythm patterns combine with stress patterns as well as features of connected speech to create the overall stress-timed pattern in English (more on this later). For the purpose of this project, I will be focusing on stressed syllables, unstressed syllables, the role of function and content words, and how they work in unison to give English its characteristic rhythm. My intent is to keep a narrowed focus on these features in order to be able to provide PD participants with a firm knowledge base on rhythm.

The ability to produce natural stress is an essential part of mastery of the English language. The rhythm of English depends greatly on systematic placement of stress in words and sentences. The vowels of stressed syllables tend to be longer, louder, and higher in pitch, although not all three characteristics are always present (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). Furthermore, according to Avery and Ehrlich, 1992a, “the most important marker of stress in North American English is length” (p. 106). The speaker must force out more air from the lungs to create a stressed utterance (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). In order to understand rhythm, one must be familiar with its components. In the following section, stress in English at the syllable and word levels will be addressed.

**Word Stress**

Word stress in English is very systematic. Factors that influence where stress is placed within a word may include a word’s origin, prefixes, suffixes, and the grammatical function (i.e., reflexives, numbers, compounds, and phrasal verbs) within an utterance (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). In this section, I will represent stress with bubbles: The
larger bubble represents strong stress; the smaller bubble represents light stress. The following two-syllable words each contain the same vowel used twice:

- garbage
- color
- palace

The first vowel in each word is longer, louder, and higher in pitch. This stressing of vowels creates a sound that is clear in sound, also known as a full vowel sound. In contrast, the second vowel in each word receives a lighter stress, called unstress; the sound is described as a reduced vowel sound (Burns, Avery, & Ehrlich, 1992). Stressed and unstressed syllables are both important components of English rhythm.

**Unstress**

When a vowel is produced in an unstressed syllable, the vowel is often “very short and unclear in English” (Avery & Ehrlich, 1992a, p. 106). An unstressed vowel is pronounced as schwa, or a reduced vowel, and the schwa is represented by the phonetic symbol /ə/ (Burns, Avery, & Ehrlich, 1992). Consider the word telephone. The vowels in the first and last syllables are pronounced as full vowels, /ɛ/ and /o/, respectively. The second syllable is unstressed and the vowel is pronounced as the reduced vowel /ə/.

The following word pairs depict a direct contrast of a full vowel and a reduced vowel in the first and second syllables:

- photograph
- photography
- drama
- dramatic
- democrat
- democracy
The word pairs demonstrate a pattern where the words on the left are stressed on the first syllable, while those on the right are stressed on the second syllable. Notice that the stressed vowels in the left column are full, yet the same (unstressed) vowels in the words in the right column are reduced to schwa (Burns, Avery, & Ehrlich, 1992, p. 65).

According to Avery & Ehrlich (1992a), “Many ESL students fail to differentiate sufficiently between stressed and unstressed vowels, producing full vowels in unstressed syllables” (p. 107). If an EL has not acquired this skill characteristic of English pronunciation, they may be pronouncing full vowels on each syllable. Because unstressed vowels take far less time to pronounce than stressed vowels, the speaker needs be able to produce unstressed vowels in order to retain English rhythm (Avery & Ehrlich, 1992a).

Levels of Stress

It is generally accepted that there are three levels of stress readily discernible to the ear: strong, medial, and weak (also called primary, secondary, and tertiary) (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). For this discussion, however, these levels will be described as strongly stressed, lightly stressed, and unstressed. Furthermore, they will be marked for comparison using large Os (strongly stressed), small os (lightly stressed), and periods (unstressed). Figure 1 illustrates examples of the three levels of word stress.
Each word contains one syllable with strong stress, one with less stress, and all others are unstressed, and are squeezed between stressed syllables.

Sentence Stress and Rhythm

Stressed and unstressed syllables may combine to produce word stress, as seen above, or they may combine to create sentence stress. Sentences stress refers to “the alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables” and how they “function within sentence-length utterances” (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010, p. 208). In English, there are many similarities in the patterns of word stress and sentence stress. Illustrating these similarities may be helpful for ELs. The examples in Figure 2 compare the rhythmic patterns of words and simple sentences.
When word and sentence stress combine, the pattern of spoken speech is referred to as rhythm. Rhythm is the “regular, patterned beat of stressed and unstressed syllables and pauses” (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010, p. 209). In other words, sentence stress refers to the stressed elements of a sentence, while rhythm refers to rhythmic pattern of stressed syllables, unstressed syllables, and pauses. It is much like a phrase in music. The rhythm moves from beat to beat, or stress to stress, and the unstressed syllables are squeezed between. No matter how many unstressed syllables there are, the regular, rhythmic beat is not interrupted (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). For this discussion, stressed elements will be
depicted using capital letters, whereas unstressed will be written in lowercase letters.

Figure 3 depicts these symbols.

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<td>The BIRDS</td>
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As can be seen, the regular beat of stressed syllables is maintained regardless of the number of unstressed elements that are added. The rhythm is upheld by the regularity of the stressed syllables. The rhythm of English, although similar to other world languages, may be different from many ELs L1s, depending on the stress-timed or syllable-timed nature of their L1 (Avery, Ehrlich & Jull, 1992), as discussed in the following section. In other words, teachers need to be aware of the rhythm of their students’ L1s and students need to be explicitly taught this feature of English pronunciation.

**Stress-timed vs. Syllable-timed Languages**

World languages fall into one of two categories: stress-timed or syllable-timed (Celce-Murcia et al, 2010). Understanding this distinction as a teacher is imperative in order to guide our students to achieve a regular rhythmic beat of English. In a stress-timed language, such as English, syllables are grouped into a metrical foot, consisting of one strong-stressed syllable and multiple lightly and unstressed syllables. Metrical feet are placed together, with strongly-stressed syllables occurring at regular intervals. This
sounds like DUM di-di / DUM di-di / DUM di-di / DUM. It is important to highlight the length of time it takes to produce an utterance to students. In a stress-timed language, such as English, the length of the utterance will depend on the number on stressed syllables (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). S. McCurdy asserts that although Celce-Murcia (2010) uses this example, it does not mean that English always stresses the first syllable of each thought group, or that all stressed elements have exactly the same number of unstressed elements between them. This clarification is helpful as oftentimes many people are confused by this particular example (personal communication, December 10, 2016). The fact that the number of stressed syllables affects the length of an utterance varies greatly from the nature of syllable-timed languages.

Syllable-timed languages have fairly equal stress placed on each syllable. Furthermore, in syllable-timed languages the phenomenon of vowel reduction does not exist since unstress is not a feature; therefore, the length of each syllable is equal (Schaetzel & Low, 2009). The length of an utterance in a syllable-timed language depends not on the number of stressed syllables, but rather on the number of syllables.

According to Avery, Ehrlich, and Jull (1992), “ESL students who speak a syllable-timed language will often assign equal weight to each syllable in English sentences, regardless of whether the syllable is stressed or unstressed. This may give their speech a staccato-like rhythm that can adversely affect the comprehensibility of their English” (p.74) English (along with German) has the largest differentiation between stressed and unstressed syllables. Figure 4 compares the more differentiated stress
patterns of English with the relatively unstressed pattern of Spanish and French (both syllable-timed languages).

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Understanding whether a student’s L1 is classifiable as stress timed or syllable timed will help a teacher to plan pronunciation lessons accordingly (Schaetzel & Low, 2009).

It should be noted that the notion of timing as a dichotomy (stressed-timed vs. syllable-timed) is not universally accepted. Traditionally, each language was thought to be classifiable either as a stress-timed language or a syllable-timed language (Schaetzel & Low, 2009); however, recent phonetic research (Low, 2006) states languages are not strictly syllable or stress timed, but rather classifiable on a continuum between the two categories. In other words, world languages are more accurately represented as having a tendency toward either stress timing or syllable timing. However, most researchers and practitioners support including the concept of English as a stress-timed language within pronunciation curriculum due to its strong stress-timing tendency (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010).
Content vs. Function Words

In order for students to be able to produce sentences with the correct stress-timed nature of English, they have to know which words are stressed and which are not. *Content words* “express independent meaning” (Avery, Ehrlich & Jull, 1992, p. 75) and are most often stressed. Content words include the following: nouns, main verbs, adverbs, adjectives, questions words (e.g., *what, when, who*), demonstratives (*this, that, these, those*). *Function words* have “little or no meaning in themselves, but […] express grammatical relationships” (Avery, Ehrlich & Jull, 1992, p. 75). Function words are most often unstressed in English rhythm and include the following: articles (*a, an, the*), prepositions (e.g., *for, on, in*), auxiliaries (e.g., *do, have, forms of the verb be*), pronouns, (e.g., *her, it, us*), conjunctions (e.g., *and, but, or, as*), relative pronouns (e.g., *that, who, which*) (Avery, Ehrlich & Jull, 1992). Students need to be aware of the difference in stress on content words and function words and have ample opportunity to practice this distinction.

Field (2005) refers to stressed and unstressed patterns as lexical stress. Researchers suggest teachers begin teaching lexical stress by making students aware of rules, specifically that approximately 90% of content words in speech are made up of only one syllable or begin with a stressed syllable (Cutler & Carter as cited in Field, 2005), and the other 10% are made up of words with prefixes or initial syllables that look similar to prefixes (Field, 2005). Learning these rules may help students to accurately place stress on content words.
The listener’s perspective

Because of the stress-timed nature of English, when a native speaker is listening to incoming speech, the way the brain processes stress placement is of importance (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). Gilbert (1984) found the following:

English speakers tend to store vocabulary according to stress patterns (Levelt, 1989, as found in Gilbert, 1984, p. 21). When the wrong pattern is heard, the listener may spend time searching stored words in the wrong category. By the time the listener realizes something is wrong, the original sequence of sounds may be forgotten. For this reason, a stress pattern mistake can cause great confusion, especially if it is accompanied by any other kind of error (Brown, 1977, as cited in Gilbert, 1984, p. 21).

In other words the native-English speaker is listening for common stress patterns, and if the speaker fails to produce this accurately, the listener may be confused, thus needing to ask the speaker to repeat. Celce-Murcia et al. (2010) further explains how in order to make sense of what one is saying, a listener pays close attention to stressed words and stores them in their short-term memory. The listener then identifies the pattern of the stressed syllables to help them process and interpret what they hear. When a speaker fails to produce stressed content words in contrast to unstressed function words, the message is not comprehended.

Field (2005) further supports the idea that lexical stress enables a listener to decode spoken streams of speech in terms of a “mental lexicon”. He suggests words with similar stress patterns are closely linked in the mind. Therefore, the stress patterns in our
The mental lexicon help a speaker to retrieve the word (Aitchison as cited in Field, 2005). This suggests that when ELs know word stress more accurately, it may not only help them to be understood more clearly, but it may also help them to recall vocabulary more readily.

Finally, it is advised to teach stress at the individual word level when introducing vocabulary words, and it is suggested all teachers, not exclusively ESL teachers, should do this (Field, 2005). The learner should then practice speaking new words with a focus on correct syllable stress. In this way, the learner begins to form “part of the access code by which the language user locates a word in his or her mental word store” (Field, 2005, p. 420). As ELs begin to recognize word stress patterns and create word stress stores, they may be able to recall vocabulary more easily and it may improve their overall intelligibility.

Regarding rhythm, specifically, Celce-Murcia et al. (2010) suggest incorrect rhythm patterns may not only cause the listener to become frustrated, but “that if the stress and rhythm patterns are too nonnativelike, the speakers who produce them may not be understood at all.” (p. 163). This is explained by the process listeners use to make sense of a spoken stream of speech. First, they hold stressed elements in their short-term memory as they are listening. Next, they identify common patterns and, finally, they create a plausible interpretation of what they heard. This is much like my personal account about my mental processes when interpreting ELs’ speech described in Chapter One. When a speaker fails to produce the accurate dynamics of stress and unstress, the listener has no noteworthy elements to hold in their short-term memory, thus they are
confused by the message in its entirety. In conclusion, rhythm can have a profound impact on an EL’s ability to be understood and the importance of this skill set cannot be ignored.

The Importance of Teaching Rhythm

Field (2005) states, “Arguably the most pressing issue in L2 pronunciation research today is the quest to identify the factors that most contribute to speaker intelligibility” (p. 399). He continues that traditionally intelligibility is the goal of pronunciation, yet ESL teachers aren’t knowledgeable about how to teach it.

Suprasegmentals and Intelligibility

According to McNerny and Mendelsohn (1992), “the traditional approach to teaching pronunciation gives priority to the wrong aspects of pronunciation [which] stems from a failure to grasp the importance of suprasegmentals” (p.185). Suprasegmentals play a critical role in communication and have the greatest impact on the intelligibility of ELs’ speech. While an EL may have perfectly intelligible phonemes (consonant and vowel sounds), as well as standard grammatical forms, a native speaker (NS) may have great difficulty understanding them if their suprasegmental features are askew (McNerny & Mendelsohn, 1992). Munro and Derwing (1999) support that suprasegmental errors, such as an error in stress, intonation or rhythm, seem to have more of an effect on intelligibility than segmental errors, or phonetic errors. They also found that even heavily accented speech can be intelligible, depending on the type of errors being produced.
It has been widely observed that suprasegmental features have a profound effect on the intelligibility of the speaker (McNerny & Mendelsohn, 1992; Derwing, Munro, & Wiebe, 1998; Derwing & Munro, 2008, Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). In a study consisting of two groups of ELs, the instruction of one group focused on suprasegmental features, or prosody, while the second focused on segmental features. Both learned successfully; however, the suprasegmental group received better comprehensibility ratings at the end of the study, while the segmental group had no improvement in comprehensibility ratings (Derwing, Munro, & Wiebe, 1998). In a similar study by Derwing and Rossiter (2003) of adult learners who were enrolled full-time in ESL at a local college in Canada, two groups participated in 12 weeks of instruction, one focused on suprasegmentals, the other on segmentals. A third group received no instruction as a control. Their speech was rated by six expert judges, comprised of ESL teachers who had extensive experience teaching learners from a wide variety of L1 backgrounds and proficiency levels. It was rated at the beginning and at the end for 1) amount of accent, 2) spoken comprehensibility, and 3) spoken fluency. The suprasegmental group improved in comprehensibility and fluency but not accent. The segmental group had fewer phonological errors in their post-instruction production, yet became slightly worse overall with suprasegmental features. The authors conclude that, although instruction on segmental features may still impact accent reduction in the long run, it is important to give priority to suprasegmental features in pronunciation instruction in the short run. Focusing instruction on suprasegmentals is more likely to result in better comprehensibility in a shorter amount of time. In another study by O’Brien (as cited in Schaetzel & Low, 2009), native German speakers rated
American university students reading aloud in German. It was reported that the native
speakers focused more on suprasegmental features (stress, intonation, and rhythm) than
on segmental features when rating native-like speech samples. Schaetzel & Low (2009)
assert the implications of this study suggest teachers should focus on suprasegmental
rules in addition to addressing common phonemic errors. These studies show ESL
instruction focused on suprasegmental features may greatly benefit the speech of ELs.

To give ELs the opportunity to improve their comprehensibility, teaching
suprasegmentals is of utmost importance in the ESL classroom. Regarding curriculum
design, McNerny and Mendelsohn (1992) assert that priority should be given to
suprasegmental features, especially in a short-term pronunciation course. ELs may
experience improvement in their comprehensibility. Moreover, they believe students may
experience less frustration, compared to a course focused on segmental features, because
“greater change can be effected in a short time” (p.186). An EL may experience listeners
successfully comprehending their speech more frequently and feel accomplished in their
learning.

The amount of instructional time devoted to pronunciation may be limited and an
instructor must be purposeful in allocating sufficient time to suprasegmentals. Derwing
and Munro (as cited in Derwing and Munro, 2009) assert, “If time is spent on something
that doesn’t affect intelligibility or comprehensibility (such as the infamous interdental
fricatives in English), something that really does matter will be neglected. Evidence is
accumulating that what’s important are the macroscopic things, including general
speaking habits, volume, stress, rhythm, syllable structure and segmentals with a high
functional load” (pp. 482-483). In other words, they believe there are specific features of pronunciation, including stress placement and rhythm, that have more effect on intelligibility than other less impactful features. While suprasegmentals are very important, segmentals should not be ignored (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). Finally, Derwing and Munro (2009) contend loss of intelligibility can have social cost. Although the speaker may have acquired adequate grammar skills and a good vocabulary, when they are not understood, they may experience frustration or embarrassment.

