"I am not boring in your class":
Using Digital Voice Recorders to teach
Academic Writing Skills in the ESL Classroom

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Introduction

"Teacher, I like your class. I am not boring in your class." Out of the mouth of a recently arrived immigrant in my high school ESL class came this compliment one day. I smiled to myself at the student's linguistic error (using the active present participle "boring" rather than the passive past participle "bored"). I made a note to go over participial adjectives with the class. Almost every English language learner has some difficulty with adjectives ending in "-ed" or "-ing." Most need specific instruction on the concept that an adjective ending in "-ing" means that the noun it is describing is the "source" or "creator" of the condition and the adjective ending in "-ed" describes a noun that has "received" an action leading to a change in condition. But, in the case of the adjectives "bored" vs. "boring", is a student the "receiver" of the boredom – and therefore "bored" – or the creator of the boredom – and therefore "boring"? We've all had students who can create their own boredom! Although I don't think he meant it that way, it could be that the student was really making a very astute, semantically correct statement – in the class, he was not creating boredom. He was actively creating interest. He was being interesting!

Keeping students actively engaged in a class is the key to avoiding boredom. And, learning takes place only when the students are not bored. However, let's admit, at times the curriculum and the content requirements of a class are boring. Every secondary school teacher has experienced the tug between the stated curriculum and what the students would really like to learn. What fosters the sparkle in a student's eyes, what captivates the minds and hearts of a room full of hormonally-hyped, media-saturated teens? Not learning tedious grammar rules, or how to document sources for a research paper, or how to avoid plagiarism. As a high school ESL English teacher, I am responsible for teaching my students the basics of writing a research paper. For students who are college-bound, these skills are necessary for success in college. But, most ESL students in high school are much more immediately concerned with grasping the basics of communication in English. They want to be able to talk with their peers, understand their teachers, help their parents read the barrage of baffling documents that arrive in the mail, and get a driver's license. So, my challenge is to connect the "boring" curriculum that seems unrelated to their lives with something that *does* make sense and is relevant to their lives. As Wesley Fryer, director of Story Chasers, a multi-state initiative that supports student and teacher citizen journalism, puts it, "If we want kids to have meaningful experiences in schools, […] need the students actively creating content, not just being passive and listening to the teacher." One way to do this, Fryer suggests, is to use digital audio recorders as they "empower individuals to be active in their learning."[1] Since listening and speaking are the teenage language learners' most pressing concerns, using technology such as digital voice recording (DVR) as a tool to support their academic reading and writing skills is one way to avoid boredom and create learning in the ESL English or Language Arts class. DVRs are small (cell-phone sized) devices that cost around

fifty dollars per unit. They can store hundreds of hours of voice recordings that can also be copied to computer files for any number of uses. This curriculum unit describes a step-by-step process of working with recorded voice and DVRs to invigorate the teaching of basic academic writing skills in the middle or high school ESL classroom. It could also be used by a mainstream Language Arts or English teacher (with some modifications). This curriculum unit is designed to cover from one semester up to one academic year, assuming that the activities are interspersed with other lessons throughout the year.

Objectives and Rationale

Upon first arrival in high school, or any school, in the United States, immigrant students go through a "silent stage." According to Cristina Igoa in *The Inner World of the Immigrant Child*, this is one characteristic of all immigrant children regardless of their home country, family or economic status, or any other factor. Igoa's "silent stage" could be compared to the "silent period" that Stephen Krashen describes in "natural" child second language acquisition. During this period, Krashen states, children are not required to speak, and therefore build up acquired competence in the target language through active listening.[2] Igoa urges educators to view a silent stage for new ESL students as an advantage rather than a negative state to be overcome. During this stage, Igoa says, students can become "insightful observers" and "in that silence, they develop strong listening skills. They come to value keenly language as a mode of self-expression; they do not take language for granted because of the time in their lives when they were silent. Then they experience the sheer joy of breaking that silence."[3] Tools such as DVRs, which capitalize on the ESL student's inherent desire to move from silence to full fluency, can enhance the teacher's ability to motivate and integrate these students into mainstream academic content.

