



# Evaluation of a Program for Accent Reduction & Communication Skills Training

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## Background

Accent reduction and communication skills training are within the scope of practice for speech language pathologists (SLP); however, few university programs offer clinical training opportunities within these areas. As a result, fewer clinicians opt to work with populations who elect to improve their pronunciation and/or communication skills despite a market for this type of work.

Research has demonstrated the efficacy of accent reduction and communication skills training in adults who speak English as a second language (Behran & Akhund, 2013; Carr, 2012; Chakraborty et al. 2011; Chakraborty & Shanmugam, 2011; Chan, 2010; Derwing et al. 2012; Han et al. 2011; Jacewicz & Fox, 2016; Mackey & Sachs, 2012; Medina & Krishnamurti, 2013; Menke & Face, 2010; Munro & Derwing, 2008; Ovalle & Chakraborty, 2013; Schmidt, 1997; Schwarzer, 2009; Smiljanic & Bradlow, 2011; Warker, 2013).

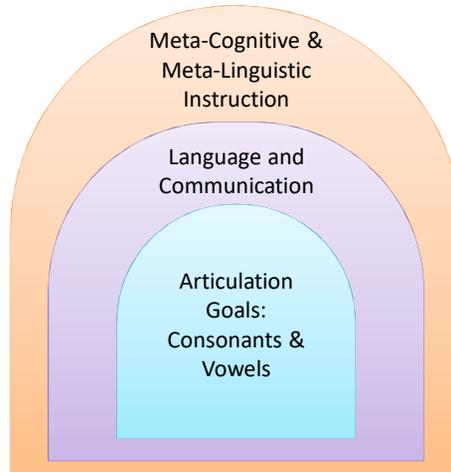
## Program Description

The Accent Reduction and Communication Skills Training (ARCST) program was designed to provide accent modification, linguistic instruction, and communication enhancement supports to adults who speak English as a second language and elect to improve in these areas. Dually, the program provides graduate students in Speech-Language Pathology an opportunity to engage in providing speech and language services to adults with intact cognitive abilities, specifically to improve articulation and language skills.

Participants received a comprehensive speech and language evaluation and at least one semester of group therapy supervised by a NJ licensed and ASHA certified SLP. The **program goals** differed between adult participants and SLP graduate student clinicians, and were:

- 1) To improve articulation, language, and communication skills in English for daily communication purposes, through a variety of direct instruction, meta-cognitive, and meta-linguistic strategies (Adult Participants).
- 2) To gain a multicultural experience with assessment, treatment, and ongoing progress monitoring for providing accent reduction and communication skills training to individuals who elect to participate in accent reduction/modification therapy (SLP Student Clinicians).

## Framework



## Key Components

- Individual **assessments** including standardized vocabulary and articulation tests and speech and language sampling approaches. Each assessment battery included:
  - Interview/Intake
  - Reading a phonetically balanced passage
  - Language/Speech sample, single-photo prompt
  - Standardized Assessments:
    - EVT2 (Williams, 2007)
    - BBTOP (Bankson & Bernthal, 1990)
- Group based intervention with a maximum of 5 participants per group and dyads or triads of SLP student clinicians providing intervention. Each intervention session included:
  - Articulation Training:
    - Auditory discrimination; Phonotactic instruction; Articulation drills
  - Language and Communication Training:
    - Structured and unstructured activities for communication practice
  - Meta-Cognitive & Meta-Linguistic Instruction:
    - Reflections on communicative challenges and direct instruction in grammar and usage

## Program Evaluation

- This program evaluation examined the implementation of an Experiential Training Opportunity, namely the ARCST Program, that provided clinical experience to SLP graduate student in accent reduction and communication skills training for members of the community who elected to participate in this type of therapy.
- Overall outcomes of the program include the following:
  - 7 Semesters across 5 Years of programming
  - 44 SLP Student Clinicians
  - 24 Program Participants
  - Overall Success Rate in the Average Number of Treatment Goals Met = 55.56% (SD = 0.22)
- Programmatic changes occurred across each year of the program and included the following:
  - Decrease from 2 semester (Spring+Summer) to 1 semester program (Spring Only)
  - Variation of the number of goals in relation to the number of participants and SLP student clinicians
  - Hiring an SLP to supervise clinical activities related to the program (Year 3 and beyond)
  - Increased collaboration between SLP and ESL faculty for improving program participant outcomes, to that end, training on phonological aspects of communication was provided to ESL teachers for the last three years of the project
- Future Directions for the ARCST Program include:
  - Assessment of the ratios of SLP students, program participants, and treatment goals to inform appropriate dosage rates
  - Expansion of the program to other community partners including the medical community where there is need for this type of programming

## Program Data

Year	Semester	# of SLP student clinicians	# of Participants	# of Treatment Goals Mean (SD) Range	# of Goals Met Mean (SD) Range	Goal Success Rate Mean (SD)
Year 1	Spring 2013	5	1	35	15	43%
	Summer 2013		4	29.75 (5.5) Range = 25 to 35	6.0 (0.82) Range = 5 to 7	24%
Year 2	Spring 2014	6	5	14.6 (2.71) Range = 12 to 19	4.8 (0.84) Range = 4 to 6	40%
	Summer 2014		3	13.33 (2.52) Range = 11 to 16	7.0 (2.65) Range = 4 to 9	64%
Year 3	Spring 2015	7	3	22.33 (2.08) Range = 20 to 24	16.0 (1.73) Range = 15 to 18	80%
Year 4	Spring 2016	9	4	7.5 (1.73) Range = 6 to 9	5.0 (1.83) Range = 3 to 7	83%
Year 5	Spring 2017	6	4	10.75 (0.50) Range = 10 to 11	5.5 (3.11) Range = 2 to 9	55%

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- ROW-Lab: <http://blogs.shu.edu/row-lab/>
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