Rhythm and Intelligibility

Often, rules that govern an EL’s first language (L1), such as word stress patterns, can transfer to the second language (L2) (Gilbert, 1984). For example, a native-Arabic speaker might tend to stress the first part of two-syllable words. In another example, a native-Spanish speaker may not distinguish between stressed or unstressed syllables, thus he/she may find it difficult to recognize or produce the difference in English expressions like:

- the black bird
- the blackbird
- the green house
- the greenhouse

Spanish speakers often struggle to produce the distinction of variable stress (Swan & Smith, 2001). Furthermore, a native-Spanish speaker may produce an English sentence with even stress and rhythm, thus the acoustic clues (stress on content words, unstress on function words) are missing and the listener may find it difficult to decode the structure. For example, in Ann is older than Joe, is and than may be as prominent as old (Swan & Smith, 2001). Frequently, incorrect stress placement affects the intelligibility of the speaker.
In a study by Field (2005), trained listeners were asked to transcribe recorded materials when variables of word stress and vowel quality were manipulated. He found that misplaced word stress, specifically when word stress is shifted to an unstressed syllable of a content word, had a much greater effect on intelligibility than vowel quality. The findings were true of both native and nonnative English-speaking listeners. Furthermore, Grosjean & Gee (as cited in Field, 2005) assert the weak quality of function words, which were not part of Field’s study, “provide(s) an important cue that distinguishes them from content words and thus contributes importantly to the intelligibility of longer stretches of speech” (p. 420). In light of these findings, ESL instruction that emphasizes accurate syllable stress placement in content words in conjunction with accurate unstress of function words may directly benefit ELs’ intelligibility.

In a study of Spanish speakers learning English, Chela-Flores (as cited in Celce-Murcia, 2010) claims that “rhythm, in particular the appropriate lengthening of stressed syllables and shortening of reduced syllables in English, is the most widely experienced pronunciation challenge for speakers of other languages” (p. 30). In her study she found her ELs improved their rhythm by, first, focusing on rhythmic patterns of lexical items or phrases, then by matching such patterns to the items or phrases, and finally by applying the patterns to words, phrases, and sentences. She added that the students would need extended practice in order to automatize the new rhythmic patterns (Chela-Flores, 1993). In light of this, it seems learners may benefit from both explicit focus on the rules of
English stress patterns, as well as sufficient opportunity to practice the patterns while speaking.

Todaka (1990) found that accurate rhythm can affect accurate intonation. In this study, Todaka compared intonation contours of a typical utterance in North American English (NAE) and Japanese and then measured the intonation of 20 Japanese speakers. The researcher found the Japanese speakers tended to transfer their L1 intonation patterns to English, specifically using too small of a pitch range and by failing to sufficiently stress and lengthen stressed syllables that carried pitch changes. This difference can be seen as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{NAE speaker} & \quad \hbar{\text{O}} \quad . \quad . \\
\text{Japanese speaker} & \quad . \quad . \quad \ldots
\end{align*}
\]

This is a book.

(Celce-Murcia et al., 2010, p. 30)

The results suggest that the speakers’ intonation was askew due inaccurate stressing and lengthening of syllables. In sum, rhythm affects intelligibility in ways more than simply the musical beat itself; accurate intonation is also dependent on accurate rhythm.

Research on Teaching Rhythm in ESL

Because research shifted from focusing exclusively on segmentals to include suprasegmentals, teaching trends have followed suit. At the end of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, teaching pronunciation began to evolve from practicing isolated sounds or stress and intonation patterns to teaching these sounds and patterns in a wider context (Naiman,
1992). This evolution highlights the way in which English pronunciation is “inextricably linked to meaning at the discourse level and must be presented to students in that way and practiced accordingly (Naiman, 1992, p.163). That is to say speaking practice needs to move away from “isolated sounds or stress and intonation patterns without regard for the wider context in which these sounds and patterns occur” (Naiman, 1992, p. 163). The shift in emphasis must move beyond the teaching of segmentals at the individual sound and word level to the teaching of suprasegmentals including stress, rhythm, and intonation. One decade since Naiman’s ideas, researchers reported students continued to receive inadequate pronunciation instruction. The results of a survey of 100 adult intermediate ESL learners showed only eight received any pronunciation instruction, regardless of the fact they had been enrolled in ESL programs for extended periods of time (Derwing and Rossiter as cited in Derwing & Munro, 2005). Furthermore, Schaetzel and Low (2009) state, “Teachers need to spend time teaching learners the rules for word stress, intonation, and rhythm in English, as well as focusing on individual sounds that may be difficult for the learners in their classes: (p. 2). It seems a deficit continues to exist in the area of explicit pronunciation teaching.

In an extensive study on teacher practices surrounding pronunciation pedagogy, Foote, Holtby, and Derwing (2011) attest this area of ESL is making few gains. The survey was completed using an online Web tool, SurveyMonkey, by 159 teachers of adult ESL. When asked about their colleagues, the findings revealed less than half (46%) of the respondents believed instructors at their institution were incorporating pronunciation into their regular classes. A third (36%) of the respondents were not sure what their
colleagues were teaching in regards to pronunciation, and 18% believed their colleagues did not teach pronunciation. Very few believed their colleagues were teaching pronunciation; these findings did not match reports about their own practices. When asked about their own general ESL classes, 86% said they regularly incorporated pronunciation, and 73% reported regularly correcting mispronunciations. However, the findings did not reveal what type of pronunciation was being taught nor exactly how much of the class time was devoted to pronunciation.

Next, a subset of this surveyed group (N = 99) was then used to determine how much time each of the teachers spent on pronunciation each week. The results showed on average teachers spent less than one hour on pronunciation instruction per week, which was a mean of about 6% of their weekly class time. Furthermore, “many teachers reported spending less than 5% of their class time on pronunciation; in fact some teachers spent as little as 1%” (Foote, Holtby, & Derwing, 2011, p. 18). As can be seen, the survey revealed very little time was spent teaching pronunciation.

The survey by Foote, Holtby, and Derwing (2011) then examined how much of the time spent teaching pronunciation in the ESL classroom was focused on teaching suprasegmental features. It is important to keep in mind that according to the results above, the average teacher spent only 6% on teaching pronunciation. Of the instruction time spent on pronunciation, the survey showed 32% of instructors spend less than a third on prosody, 26% spent between 40% and 60%, 33% spent between 70% and 90%, and 9% reported spending all their pronunciation instruction time on suprasegmental features.
Despite research supporting communicative pronunciation teaching of suprasegmentals, it seems teachers continue to struggle to realize this trend.

These findings (Naiman, 1992, Derwing & Munro, 2005, Schaetzel & Low, 2009, Foote, Holtby, & Derwing, 2011) match that of my own observations. As previously mentioned, many ESL teachers with whom I have come into contact seemed to lack confidence in the area of teaching pronunciation, specifically suprasegmental features, so much so that they would shy away from discussions surrounding the topic. I suspect the majority of teachers from my institution are teaching some aspects of segmental features; however, I believe they are not teaching suprasegmental features at all, and if any, they may have touched on word stress and/or intonation in their pronunciation instruction.

**Barriers to Successful Teaching Rhythm in ESL**

In attempting to fully understand why teachers fail to teach ELs critical features of pronunciation, it seems three common themes arise: a lack of teacher preparation, difficulty prioritizing pronunciation in course planning, and an inadequacy of existing curriculum.

**A lack of teacher preparation.** Teachers may have a feeling of inadequacy when it comes to teaching pronunciation. Derwing and Munro (2009) believe issues with intelligibility can be solved simply with basic pronunciation instruction incorporated into general ESL curriculum. They describe the pronunciation needs of ELs as being “nothing special, mysterious, or medical” (p. 483). Unfortunately, many teachers have had no training in pronunciation pedagogy (Levis, 2005; Munro & Derwing, 2005, Foote, Holtby, & Derwing, 2011) and as a result may be afraid to teach it.
Murphy conducted a study on the MATESOL programs found in the TESOL directory and found that nearly half of the programs did not offer a phonology course (as cited in Munro & Derwing, 2008). Derwing and Munro (2005) believe pronunciation’s marginalized status in history may be to blame for many ESL teachers lacking adequate preparation to teach pronunciation. Naiman (1992) depicts this situation well as he describes ESL teachers during his eight years of teaching at the community college level:

Many teachers felt that they did not have enough training or expertise to teach pronunciation, so they felt it was safer not to do it. Other teachers believed they really didn’t have an ‘ear’ for pronunciation so they felt they really wouldn’t be helping their students if they taught pronunciation. Many colleagues were conscious of their poor understanding of the technical aspects of the sound system of English and therefore felt extremely uncomfortable teaching pronunciation. As a result, it was often left to the end or totally neglected. (p. 164)

Teachers are keenly aware of their lack of pronunciation pedagogy training. They often have feelings of inadequacy about how to clearly explain the content, have a limited knowledge base of effective activities to provide their students with ample practice, and are unsure about how to incorporate it within ESL curriculum. Derwing and Munro (2009) state there is a need for more teacher training because “very few programs offer courses in how to teach pronunciation” (p. 187). They continue that without adequate preparation, teachers will continue to neglect to teach pronunciation altogether.

In the aforementioned study by Foote, Holtby, and Derwing (2011), survey results found many instructors lacked confidence in their abilities to teach pronunciation. In fact,
only 58% felt completely confident in teaching segmental features, and even fewer (56%) were comfortable with suprasegmental features. When asked about a desire for more training in pronunciation teaching, 75% agreed.

According to Baker (2014), teachers need a firm knowledge base in order to provide clear explanations of English pronunciation. Furthermore, the teacher needs to have an understanding of effective techniques, how to implement them in ESL instruction, and the effect they may have on learner pronunciation development. Baker describes the current situation as follows: “Relatively few teacher education programs provide courses on how to teach L2 pronunciation. Research has shown that many L2 teachers have received only limited training in phonetics or pronunciation pedagogy (Breitkreutz, Derwing, & Rossiter, 2001; Derwing, 2010; Derwing & Munro, 2005; Murphy, 1997; Saito & van Poeteren, 2012)” (Baker, 2014, p. 139). In her extensive study on teacher practices, Baker (2014) found teachers’ pronunciation pedagogy preparation ranged from having taken a course devoted to pronunciation, to a combined focus on speaking, listening, and pronunciation, to having no relevant coursework. Baker’s (2011) interview study found that teachers who had taken a pronunciation course as a requirement for their ESL licensure program reported placing priority on teaching suprasegmental features of pronunciation in their classes. However, these teachers still lacked confidence in teaching some areas of pronunciation.

The results from Foote, Holtby, and Derwing’s (2011) study revealed 59% of ESL instructors had received special training in pronunciation as part of a general ESL or linguistics course, 52% had taken a linguistics course (e.g., phonetics or phonology), yet
only 20% had taken a course specifically focused on ESL pronunciation instruction at a university. Foote, Holtby, and Derwing (2011) then recommend:

Given that only 20% of the respondents reported taking an entire course specifically focused on teaching pronunciation, as opposed to a linguistics course or a unit within a general TESL course, more TESL programs should offer pedagogical courses on the teaching of pronunciation (p. 18).

It seems the pedagogical content and opportunities for application are insufficient in general ESL courses, linguistic courses, or those such as phonetics or phonology. Requiring a pronunciation pedagogy course as part of ESL programs may help teachers to feel more confident in their abilities to teach pronunciation.

On another note, the survey results showed 66% of ESL instructors had received intermittent pronunciation PD at a conference or workshop (Foote, Holtby, & Derwing, 2011) leaving 34% without PD. Despite over half receiving PD on pronunciation pedagogy, it is reported, “instructors are still not receiving the PD they need to feel completely comfortable teaching pronunciation (p. 16). One respondent states, “Very little is being done in this area. I often look for pronunciation workshops but don’t find them” (p. 16). Another admitted, “Too many teachers avoid teaching pronunciation because they lack confidence in their own ability to succeed with it” (p. 16). Overall 75% of respondents specified that they needed more pronunciation training. These findings closely match my suspicions I have had working in my various ESL programs; I believe teachers were not comfortable teaching pronunciation and, therefore, avoided it altogether.
The same study found that while 80% of respondents reported having access to conference presentations, few had access to in-house trainings (Foote, Holtby, & Derwing, 2011). This fact does not align with my observations as I have seen very few opportunities for PD on pronunciation pedagogy in my region, conference presentations and in-house trainings alike. One possibility for this disparity may be due to the fact that the survey respondents were Canadian ESL instructors.

I believe teachers need further PD training with ample opportunity for application in order to build the confidence necessary to teach pronunciation, including some of the less familiar aspects, such as word stress, sentence stress, and rhythm. This idea is further supported by the results of Baker’s (2011) survey. She found that when instructors were able to attend workshops or presentations, although they found the session to be valuable, they had difficulty transforming theory into classroom application. One such teacher states, “I haven’t found that many things that I can take back and change my practice . . . I listened to [the conference presenter] and loved it, but I don’t know what to do with it” (p. 275.) It seems there may be a missing link between pronunciation pedagogy content and application.

Teacher preparation and quality of instruction. Baker’s study (2014) gave rise to another aspect of pronunciation pedagogy important to the ESL classroom. She found that a lack of teacher preparation also had an effect on the quality of instruction. She observed the types of techniques used by teachers; the categories consisted of controlled, guided, and free techniques. Controlled techniques meant the communication was highly structured, the teacher maintained control, and the student responses were predicted (i.e.,
repetition drills and minimal pair activities). Guided techniques were semicontrolled, and responses could be open-ended and unpredictable answers or they might be exercises that resemble communication outside of the classroom (e.g., interviews, group discussions, information gap activities, or preparation for presentations). Free techniques meant the student had more control and the activity was open-ended or often collaborative with other students. According to Brown (as cited in Baker, 2014), free techniques may involve negotiation, unpredicted responses, or communicative performance in real life situations (e.g., acting, role-play, presentation). The use of guided and free techniques, as opposed to more controlled techniques, can positively impact the acquisition of linguistic feature for ELs (Baker, 2014); however, the results of this study showed teachers mostly used controlled techniques (60%), while use of guided (24%) and free (16%) were more limited (Baker, 2014). The data also revealed a great deal about the pedagogical content knowledge of the teachers. The teachers who had been prepared with a graduate course devoted entirely to phonology used a much wider repertoire of techniques than the other teachers, who either had no pronunciation pedagogy coursework or a combined focus course. These findings suggest “in-depth training in pronunciation pedagogy has a direct and positive impact on teachers’ knowledge base of techniques for use in the classroom” (Baker, 2014, p. 148). She believes the dominance of controlled techniques is not surprising since for decades pronunciation pedagogy consisted of imitative-intuitive and analytic-linguistic approaches, consisting of controlled techniques. While research supports the notion that controlled techniques can have a positive impact on EL’s intelligibility (Couper, 2003; Derwing et al. as cited in Baker, 2014), “the less frequent
use of guided or free techniques may limit the potential development of comprehensible learner pronunciation in authentic conversations” (Baker, 2014, p. 153). According to Saito and Lyster (2012), communicative activities may have a greater impact on the learner retention and automaticity of a pronunciation feature. Furthermore, Baker (2014) found that guided techniques were used least frequently even among those with phonology coursework and that further development on a knowledge base of these techniques and how to effectively incorporate into lessons may be needed.

Though we can assume pronunciation instruction needs to be incorporated within communicative activities, it seems teachers continue to have little direction about how to do this (Morley, 1991). Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin (as cited in Levis & Grant, 2003), believe experienced teachers find difficulty getting their students to produce new pronunciation in meaningful communication, as opposed to when it is the focus of a controlled activity. One teacher from the Baker (2014) study reported using the same few techniques repeatedly in the little time she planned for pronunciation instruction. She believed her lack of education was the reason for her limited variety of techniques.

