

Three Cheers

Rosette Finneran

Nassau Community College, Garden City, NY

Norris and Ortega's (2000) *Effectiveness of L2 Instruction: A Research Synthesis and Quantitative Meta-Analysis* is a compelling read, because it addresses a matter of great interest to second language teachers; that is, the relative efficacy of various approaches to second language instruction. As an L2 instructor who has long extolled the benefits of an explicit Focus on FormS (FonFS) approach, even when it was patently unpopular to do so, it is pleasing to read that the question of the effectiveness of L2 teaching had finally been put to bed – and three cheers for focused instruction!

In addition to reaffirming my confidence in a focused, explicit approach to ESL teaching, the authors took on one of the most daunting challenges in the field of SLA – namely to evaluate objectively the bewildering array of competing L2 theories that fall in and out of vogue. That these theories engender wildly contradictory pedagogies is frustrating to the L2 instructor at best and disheartening at worst. However, Norris and Ortega's (2000) meta-analysis of primary research on the effectiveness of L2 instruction offers an empirical framework within which all pedagogical techniques can be compared, measured, and evaluated in a principled way, one against the other. This, in itself, is a giant step forward for the discipline of instructed SLA.

Finally, this exhaustive analysis of research not only makes sense of nearly two decades of L2 studies, but also points the way for future research endeavors that are replicable, empirically sound, and perhaps most important of all, cooperative in spirit.

REFERENCES

Norris, J. M., & Ortega, L. (2000). Effectiveness of L2 instruction: A research synthesis and quantitative meta-analysis. *Language Learning*, 50, 417-528.

Rosette Finneran is a doctoral student in Applied Linguistics at Teachers College, Columbia University. Her research interests include fossilization in adult second language acquisition and instructed SLA. She is an assistant professor of English and ESL Placement Coordinator at Nassau Community College in Garden City, NY.