

# Global Citizenship, Global Exchanges, and World Englishes

**Dr. Raichle Farrelly, University of Colorado Boulder**

*Raichle Farrelly is a teaching associate professor, in addition to the TESOL director, in the Department of Linguistics at the University of Colorado Boulder. She is also a member of the board of directors for the TESOL International Association. She is a featured speaker at this spring's international conference, with the presentation "Global Collaborations to Promote Language Learning and Teacher Development," as well as an invited second session "Exploring World Englishes to Enhance Learners' Oral Skills." Her numerous professional interests include community-engaged learning and teaching refugee-background adults. Professor Farrelly graciously accepted this interview for The English Connection. — Ed.*

**The English Connection (TEC):** Thank you, Professor Farrelly, for agreeing to this interview with KOTESOL's ELT magazine, *The English Connection*, as a prelude to your two featured speaker sessions at this year's 2023 International Conference.



**Prof. Farrelly:** Thank you! I'm delighted to participate in this year's KOTESOL conference and welcome this opportunity to connect with your readers.

**TEC:** Your featured session, "Global Collaborations to Promote Language Learning and Teacher Development," looks to share our understanding of global citizenship education. How would you define a "global citizen," and could you explain the education involved?

**Prof. Farrelly:** According to the United Nations, "global citizenship is the umbrella term for social, political, environmental, and economic actions of globally minded individuals and communities on a worldwide scale." Being a global citizen means recognizing that we are all connected across a wide variety of societies and networks, and we have a responsibility to engage in action that benefits the greater good. As educators, when we incorporate global citizenship education into our practice, we enable students to make connections between local and global issues so that they can imagine a pathway to that "greater good." We create opportunities for learners to examine their beliefs and values, and evaluate not only the differences but the similarities between people all over the world.

Global citizenship education promotes combating prejudice and discrimination through understanding and active participation in a global community. It dovetails nicely with English language teaching because as students identify issues that matter most to them, they need to develop appropriate and effective communication strategies for conveying their stance and their passion. They need to be able to use language creatively and critically to convince people, to argue, to advocate, and to take action.

Students' authentic language use within global citizenship education reflects the types of interactions they will engage in as they become knowledgeable and take action on various social and environmental issues. Most youth today do want to be global citizens – to make changes locally and globally to create an even better world. As educators, we have this wonderful and unique opportunity to help them develop the tools and strategies needed to do so!

**TEC:** As a bit of insight into your featured session, what will be some of the opportunities to develop virtual global exchanges

you will be discussing, along with the practical ideas for implementation?

**Prof. Farrelly:** In this session, I'll highlight some virtual global exchanges that have had a tangible impact on the participating students. Some of the exchanges connected English language learners in different parts of the world through project-based learning with real-world deliverables such as a media literacy campaign developed by students in the U.S. and Slovakia. Another collaboration brought together English learners and teachers from Russia and the U.S. who were able to connect with one another through virtual conversation cafes.

The success of collaborative virtual global exchanges hinges on the planning, which starts with identifying partners and establishing shared goals for the project. If teachers are collaborating to bring their classes together, for example, each will want to be clear about the intended learning outcomes for their respective learners.

**TEC:** In addition to your featured session, you will be discussing World Englishes and speak on raising awareness about English as a global language in an invited second session, "Exploring World Englishes to Enhance Learners' Oral Skills." What can interested attendees anticipate?

**Prof. Farrelly:** I'm really excited about this session because it encompasses two areas I'm very passionate about: (a) promoting the use of diverse varieties of English in the classroom and (b) developing oral language skills (i.e., speaking, listening, and pronunciation). I'm looking forward to exploring attendees' perceptions about World Englishes, including our collective understandings about the use and acceptance of different varieties of English in a range of global contexts – academic, professional, and informal.

As teachers, teacher educators, and curriculum designers, we are constantly making decisions about the content we teach and the materials we use as the medium for instruction. We often draw on our experiences as learners when teaching, and for some of us, that means grappling with long-held beliefs about how languages are learned and taught. In some cases, that may reflect notions that elevate "native speaker" standards as the goal for learners. However, as we all are coming to realize, a "native speaker" standard is a moving and perhaps unrealistic target. Who is the native speaker and why is their variety privileged? Which "native" variety is the one to teach? As we select and develop materials to cultivate oral skills in English, we can be expansive and inclusive in our approach. In this session, I'll share a collection of activities and resources that promotes linguistic variety and reflects an attitude of abundance, and I hope attendees will also be willing to share!

**TEC:** A large majority of KOTESOL members are English "native speakers" teaching English to Koreans as a second or additional language, and find "enhancing learners' oral skills" to be at the top of their list of job duties. What are perhaps some specific

aspects in this Korean teaching context that might be brought out in your session?