Also noteworthy is the fact that the teachers with more advanced training also made use of “kinesthetic/tactile production techniques”, such as moving the body (standing/sitting), clapping, tapping a rhythm on the desk, or using kazoos or rubber bands (Baker, 2014, p. 148).

**Difficulty prioritizing pronunciation in course planning**

Another theme that arises as a barrier to teaching suprasegmental features of pronunciation, such as rhythm, is a difficulty prioritizing pronunciation in course planning...
planning. Although approaches have supported the incorporation of pronunciation lessons into ESL curriculum for many years, teachers have little idea just how to do this (Levis & Grant, 2003). In a pronunciation course, for example, teachers may apply pronunciation lessons by beginning with controlled practice and moving to less structured, communicative practice. Teachers often spend too much time on controlled or guided activities and inadequate time is given to communicative practice. In this case, speaking practice may lack pronunciation focus or be completely ignored (Levis & Grant, 2003). In classes devoted to speaking or oral communication, curriculum may move in the opposite direction, beginning with less structured practice and moving to more focus on pronunciation. However, this often leads to pronunciation being addressed as a corrective measure to prominent pronunciation errors, thus it is applied unsystematically. In both cases, students do not receive a full range of practice to effectively improve their pronunciation and oral communication. Levis and Grant (2003) believe that both cases, the former lacking communicative practice of the target feature and the latter lacking systematic and sustained focus on instruction, are due to teachers’ need for clear direction as to how to effectively incorporate pronunciation into ESL curriculum, whether a listening and speaking or all-skills class, so that they may accomplish the communicative goals of the course.

One obstacle to successfully teaching pronunciation is how to design a course that prioritizes suprasegmental features within the time allotted for pronunciation. In her study, Baker (2011) found a number of teachers had significant difficulty applying research on suprasegmentals to their classroom instruction. They felt the research made
them aware of the importance of teaching such features, but they lacked systematic
information on precisely what to teach and how to teach it given time constraints. Most
instructors involved in this study believed suprasegmentals should be prioritized.
However, one teacher struggled with how to teach a suprasegmental feature as part of a
whole lesson, or, furthermore, how to do this without having to devote a whole lesson to
it. He states, “Get them aware of a [suprasegmental feature] if you have time for it. It’s
very difficult to have time to do a whole lesson. It’ll take a whole period. Who has that?”
(Baker, 2011, p. 283). Although he strongly believes suprasegmentals should be given
increased attention, it seems he has other topics that are actually taking priority, thus
making it difficult for him to devote whole periods to the topics. He continues, “...-
translating what [graduate course instructors] are doing into what can I do in the
classroom in a limited amount of time, that would be really useful. If you’ll give me
something I can do as a teacher is basically [what he needs], ‘cause the theory is
fascinating, but it’s hard to get to do it in the classroom” (Baker, 2011, p. 283). This
closely matches the difficulties of my own experience; the pressure to focus on other
areas, such as reading and writing in order for students to pass state exams, took
precedence over important features of pronunciation. And when what little class time was
devoted to pronunciation, it was unsystematic and not sustained. Therefore, students had
little opportunity to practice suprasegmental features and most likely were unable to
reach mastery.

When discussing prioritizing topics within a course, it is imperative to examine
the source that guides teachers’ lesson plan decisions, the state standards. Levis argued
that “although pronunciation is part of the curriculum [...]”, it is often not included in state language proficiency standards or addressed systematically in instruction (as cited in Schaetzel & Low, 2009, p. 1).

Adult education standards used at a given program may be comprised of several sources and may vary from state to state. In 2013, Adult Basic Education (ABE) adopted the first set of nation-wide standards: the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS). In 2016, these standards were updated to include the English Language Proficiency Standards for Adult Education. The new section includes 10 standards to ensure adult ELs may receive focused and effective instruction to meet states’ content standards for college and career readiness. Standard Nine states, “An English Language Learner can create clear and coherent level-appropriate speech and text” (American Institutes for Research, 2016, p. 29). Although the descriptors for each level of the rubric (levels 1-5) are aimed at recounting events in a sequence, using linking words, and providing a conclusion, it has no focus specifically on pronunciation.

Minnesota has created Academic, College, and Employability Skills (ACES) as a way for ABE teachers to break down skills to what they can do in the classroom. There are eight categories, one of which that focuses on Effective Communication (EC). Pronunciation learning targets are not included for effective communication (ABE Teaching & Learning Advancement System, 2016).

**Inadequate pronunciation curriculum**

As described in the aforementioned study by Baker (2011), many ESL teachers struggled to effectively teach some features of pronunciation due to time restrictions.
However, curriculum constraints were also reported as a cause of this difficulty. The resources they had access to included pronunciation techniques and materials, as well as activity books and textbooks, yet the resources lacked instruction on how to teach the features within lesson plans. In addition to specialized discussion groups and conference sessions, some participants of the study believed teacher knowledge of pronunciation pedagogy could be increased by “activity books or resources that more intricately mesh theory with pronunciation activities” (p. 286). In other words, the instructors felt they were not equipped with all the pieces to teach pronunciation and to provide sufficient, relevant practice.

Existing pronunciation and speaking curriculum seem to belong to two categories: supplemental texts and textbooks. The former consists of pronunciation-based texts. Although they may include communicative activities, they are focused on specific pronunciation features and are not sufficient to be used as a primary text in a speaking and listening class. The latter consists of oral communication texts or textbooks designed for integrated skills in the ESL classroom. These types often consist of contrived practice and lack “explicit, sustained focus” on pronunciation features (Levis & Grant, 2003, p. 14). “When pronunciation is included, it usually addresses listening comprehension or consists of carefully controlled oral reading or repetition. Speaking-oriented pronunciation instruction, when it appears at all, consists of carefully controlled oral reading or repetition” (Levis & Grant, 2003, p. 14). This current situation resembles that of the last decade of the 20th century, as reported by Murphy, when “activities centered around speaking and listening [were] vastly more common . . . than are pronunciation
activities” (as cited in Levis & Grant, 2003, p. 14). As a result, both supplemental texts and textbooks are lacking in clear instruction and sufficient practice that can be applied to lesson plans in a systematic way.

In a study by Derwing, Diepenbroek, and Foote (2012), it was found that many ESL textbooks fail to teach all aspects of pronunciation. When they do include each pronunciation feature, the number of occurrences for each are inconsistent, some occurring only once, which would not provide enough practice for mastery. Furthermore, it seems the different types of techniques (controlled, guided, free) are not considered for each is not practiced sufficiently. Finally, many textbooks are uneven across levels. For example a level 1 textbook may have rhythm practice, whereas a levels 5 and 6 have none (Derwing, Diepenbroek, & Foote, 2012). When focusing on one aspect of pronunciation, such as rhythm, it appears little thought was given to the scope and sequence of many textbook series as a whole.

Another factor that arises when textbooks are used to teach pronunciation in the ESL classroom is the concept of overroutinization. When teachers are insufficiently trained in pronunciation pedagogy, they may find themselves relying more on the textbook or activity books than a teacher who has been taught a variety of strategies (Baker, 2014). This may also take place in courses of a “textbook-driven nature” (Baker, 2014, p. 152). In this case, he/she may experience overroutinization as the few activities presented in the text are repeated.

When curriculum does include pronunciation lessons, it seems they are lacking in either explicit instruction or sufficient practice. Furthermore, many textbooks and activity
books lack sustained focused on important pronunciation features that may provide a student with enough opportunities for practice to reach mastery. Finally, due to the phenomenon of overroutinization, a solid textbook lesson may be best paired with a firm understanding of how to teach pronunciation on the part of the teacher.

It is important to note at this point that the majority of the literature available on teachers’ practices regarding pronunciation teaching is geared at the K-12 levels. However, I believe we can safely assume the obstacles at the adult level are similar.

Best Practices in Teaching English Rhythm

As seen in the previous sections, incorporating pronunciation into ESL instruction requires thoughtful planning. During the planning stage, the teacher needs to keep a special focus on the more important aspects, such as learners’ specific segmental errors or suprasegmental features. Lessons must include explicit instruction and provide ample practice. The practice may include some controlled activities, but the teacher must remain cognizant of the effectiveness of guided and free techniques and develop these types of activities. Ideally, the activities are authentic and provide meaningful, communicative practice with an aim for automaticity in student production. While planning, the teacher must work within the time constraints of the course, managing lessons to be sure to meet all learning targets, as well as working within the limitations of available resources. At the same time, the teacher must plan lessons with explicit, sustained focus on pronunciation integrated throughout the duration of the ESL course, spiraling the numerous aspects of pronunciation. Planning to integrate pronunciation into instruction is no easy task.
As described earlier in this chapter, the goal of this project is to provide PD participants with a firm knowledge base on rhythm as well as a toolbox of effective strategies they may apply within their content lessons. I will keep a narrowed focus on stressed syllables, unstressed syllables, the role of function and content words, and how they work in unison to give English its characteristic rhythm. To begin I will explore suggested frameworks for implementation of pronunciation features. After that, I plan to describe a handful of useful strategies for teaching rhythm that may be applied to existing lessons.

**Integrating Rhythm into a Course**

Celce-Murcia et al. (1996, 2010) propose a communicative framework for incorporating pronunciation into ESL curriculum. The communicative framework suggests that pronunciation lessons consist of the following five phases:

1. **Description and analysis:** The goal of this phase is gain awareness of the target feature, through discovery learning, explicit instruction, or the like. It may be useful to employ visual diagrams, or kinesthetic tools, such as rubber bands or arm movements, during this phase. The teacher may also describe how these features are used within discourse and how discourse may have an effect on our choices regarding specific pronunciation features (e.g., in *Canada* the vowel *a* may sound like /æ/ or /ə/ depending on whether it is stressed or unstressed).

2. **Listening discrimination:** Learners may become frustrated if they are asked to produce a pronunciation feature that they cannot clearly hear, often due to the lack of that particular sound in their L1. Listening discrimination is a valuable step in
the acquisition process because it allows the learner to gradually gain the ability to discern a pronunciation feature aurally. Normally, ELs are asked to either identify a new feature or to distinguish it from other similar features (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). Examples of listening discrimination may include the following: distinguishing vowel or consonant sounds from one another when given two sounds difficult to distinguish in the speakers’ first language, counting syllables in a word and indicating which syllable receives the stress, or identifying consonant-to-vowel linking of connected speech (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010).

3. Controlled practice: The goal of controlled practice is to get learners to be aware of a specific language feature and to have them examine their output in order to improve their language production (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). The logic for such practice comes from the information-processing theory (McLaughlin; McLaughlin and Heredia as cited in Celce-Murcia et al., 2010), which states learning “begins with controlled processing in the learner’s short-term memory. Only gradually, with repeated rehearsal, does the newly learned feature become more automatic” (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010, p. 47). Furthermore, controlled activities are usually limited to certain features and the focus is on form and accuracy. Learners may work in pairs or small groups and monitor each other’s output as the teacher circulates and provides feedback on accuracy of the language feature. Activities often include the following: repetition practice, oral readings (e.g., minimal-pair words/sentences and short dialogues), tongue
twisters, Jazz Chants, short poems, children’s rhymes (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010), and Jazz Chants (Graham, 1978).

4. Guided practice: Recent studies provide evidence that learners may more easily acquire phonological features when the learner has metaphonological awareness of the feature being produced (Park; Venkatagiri and Levis as cited in Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). Furthermore, when ELs complete a task that allows them to focus their attention on a specific language feature, yet emphasizes meaning, they may start to automatize use of the language feature. Therefore, the lesson should move from controlled practice, (monitoring for accuracy), to guided practice, or semicontrolled. In guided practice, the context and much of the language is given, while the learners provide specific information, such as their own ideas or personal information. The focus of this phase is on accuracy as well as fluency. Guided activities may include the following: simple information-gap exercises, sequencing tasks such as strip stories, and cued dialogues (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010).

5. Communicative practice: It is thought that controlled practice alone may have an effect on a learner’s output long term. That said, the belief behind communicative practice is that learners need to be provided the opportunity to practice the production of the targeted language feature in realistic situations. In this process, the learner may automatize his/her knowledge of the feature, while developing strategies to compensate when it lacks. Finally, the learner will begin to produce the targeted feature accurately and fluently (Ellis as cited in Celce-Murcia et al.,
2010). In the communicative practice phase, learners take part in tasks that have them applying the newly acquired phonological feature in genuine exchanges of information (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). Activities must be carefully designed to highlight the targeted pronunciation feature, require negotiation of meaning, and be open-ended. While conveying their message, learners must pay attention to both the accuracy and the content. Problem-solving tasks make good communicative activities, such as examining the resumes of two applicants (whose personal information contains targeted sentences with easily confused word stress or rhythm patterns) and deliberating about the applicants. Other examples of communicative activities include the following: interviews, debate, storytelling, role plays, values clarification, and problem solving. Feedback is often withheld until the activity is completed.

The framework recognizes that learners will progress from one phase to the next gradually. Furthermore, the three phases of practice are designed to move the learner from more controlled to less controlled (communicative or free) use of the targeted language feature. The end goal is for learners to gain automaticity, or automatic processing or production of the pronunciation feature. Lastly, this framework is intended to be used over the duration of a course, consisting of several lessons and often revisiting previous phases, or spiraling, as necessary.

It would be logical to introduce English rhythm in an ESL course after students are familiar with syllable stress, word stress, and how they fit together to create sentence stress. This would look much like the beginning of this chapter. However, a teacher could
begin with rhythm in the event time restrictions would limit the number of pronunciation features taught in a given class. I believe students of all ages would be able to grasp the notion of rhythm in English with some extra attention given to stressed syllables in polysyllabic words (e.g., *PHOtograph, demoCRATic*).

**Strategies to Teach Rhythm**

Existing lessons to teach specific features of pronunciation can be found in ESL curriculum. However, texts are often arranged by pronunciation feature, such as “Chapter 9: Basic Rhythm-Stressed Words” from *Well Said Intro: Pronunciation for Clear Communication* by Grant (2007). In this chapter, one exercise instructs students to circle the content words (or stressed syllables of the content words) in various sentences; however, the items are unrelated to a thematic lesson. The items are as follows: “1. Do you want me to call you? 2. Did you sign a lease? 3. Camilla and Claudio are engaged. 4. What do you want? 5. I’m not happy with my new car.” (p. 82). Many ESL activity and textbooks consist of exercises like this one, where the chapters are arranged by pronunciation feature, not content, and the exercises are unrelated to each other. This approach to practicing pronunciation out of context is not best practice (Levis & Grant, 2003). Therefore, teachers may prefer to adapt strategies so that they may be applied directly to their existing content lessons, thus making the learning more meaningful.

The strategies, to follow, have been chosen as effective strategies that are especially adaptable to content lessons with little preparation work on the part of the teacher. The strategies span the five phases of the communicative framework and can be used repeatedly throughout the duration of the ESL course. The goal is to provide
sustained, systematic practice for ELs as they move from controlled to guided and free practice, in hopes they may develop the skills necessary to automatize patterns of English rhythm. Further discussion about the process of applying these strategies to content lessons will be included in Chapter 3. Furthermore, in Chapter 4, I will provide examples of content-based activities, in which each strategy will be applied to an existing content lesson to incorporate rhythm practice. The following are types of strategies chosen to be easily adapted to existing content lessons:

1. *Teach accurate word stress when introducing vocabulary* (Field, 2005). Teach stress at the individual word level when introducing vocabulary words in all classes and content areas. The learner should then practice speaking new words with a focus on correct syllable stress. In addition, using the word in a sentence will allow for practice beyond the word level. When used in a sentence, the teacher may model accurate stress of content words and unstress of function words, thus giving students an opportunity to practice rhythm. This strategy matches phase one, description and analysis, of the communicative framework.