The high school where I teach English as a Second Language has one of the most diverse populations of any high school in the district. In our ESL classes we have refugee students from Burma, Vietnam, Cuba and Somalia, as well as students from Moldova, Ukraine, France, the Ivory Coast, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Mexico, El Salvador, Brazil, Nepal, and numerous other countries. These students arrive with varying degrees of formal education. Some have a good academic foundation, and are capable of coursework on grade level, but have limited English proficiency. A few have *never* attended school before immigrating to the US or have only attended sporadically. The majority have some significant gaps in education. But no matter what degree of academic preparation they arrive with, they all have to complete a graduation project required by my school district, which includes a six-page research paper and a ten-minute oral presentation before a panel of judges. The paper is written in the junior year while the oral presentation takes place in the senior year. In addition, seniors are required to do a service project or create a product that serves as an extension of their research.

Understandably, this tripartite graduation project looms large and intimidates almost every student, especially our ESL students. For my students it seems like an insurmountable obstacle. As a teacher, I sometimes feel overwhelmed. How can we require a research paper of students who haven't mastered survival English? What about students who have such huge gaps in their education that they are not literate in any language? We do allow some accommodations and modifications of the project, but are not allowed to exempt any student.

Since I teach both a junior and a senior ESL English class, I'm involved in all three parts of the graduation project. In the past, I have used DVRs and video recording to help seniors with the oral presentation of their project. However, I'm now focusing on using the DVRs in the junior year as a tool to help students research and conduct interviews related to their chosen topic. The DVRs can be a bridge for students still struggling with the oral production of English who simultaneously need to develop academic writing skills in English as quickly as possible.

ESL students are all motivated to understand what their English-speaking peers are saying, and they want to speak English without being ridiculed. Many of them are pressed into service as family translators in places such as doctors' offices as soon as they are able to string a few words of English together. They *know* how important it is to be able to understand native speakers and respond to questions in a way that can be understood. But, writing a research paper, of what relevance is that to their daily lives? I see the DVR as a tool to motivate students to develop their skill at asking questions and responding to native speakers on academic topics, as well as everyday topics. By using this technology, students can conduct interviews and surveys related to their chosen research topic and listen to the recordings as many times as necessary. The completed transcripts can be used as primary sources in their research papers.

While listening to themselves speak with other language learners and native speakers on the DVR, they notice ways they can improve their spoken English – which also has a positive effect on their written production of English. Noticing how one's production of a second language differs from a native speaker's utterances, or noticing how a pronunciation error caused a miscommunication could be the starting point for acquisition in the target language, as Richard Schmidt, in his article "The role of consciousness in second language learning" proposed in his "noticing hypothesis."[4]

Students who do not enjoy the tedious labor of writing in English often do enjoy creating and listening to recordings of their own voices in conversation with others and making a written transcript from the recordings. As Larry S. Anderson, founder and director of the National Center for Technology Planning, a clearinghouse of information about technology in the classroom, says "Not everybody learns the same way. There are those who may not be able to write a story, but they can tell a story."[5] The DVR also affords me the chance to listen along with my students and see if they are able to produce an accurate transcript of a conversation in English. This might then present opportunities to focus on specific grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary or other issues on an individual basis.

Getting the students out into the community, interacting with English speakers outside the classroom is another key to helping them become more accurate and intelligible speakers of English. While ESL teachers need to provide scaffolding and support for language minority students as they find their legs in their new language, it is also important to encourage them, as soon as possible, to ask others for help. ESL teachers who are "often very experienced in listening to L2 speech, are not the best judges of their own students."[6] A student who is comprehensible to her ESL teacher can experience frustration when trying to communicate with someone who is less patient, less understanding, and less familiar with foreign accents. The DVR can act as a crutch to help ESL students feel more confident that they will be able to make

sense of their conversation with native English speakers. The student can listen to a recorded conversation as many times as necessary to check comprehension. DVRs are small, easy to use and very transportable. They can help expand a student's circle of communication beyond the ESL classroom, leading to "larger interpersonal webs […] with classmates, families and native speakers in the community."[7]