**Prof. Farrelly:** I would like teachers to feel confident about the choices they make when selecting materials and developing activities to foster oral skills development in the classroom. I know there are many pressures in the Korean context to prepare learners for high-stakes exams, which may detract from the time allocated to meaningful, authentic (and dare I say fun!) speaking and listening practice. I'd like to provide some accessible approaches that teachers can integrate into perhaps otherwise constrained curricula, such as those that integrate technology and flipped classes where learners have ample opportunity for speaking and listening practice both in and out of class time. I am also a big believer in the value of teacher experience and expertise, and hope that we can engage collaboratively to bring forward high-impact practices that teachers in Korea are already employing with success in their local contexts.

**TEC:** If I may draw attention to other professional interests, your passion is in community-engaged learning and, specifically, teaching refugee-background adults. Can you share your experiences in this, and the satisfaction (I'm assuming!) it gives you?

**Prof. Farrelly:** Absolutely! Teaching adult refugee-background populations changed my life as a TESOL professional, as well as personally. In 2006, I had an MA in linguistics with a TESOL Certificate and I was pursuing my PhD in linguistics at the University of Utah. I had always taught academic English classes at my institution – academic writing, pronunciation, academic study skills – and considered myself to be a competent instructor and creative curriculum designer. Most of the learners in my classes were international students from Japan, China, Korea, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia.

Then one year, I was offered the chance to teach English classes for newly arrived refugee-background women from Burundi (a country in East Africa) through the International Rescue Committee in Salt Lake City, Utah. Within the first few weeks of teaching these women, I deemed myself a complete failure! I had never encountered learners with refugee experience and interrupted formal schooling. I had never taught adults who hadn't been afforded the opportunity to develop print literacy in their home languages. In fact, none of my TESOL courses equipped me with any understanding of how to deliver early literacy instruction. That aspect of teacher education lies primarily in programs that prepare elementary school teachers.

This first group of women I taught had never learned to hold pencils and orient papers on the desk, let alone write shapes, identify letters, map sounds to symbols in an alphabet, etc. And here I was, trying to teach all of these foundational skills in a language none of them spoke. Fortunately, I found a few literacy experts near me as well as the amazing organization Literacy Education and Second Language Learning for Adults (LESLLA; [www.leslla.org](http://www.leslla.org)), and with a lot of time, reading, trial and error, and humility, I learned how to teach adult emergent readers. Over the years since teaching that first group of women, I've taught adult literacy and beginner English classes to immigrant and refugee-background learners from a range of countries including Burma, Nepal, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Mexico, El Salvador, Cuba and others!

My personal and professional lives converged when I decided to travel to Tanzania to visit the camps where many Burundi refugees were living for multiple decades prior to resettlement. I wanted to know where my students were coming from and what their lives were like prior to this new reality in the U.S. In 2008, I had the privilege of visiting the extended families of some of my students, who were still awaiting resettlement. The short version of the story is that this trip led me to establish an education-based nonprofit organization (Project Wezesha; [www.projectwezesha.org](http://www.projectwezesha.org)) that operates in the Kigoma region of Western Tanzania. Since 2009, we have worked with remote villages to build a secondary school, establish academic study camps, and provide support to dozens of young people pursuing post-secondary education and vocational training.

#### Design for Change Model -- FIDS

- **Feel** → What bothers you about the world?
- **Imagine** → Imagine ways to make the situation better.
- **Do** → Go out and put your ideas into action.
- **Share** → Inspire others with your act of change.



▲ **Peak preview slide from Raichle Farrelly's upcoming conference Session: Design for Change – a project-based approach to making a better world through education and action.**

**TEC:** On a more personal note, will the conference event be your first trip to Korea?

**Prof. Farrelly:** Yes, this is my first trip to Korea! I am so excited to visit. Over the years, I have had the pleasure of working with various students, classmates, and colleagues from Korea. I also had the honor of delivering two virtual workshops to teachers in Korea through my role as an English language specialist with the U.S. Department of State in 2021. Throughout that virtual experience, I was longing to collaborate in person with my contact at the U.S. Embassy, the leaders of the teacher associations who organized the events, and the teachers who attended the sessions. I'm looking forward to attending KOTESOL in person and meeting as many of you as possible.

**TEC:** Thank you, Professor Farrelly, for your time and for giving *The English Connection* readers and International Conference 2023 attendees an enticing glimpse into your presentations and professional interests.

**Prof. Farrelly:** Thank you so much for this opportunity to reflect and share!

**Interviewed by Andrew White.**



▲ **Raichle Farrelly with the first cohort of scholarship students in Tanzania.**