2. *Teacher script for stressed-words exercise* (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). In this technique, the teacher begins by reading a chosen script (i.e., long sentence or short passage) several times. Note that the teacher should not pause between sections or sentences as is done in listening dictation. Figure 5 contains an example script.
What Flight Attendants Want You to Know

It is strictly forbidden to do any of the following things while on board the airplane: no smoking inside the cabin or restrooms, no use of electronic devices during takeoff or landing, and no blocking the aisles during meal services.

Figure 5. “Teacher script for stressed-words exercise” by Celce-Murcia et al., 2010, Teaching Pronunciation: A Course Book and Reference Guide, pg. 374, Copyright 2010 by Cambridge University Press.

First, Students write down words they hear most easily (the teacher may read more than once). Next, in pairs, students try to reconstruct the original passage. They discover that the words they heard most clearly carry the most meaning (content words) and are stressed. The rest of the words carry less meaning (function words) and are reduced. This also helps second-language listeners to improve their processing ability of patterns of stressed syllables. This strategy fits with phase two, listening discrimination, of the communicative framework.

3. Cloze dictation (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). First, students read a passage with many functions (or content) words missing. Then, they should predict which words belong in the blanks. Figure 6 shows an example dialogue.
Next, students listen to the passage read aloud to check their answers. Celce-Murcia et al. (2010) also suggest that teachers record short segments of native-speaker speech and create simple fill-in-the-blank exercises. Sources of speech may include speeches, talk shows, weather, news, conversations, etc. This exercise focuses their attention on unstressed (or stressed) elements. This strategy can be completed individually for either function or content words. Furthermore, this could be created as an info gap exercise focused on content or function words.
rather than communicative practice as they are typically used. This strategy matches phases two and three, listening discrimination and controlled practice, of the communicative framework.

4. *Frequent and sustained choral repetition with body movement* (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). Choral repetition has been a longstanding technique to help students practice pronunciation and to reach automaticity. Students are able to practice intelligible chunks of language without conscious thought. Have learners repeat in thought groups of no more than six or seven words (e.g., *How was your night?* or *I heard you didn’t sleep much.*) Choral repetition allows the learner to focus on accuracy before moving on to less-controlled activities requiring more choice. Ideally, this choral practice is corresponds to kinesthetic movement, such as stepping, tapping, or clapping. To practice giving accurate length for each syllable, a rubber band can be used (McCurdy & Meyers, 2014). A great resource for choral repetition material is the text *Jazz Chants* (Graham, 1978), as well as numerous varieties of “chants” texts, including *Creating Chants and Songs* (Graham, 2006), which may lend itself well to personalizing chants for a various content lessons. This strategy matches phase three, controlled practice, of the communicative framework.

5. *Rhythm drills/congruent rhythm drills* (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). This technique brings student’s awareness to stressed elements within words and sentences. First the teacher reads the sentences aloud and students try to identify stressed elements. Students should notice stress usually falls on content words. Students
can tap on their desks or snap fingers as they listen a second time. They should notice that stressed words happen at regular intervals. Figure 7 is an example of a rhythm drill, which is similar to Figure 3 at the beginning of Chapter 2 (p. 19).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>O</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MICE</td>
<td>EAT</td>
<td>CHEESE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The MICE</td>
<td>EAT</td>
<td>CHEESE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The MICE will</td>
<td>EAT</td>
<td>the CHEESE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The MICE will have</td>
<td>EATen</td>
<td>the CHEESE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The MICE might have been</td>
<td>EATING</td>
<td>the CHEESE.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Figure 3. “Mice eat cheese’ rhythm drill” by Celce-Murcia et al., 2010, *Teaching Pronunciation: A Course Book and Reference Guide*, pg. 215, Copyright 2010 by Cambridge University Press.

Once a pattern has been found, students can practice chorally then in pairs. This provides controlled practice of the nature of English as a stress-timed language.

Congruent rhythm drills also provide controlled practice. A model of a given pattern is provided by tapping or clapping. Next, students repeat the example sentences chorally. Figure 8 is an example of a congruent rhythm drill, which is similar to Figure 2 also found in the beginning of Chapter 2 (p. 18).

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<th>o</th>
<th>.</th>
<th>O</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>She doesn’t like to hurry.</td>
<td>He wanted to help her forget.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Her father cleaned the basement.</td>
<td>We needed to call them at ten.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I didn’t want to leave her.</td>
<td>It’s better to hide it from John.</td>
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<tr>
<td>He hasn’t even tried it.</td>
<td>I wonder who’s kissing her now.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>They need some new pajamas.</td>
<td>I think that he’s doing it wrong.</td>
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</table>

Students are practicing similar rhythm patterns over several sentences. This helps them to see English rhythm often follows patterns. These strategies match phase three, controlled practice, of the communicative framework.

6. *Identifying content words and practice speaking using rhythm* (Grant, 2007). This strategy consists of multiple items, which could be statements or questions. For each, students are asked to circle the content words (or the stressed syllables of the content words). An example sentence is as follows:

*Example:* It’s closed on Mondays.

Next, students check their answers by comparing with their partner’s answers. Finally, they listen to each item and repeat using accurate rhythm, paying special attention to making syllables longer, louder, and higher in pitch than the unstressed syllables.

In addition, Chela-Flores (as cited in Celce-Murcia et al., 2010) suggests the teacher records short, naturalistic dialogues, and marks them for additional student practice. Figure 7 is an example of a marked dialogue for speaking practice.
Once familiar with the markings, the students could be asked to listen to similar dialogues, marking the rhythmic patterns themselves before practicing speaking in pairs. These strategies fit phase three, controlled practice, of the communicative framework.

7. **Guided dialogue** (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). In a guided dialogue, students are given a piece of information and are then expected to have an exchange using this “personal” information while following a model dialogue. In this case, there would be a pronunciation focus on the rhythm of the dialogue. For example, the teacher hands out cards with various professions written on them. Students practice the following dialogue and follow it with a survey of class members (the
slash represents a break between thought groups, capitalization and bold for stress):

A: WHAT do you **DO**?

B: I’m a **DOC**tor, / and I **WORK** in a **HOS**pital.

B: WHAT do **YOU** **DO**? *(addressing C)*

C: I’m a pro**FES**sor, / and I **LEC**ture at the **UNIVER**sity.

This guided dialogue can reinforce the idea that stressed words carry the most meaning in English, such as the nouns and verbs in this dialogue. This strategy matches phase 3, controlled practice, of the communicative framework.

8. *Information Gap* (Millin, 2015). In this activity, students are paired and each is missing information necessary to complete a task or solve a problem. They must communicate with each other effectively to fill in the gaps. Millin (2015) recommends that this activity is completed in the following five steps: 1) assigning roles (e.g., A, B, and when necessary C), 2) preparation time for students to practice their assigned speaking task with others that have the same assignment (e.g., AAA, BBB, and possibly CCC), 3) Information gap where students take turns requesting/giving information. Directions might be set up like these examples:

* A, you ask your questions. B, you answer them. Then B, you ask, and A, you answer.

OR

* A, tell B one thing in your picture. B, tell A if it’s the same or different to
your picture. If it’s different circle it. Then B, tell A one thing in your picture. Find 8 differences between your pictures. Don’t look at the other picture.

(Millin, 2015)

4) checking the answers (this may be done with their partner or with their preparation time group), and 5) feedback on content (i.e., Did you both get all of the information correct?) with further checking of problem areas, and feedback on language (i.e., noting problem areas and praising language targets that were met). She suggests the teacher remain free to monitor and help. This strategy matches phase 4, guided practice, of the communicative framework.

9. Mirroring a dramatic scene (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). C. Meyers suggests the use of mirroring a dramatic scene as a means to teach correct rhythm, along with other feature so pronunciation, such as enunciation, body language, etc. (personal communication, July 24, 2014). According to Hardison (as cited in Celce-Murcia et al., 2010), shadowing refers to a technique in which English learners repeat along with or slightly after a speaker (either in person or on video). Mirroring is a technique where the student repeats along with a speaker (again either in person or on video) while incorporating the use of body language (e.g., gestures, facial expressions, body movements). This may provide a larger package of communicative practice since “intelligibility in its larger sense includes pragmatic awareness, nonverbal communication, and discourse competence” (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010, p. 343).
Mirroring a dramatic scene is similar to mirroring as defined in that students attempt to mimic the patterns found in a short video. This technique is described by Goodwin and derived both from Isaac’s spoken fluency approach as well as Stern’s drama techniques (as cited in Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). Using a 60-to 90-second clip, ideally one consisting of two speakers with clearly stressed elements. It is also noted the text should be self-contained, or require little introduction or contextualization, and have some relevance to the students’ life.

First, the class views the clip without sound and learners guess who the speakers are, where they are, and what’s going on in the scene. They must focus on nonverbal cues to do so and will then explain their predictions. Next, they view the video with sound to check their predictions. Then, they receive a script and each line or thought group is played repeatedly as students mark pauses, prominence, intonation, linking, and gestures on their copy. (Note: If the target were one feature only, such as rhythm, the students would mark for stress.) Next, students imitate the pronunciation and body movements of each line through choral and individual repetition. The teacher should monitor and may provide further instruction on specific phrases or features. After at least one additional class for practice, pairs are recorded performing by the instructor. After each pair has performed the scene twice, one time for each partner to perform each role, the teacher gives them a different role-play prompt of a similar interaction to perform with little preparation (10-15 minutes). They are encouraged to make use of expressions from the first scene. The performance is recorded and student may
review both recorded scenes, the original imitated scene and the unrehearsed role
play, for self-evaluation (Goodwin as cited in Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). Detailed
instructions for this activity are found in Celce-Murcia et al., 2010, Appendix 21,
pp.489-490.

C. Meyers suggests a variation of this technique (personal communication,
July 24, 2014). Instead of a scene consisting of two characters, she suggests
having students choose a monologue from a popular movie. They students
practice the monologue, focusing on pronunciation, enunciation, gestures, facial
expressions, and body movements as they mimic the character in the scene. After
much practice and memorization, students perform the scene to the class as the
teacher records for self-evaluation. This strategy matches phase 4, guided
practice, of the communicative framework.

10. *Cued Dialogue* (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). A cued dialogue is similar to a guided
dialogue in that students have an exchange of information. However, the
difference is that a cued dialogue is much less-controlled; instead of following a
model dialogue, students are given a flow chart of directives and they are to create
statements/questions to match. Not only are they required to craft the language
used, they are verbally negotiating, requiring the difficult language skills of
accepting and confirming. An example of this is an exchange between a Japanese
business client and a representative of an American company negotiating a
purchase of a machine. An example prompt is seen in Figure 8:
Directions: You and a partner are representatives of Beck Instruments and Ojanpera Inc., a machine-tool maker. Ojanpera is in discussion with Beck Instruments to buy a machine, the B125. Use the flow chart below to negotiate some aspects of an agreement for the sale of the B125.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Ojanpera</strong></th>
<th><strong>Beck Instruments</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Offer to buy the machine if BI can give you a good price.</td>
<td>Say that your prices are very competitive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask for a discount.</td>
<td>Say a discount could be possible if Ojanpera agrees to pay for shipping costs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree, if the discount is attractive.</td>
<td>Offer 4% discount.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask for 6%.</td>
<td>Unfortunately, you can’t agree, unless Ojanpera pays for the installation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree.</td>
<td>Confirm your agreement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Researchers suggest this activity is an exchange between a student and a tutor.

It is also suggested that they dialogue is first recorded, then listened to and compared to the one the book provides as a model, such as the following:

**Ojanpera:** Well, we’re happy to buy a machine if you can give us a good price.

**Beck:** Well, I’m sure we can. As you know our prices are very competitive.

**Ojanpera:** Even so, I’m sure you can allow us a discount?
Beck: OK, well a discount could be possible if you agree to pay for the shipping costs.

Ojanpera: That sounds OK, if the discount is a good one.

Beck: How about 4 percent?

Ojanpera: Six percent would be better.

Beck: I’m sorry, we can’t manage that unless you pay for installation.

Ojanpera: OK, our engineers will take care of that.

Beck: OK, then, so to confirm: a 6 percent discount but you pay all the shipping and installation costs.

Ojanpera: That sounds all right.

(Sweeney as cited in Celce-Murcia et al., 2010, p. 290).

In addition to rhythm, pronunciation features that could be targeted for this lesson include pausing, contrastive stress, and intonation in nonfinal and final clauses. Additional learning points depend on the student’s performance. This strategy matches phase 4, guided practice, of the communicative framework.

11. Role play (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010, p. 217). A good way to provide ELs with communicative practice is through the use of role play activities. For this activity, the teacher hands out cards with assigned roles and information and students must create the interaction between the roles. One example of this is a late-night talk show format. Paired students take turns acting as host and as guest. The guests receives role card with an identity. In this example, the identities are created along the lines of Guinness World Record holders as in Figure 9.
As the talk-show host, the partner interviews the guest and takes notes on answer to questions, such as the following (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010, p. 217):

- What is your name?  What did you do?  What record did you break?
- When did you do this?  Where did you do this?  Why did you do this?

The teacher should monitor accurate rhythm and stress placement, providing feedback after the practice.

Another example of a role-play prompt is a nurse-patient interaction; it might read as follows (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010, p. 287):

**Nurse role card:** Ask how the patient is doing. Ask specific follow-up questions about the patient’s cough, sleep patterns, and medication.

**Patient role card:** Respond when the nurse asks you how you are feeling.

When she asks specific questions, provide details.
This strategy matches phase 5, communicative practice, of the communicative framework.

Using these eleven strategies included in this toolbox, teachers will be able to incorporate rhythm practice within content lessons. In addition, teachers will be able to choose multiple strategies to ensure his/her lessons include activities from each of the five phases of the communicative framework (description and analysis, listening discrimination, controlled practice, guided practice, communicative practice) (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). When planning a unit in any given content course, the teacher may aim to span the five phases, especially important when introducing rhythm for the first time, and to revisit several in order to provide ample practice and a sustained focus on rhythm throughout the unit. The teacher should keep in mind students need enough guided and communicative practice in order to reach automaticity in using English rhythm.

Summary

This chapter consisted of a thorough review of the literature relevant to English rhythm, obstacles to teaching rhythm, and existing strategies to teach rhythm that may be easily incorporated into content lessons. The investigation sought to answer the core research question *How can PD materials be developed to educate AE ESL teachers about English rhythm and to provide effective strategies to incorporate rhythm throughout content lessons?* The aim was to explore which information is imperative for PD participants to gain a firm base on rhythm, as well as a toolbox of adaptable strategies to use in their content courses.
Within the literature, it was found that English rhythm is a quite complex suprasegmental feature of pronunciation, consisting of stressed syllables and unstressed syllables both as parts of function and content words, as well as pauses, and the way in which they all work in unison to give English its characteristic rhythm. It was discovered that world languages are either stress-timed or syllable-timed, or may fall somewhere on a spectrum between the two, English having a tendency toward stress-timing. It is important students recognize this distinction, especially since their first languages likely have a tendency toward syllable-timing. The literature depicted content and function words, and how the amount of meaning expressed in the word affects the amount of stressed used to speak the word, making stress a very teachable concept. In addition, it was found the listener anticipates patterns of stress/unstress and when the speaker fails to produce this accurately, communication breaks down, therefore a EL must focus on the learning of stress patterns in order to improve intelligibility. It is also helpful in the retrieval of words as they have been found to be stored in a mental lexicon based on stress patterns. Then the literature depicted how English rhythm has a profound impact on intelligibility and how the teaching of rhythm in the ESL classroom should be prioritized. Next, it was found the teaching of suprasegmental features, including rhythm, is being neglected in many ESL courses. The common barriers to successful teaching rhythm in ESL were a lack of teacher preparation, difficulty prioritizing pronunciation in course planning, and an inadequacy of existing curriculum. Finally, in order to create PD materials, more on which will be discussed in Chapter Three, I needed to explore curricula aimed at explicit rhythm teaching. I found eleven types of strategies that could
be easily adapted and applied to existing content lessons, as well as provide ample instruction and practice to span the five phases of the communicative framework.