In addition to the benefit of encouraging students to move beyond their circle of comfort, the DVR can be used as a means to introduce, in a step-by-step manner, the complex tasks of quoting and paraphrasing a source. These skills are fundamental. If students cannot paraphrase something they hear or read, then they probably do not understand it very well. If they do not understand what they are hearing or reading about a topic, then they are not ready to write a research paper on that topic. All writing teachers are familiar with the student who piles on quotation after quotation, or cuts and pastes together a document claiming it as his own. If language majority students are sometimes guilty of doing this, it is easy to see how language minority students would be even more prone to the temptation to let quotations speak for them or even to plagiarize. A number of studies have shown that ESL students' violation of the rules of research documentation, or "transgressive intertextuality,"[8] is not solely due to ignorance of or disregard for plagiarism conventions, but also related to their "lack of authorial identity" [9] and their positioning in the classroom as "writers without authority." In other words the emphasis in the classroom is on the "reproduction of authority over its production."[10] As Lankamp states, "instruction in the avoidance of plagiarism should encompass more than just teaching the content of a style guide."[11]

From my experience with remedial and second language writers, "*patchwriting*, a textual strategy that has traditionally been classified as plagiarism"[12] is an almost unavoidable step in the process of learning to write a research paper. As Rebecca Moore Howard defines it in her article "Plagiarisms, Authorship, and the Academic Death Penalty," patchwriting involves "copying from a source text and then deleting some words, altering grammatical structures, or plugging in one-for-one synonym-substitutes."[13] According to Howard, English language learners who may be forced to work with words and concepts they do not yet fully understand, and who lack confidence in their ability to write correctly in English, often view patchwriting as a fundamental stage which they must master and then "move beyond."[14] In this curriculum unit, I propose ways to use DVR to assist students in the development of their own voice as writers and their ability to distinguish between paraphrase, quotation and plagiarism.

An ESL teacher must also take into consideration that writing conventions vary from culture to culture, and that other cultures may not place as much emphasis on the avoidance of improper or excessive copying from a source. Diane Pecorari introduces her research paper "Good and Original: Plagiarism and Patchwriting in Academic Second Language Writing" with an interesting anecdote from an American writing teacher, A. Matalene, working with Chinese students. After much puzzlement over the teacher's insistence on avoiding plagiarism, one student commented that "in our country, things are [a] little different. We may perhaps call what our teacher calls 'plagiarism' as 'imitation,' which is sometimes encouraged, especially for a beginner."[15]

I've found that teaching ESL students the basics of quoting and paraphrasing, starting with

quoting from a *spoken* source, rather than a written source, helps them to better distinguish between their authorial voice, and the original or "source" voice they are quoting. It is also a less abstract way to help student master the mechanics of writing a simple quotation (where to put the quotation marks and punctuation, etc.) which is one of the first steps to building their confidence as academic writers. Many of them are not ready to deal with concepts such as plagiarism and "voice," and my first objective is to give them confidence that they can integrate a quotation correctly. In this curriculum unit, my rationale for using DVRs and voice recording at the start of research writing, is first that students are more immediately attracted to the activity because it involves skills they see as more applicable to their personal lives and necessities – simple communication in spoken English; and, secondly, that they can more readily understand and internalize the concept of quoting a source when the source is something they hear rather than something they read. If the source has been recorded on the DVR, it can be checked and rechecked, just as a written source could, but every student, even the most unsophisticated, can grasp the difference between what is "original" from a speaker and what is copied down and written by a person quoting from the original.

Another rationale for using DVR to teach academic writing is that teachers should not only focus on developing literacy in the "old school" sense, but also on developing "media literacy." While admitting that there is plenty of debate[16] around the definition of "media literacy," Jason Ohler, in his book *Digital Storytelling in the Classroom*, defines it as "having the skills necessary to recognize, evaluate, and apply the persuasive techniques of media."[17] Ohler argues that today's students need to learn to use media tools in order to understand the media-driven culture they live in. For those of us who are sometimes intimidated by these new media tools, and I count myself in that group, the DVR is one of the simplest technologies to integrate into the classroom. Students can learn to use DVRs easily, and for the most part will teach themselves the new technology. Our job, as educators, is to guide them toward activities that will expand their academic skills and literacy through the new medium of DVR and other technologies. In other words, teachers don't have to be experts in technology in order to use it effectively in the classroom. As Ohler states succinctly, "What is important is that teachers be advanced managers of their students' talents, time, and productivity. They need to be the guide on the side rather than the technician magician." [18]

