Edward (Ned) English, currently serves as Senior Survey Methodologist at the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago. He received a Bachelor's degree at McGill University in Montreal, and M.S. in GIS and Cartography, at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. At the NORC, Mr. English's specialty is using GIS (Geographic Information Systems) to organize and analyze public opinion research data.

The title of the lecture is "Using Mental Maps to Study Neighborhood Movements in the Inner City: Formal vs. Informal Definitions." This talk is based on research Mr. English and his associates have carried out at the NORC, for a longitudinal survey project called "Making Connections," sponsored by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. This project studies ten low-income neighborhoods across the U.S., in collaboration with local organizations and residents to strengthen families and improve neighborhoods. The cities in the survey include Des Moines, Denver, Indianapolis, San Antonio, Seattle, Hartford, Milwaukee, Oakland, Providence, and Louisville.

Early on in the survey process, Mr. English and his colleagues realized that formal definitions of neighborhood boundaries (designated, for example, by federal, state, or local governments) did not capture residents' diverse perceptions of the location and extent of their own neighborhoods. To address this issue, the NORC applied a novel methodology, asking residents to draw "mental maps" (maps that residents drew by hand, from memory, of their neighborhoods), and then integrating, aggregating, and analyzing these mental maps in a GIS platform. With neighborhood boundaries redrawn to fit local perceptions and circumstances, the results of the survey will be more useful and relevant to local community organizations.