Preview

In Chapter Three I describe the design and methodology that guide the creation of the PD session materials to educate teachers about the uniqueness of English rhythm and its affect on intelligibility. This chapter also includes a description of the materials that will equip teachers with adaptable strategies to incorporate English rhythm within their content classes, including further discussion about the process of applying these strategies to existing content lessons. Chapter Four consists of the materials I created for the PD session. In Chapter Five I reflect on the process, make recommendations for implementation, discuss limitations of my research, describe intended dissemination, and conclude with personal reflections.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The core research question of this capstone project is *How can PD materials be developed to educate AE ESL teachers about English rhythm and to provide effective strategies to incorporate rhythm throughout content lessons?* In this chapter, I will describe the intended audience of my capstone project: creating a professional development (PD) session on pronunciation pedagogy. Then, I will present a referenced rationale for creating a PD session, and how it will help teachers overcome the common barriers to teaching pronunciation. Next, I will describe the goal of the curriculum design aimed at providing teachers with both a knowledge base about rhythm, as well as strategies to incorporate it within content lessons. Thereafter, I will explain the processes used to create the PD curriculum with a referenced rationale. Finally, I will present a description of the format of the PD session, including a description of how the curriculum will be presented.

**Intended Audience**

The intended audience of this capstone is ESL teachers at the adult education level. This PD session has been designed for a 2-hour time slot at the Minnesota English Learner Education (MELEd) Conference held in October each year. This conference is a partnership between MinneTESOL and the Minnesota Department of Education. The intended audience consists of AE ESL teachers who have had some college-level ESL
training. They may have presumably graduated from an ESL program with a Bachelor of Science degree and hold a license in ESL education, or perhaps they have a certificate, such as Adult ESL or Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). It is assumed most will not have taken a course on pronunciation pedagogy or have a thorough understanding of the suprasegmental feature of rhythm. It has been my experience that teachers feel inadequate regarding their knowledge base of teaching certain pronunciation features and that they may lack strategies to incorporate them within content lessons. It has also been my experience teachers may not understand the importance of teaching rhythm and how greatly it affects the intelligibility of ELs’ speech. I believe providing teachers with this information will inspire them and give them the confidence to teach rhythm.

PD Curriculum Design Rationale, Goals, and Development

Rationale

The rationale for this capstone consists of two parts. First, I will provide a rationale for teachers’ need for PD in the area of pronunciation, specifically rhythm. Secondly, I will provide rationale for why I have decided to create a toolbox of strategies that can be easily adapted to and incorporated within existing content lessons.

It is widely observed that there is a need for teacher education focused on teaching suprasegmental features of English pronunciation as seen in Chapter 2. Many teachers have had little pronunciation pedagogy training in their ESL licensing programs, and some have had none at all. Furthermore, it was reported that many felt there is a lack of relevant PD surrounding pronunciation pedagogy. Others reported struggling to apply
recent research to actual classroom practices. Therefore, I have decided to create PD curriculum to provide AE teachers with a strong knowledge base surrounding rhythm, a framework with which to plan within existing content lessons, and strategies to provide students with ample pronunciation practice.

For this project, I have decided to focus on effective strategies that can be easily applied to teachers’ existing content lessons to teach learners about rhythm and provide ample practice. As recent research suggests, teachers often find difficulty incorporating pronunciation into the course design. Some begin with fluency and address pronunciation issues as they arise, but often miss important features that may have a major impact on intelligibility, like rhythm does. Others begin with a more narrowed focus on certain pronunciation features, but often fail to get to phases of guided and free activities, where the feature is applied communicatively and, therefore, students fail to automatize the pronunciation aspect when speaking freely. In the same vein, teachers who rely on ESL texts find difficulty thoroughly teaching a specific feature of pronunciation. As the literature in Chapter 2 suggests, supplemental texts are not sufficient as a primary text. Furthermore, I found in my analysis of texts that they are not embedded in content units; while the focus on rhythm may be explicit and sustained, the topics of the activities are random, thus they lose the meaningful, communicative focus. As for textbooks designed for an all-skills course, pronunciation is not always explicitly taught, sustained practice is often missing, and in many cases, many pronunciation features are not mentioned at all. Because designing pronunciation into a course is complex and because texts are inadequate for sufficient pronunciation teaching and practice, I have decided on eleven
strategies that will help teachers keep a sustained focus on rhythm while fulfilling the content objectives of existing lessons.

In order for students to gain mastery, practice of features of pronunciation, activities should be incorporated into meaningful, communicative contexts. In many cases, the context will consist of existing lessons meeting content objectives of a given course. An example of this is the content of Reading 255, a course designed for ELs who test above ESL Level 6 at my current AE program. The goals of this course are to prepare learners to advance to higher-level reading classes quickly and efficiently as possible, to develop content-area language and vocabulary, as well as the development of critical reading skills needed for GED and other test preparation. Another example may be the content of a career pathways class, such as English for Healthcare, which focuses on healthcare industry skills including: healthcare vocabulary and terminology; readings centered on healthcare; healthcare career opportunities; listening and speaking in healthcare environments. Finally, these strategies would also be applicable to an ESL all-skills course, such as ESL Level 3, using a textbook series with content-based units, such as Ventures 2: Student’s Book (Bitterlin, Johnson, Price, Ramirez, Savage, 2014a). In whichever content the pronunciation focus is embedded, learners need to have opportunities for sustained rhythm practice throughout the duration of the course. Once the student has had ample opportunities to practice the particular aspect sufficiently for automaticity to occur, he/she can effectively apply new pronunciation concepts to uncontrived speech utterances. In other words, the student will use rhythm effectively in their daily speech.
The way in which a teacher decides to plan and present instruction is an individual choice. However, as seen in Chapter 2, an optimal learning environment is one where the learner practices a pronunciation feature through the five phases according to the Communicative Framework for pronunciation teaching (Celce-Murcia et al., 1996, 2010). The lesson moves through the phases as the learner gains an awareness of the concept, can identify the feature audibly, and then is allowed sufficient practice from controlled, to guided, to free in order to gain automaticity. For this reason, I have strategically chosen strategies to teach rhythm that will allow for practice in each phase.

The teacher may use the strategies as a toolbox, but must keep in mind that the first time each is presented, they should go in order of the five phases. Once each phase has been presented, the strategy may be revisited and adapted to a variety of content as the course content changes. Ideally, the teacher would recycle the strategies again and again as to create a sustained focus on rhythm throughout the course. When considering other learning objectives of the course, I imagine that, in time, the teacher will have multiple aspects that are being revisited in turn throughout the duration of the course. In this way, the curriculum can spiral several concepts, so that students are reviewing many features to gain mastery.

Goals

The goal of my capstone project is to design curriculum on teaching English rhythm to serve as a PD session for ESL teachers and classroom teachers working with ELs. I will provide teachers with a firm knowledge base about English rhythm. Using inquiry-based learning, teachers will learn to recognize English rhythm
(audibly/visually), and this will be enhanced through comparisons to the rhythm of other
languages. I will provide evidence regarding the importance of rhythm in English, as well
as the impact it has on their students’ intelligibility. We will explore the various
suprasegmental features that comprise rhythm, so that they will be able to accurately
instruct their students in the future. I will present the Communicative Framework for
Teaching Pronunciation Teaching (Celce-Murcia et al., 1996, 2010) and how the chosen
strategies fit into the five phases. Finally, I will provide teachers with a toolbox of
effective strategies that can be easily adapted to their existing content curriculum. The
teachers will have an opportunity to see the strategies applied to example content lessons,
and they will learn how to apply them on their own. Finally, they will have a chance to
make adaptations to a different content example to learn how the strategies can be easily
applied to any existing lesson, so that their ELs are provided ample rhythm practice.
Development

The curriculum design for this PD session was approved by Hamline University’s
Human Subjects Committee. In the first portion of the PD materials, I will address the
issue of educating teachers on English rhythm, including how it compares with the
rhythm of syllable-timed languages, and how an EL’s L1 might affect their speech. This
information will come from Celce-Murcia, M., et al. (2010) Teaching Pronunciation: A
course book and reference guide (2nd ed.). This portion will also include a brief overview
of how rhythm affects intelligibility to support the importance of teaching rhythm. This
information will come from the relevant literature (see Chapter Two).
The second area of the PD materials will involve activities developed for the teachers to learn about rhythm in a discovery-based manner. I intend to use video clips found on Youtube, as well as self-recorded speech samples.

The third portion of the PD materials will include strategies teachers may apply to their existing content lessons. The strategies will be adapted from pronunciation resources, namely Linda Grant’s (2007) *Well Said Intro: Pronunciation for Clear Communication*. I will also adopt ideas for teaching rhythm from the Celce-Murcia et al. (2010) text, Avery and Ehrlich’s *Teaching American English Pronunciation* (1992b), as well as tips I received from C. Meyer of the University of Minnesota—Twin Cities (personal communication, July 24, 2014).

Reflection Process

Throughout the development of my PD session materials, I have been keeping a record of my thoughts, including brainstorm ideas and ongoing questions. As I design the curriculum, I have been recording reflections on best practice methods found in the literature review, implications this PD session may have on classroom instruction, limitations of the materials, and ideas for future study and development.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have described how I will use my knowledge of current research to answer the question: “How can PD materials be developed to educate AE ESL teachers about English rhythm and to provide effective strategies to incorporate rhythm throughout content lessons?” I want to ensure I am providing teachers attending my PD session with a firm knowledge base surrounding English rhythm, including how the
timing of English likely differs from that of their students’ L1s and an understanding of the importance of teaching English rhythm for their students’ intelligibility. It is my hope this will inspire them to put the information to good use. Furthermore, I hope the PD session gives teachers the confidence to be able to provide their students with explicit instructions, a conceptualization of how to tailor pronunciation teaching to the five phases of Celce-Murcia et al.’s (2010) Communicative Framework, and the skill-set to apply the strategies to their existing content lessons. I have explained the intended audience for the PD session, the rationale, goals, and development process for this curriculum.

In Chapter Four, I will present the activities and materials that I created as part of my PD session on rhythm and the way in which the PD will be presented. Chapter Five will provide my reflections about the entire capstone process.
CHAPTER FOUR: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MATERIALS

The materials for this professional development session entitled *Teaching English Rhythm* include a presentation slideshow, a script for the presenter, and two handouts.

Professional Development Presentation Slideshow


Professional Development Presentation Script

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Slid #</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Presenter Script</th>
<th>Presenter Actions</th>
<th>Participants Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Intro</td>
<td><em>Good morning! My name is Angie Haasch and today we will be exploring how to teach English rhythm. You can reach me via email at this address.</em>&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<em>A little bit about me. I have been teaching for over a decade in various school districts, at all levels kindergarten through adult. I have worked in mainstream schools, as well as charter schools. My experiences have really been all across the board.</em>&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<em>Currently, I am teaching adults at ____ AE. I also teach K-5 at ________ Academy, and our school is 95% Somali.</em>&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<em>I attended the U of MN as an undergrad and completed the MAESL program at Hamline University. In fact, today’s presentation is the culmination of my master’s thesis. I am happy to finally be here presenting this work!</em>&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<em>Ok, before we get started, please take 2 minutes to introduce yourself to your neighbors. (Name, Where he/she teaches, what grade level and content). You will be interacting today.</em></td>
<td>Point to email address.</td>
<td>Introduce themselves to each other for 2 minutes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When you think of rhythm, you may imagine the beat of a drum, the tapping feet of a dancer, the pulse of your favorite song. Today, we will be exploring an important feature of pronunciation called rhythm. Every language has its distinct rhythm. You will learn what it is, exactly, why it’s important to teach to our English learners, and finally, you will learn about 6 strategies you can easily apply to your existing lessons to incorporate rhythm practice.

Rhythm in English is very much like the rhythm of music. The rhythm of our speech creates a flow. And as listeners, we expect to hear this smooth flow. When a speaker doesn’t use rhythm correctly, the listener is confused and often has to ask him/her to repeat.

Today we will be answering the following questions: What is rhythm in English? Why do my students need to practice it? How do I teach it? How will it fit into my existing lessons?

Let’s do some language analysis!

First, everyone will need a handout and writing utensil. Does anyone need a pen or pencil? Raise your hand.

I will play a clip of Oprah speaking 2 times.

On Handout A, you have a transcript of her speech. The first time we watch it, your job is to analyze her body language. I want you to pay close attention to when she raises her eyebrows, lifts her arm or hand, or she moves her head. When you see these gestures, you will make a mark on those words.

When we are done, you will discuss your observations with a neighbor. Could I please have 2 volunteers to share what you discussed?

Great! Ok, so they saw _____ on the words _____. Another pair? Good. They saw _____ on the words _____.


Observe video and make marks. Discuss observations with partner. 2 volunteers share out observations.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7 Analysis</th>
<th>Now we will watch it again. This time I want you to listen for words that sound looonger and LOUDER. That is to say, listen closely to the vowels of words and make a mark when they are looonger and LOUDER.</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8 Analysis</td>
<td>Alright, we will watch it and you will discuss your observations with a partner when it is finished. Could I please have 2 volunteers to share what you discussed? Great! Ok, so they hear longer and louder vowels on the words ______. Another pair? Good. They heard it on the words _____.</td>
<td>Play video until 2:14. Ask participants to share out observations. Ask follow up questions. Elicit responses.</td>
<td>Observe video and make marks. Discuss observations with partner. 2 volunteer(s) share out observations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Analysis</td>
<td>Ok, let’s do that again. This time you are going to analyze the speech patterns of a Somali woman speaking. We will watch it 2 times. The first time we hear the Somali woman speaking your job is to analyze her body language. Again, pay close attention to when she raises her eyebrows, lifts her arm or hand, or she moves her head. When you see these gestures, you will make a mark on those words on the next transcript.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Analysis</td>
<td>Let’s watch it now. When the clip is done, please discuss your observations with a neighbor. Could I please have 2 volunteers to share what you discussed? Great! Ok, so they saw _____ on the words _____. Another pair? Good. They saw _____ on the words _____. Did you find it hard to follow what she was saying? (thumbs up/sideways/down)</td>
<td>Play video. Ask participants to share out observations. Ask follow up questions. Elicit responses.</td>
<td>Observe video. Discuss observations with partner. 2 volunteer(s) share obs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Analysis</td>
<td>And finally, we will watch it a second time. This time you</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
are listening for words that sound looonger and LOUDER.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>12</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
<th>Alright, we will watch it and you will discuss your observations with a partner when it is finished. Could I please have 2 volunteers to share what you discussed? Great! Ok, so they hear longer and louder vowels on the words ______. Another pair? Good. They heard it on the words _____.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>Now I want you to compare Oprah’s speech to that of the Somali woman’s speech. You have 1 minute to discuss this with your partner. What comparisons did you come up with? Would a few of you share? Great! They found _____. And another? Good! They found _____.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Stress vs. syllable timing</td>
<td>When we observed Oprah, we noticed she used many gestures and that they were often on the words that were also louder and longer. Each time she was doing this, she was stressing those words. Likewise, we can notice she was NOT adding stress to all words. Many words were quiet and quick by comparison. This, my friends, is what a stress-timed language looks like. English is a stress-timed language, as is Arabic, Russian, Swedish, and German. What this means is that the important words receive more stress, while the unimportant words receive less stress. You may hear me refer to this as unstress, or reduced vowel sounds. As we observed in the video, the Somali woman did not have a lot of gestures along with her speech. Also, she did not seem to say many vowels very loud or long. That showed us she was not adding extra stress to any syllables in particular, and likewise she did not show unstress by comparison.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Take notes, if desired.
This is what a syllable-timed language looks like. Most languages are syllable-timed. This means each syllable receives a similar amount of stress. Examples of languages that are syllable-timed are Somali, Italian, Japanese, Spanish, and French.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>15</th>
<th>Description &amp; Analysis / Timing</th>
<th>This picture taken from Teaching American English Pronunciation, by Avery and Ehrlich (1992b) is a great image of the difference in timing of world languages. The top picture shows the steady beat of a syllable-timed language. Each syllable receives an equal amount of time; equal stress. It's kind of staccato. This is true for many East African languages. The bottom row depicts a stress-timed language, such as English or German. As you can see, the bigger people represent the stressed elements and the smaller figures, which represent lightly stressed and unstressed syllables, are squeezed in between.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| 16 | Timing/ Rhythm drill strategy | Let's do an activity; this is called a rhythm drill. The red circles indicate the beat. Let's clap on those as we read through this chorally. How many syllables does the first line have? Yes, 3. How many in the last? Correct, it has 9 syllables. As you can tell, the number of syllables makes little difference in a stress-timed language. The same words were stressed in each sentence and all the other words were crammed in between! You'll notice each sentence followed the beat and took nearly the same amount of time to say. |

| 17 | Listening Discrimination | We have another exercise. This is a strategy from your toolbox, the focus is on listening discrimination. You will need to write on the handout for this. I will read a passage. As I am reading, you should write down as much of it as you can. I will read it only one time. Any questions? Listen carefully: What Flight Attendants Want You to Know It is strictly forbidden to do any of the following things while on board the airplane: no smoking inside the cabin or restrooms, no use of electronic devices during takeoff or landing, and no blocking the aisles during meal services. Figure 5. “Teacher script for stressed-words exercise” by Celce-Murcia et al., 2010, Teaching Pronunciation: A |
Now, I want you to underline the words you wrote as I was speaking. These are the only words you will underline.