At this point in the discussion of technology use in the ESL classroom, one might ask why I have chosen to use an audio-only medium such as DVR rather than an audio-video medium such as Flash Video.[19] From a technical standpoint, audio-only may be simpler and more cost-effective. Mike Kinnard, a former BBC Producer and now lecturer of broadcast media and journalism, argues for audio over audio-video in the classroom for several reasons. As he puts it, "a teacher can make a complete audio project with a group in the time it takes to reboot the computer that has crashed for the umpteenth time under the weight of a gigantic video file."[20] Kinnard also notes that today's students are comfortable with audio-only forms of communication -- just watch them on their breaks, plugged in to the ubiquitous mobile phones and MP3 players.[21]

The use of audio-only media has some pedagogical recommendations as well. In a study done on the cognitive impact of radio vs. television on children, Greenfield and Beagles-Roos found that each medium emphasizes different types of information, which are then recalled better

in that particular medium. While action was more memorable in the audio-visual format, dialog was more memorable in the audio format.[22] If my lesson emphasizes recalling words and dialog, or quoting and paraphrasing a speaker, then an audio-only format could be a better choice. In a similar study, Beagles-Roos and Gat found that recognition of expressive language and the use of background knowledge in making inferences was increased when children listen to a radio story as opposed to a TV story.[23] In a recent article on the use of podcasting for language learning, Rosell-Aguilar explores some of the advantages of audio. Audio gets around issues such as illiteracy and dyslexia. Moreover, the use of earphones increases isolation and concentration.[24]

Finally, my reasoning for integrating DVR technology into the research writing process is that it helps the student document the research process, create a more original final paper and ultimately a more creative and interesting final product. Students can find themselves being less boring and more interesting! Let's face it, the prospect of reading painfully boring papers is not one of the more pleasant aspects of teaching high school English. The 11th grade students in my school must all submit their papers to be read and judged by two or more English teachers (not the student's own teacher). Then, they present their research findings orally and defend their position on the topic in front of a panel of three to four teachers and community volunteer judges during their senior year. Students who have gone out into the community and have incorporated information from sources whom they have personally interviewed, rather than relying only on books and internet sources, tend to have a better grasp of their topic and have more confidence in speaking about their topic. They often bring to the discussion a more personal involvement and enthusiasm. Whenever possible, I encourage students to choose topics that relate to their own interests and/or involve their own communities. This makes them experts and validates their life experience and identity. Having transcripts of interviews with experts or community members who have life experiences they can relate to the topic is a powerful resource. Furthermore, the judges are impressed that students have taken the extra step of arranging and recording interviews.

Students using DVRs can transcribe and document their interviews and they can choose to incorporate these interviews into some kind of final product, such as a podcast or Photo Story [25] document. These products can serve as an additional form of classroom assessment. There are a number of free applications for manipulating and creating a final product from the raw interviews. Audacity[26] and Photo Story are two such resources. These technologies allow students who may have struggled through the writing process to arrive at the final outcome of a unique and interesting perspective to share with their audience. Even though ESL students are especially intimidated by speaking in front of a panel of judges, they typically come away from the experience with more confidence in their ability to speak in English. Using DVRs along the way helps them to improve their fluency in all four domains – listening, speaking (including monologic speaking), reading, and writing. Every year, no matter how much whining, nail-biting, boredom and fear I've seen from students at the beginning of the process, they come away feeling that they have reached an important milestone in their education. Sometimes I can't believe the transformation. They are no longer bored/ boring high school juniors, but interesting and engaging seniors about to graduate!

