An Interview with APPLE Lecture Speaker Dr. Richard Donato

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INTRODUCTION

On March 6, 2020, the *Studies in Applied Linguistics and TESOL (SALT)* journal had the great pleasure of interviewing Dr. Richard Donato, the invited speaker for the 2020 APPLE Lectures Series hosted by the Applied Linguistics and TESOL Program at Teachers College, Columbia University. Dr. Donato was kind enough to take the time, during a very busy day, to speak about his work on teacher training, history-in-person, and culture in the language classroom.

Dr. Donato is Professor and Chair of the Department of Instruction and Learning at the University of Pittsburgh and holds joint appointments in the Departments of French and Italian, Hispanic Languages and Literatures, and Linguistics. His research interests include early foreign language learning, sociocultural theory, classroom discourse analysis, and teacher education. His research on foreign language education earned him the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages/Modern Language Journal Paul Pimsleur award (1997 and 2006), the Northeast Conference Freeman Award (2004), and the French Institute of Washington Award (2003). In 2016, he won the University of Pittsburgh's Provost award for doctoral student research mentoring. In 2019, he was awarded the Pennsylvania State Modern Language Association Frank Mulhern Leadership Award. He is the co-author of the books *A Tale of Two Schools: Developing Sustainable Early Language Programs* (2010) and *Enacting the Work of Language Teaching: High Leverage Teaching Practices* (2017).

We thank Dr. Donato for his participation in an engaging interview. We'd also like to thank Haimei Sun for videotaping and Dr. Payman Vafaee for coordinating the APPLE Lecture Series Interview.

THE INTERVIEW

Here is the link to the full interview.

History-in-Person

1) In your examination of how history-in-person processes influence teachers' classroom discursive practices, you note that to your knowledge "the concept of history-in-person has not been applied to the social process of teacher formation" (Davin & Donato, 2018, p. 741). Why do you think that might be? How did you become interested in the concept of history-in-person, and how did you come to apply it to teacher formation? [Q1 Video]

2) In Davin and Donato (2018), you also suggest that applying the concept of "history-in-person" to the social process of teacher formation may help teachers become aware of how contentious practices they encountered previously as language learners influence their current teaching practices. What types of teaching practices would you label as contentious and why? [Q2 Video]

3) What role do you think language teachers' personal histories of struggle with larger sociopolitical issues might play in the second language classroom? Do you think these struggles can contribute to language teacher formation or do you think they might create unnecessary tensions in the classroom? [Q3 Video]

4) As you and Davin (Davin & Donato, 2018) point out, a teacher's history-in-person influences how they value certain ways of talking in the classroom and resist other ways. And you argue that teachers need to become aware of their own history-in-person in order to gain more conscious control of their talk-in-interaction. How do you recommend teachers go about exploring their own history-in-person? [Q4 Video]

5) You and Davin (Davin & Donato, 2018) also state that history both as a language learner and a teacher observer affect novice teachers' instruction. How does a teacher educator begin to undue the harm that may have come from novice teachers' exposure to poor or misguided pedagogical practices? [Q5 Video]

6) Your recent research aims to explore the relationship between teachers' personal histories and classroom discursive practices as a step toward transformative teacher education. What are some of the challenges you have encountered in pursuing this agenda, and how have you addressed them? Moving forward, what would be the top priorities for us to focus on in this endeavor? [Q6 Video]

Culture

7) In Cutshall's (2012) article on integrating culture into language classrooms, she argues that "long gone are the days when anyone would suggest that language could be taught 'on its own' as discrete grammar points with no sense of the cultural products, practices, and perspectives of native speakers " (p. 32). Do you think this statement accurately reflects the state of language teaching practices worldwide? Why or why not? [Q7 Video]

8)   Cutshall (2012) also explains that when language teachers teach culture, they often focus more on the products and practices of the target language culture, but less so on the perspectives. How do you recommend language teachers integrate cultural perspectives (e.g., values, beliefs) into their classrooms? And how can teachers best deal with situations when their own cultural perspectives might clash with those of their students? [Q8 Video]

9) Cutshall (2012) mentions that it has been many years since some teachers have been to the country where the target language is spoken. Other teachers have never visited a country where the target language is spoken because they learned the language as a foreign language. In these cases, how can teachers know if what they are teaching about culture is unhealthy and stereotypical or if it is true of the target culture? [Q9 Video]

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