Ok, the next part will require a partner. Find one person to work with.

Working together, I want you to recreate the passage. You will share your work with each other to try to get the whole passage written out. You will have 2 minutes.

18 Listening Discrimination

Look at the words you heard the first time, the underlined ones.

How do your underlined words differ from the words in your passage that are not underlined?

Share your observations with your partner.

Could I have a few volunteers share your observations.

YES! You have noticed something very important! (PAUSE)

Make observations from volunteers.

Elicit response from volunteers.

Share with partner.

Share out.

19 Description & Analysis / Content vs. Function words

The words you heard first are the words that carry the most meaning!

Most of the words you heard the first time are called content words. The words you may have missed the first time carry less meaning and are called function words.

Explain slide.

Share out.

20 Description & Analysis / Content vs. Function words

Ok, get ready to take some notes. You may use the handout to write notes. We will use the rubber bands shortly.

In the next section, we will explore which words are considered content words and what they sound like when pronounced in an utterance.

We will do the same for function words; which words are functions words and how do they sound different from content words?

Pass out rubber bands.

Prepare to take notes on handout.

21 Description & Analysis / Content

Content words are often STRESSED. That means they sound loooonger, LOUDER, and HIGHER in pitch.

Consider the sentence: THANK you for LENDING me MONEY for SCHOOL. You can hear the capitalized words

Gesture with arms: Loooonner LOUDER

Take notes on green handout.
| Words | are are longer, louder, and higher in pitch.  
Let’s try it. I speak, you repeat: Thank you for lending me money for school.  
I want to remind you that we are talking about basic sentence stress, or basic rhythm, here. This is the foundation from which both you and your ELs need to begin. There are, of course, exceptions to the rules. There are definitely times when even these words will be unstressed, and likewise, the words we learn as function words, will undoubtedly be stressed at times, like for emphasis. But you need to know, we are talking about a baseline here, the basic rules. You and your classes can always go on to learn about times when it is grammatically correct to do exceptions to the rule. That is a training for another time. | HIGHER in pitch |
|---|---|---|
| 22 Description & Analysis / Content Words | As we saw in the last task, content words carry the most meaning. This is a list of the parts of speech that are content words. They are MOST OFTEN stressed. Take a minute to read over the list silently.  
For some of you, many of these parts of speech and subsets of parts of speech may be familiar. For some, they might be a little foggy, however, so let’s write a few examples of each on your notes. I’m an example person.  
Any questions on this? | Read list silently.  
Take notes on examples . |
| 23 Controlled Practice using kinesthetics/Content Words | Now it’s your turn to practice! Using your rubber band, practice stressing content words. Another strategy from our toolbox. We will do the first one together.  
She’s happy about opening a checking account.  
You have 1 minute to practice the others.  
Ok, great job! As you can see this is great practice for our ELs! Let’s practice them all together.  
She’s happy about opening a checking account.  
I’m tired of making payments on my car.  
We’re thinking about buying a house.  
Why do you think a strategy like this helps learners with stressed elements? Talk to your partner for 30 seconds.  
What are some kinesthetic movements you currently use or have seen used? Talk to your partner for 30 seconds.  
Rubber bands are a great tool for practicing stress. You | Demonstrate stress and unstress w/ rubber band.  
Choral read using rubber bands.  
Demonstrate other  
Take notes on handout.  
Practice speaking 3 sentence s with rubber bands.  
Choral read using rubber bands.  
Discuss with partner. 3x |
may also use arm gestures in and out, tapping the desk, clapping, tapping feet, marching, stomping, or a quick arm movement down to show stress. Kinesthetics help our English learners to understand pronunciation features. But they also help to automatize the correct use of the pronunciation feature.

Take a 1 minute to discuss your partner. Where could you incorporate kinesthetics into your lessons?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>24</th>
<th>Description &amp; Analysis / Function Words</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ok. I think we are ready to move on to function words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Function words are usually unstressed, unless in final position or when used emphatically. I want to be clear here, that when we stress or unstress, it is ALWAYS the VOWEL. We reduce the vowel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reduced vowels are quicker, quieter, and lower in pitch. They are NOT a fast speaking or a speaking version of a stressed vowel. They are formed differently.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Before we practice a sentence, let’s try the sound of an unstressed sound. In English, a reduced vowel sounds like “eh”. Repeat after me “eh”, “eh”. I want you to say a long ‘e’ sound “eee”. Feel how tense the muscles of your cheeks and tongue feel. Now try a short ‘a’ sound “aah”. Feel how the tension in your tongue. Now, again, try a reduced vowel in English, “eh”. Do you feel how the muscles are relaxed?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Note to presenter: “eh” is actually a schwa, written as /θ/. We also have the reduced sound /i/, but beware not to overwhelm participants in this PD session. If it seems they can handle more, a good example for the /i/ sound is in the word American. ELs want to pronounce the ‘I’ as a long ‘e’ sound; however, in English it is the reduced vowel /i/.)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Think of the word Canada. Which syllable has the stress? Yes, the first. And we say that ‘a’ as a short ‘a’ sound “aah”. But the other ‘a’s in that word. How do we say those? Yes, as reduced vowels. Feel yourself say the three syllables. Ca-na-da. Good. Now, we are discussing syllable stress only here, but syllable stress combines with sentence stress to make rhythm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The most important takeaway—our students need to be TAUGHT and to practice reducing vowels. It’s likely their first languages do not have reduced vowels, so it’s our job to teach them about this concept, practice doing it, and then give them practice stressing and reducing in long</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Take notes on handout. 
Call and repeat reduced vowel sounds. 
Take notes on handout. 
Repeat reduced vowels.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page 25</th>
<th>Description &amp; Analysis</th>
<th>This is a list of the parts of speech that are function words. They are usually unstressed. Take a minute to read over the list silently.</th>
<th>Read list silently. Take notes on examples.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Example</strong></td>
<td><strong>Activity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consider this sentence again. Pay close attention to the unstressed words.</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thank you for lending me money for school.</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Again, let’s write a few examples of each on your notes.</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Any questions?</strong></td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Controlled Practice using Kinesthetics</td>
<td>Let’s practice! Now, this is the similar to what we did before, but I want you to really focus on NOT ONLY making the capitalized words stressed, but making the function words smaller, shorter, quieter. We will use our rubber bands again, but remember this time we are focusing on UNSTRESSING function words.</td>
<td>Practice speaking sentences with rubber bands. Choral read with rubber bands.</td>
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<td><strong>Ok, great! Let’s practice these together.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>They’re interested in applying for a loan. Rob is afraid of getting into debt. I’m interested in studying auto mechanics.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Controlled Practice/Identify Content words &amp; practice using Kinesthetics</td>
<td>Now I am going to quiz you. First you need to identify which words are content words and which are function words. I want you to underline the content words. You have 2 minutes.</td>
<td>Elicit answers. Underline content words. Share out. Practice speaking using rubber bands.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ok, which words are content words in #1? And #2? #3? #4?</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Ok, practice with your partner. Be sure to focus on STRESS and UNSTRESS using your rubber band. You have 1 minute.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>Let’s try another strategy from our toolbox! Locate the</td>
<td>Point to Predict</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>utterances to practice rhythm.</strong></td>
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<td>Text</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td><strong>discrimination/Cloze</strong> cloze activity on your handout. I will read a passage and you will write in the function words as you hear them. Remember, function words are unstressed, so you will need to listen closely!</td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td><strong>Listening discrimination/Cloze</strong> Ok, let’s see how well you did. Here are the answers. Now, of course, that was easy for you to predict, but I’m sure you all know many ELs will struggle with getting just the right word in the blanks. This activity will help to develop their listening skills for unstressed function words.</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td><strong>Research supporting teaching rhythm</strong> Now, some of you may be thinking, “I already teach letter sounds and intonation. Isn’t that enough pronunciation? Why do I need to teach rhythm too?” The proof is in the research: In order to make sense of what one is saying, a listener pays close attention to STRESSED WORDS and stores them in their SHORT-TERM MEMORY. The listener then identifies the PATTERN OF STRESSED SYLLABLES to help them PROCESS and INTERPRET what they hear. When a speaker FAILS to produce STRESSED CONTENT words in contrast to UNSTRESSED FUNCTION words, the message is NOT COMPREHENDED. (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010) Rhythm (appropriately lengthening stressed syllables and shortening reduced syllables) is the MOST COMMON pronunciation issue for English learners! (Chela-Flores, 1993, Celce-Murcia et al., 2010)</td>
<td></td>
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<td>31</td>
<td><strong>Communicative Framework</strong> I am going to give you our next handout for taking notes. At this point, you might be asking, “Ok Angie, it sounds important. So HOW do we TEACH this in our classes?” In a few moments, we are going to unpack a “toolbox” of strategies to teach rhythm. You will be able to apply these strategies to your existing lessons; I will show you how! Then, you will get a chance to adapt an existing lesson to incorporate rhythm practice! Before we do that, however, I want to be sure you understand how to incorporate rhythm into your courses. I will be following a communicative framework for incorporating pronunciation into ESL curriculum.</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Handout</th>
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<td>28</td>
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<td>31</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| 28 | **Handout** Give Handout B. |
| 29 | **Handout** Prepare to take notes on Handout B. |
| 30 | **Handout** |
| 31 | **Handout** |
According to Teaching Pronunciation the communicative framework includes 5 steps:
1. Description and analysis
2. Listening discrimination
3. Controlled practice
4. Guided practice
5. Communicative (or free) practice

You will find this list on Handout B, so please use that to take notes.

It is important to note here that these phases are NOT intended to be completed in one lesson. In fact, they should be done over the length of a unit. Or if you wanted to envision your entire course, you would hit on all five and then revisit for practice throughout.

Research shows pronunciation is best taught when it is integrated into thematic lessons—the content you are already using—as opposed to supplemental lessons or stand-alone lessons.

I want you to take a minute to work with your partner. Match the activities we've done today and the phases of the communicative framework they belong to.

---

| 32 | Communicative Framework | According to Teaching Pronunciation the communicative framework includes 5 steps:
|    |                          | 1. Description and analysis
|    |                          | 2. Listening discrimination
|    |                          | 3. Controlled practice
|    |                          | 4. Guided practice
|    |                          | 5. Communicative (or free) practice
|    |                          | You will find this list on Handout B, so please use that to take notes.
|    |                          | It is important to note here that these phases are NOT intended to be completed in one lesson. In fact, they should be done over the length of a unit. Or if you wanted to envision your entire course, you would hit on all five and then revisit for practice throughout.
|    |                          | Research shows pronunciation is best taught when it is integrated into thematic lessons—the content you are already using—as opposed to supplemental lessons or stand-alone lessons.
|    |                          | I want you to take a minute to work with your partner. Match the activities we've done today and the phases of the communicative framework they belong to. |
|    |                          | Show textbook. Referenc e Handout B. Discuss with partner. |

---

| 33 | Communicative Framework | Can I get a few volunteers to share their answers? Which activities belong in phase 1?
|    |                          | Great! Note taking, teacher script for stressed words, and analyzing speech in video.
|    |                          | Phase 2? Yes! Cloze dictation. That's it.
|    |                          | Phase 3? Uh-huh, identify content words and practice speaking, and the rhythm drill (The cats chase mice). Good!
|    |                          | Did anything fit under phase 4? I think the part where we were identifying content words and practicing speaking fit here in the beginning. When you were deciding which were content words and practicing the rhythm on your own. Good!
|    |                          | Any for phase 5? Right, none yet. You will see an example when we go over the Toolbox of Strategies.
|    |                          | As you can see, you have already practiced many of our strategies today! Before we move on, I want you to take another look at the 5 phases of the communicative framework. This framework is a guide that helps in planning lessons. The question I ask of you is: How much |
|    |                          | Elicit volunteer responses. Share out. Discuss with partner. |
time do you think it would take a class to move through the 5 phases for one pronunciation feature? Discuss for 1 minute.

Can I get a few of you to share your thoughts? Ok, good. He believes this could take an entire unit. Any other ideas? Over the duration of the course. Good. Ok, yes, I just want to hit home the idea that these phases are NOT to be worked through in a single lesson, or quickly at all. It might take a while unit, or a whole course. The BIG idea here is that you make sure to hit on 1, don’t forget 2, and then be sure to provide practice in all 3 ways (3, 4, and 5). The research shows 2 things: 1) Many teachers are good at creating activities for controlled practice, but do not provide enough pronunciation practice for guided or communicative. And the other, sustained practice is key. That means, hit on all 5 phases and be sure to revisit each again and again throughout the course. This is the key to reach mastery of the pronunciation feature; this will allow the English learner to transfer the skill to their own speech in real life.

Furthermore, remember the goal of this session is to provide you with strategies to apply to YOUR existing lessons. That is because the research also shows supplemental materials are not as effective as INTEGRATED lessons. When you take the content, or theme, you are already studying, and apply a pronunciation focus, it is more effective than stopping the lesson to switch to a stand-alone pronunciation lesson. Incorporating pronunciation INTO your lessons is going to be most effective.

Now you will find ROOM for all 6 strategies in on your handout. Notice, I did NOT write the name of each strategy or give you the notes. I want to you take notes as we go along. Don’t forget to write down examples, so you can recall this information later.

The 1st strategy in our toolbox is called Vocab + Rhythm. I say and you repeat, “Vocab + Rhythm”. Good!

This is the easiest one--you can start doing this tomorrow!!!

What this means is that you should always teach stress at the individual word level when you first introduce a vocabulary word. It’s simple! And this can be done in all classes and content areas!

For example, take our Ventures, Unit 5 vocabulary word unremarkable. When first teaching this word, write the
word with stress markers on the stressed syllables; this could be bubbles, underlining, or capital letters like you have seen here today. Next, have students practice saying correct stress un-re-MARK-able; Have them repeat after you. Perhaps you pass out rubber bands each time you are working on vocabulary. Or perhaps your mnemonic of choice is simply using arm gestures. It doesn’t matter what you use--just get them practicing!

Let’s try it: unremarkable (repeat), unremarkable (repeat)

I would also use the word in sentence to show the rhythm of the sentence. For example, the reading in Unit 5 used the word as: The stage was plain and unremarkable. I might shorten this to: The STAGE was un-re-MARK-able. Let’s try this together

If participants ask, in this unit the vocabulary is first read in a passage, then could be used while answering comprehension Q’s. Finally, they are listed, they find them in text, decide if “positive or negative” and then write cues they used to decide. Students then pair and discuss using vocab in other contexts (about a TV program).

Toolbox Strategy #2 Teacher Script for Stressed Words

Let’s move on to Strategy # 2 from our toolbox. It fits phase two, listening discrimination. The name of this strategy is Teacher Script for Stressed Words. I call and you repeat, “Teacher Script for Stressed Words”. Good!