Strategies

Scaffolding

Undergirding all of the activities in this curriculum unit is the ESL teacher's stock in trade – scaffolding. According to Echevarria, Vogt, and Short in *Making Content Comprehensible for English Learners – The SIOP Model*, scaffolding is a multidimensional term that can be used to describe verbal, procedural, or instructional techniques. It is associated with Vygotsky's notion of the Zone of Proximal Development, a 'place' in language learning where support and interaction with a more proficient speaker allows the learner to perform at a higher level.[27] In Echevarria, Vogt, and Short's book, *verbal scaffolding* describes the way in which a more advanced speaker or, in the case of the language classroom, the teacher, provides assistance in the form of repetition, rephrasing, paraphrasing, slowing down speech, pausing, asking for clarification, and other supports for a beginning language learner. These supports are then gradually decreased as the learner gains ability. *Procedural scaffolding* encompasses the ways in which the teacher organizes and manages the classroom in order to assist new language learners. Procedural scaffolding would include small group instruction and partnering weaker students with more experienced students as assistants. *Instructional scaffolding* would include the use of graphic organizers and visual aids as pre-reading tools and the use of timelines and charts to help students organize their learning.[28]

The use of DVRs in this curriculum unit involves all three types of scaffolding. By allowing a student to record and play back a conversation as many times as needed for comprehension, the device aids in verbal scaffolding throughout the unit. It could also be used as scaffolding for pronunciation lessons, and specific lessons on intonation, emphasis and pausing. As a warm-up for the unit, I suggest an activity in which the students speak in their native language, recording an introduction of themselves for the class. Everyone has a chance to listen to these brief recordings and notice the variety in intonation patterns among the different languages (this only works, of course, if your class is made up of students from a number of different countries). This warm-up exercise helps students notice how their own intonation pattern differs from others, which is important because awareness and control of intonation increases intelligibility in a second or foreign language. Research in the area of pronunciation has shown that a speaker's skill at reproducing the "melody" of the language, rather than the ability to produce individual sounds of the language, has the greatest effect on understanding.[29] This warm-up activity also helps students "warm up" to the DVR itself, and get used to the technology while they are first speaking in their most comfortable first language. Often students have never heard themselves speaking on a recording, even in their first language.

I integrate procedural scaffolding in my introduction of the DVRs; first through the warm-up described above, then through simple, guided activities and interviews that gradually build in length and complexity. The main activities of the unit start with a game called "3 Truths and 1 Lie," one I've used in my classroom for years. In this latest variation, I use the game to further familiarize the students with the DVRs and help them get accustomed to hearing their own voice in English. From the game, we move to short interviews on the topic of "My Journey to the U.S." in which the students interview each other and then write narratives based on information from the interviews. From these recordings they learn to quote and paraphrase

their source. Afterwards, students are sent outside the classroom to complete several more interviews, first with a native speaking peer or a teacher with whom they feel comfortable, and finally with an expert in the topic they've identified for their research paper.

The DVRs also allow me to scaffold the delivery of my lessons – or *instructional scaffolding*. In this curriculum unit, the DVRs permit students to capture voices and conversations, which they can use to practice the complex skill of paraphrasing. When teaching students how to paraphrase from a source, most mainstream English teachers start with some form of written text. Students are then told to "put it in their own words." For the ESL student, with a smaller vocabulary and shakier grasp of syntax in English, this is quite difficult, hence the temptation to copy large chunks of the text directly or alter the original text minimally. However, if students first practice paraphrasing from a digital recording, listening to what someone says and then writing the gist of the message in their own words, they will not be able to copy chunks of text, and will rely more on their own language resources. This is a form of instructional scaffolding, where I use the DVRs to build the ESL students' skills in paraphrasing with assistance that a native speaker probably would not need.

Active Listening

Active Listening is a "teaching technique in which students not only listen but also show their comprehension by their responses."[30] Simply letting students loose with the DVRs to record conversations and interviews, without a relevant, focused task to complete would not result in my objective of developing communicative and academic proficiency. The student responses to the recorded input can either be used to assess understanding or require that the student synthesize and evaluate what is heard. The activities in this unit employ fill-in charts, rubrics, summarizing tasks, or check sheets that students complete as they are listening to their recorded conversations and interviews.

Pre- and Post- Self Assessment

After students produce their first recorded conversation in English with a native speaker, they are asked to listen to the conversation and complete a pre-assessment of their speaking. They rate themselves on enunciation (can we hear the sounds clearly?), intonation (does the rhythm of their speech sound like English?), pronunciation (are there any words that were not pronounced correctly?), grammar errors (were there any syntactical problems that caused miscommunication?), word choice and overall fluency (were they able to express their ideas using appropriate vocabulary and without too many hesitations/circumlocutions). I also rate each student on the same pre-assessment and we listen to the conversation together – this allows me to give some individual feedback. We will identify the one area that the student and I feel needs the most practice. A specific goal related to that area can be set and monitored through future recordings on the DVR.

Students save this initial recording and self-assessment. Then, at the end of the curriculum unit, students record a post-assessment interview, preferably with the same native speaker, or a similar interlocutor. The students and I fill out post-assessments rating their speech on the same criteria as the pre-assessment. We can listen to the pre-assessment interview

recording and the post-assessment recording and discuss the individual student's progress, particularly focusing on the one area for improvement that we identified at the beginning of the unit.

A pre- and post-assessment of writing skills, specifically of paraphrasing and quoting, can also be given.

Pre- and Post- assessments are useful strategies for encouraging students to take an active and responsible role in their own learning. Studies on motivation indicate that students who feel they are active participants in the learning process, and who feel that what they are learning connects to their lives outside school, have increased motivation in the classroom.[31]

Task-Based Instruction

A task such as recording an interview with a native speaker of English gives the students an opportunity to "negotiate meaning." In other words, to complete the task successfully, they are required to clarify their ideas, respond to miscommunications by repeating and rephrasing, and use other strategies to make themselves comprehensible.[32] Task-based instruction is part of a balanced approach to second language teaching, complementing a form based instructional approach in which correcting language form, such as grammar, is emphasized over communication of meaning.

Research findings summarized in Lightbown and Spada's *How Languages Are Learned* indicate that "conversational interaction promotes second language development" and that certain features in that conversational interaction are more likely to increase learning. Corrective feedback was listed as one of those features.[33] By recording their conversations on DVR, and having the opportunity to listen to the conversation with a teacher, students will be participating in task-based instruction that also features corrective feedback. Often, students themselves notice their mistakes when they listen to their recorded conversation, but I will also have an opportunity to give them corrective feedback.

Think Aloud

"Think Aloud" is a strategy that can be used for teaching reading or writing skills. In this curriculum unit, I suggest using the think-aloud strategy to model for students how to choose a relevant quotation from an interview and how to paraphrase. These are complex, higher-order tasks that a teacher must model specifically, by voicing her thoughts as she demonstrates how to complete the task. Working with the transcription of a recorded interview, the teacher could listen to the recording with the students and talk about how she decides which statement from the interview is strong, "catchy," or worth quoting in some way. Students could then work with partners to think-aloud as they listen to their own interviews and choose quotations that they will use in a narrative writing. Some useful articles on the "think-aloud" strategy can be found in electronic journals, *Reading Teacher* and *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*.[34]

Activities

Activity 1 - Bilingual Introductions

As a way to familiarize students with the DVRs and help them notice variations in intonation patterns among different languages, the following activity can serve as a warm-up for the unit. One digital voice recorder per student would be optimal. However, pairs of students could share voice recorders if you do not have enough for each student. It would also be best for each student to have individual ear phones or headsets. If you don't have a listening device for each student, you will need more space in or outside the classroom so students can spread apart

Ask the class as a whole to decide upon four facts that each student will share with the class. Keep it simple; for example, students will tell their name, country of origin, time in the US, and favorite free-time activity. Tell the students that they will record themselves speaking first in their native language and then in English. Demonstrate how to do this by recording your own bilingual introduction on a DVR and playing it back for the class. If you don't speak a second language, even better! Ask a student to coach you and demonstrate your fearlessness about sounding funny in another language. Encourage students to speak slowly and clearly in both languages, as other students will want to decipher words in English and other languages. Also, emphasize that it is best if they present the information in the same order in both languages.

Each student then goes off into a quiet corner of the room, or outside the classroom, and records the bilingual introduction. They may listen and re-record as many times as they like until they are satisfied with the recording. (This could be a homework assignment if your time is limited.)