(Does anyone know why I would make you repeat after me? Right! We are better at remembering things we say rather than things we simply hear.)

In this technique, the teacher reads a script and students write what they hear--this is the one you did a few minutes ago. You may recall, the purpose of this exercise was to get the listener to recognize they hear the content words first, because they are stressed. These are also the words that carry the most meaning. This can also help second-language listeners to improve their processing ability of patterns of stressed syllables.

Now, in order to apply this to your existing lessons, you simply need to choose a short passage or long sentence. You will read it multiple times without the normal pauses used in dictation. Students write down the words they hear most easily. Then, the try to reconstruct the original passage with a partner.

As an example. let’s apply this to a sample passage together. This passage is from the same textbook.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Toolbox Strategy #2 Teacher Script for Stressed Words</th>
<th>Ventures 3, Unit 6, Lesson D (p. 76)</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>When we did this earlier, I read aloud and you took notes. That is how we would do this, but for this example, you get to see the text first. Would anyone like to volunteer to read this aloud at a pace appropriate for ESL level 4 students? Great! Go ahead, nice and loud. Good! And students are taking notes. You might read it a few times and then let them work in partners to recreate the rest of the text. I had you underline your original words, so you could see the difference.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>It might look something like this. You will see all of our content words are underlined, yet the function words are not. Students discover they words they heard most clearly carry the most meaning (Content words) and they are stressed. The rest of the words carry less meaning (function words) and are unstressed. You might even extend this activity for further rhythm practice by having students practice reading chorally with a partner. End with a choral reading with the full class. If “might” is debated, one could stress “might” to emphasize the possibility. Another way is no stress on ‘might’ and light stress on ‘think’ as the main verb. Ok, that’s it for this strategy, but I that was a lot of info! I want you to talk to your neighbor for 1 minute. Together, explain the steps of applying Strategy #2 Teacher Script for Stressed Words. Great! Would one pair like to volunteer the steps they came up with?</td>
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<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Our next strategy is also designed for listening discrimination. This is called a Cloze Dictation. I call and you repeat, “Cloze Dictation.” Easy enough, right? Students write the missing words in the blanks while listening, like you did earlier. Now to apply this strategy to your existing lessons, you must first choose a passage from your curriculum. For our example today, we are going to use the same text as Strategy 3.</td>
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<td>Before doing the lesson, the teacher must type the passage, removing any function words. During the lesson, hand out the passage and ask students to predict which</td>
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| Cloze Dictation | words are missing. Next, the teacher will read the passage aloud while students check their answers. This exercise focuses their attention on unstressed elements.  

*I would also like to note that this strategy can be completed in the same way for content words, focusing on the stressed elements.* |

| 40 | Toolbox Strategy #4 Identify Content Words/Practice Speaking | Our next strategy from the toolbox is #4. The name says it all—Identifying content words and practice speaking. *I call and you repeat, “Identifying content words and practice speaking rhythm”. This is controlled practice.*  

This strategy consists of multiple items, which could be statements or questions. For each, students are asked to circle the content words (or the stressed syllables of the content words). Let’s look at the example sentence.  

It's closed on Mondays.  

*Students will circle the content words. For more difficult sentences, this is a good time to review the rules of content and function words and exactly which parts of speech belong to each. For the last step, students then check their answers by comparing with their partner’s answers.* |

| 41 | Toolbox Strategy #4 Identify Content Words/Practice Speaking | Here is a recreation of Grammar and Beyond, Unit 13, Exercise 3.2. This is from a lesson on adjective patterns in English. The rule states we need a noun or pronoun after an adjective. Students completed this original activity by adding in the words *one* and *ones* after adjectives that had no noun.  

*In this example the grammar lesson is done, so it is the PERFECT time to extend the lesson to practice rhythm!*  

Now, I want you to create your answer key. On your handout, you will circle the content words. You will have 5 minutes.  

Now it is time to tell your “class” what to do. I want you to work with your neighbor to practice giving instructions to your “students”.  

*Good! And let’s not forget the 2nd part of this strategy “Practice Speaking Using Rhythm”. Here, the teacher reads the sentences, while students listen to each item and repeat using accurate rhythm. They are to pay special attention to making syllables longer, louder, and higher in pitch than the unstressed syllables.* |
This is also a good time to use those kinesthetic movements you have chosen. Remember, whether it's rubber bands, arm strikes, or hand movements, you want to choose one and be consistent in your classroom. The students will become very familiar.

Go ahead and practice one or two with your partner. One of you is the teacher, the other is the student.

Moving on to my personal favorite strategy based on my experience. Strategy #5 is called Info Gap. I call and you repeat, “Info Gap”. Here we are creating an info gap to practice rhythm. This is guided practice.

I want to mention that teachers often do a great job with description and analysis and controlled practice when it comes to pronunciation, but the real challenge is creating meaningful activities that are guided practice or communicative practice, like Strategy #6 will be. It takes purposeful planning to create activities that give ELs the opportunities to speak freely, yet focusing on a pronunciation feature. However, it is necessary for them to have ample opportunities for practice in order to reach mastery of the pronunciation feature.

In this activity, students are paired and each is missing information necessary to complete a task or solve a problem. They must communicate with each other effectively to fill in the gaps.

To apply this strategy to your existing curriculum, you will choose an exercise or passage. This part takes some creativity because you need to decide how this information could be divided up. You will write it out in chart form. Next, copy the chart and paste it two times. The first will become Chart A and you will remove half of the information. The other is Chart B and you will remove the other half of the information.

While doing this, keep in mind we are aiming to make this guided practice. You don’t want to write the questions and answers out on the chart—just the information. The students must figure out how to phrase the questions and responses on their own. You may need to remind them they are focusing on rhythm throughout this activity.

Here is an example of information I took from a reading in Ventures 3, Unit 1, Lesson D Reading, p. 12. This excerpt is a nonfiction piece about finding a job that fits different personality types. As I was creating this activity, I thought
it might make a good pre-reading activity. It would also work great as an extension activity to further improve comprehension.

The first chart shows all of the information I found in the passage about personality types. I then removed half of the information, as you can see in Chart A. One student would get this chart, while their partner would get Chart B, not shown, and they would need to communicate with each other to fill in the chart. Be sure to set up guidelines beforehand, such as “No peeking at each other’s sheet”, “Speak in full sentences”, and of course, “Practice stressing content words, while unstressing function words.”

Millin (2015) recommends that this activity is completed in the following five steps: 1) Assigning roles. For example, student A, student B, and when necessary student C. 2) Preparation time for students to practice their assigned speaking task with others that have the same assignment. This could be all the A’s together, and all the B’s. 3) Next, the students complete the Information gap. Here, they take turns requesting and giving information.

Now, these activities might be where each student has part of the information and they need to ask questions of each other to fill in their chart. Or, it might be that they each have a picture and they are asking questions about what is similar and different. When they find something is different about their picture, they circle it. Maybe they aim for 8 differences or some set number.

The teacher should monitor accurate rhythm and stress placement, providing feedback after the practice. It may be necessary to model accurate rhythm and have student repeat.

As I mentioned, the Info Gap is a guided activity in terms of communication. I can’t stress this enough that we have to allow our students the opportunity to phrase the questions and answers independently.

Remind students to stress content words. You may even need to stop and review which types of words are stressed.

Now it’s your turn to create an info gap activity. It takes some practice.

This exercise comes after the reading in the unit. It is focused on the vocabulary of the story. As you can see,
students are to match words to their definitions. Of course, we wouldn’t want to draw attention to this in the book because the students would already have the answers!

Take 2 minutes, you may use the charts provided on the handout. Create an info gap from this information.

47 Toolbox Strategy #5 Info Gap

Great! I noticed many of your charts looked like this! You have half of the info filled in on Chart A and half on Chart B.

The million dollar question: How would you keep your students focused on rhythm during the speaking activity? Talk with your neighbor about this.

Can I get a few volunteers to share their answers. Great! Yes, those are great ideas.

48 Toolbox Strategy #5 Info Gap

If students are struggling to use rhythm, go ahead and apply strategy #4: Identify Content Words and Practice Speaking!

Have students write out answers and circle the content words.

Then model and repeat chorally for extra practice.

I also wanted to point out, even if the students aren’t practicing with perfect rhythm during a guided or communicative practice activity, at the very least they are attempting to do so, which is drawing their attention to the pronunciation feature. This is giving them a metacognitive awareness of the feature, which will only help them to improve in the future!

49 Toolbox Strategy #6 Role Play

We are on our final strategy in the toolbox today! Strategy #6 is called Role play, which I’m sure many of you have experienced at some point before. I call and you repeat, “Role Play”. Role plays are a good way to provide ELs with communicative practice, meaning they are communicating freely.

For this activity, the teacher hands out cards with assigned roles and information and students must create the interaction between the roles.

The first step to apply this strategy is to complete a lesson from your existing curriculum. I believe this works better to do after a lesson because students will have adequate background knowledge to be able to communicate freely.

Next, you will create cards with assigned roles and
information. You will hand them out and the students will create an interaction between the roles.

Now I think it is helpful, here, to allow the students to practice in like groups again before you begin. That way they can practice a little with stating questions and phrasing. They will also get a chance to focus on rhythm—the pronunciation focus.

The teacher will monitor accuracy and provide feedback only after the activity is complete. I would keep the feedback general, as well, as not to single any one out.

50 Toolbox
Strategy
#6
Role
Play
Here are two example role cards. I have chosen a career counselor and a student. Yep, you guessed it, this information came from the passage we read from Unit 1—the same one we used to create our info gaps in the last activity!

As you can see, the role cards tell the students what information they are asking about or answering, but it is up to them to create the language to do so.

Role plays are actually quite easy to apply to existing lessons, so don’t be afraid to try this one!

51 Summary
Wow! Let’s recap which strategies we have covered today.

Looking at the handout with a partner, please list the six strategies we have learned today. You have 1 minute.

Great! You recall we talked about Vocab + Rhythm, Teacher script for stressed words, cloze dictation, identify content words and practice speaking, info gap, and role play. Awesome job!

52 Conclusion
Are there any questions for me?

I want to thank you all for joining me today. I hope you walk away from here with an understanding of rhythm in English, how it differs from other languages, and why it’s important for us to teach it to our ELs. And you should have an idea of how to apply the six strategies from our toolbox to your curriculum.

You may email me with any further questions or if you’d like a copy of this presentation.

Thank you again and have a great conference!
Handout A

Transcript of Oprah’s Speech

We will watch the video two times. The 1st time, mark where you see eyebrows raising, arm/hand going up, head moving. The 2nd time, mark where you hear words (vowels) that are said longer and louder.

So, I love this idea of deep listening, because often times when someone comes to you and they want to really vent they want to purge whatever’s going on inside them, people start talking and giving advice. So, if you allow the person just to let whatever those feelings are to come out, and then at another time come back to them with your advice or comments, you would experience a deeper healing. That’s what you are saying.

Transcript of Somali Woman’s Speech

We will watch the video two times. The 1st time, mark where you see eyebrows raising, arm/hand going up, head moving. The 2nd time, mark where you hear words (vowels) that are said longer and louder.

Bad news, I don’t like it bad news. Because the Somalian, these are good people. Even me I have friends, American. Black American . . . Mexican. I want to talk to all people. But I don’t know what’s wrong.

Notes:
Communicative Framework for Incorporating Pronunciation into ESL Curriculum

With your partner match the activities we have done so far today with the phases of the Communicative Framework?

1. Description and analysis
2. Listening discrimination
3. Controlled practice
4. Guided practice
5. Communicative (free) practice

   a. Cloze dictation
   b. Identify content words and practice speaking
   c. Rhythm drill
   d. Note taking
   e. Teacher script for stressed words
   f. Analyze speech in video

Listening Discrimination Activity

1. I will read a passage.
2. As I am reading, write down as many words as you can.
3. Underline these words only.
4. With a partner, try to recreate the passage.

## Description and Analysis: Content and Function Words

### Content Words

Content words are **stressed** / **unstressed**. (Circle one.)

Example sentence: ________________________________

These sounds are:

a) ________________________________
b) ________________________________
c) ________________________________
d) ________________________________

Words that are usually stressed content words: (write examples of each below)

- nouns
- main verbs
- adjectives
- possessive pronouns
- demonstrative pronouns
- question words
- *not* / negative contractions
- adverbs
- adverbial particles
Function Words

Function words are stressed / unstressed. (Circle one.)

Example sentence:
_____________________________________________________________________

These sounds are:

a) ______________________________________________

b) ______________________________________________

c) ______________________________________________

Words that are usually unstressed function words: (write examples of each below)

- articles

- auxiliary verbs

- personal pronouns

- relative pronouns

- possessive adjectives

- demonstrative adjectives

- prepositions

- conjunctions

- adverbial particles
Identify Content Words and Practice Speaking using Kinesthetics

Let’s look at Ventures 3, Unit 7, Lesson C2 (pp.88-89)—a grammar lesson on using gerunds after prepositions.

Identify which words are content words vs. function words. Underline the content words. Practice speaking with your partner using rubber bands.

1) She’s afraid of losing her job.
2) He pays for everything with cash.
3) We’re thinking about buying a computer.
4) I’m tired of waiting in line.


Cloze Dictation: California Drivers

Read through the following dialogue. Try to predict the word that is missing in each blank. Then listen and check your answers.

A: How did you come into work today, then?
B: I drove.
A: What were ______ roads like?
B: Oh, terrible. You know what California drivers ______ like when it’s raining.
   I saw three accidents ______ the way here.
A: Three accidents? Was this ______ the freeway ______ the city streets?
B: On the freeway.
A: Was anybody hurt, ______ you think?
B: Oh, I don’t think so. The accidents were all sorts ______ fender-benders!

Handout B

Communicative Framework for Incorporating Pronunciation into ESL Curriculum (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010)

1. Description and analysis
2. Listening discrimination
3. Controlled practice
4. Guided practice
5. Communicative (free) practice

Toolbox of Strategies

Use this handout to take notes on Strategies 1-6.

Strategy # 1  Title: _______________________________________________________
Description:

Example/Notes:
In some countries such as the United States, England, and Canada, punctuality is an unspoken rule. It is important to be on time, especially in business. People usually arrive a little early for business appointments. Business meetings and personal appointments often have strict beginning and ending times. When you are late, other people might think you are rude, disorganized, or irresponsible.

Strategy # 3  Title: ____________________________________________________
Description:

Example/Notes:
Strategy # 4  Title: ____________________________________________________

Description:

Example/Notes:

Here is a recreation of Grammar and Beyond, Unit 13, Exercise 3.2. This is from a lesson on adjective patterns in English. The rule states we need a noun or pronoun after an adjective. Students completed adding in the words one and ones after adjectives that had no noun.

Now apply rhythm strategy #4, Identifying Content Words and Practice Speaking Using Rhythm. First, create your answer key. Next, practice giving instructions to your “students”.

1. A Which pants should I wear, the blue pants or the brown ones?
   B The brown pants look better.

2. A How’s your job?
   B It’s OK. There are some nice co-workers and some less friendly ones.

3. A Joe has such an interesting job! He always has funny stories to tell.
   B That’s true. We only have boring ones.

4. A Who goes to your restaurant?
   B Most of the customers are young professionals, but there are older ones, too.

5. A I work for an ethical employer.
   B You’re lucky. I work for an unfair one.

Instead of defining vocabulary words independently or as a whole group, try doing this activity as an info gap. Using the information from Ventures 3, Unit 1, Lesson D (p. 13) to create an info gap for students A and B.

Match the words and the definitions.

1. personality _______ a. a kind of person or thing
2. type _______ b. good at making things that are new and different
3. outgoing _______ c. enjoys thinking and finding answers
4. intellectual _______ d. a person who paints, dances, writes, or draws
5. creative _______ e. the natural way a person thinks, feels, and acts
6. artist _______ f. friendly
Let’s recap!