Once they have recorded their introductions, gather and form a circle with desks or chairs. Hand out multiple copies of the listener response sheet illustrated below. Students then pass their DVR to the student on their left. They listen to the recording and fill in the listener response sheet.

Name of the speaker:_____
1. What information did you understand in English?_____

2. What information did you have trouble understanding in English?_____

3. Do you speak the same native language as the speaker?____

If "No", did you understand any words in the speaker's native language?_____
What words?_____

4. Draw a line that shows the rising and falling of the voice in the *native* language of the speaker. (For #4, you should demonstrate this on the board using your recorded introduction.)

After students have completed the response sheet, they pass the DVR again to the left and repeat. If you have a large class, you may have them pass the DVRs several students to the left each time, or adjust accordingly, so that each student has listened to as many of the introductions

as you have time for. Students can share their response sheets with each other and discuss what they noticed about the sounds and "music" of different languages. They can give the listener response sheet to each speaker as immediate feedback on speaking clarity.

A follow-up activity has students use Audacity to record the introductions and view them as graphical representations. This could further enhance student awareness of the intonation patterns and pausing of other languages. It would be a good idea, as the teacher is the only native speaker in the room, to record your own introduction in English on each student's DVR. That way they would be able to compare a native speaker's intonation to their own.

Activity 2 - Three Truths and One Lie

For this activity, students will again record themselves giving a short speech (English only this time) and pass the DVRs around the class or among partners.

Students will tell three things that are true and one thing that is a lie about themselves. (You could vary these instructions. For example, if you have been teaching past tense to the class, you can ask students to tell about things they did last weekend.) Model for the students by recording yourself telling three truths and one lie and playing the recording back to the class. Ask the class to guess which statement is the lie. Students go off to a quiet corner or outside the classroom and record their short monologues. When everyone has gathered back together, pass out listener response sheets (one for each monologue they will listen to) with the following instructions:

Name of the speaker:_____
Write down what the speaker said -
Statement #1:_____
Statement #2:_____
Statement #3:_____
Statement #4:_____

Which statement do you think is a lie?_____ Why do you think so?_____

Depending on how much time you have for this activity, you may want students to work in pairs and then change partners or pass the DVRs around a circle. Allow students to listen to as many other classmates as possible. When they are finished, they give the DVR and response sheets to the original speaker/recorder. This gives students immediate feedback on how clearly and understandably they spoke. Students can also have fun by tabulating how many other students they fooled and determining who is the best liar in the class!

As a follow-up, students can record their own monologues on Audacity and view a graphic representation of their speech. The teacher could use these recordings to help make pronunciation corrections and suggestions, or to point out grammar errors, etc. Students could re-record their monologues on a different file to improve problem areas and then make a comparison of their initial recording and the improved recording.

Activity 3 - Tell Me About Your Journey - Partner Interviews

In this activity, students will record a sustained interview with one classmate on the topic of his or her journey to the US. (If you have students in the class who are reluctant to talk about the subject you should give an alternative topic, for example comparing and contrasting life in the US and life in their native country.)

I suggest having the class brainstorm questions that they could ask in the interview. Guide the students to choose a certain number of questions from the brainstormed list that everyone will ask. Allow each student to write some of their own questions, and encourage them to ask some impromptu questions as the interview progresses. This will require examples and modeling.

Before conducting their interviews students will also need instruction on interviewing techniques. One good resource is the free *Teen Reporter Handbook* which can be downloaded from the Radio Diaries website. [35] (Radio Diaries works with people of all ages and backgrounds to document their lives for public radio.) It would also be a good idea to model an interview for the class. You could ask a visitor, volunteer, or other teacher to come to your class. Save the recorded interview because you will need it to demonstrate quoting and paraphrasing in Activity #4 below.

If possible, pair students with classmates who do not speak the same native language. The interview could be a homework assignment, or students could be allowed to find a quiet spot outside the classroom to conduct their interviews.

Students should save their recorded interviews for Activity #4. There are a number of follow-up activities that could be done after the recorded interviews, including podcasting and making a Photo Story presentation. In addition, there are numerous links on the Radio Diaries website that could be explored by ambitious students who would like to submit their work for broadcast.

Activity 4 - Quote and Paraphrase Your Partner

Using the recorded interviews from activity #3, students will learn how to quote and paraphrase from a source. Then, they write short narratives summarizing the interview. Using your pre-recorded interview, play a section and use the "think-aloud" strategy. The objective is to show the class how you choose a good, one-line quotation from the interview. Talk about how you really like the exact words the speaker used to express an idea and want to preserve those exact words and give credit to the speaker. When I have low-level students, I often draw a stick figure with a speech bubble. I write the exact words in the bubble. Then, I convert the bubble into a quotation, showing the students that the quotation marks replace the bubble.

To model paraphrasing, choose a longer section of the interview. Listen with the class and then think aloud for the class as you make the decision to paraphrase your source, rather than quote directly. For example, you could tell the class that a certain part of the interview is "too

long, so I want to summarize it in fewer words." Demonstrate how you do that by composing a paraphrase on the board or overhead. The "think-aloud" strategy is indispensable for scaffolding academic content for ESL students.

After you have demonstrated paraphrasing and quoting, students will write their narrative summary of the interview, using at least one or two quotes and appropriate paraphrasing. A discussion of how to document the source of the quotes and paraphrase should follow. These summaries can then be proofread by the interviewee for accuracy of information and correct quotations and documentation. Since the original interview has been recorded, any disputes about accuracy can be checked by the students and the teacher.

Activity 5 - Take It Outside the Classroom

Once students have mastered the basics of DVR recording and interviewing, and they can demonstrate their mastery of quoting and paraphrasing, they are ready to take it outside the classroom. As a homework assignment, students could interview an English speaking peer, another teacher, or a native English speaker in the community. School club members, PTA parents, or other school volunteers would be good interviewees. The class could come up with a topic or topic options for the interview and brainstorm questions. Activities from #4 above could be developed from these recordings to give students further practice in summarizing, quoting and paraphrasing.

Students could also be asked to record the interview on Audacity and edit the interview. Sounds and music could be added, but there are numerous other creative possibilities. All this will provide an opportunity for extension or assessment of student work.

Finally, if your students are required to do a full-fledged research paper, I suggest having recent immigrant ESL students write about the topic of immigration. This gives them a subject to which they can easily relate and an opportunity to be an expert. Since each immigrant group has a unique story and trajectory in their journey to the US, and within each immigrant group each individual has his or her own story and experiences, this topic can expand or contract according to the linguistic or academic competence of each student. ESL students will have a number of primary sources (their classmates, community, and family members) that they can include in their research paper. All of their primary source interviews can be recorded, transcribed and documented. Students could research statistics related to immigration and the history of immigration, changing attitudes toward immigration and immigrants, problems and solutions related to immigration, and myriad other topics.

Notes

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Useful introduction to the free, online audio recording and editing resource, "Audacity". Sample lesson plan and links to online videos and tutorials.

Igoa, Cristina. *The Inner World of the Immigrant Child*. Mahwal, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1995.
Excellent book for understanding the emotional, psychological and social dimensions of the ESL/immigrant student experience.

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Good source of ideas for using audio across the curriculum.

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Useful for developing interview questions and coaching students on the logical order of questions for an effective interview.

Ohler, Jason. *Digital Storytelling in the Classroom: New Media Pathways to Literacy, Learning, and Creativity.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2008.
Excellent exploration of technology use in the classroom, with many practical tips, advice, and activity suggestions. Shows how the networked computer can illuminate the heart of learning, storytelling.

Radio Diaries. www.radiodiaries.org. Good source for podcasts to share in class and a downloadable handbook for students with good ideas for organizing and conducting audio interviews.

Student Resources

Free Management Library. "Free Management Library (SM)." *Free Management Library (SM).* N.p., n.d. Web. 23 Oct. 2010. <http://managementhelp.org>.
Good ideas for interview questions. Lists questions for different types of interviews. Tips on how to arrange and conduct interviews.

Radio Diaries. www.radiodiaries.org
The web site of a not-for-profit organization working with people of all ages and backgrounds to document their lives for public radio. The site has many useful links, podcasts, and a free downloadable *Teen Reporter Handbook* that students can use to learn about how to conduct an audio interview.