*With your partner, list the 6 strategies we applied to content lessons today.*

1)
2)
3)
4)
5)
6)

Thank you for joining me today! If you have any questions or comments, please contact me, Angie Haasch, at angiehaasch@gmail.com.
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

The core research question is *How can PD materials be developed to educate AE ESL teachers about English rhythm and to provide effective strategies to incorporate rhythm throughout content lessons?* I have explored the research regarding pronunciation pedagogy, including the components involved in the teaching of rhythm, rhythm’s affect on intelligibility, and which barriers currently exist to teaching rhythm. I have explored research regarding pronunciation implementation and existing strategies to teach rhythm. Finally, I have created PD materials for AE ESL teachers in order to provide them with a firm knowledge base surrounding rhythm, as well as instructions on how they can apply strategies within their existing content lessons to improve the rhythm of their ELs’ speech.

Reflections of the Process

The process of this culminating capstone has been insightful. While researching, I confirmed many suspicions that lead me to the project idea—to create a PD session surrounding English rhythm--in the first place. Although I had assumed many teachers were not teaching pronunciation, rhythm in particular, the current situation in ESL classrooms is worse than I had anticipated. Many teachers are not teaching suprasegmentals altogether, and of those that do, few teach rhythm and likely don’t understand the importance in doing so. Furthermore, rhythm is seldom taught or practiced
in textbooks, and when it is, it is usually one activity in the whole book. In these cases, it is not explicitly taught, nor is there sufficient practice. Furthermore, rhythm was not present at every level of textbook series. Another suspicion I had prior to this project was that teachers had little training in teaching pronunciation and that there were few PD sessions available that focused on suprasegmental features. I found confirmation of this situation in the process.

The process of writing this thesis gave me a deep understanding of rhythm in the English language, as well as how it differs from other world languages. I found this to be a fascinating topic to study, in part because of how imperative correct rhythm is for the intelligibility of the speaker. Although I found other suprasegmental features, such as word stress and intonation, to be quite significant, I believe rhythm is the most important. In fact, if a given course doesn’t have much time to devote to pronunciation, I would encourage the teacher to focus on this feature above all others although I should note I found it difficult to speak of word stress as if it were a different feature from rhythm, because the rhythm of an utterance is greatly disrupted if proper word stress is not used. For this reason, I see this PD session as part of a series; learn more on this below.

One piece I appreciated learning about during the literature review was the order in which rhythm should be taught and practiced in the classroom. The communicative framework for incorporating pronunciation into ESL curriculum (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010) laid out five phases that lessons should follow and then revisit throughout the duration of the course. This was insightful because it provides a concrete plan for presenting a pronunciation feature and purposeful steps to practice it in an order that...
makes sense. Following the five phases ensures the feature will be explicitly taught and
the students are provided with ample opportunities for practice, as I had found in my
research as the advised way to teach a pronunciation feature. In the research, it was also
found that many students may not reach the language goal of automaticity due to the lack
of guided and true communicative practice. Baker (2014) seconded this idea in her
description of controlled, guided and free technique; she found the last two types were
rarely practiced. The framework helps to keep this goal—the goal of true communicative
practice—in mind while planning lessons for pronunciation practice. I am using this in
my teaching practice already and it was invaluable in designing the PD session. I should
also mention that I found creating activities for communicative practice quite difficult.
Controlled practice strategies and activities abound, and guided practice is easier to
design; however, communicative practice takes a bit more creativity. To create an activity
where students are practicing communicating freely, yet the focus remains on rhythm or
any given pronunciation feature is challenging at first, but I believe it will get easier with
practice.

I found it quite helpful to use the communicative framework while creating the
PD session. My goal was to create an interactive session using discovery learning. In
doing so, I was able to use three of the five phases (Description and analysis, Listening
discrimination, and Controlled practice) as part of the presentation. The participants will
experience the phases first-hand while they focus on defining rhythm, the differences of
syllable-timed and stress-timed languages, and why rhythm is important to intelligibility.
I believe this will give them a better understanding of the five phases of the framework,
which will be beneficial when they begin to apply the strategies to their own lessons. They will need to keep the order of the phases in mind and they will have experienced multiple activities they can emulate with their own students.

One thing I found interesting about the process of writing the literature review was that the order in which Chapter Two was laid out ended up creating a blueprint of the PD session. The progression of introducing each concept as they built on each other (word stress, sentence stress, rhythm, stress-timing vs. syllable-timing, etc.) helped guide how I would present the information to the participants. However, I found time constraints to be limiting in the number of topics I was able to include in the PD session.

In the creation of the PD session, how much time was allotted for the session had a great impact on how the session was laid out, particularly when choosing which strategies to include. For each chosen strategy, I needed to explain the strategy and either model its application or have the participants do the application as practice. It was not possible to do all eleven of the strategies outlined in Chapter Two due to time constraints. I found narrowing this down to just six strategies was quite challenging, but I tried to keep in mind that I wanted the participants to be able to easily apply the strategies. Focusing on strategies with convenient application helped me to choose the six found in Chapter Four. Furthermore, I needed to choose the right strategies to be sure I was reaching all five phases of the communicative framework.

Implementation recommendations

The PD session materials are developed, specifically, for the Minnesota English Learner Education (MELEd) conference and to be presented by me in a 2-hour session.
Modifications would be needed, however, for another setting, presenter, or time allotment. I believe this could be adapted to fit multiple settings. It would be simple to do a similar session as an in-house PD session or at another conference. However, if someone were to use it in another way, such as the way described below, which was suggested by my colleague, some modifications would be necessary.

My colleague served as the curriculum coach at our adult education program for a number of years. When we discussed the format of this session, she explained that it is often futile to give in-house PD to the full (evening) staff because of the high teacher turnover rate. Furthermore, all PD for this school must be connected to our specific system of effective interventions (SOEI). That said, she imagined professional development designed for curriculum coaches only. Once trained, the curriculum coaches would then apply their expertise during the process of teacher evaluation. The SOEI in our district is based on Charlotte Danielson’s framework for teacher evaluation (Danielsongroup.org, 2016). The annual protocol at the adult level differs from that of K-12. Only contract AE teachers complete observations. Probationary teachers complete one full observation per year and two focused observations, including pre- and post-observation meetings. Non-probationary teachers complete one full observation every three years, as well as focused observations. Teachers are evaluated on multiple areas according to the framework, overall, but for each focused observation, a teacher chooses an area on which to improve. In this case, teaching rhythm and incorporating rhythm practice would be an option teachers might choose. While I think this is a worthwhile idea, one downfall I see is that hourly-paid teachers, such as myself, are not required to
complete the observation process. Thus, these teachers might not be exposed to PD information or strategies to teach rhythm at all; alternatively, many hourly teachers elect to complete the observations process in order to improve their craft or could be involved in learning walks, where they are able to observe other teachers in practice.

The PD session materials in Chapter Four can be modified for a shorter length of time, as may be necessary in another setting. One piece of the session that takes time is the numerous times participants are asked to interact, both with one another and with the curriculum. This could be condensed into fewer interactions. Another area that might reduce the length are the strategies that the participants experience that are also applied to sample curriculum in the end. These strategies could be depicted once and then summarized instead. Finally, one might eliminate the section on the communicative framework for teaching pronunciation in ESL curriculum altogether. I believe it is tremendously valuable, but for the sake of time it could be removed. In addition, the framework may not be necessary for non-ESL teachers.

Finally, this presentation might be presented by someone other than me. In that case, the script and slideshow will be very useful. If I were to make a recommendation to someone, I would suggest he/she read this capstone project in full, which can be Hamline University’s institutional repository, Digital Commons@Hamline, found online at http://digitalcommons.hamline.edu/. This would provide the presenter with the background knowledge to thoroughly explain more difficult concepts of rhythm, such as stress timing and unstress. I believe the script is easy to follow and descriptive, while the slideshow provides great illustrations and sample adaptations.
Overall, I believe this presentation could be implemented for a variety of settings, time lengths, and presenters. If I were to present to a different audience, however, slightly more modifications might be needed.

My recommendations for presenting these PD materials to teachers of content areas outside of ESL, teacher assistants, or teachers who have no little experience with English learners would be to present this as part of the three-part series. The plan for the series is based on the ideas of Derwing and Rossiter (2003), who state suprasegmental errors may have more of an effect on intelligibility than segmental errors. Their working definition for suprasegmental features is based on the a study of Derwing, Munro, and Wiebe (as cited in Derwing, Munro, and Wiebe, 1997), where ESL students focused on global speaking strategies (e.g. stress, rhythm, and intonation). Before teaching rhythm, it would be necessary to thoroughly teach word stress, or syllable stress. Word stress can be very nuanced depending on the part of speech, such as the prefix + noun PROJECT versus the prefix + verb (project), and depending on the word’s use, such as noun compound GREENHOUSE versus a noun modified by an adjective green HOUSE (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). Due to this, participants would benefit from a complete understanding.

Furthermore, intonation is found to have a profound effect on intelligibility. A one-word utterance with a rising pitch could signify a question (i.e., Now?), whereas an utterance with a falling pitch could signify a command (i.e., Now.). Furthermore, intonation can convey attitude or emotion. Consider the following utterance: Great. Depending on the intonation, this could be meant to sound perfunctory, enthusiastic, or sarcastic (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). I believe participants who have little linguistic education or
experience working with ELs will benefit greatly from this recommended three-part series.

Limitations and Extensions

The intended audience for this PD session is one made up of teachers with ESL education licenses. The participants who attend the MELEd conference, however, do not always fit this mold. Oftentimes, there are teachers licensed in another area, such as math, special education or Adult Basic Education (ABE), who are currently teaching ESL at an adult level, and they are seeking more education on teaching ESL. Other times, content area teachers (e.g. science, math) may attend to learn more on ESL pedagogy due to the high number of ELs in their content area classroom (with no licensed ESL teacher present). It is worth giving consideration to who exactly may be participating in the PD session and tailoring parts to various groups. Furthermore, this session is created for the adult level while participants in this session may be made up of teachers in all areas of education: elementary, middle school, secondary, college, and teacher education. It is advisable to provide a statement or activity for participants drawing attention to the fact that they will be able to adapt the strategies to the level they teach.

The research of this capstone was focused solely on rhythm. The English language is comprised of numerous suprasegmental features, and many times, if felt odd to focus solely on rhythm when there were other features that seemed equally as important. Perhaps this would feel more applicable after having PD on other suprasegmental features, namely word stress, sentence stress, intonation and/or pausing. However, it was informative to take a narrow look at rhythm, while exploring the
research regarding all pronunciation pedagogy (namely suprasegmental features).
Furthermore, it was also suggested there is a need for pronunciation teaching (namely suprasegmental), as well as a need for teacher training in pronunciation (not just rhythm). Once more, were Teaching English Rhythm part of a series, teachers may develop pronunciation pedagogy skills in all suprasegmental areas.

One area that became troublesome in the process was the topic of copyright of images in the slideshow. I created the slideshow using Google Slides, and when I needed a stock photo, I used the *insert image* and *search* features I am accustomed to from Microsoft Powerpoint. However, I learned that finding images using Google Slides, in that same way, searched the internet via Google for images. These are likely copyrighted images and permission to use is needed. This could have been avoided by simply starting the search for images with Creative Common Licenses. The license makes the material free to share and adapt. From there, the author needs to cite the image as one licensed through Creative Common and provide an appropriate reference. I would advise anyone who is begging to make a slideshow that might be published or used for training purposes to keep this in mind at the beginning of the creation process.

Another topic that arose in the final capstone meeting was the topic of the difficulty creating information gaps. I made sure to provide an example of how to apply this strategy to existing lessons in the presentation, as well as providing an opportunity for the participants to practice doing so on their own. The committee members agreed more practice may be needed. Although it is not difficult to make an info gap, there is prep and it takes practice before it becomes intuitive. One idea to remedy this is to assign
participants to small groups. Each group would be given a different activity or passage from an existing content lesson; they would adapt each to become an info gap activity. Once these are complete, each group will share out their new info gap activity. The presenter will then be sure copies of each are made, so that each participant goes home with a copy of all of the examples. This may provide ample practice necessary to be able to apply the info gap strategy to their personal existing lessons. In addition, it is advisable to put extra emphasis on the idea that ELs need to be able to practice *speaking* each part, not writing it (as that will then become a reading aloud activity), because they need to be given time to practice applying rhythm to the utterances they will make once the info gap activity begins. When they are meeting with like groups beforehand, they are creating a metacognitive awareness of the use of rhythm. This metacognitive awareness is necessary for real-life application of a classroom-learned language feature.

When it comes to the videos used for language analysis, one might find the clip of the Somali woman less than ideal. For one, she uses slight rhythm in her English, whereas an EL slightly newer to English might exhibit more first-language transfer, or syllable-timed rhythm while speaking in English. Secondly, the clip is brief and may be inadequate for analysis. My suggestion is that a presenter makes a video of a newcomer or beginner student speaking about a familiar topic. It could not be something too simple nor reading a written sample as those would interfere with their natural rhythm. Another idea is to find a video clip of a Spanish speaker or French speaker accepting an American award. An actor may have training and improved English rhythm, so it might work best to find an acceptance speech of a director or someone from set, lighting, or costume
design. Ideally, the speaker would not be reading but speaking freely and exhibiting the first-language transfer of Spanish or French rhythm.

Finally, due to time constraints, I felt I was not able to cover an important aspect of successful pronunciation pedagogy: feedback. Feedback was highlighted as an effective means to improving students’ pronunciation. Whether it’s feedback from the teacher, peer evaluation or self-evaluation, it is encouraged. On our final capstone meeting, the topic of addressing individual pronunciation errors came up. Evidently, some teachers had shared being uncomfortable giving feedback on an individual’s pronunciation errors in front of the class, as it might cause embarrassment for the student. We agreed feedback should not be overlooked, however, and that a better approach to this scenario might be to keep notes of major errors observed and address them with the class as a whole once an activity is complete. That way not any one student is singled out and they may all benefit from the feedback on common errors they may be making. Another format for feedback is the use of a rubric to assess pronunciation features; the rubric could focus on one feature or multiple depending on what the class has covered. One technique that may be effective is the use of audio or video recordings and reflective feedback. One might explore applications that would allow students to record their speech using cell phones, so that access to technology is equitable. Students would then evaluate their own speech. In the brainstorming process, I began to look at various software and applications. In addition, video recordings of students speaking may have an impact on students’ speaking skills. Ideas for tools to do this would be Snapchat, Facebook Live, or a basic video function from a cell phone camera. Students could
analyze their enunciation and body language, which may allow them to see (or see the lack of) stressed elements.

Dissemination

As mentioned in Chapter Three, my intent is to present the PD materials at the MELEd conference in the future. The goal of this project is to provide PD participants with a firm knowledge base on rhythm as well as a toolbox of effective strategies they may apply within their existing content lessons. I would also like to present these materials in other settings. Some suggestions of alternate settings in MN are as follows: an in-house training at my current adult education center or perhaps a focus group of the teachers of Speaking and Listening courses’ professional learning communities (PLCs); the Minnesota Literacy Action Network’s Summer Institute; the bi-annual national Pro-Literacy Conference to be held in the Twin Cities in September, 2017; PLCs and study circles with ATLAS (ABE Teaching and Learning Advancement System); Minnesota Literacy Council (MLC) sponsored ABE volunteer trainings; and volunteer trainings for STudent Achievement in Reading (STAR) fluency groups.

Personal Reflections

As a result of completing this capstone, I have grown both personally and professionally. I feel I have gained a significant amount of confidence in the area of teaching pronunciation. Not only am I more equipped to explicitly teach English rhythm to my ELs, but I’m also able to easily determine areas of existing curriculum that would lend themselves well to rhythm practice. I am able to find opportunities to apply rhythm strategies or to revisit the rules of rhythm. Beyond this I also feel prepared to educate my
peers on this topic and on the methods I have deemed most effective to improve the rhythm of our English learners. Moving forward I hope to continue to develop the PD sessions for a three-part series. It is my hope that adult education teachers will soon realize the significant impact rhythm has on intelligibility, and this belief will be evident in new textbook editions and in classroom practices everywhere.
REFERENCES


Oprah Winfrey Talks with Thich Nhat Hanh Excerpt – Powerful [Video File].

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