

## **Reading Media Imagery to Language Literacy – Producing Digital Media for the Common Core**

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### **Background**

This unit is one teacher's vision in using reading media imagery to teach by producing digital media, with video narration, under the guide of the Common Core Standards to activate English Language Learners.

As a mid-career, lifelong teacher and techno enthusiast, I have drawn inspiration to meld the pathways of my life into a direction to the benefit of my charges in public education. My particular circumstance lends itself to creativity; the field of Hispanic/Latino Education in public schools is in the direst of circumstances. The imagery from conversations at the lunch table to the published news and public school report cards show English Language Learners are floundering academically. Statics paint a troubled future. ELL students, for the most part, are not graduating and are less likely to go to college. In 2007, the nation-wide dropout rate was 21% for foreign-born students compared to 8% for native-born students.<sup>1</sup> ELL and immigrant populations have lower graduation rates and higher dropout rates. ELL students are more likely to live in poverty; in 2007 66% of ELL students lived in a household with a family income of 200% below the poverty level compared to 37% of non-ELL students.<sup>2</sup> This is wholesale disenfranchisement of a large segment of our population who are not preparing to take their place in society. Many ELL students are not moving on educationally in our society and are alien to the society their parents left long ago. My students must learn English and speak with an American voice. Their American voice needs to be heard and participation felt by the American public. The media imagery, to date, paints a grim picture toward the needs of the majority of my students. Images of fences, patrolling vigilantes, cartel violence and large families are in the minds of many American citizens. Groups such as Federation for Immigration Reform and Americans for Legal Immigration while seemingly well intended, reinforce negative stereotypes of Latinos thus lessening some Americans' desire to offer needed assistance toward ELL students' academic progress, roughly 75% of whom are Latino. Imagery of Latino role models, cooperation, hard work, strong families and positive contributions need to become the lasting impression left on the minds of Americans. ELL students must be engaged with authentic instruction that legitimizes their special talents, broad culture, and diversity to bring out the added flavor their presence provides American schools.

As a rare Latino male teacher, born in Fayetteville, N.C., to a Puerto Rican, U.S. military family, I have a strong bond through mutual familial language and similar upbringing to the vast majority of ESL students whom I serve. My students' failures are my failures – their triumphs are my triumphs. The majority of my students are of

Hispanic and/or Latino backgrounds. Many of them have not had the advantages I had with my family comfortably enveloped by the arms of the U.S. military and American taxpayers. Many come from struggling families. I also encounter students whose families have moved into the area with overseas companies and have clear advantages to their educational experiences. I teach ESL as an elective; middle school English language arts heavily influence my lessons. My focus is on English language acquisition by the reading, writing, speaking and listening domains of language. My work is broad, assisting ESL served students in my classroom and facilitating afterschool tutoring for any English language learner whether served or consultative. It is my hope my work within this curriculum unit can have as large an impact as possible on the various levels of (ELL) students throughout my school and for other teachers of any students.

Part of my philosophy of teaching is my desire for students to listen, read, write and speak in English in a meaningful way. Realizing the world around them and understanding bias, determining an appropriate course of action, researching and responding in positive, meaningful text and oral discourse. The techniques and talents I have acquired throughout my life have afforded me the opportunity to teach students to create and share their work with themselves, friends, family and the world if they desire. My ultimate aim is to improve education for my students and as many others as I can. I strongly feel the integration of fun, useful technology guided by the principles of the common core standards can have a positive impact on education. Adopting the methods, skills and practices discussed in this curriculum unit in small and growing steps by other teachers can have a profound impact on education. As we integrate to help produce digital works, our students learn content in an innovative, reflective way, as well as meet the standards of the Common Core and provide abundant opportunities for creative student self-expression. Strategies and activities included in this unit can help in curriculum development with digital media production/Common Core integration for other teachers.

As I began this curriculum unit I was an ESL teacher; after the summer of 2012 I became a Technology Facilitator. My role and school setting has changed but the mission and challenge has not. My assignment as an ESL teacher at Bailey Middle School and alternative education had me working with a cumulative 70 English language learners at various states of English language proficiency. Half of those students were assigned to different sites throughout the Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools alternative education program; the other half composed a small percentage of a large suburban middle school in the Lake Norman area of the greater Charlotte metropolitan area. Bailey Middle School had 1,538 students on the day I left, the vast majority of those students Caucasian. I left to continue my work in a more impactful role as technology facilitator at a culturally rich high ELL populated school in the city of Charlotte.

I taught ESL to students at Bailey Middle, providing support to the varying needs of ESL students throughout the school building and now in the past two years across three

different sites. I work to provide support for not only non-English speakers but also the various academic needs of all English language learners across all content areas. ESL is a demanding, dynamic field. I have witnessed the changes from when I began in 1996 and have worked hard to accept and adapt my teaching to become more effective in what I do each year.

I feel I have strong tools to help me reach out to the widest possible audience of ELL learners. I am fortunate enough to have strong leadership from my school to help direct an advantageous method of reaching out to English language learners. I am excited to be an ESL teacher, with the pace of technological advances; we are going to usher in a new era of teaching – an engaging, rigorous one, with concrete production. My students are able to communicate with me through *edmodo.com* on a schedule, which may be more conducive to allowing maximum inclusion in the regular setting. Students who need more “teacher time” have the opportunity; students who can benefit from digital support have the opportunity to do so as well.

I have learned it is important to network within the community. Forming partnerships to achieve opportunities for our students is a stronger way to assist my sector of public education. This year I have a volunteer tutoring group through a church partnership where four to five volunteers serve twice a week to help English Language Learners. Through my nascent BMS Productions, a student club, I have established a loose partnership with a local television station to provide students with a trip to visit the studio and have commitments for future field trips and guest speakers.

Eastway Middle School, my new school, has almost half the population of Bailey. Eastway Middle is culturally diverse with students from many different countries across the world. Almost half of Eastway’s population comes from Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, Asia as well as Europe. Eastway is an international school in the heart of urban Charlotte. A visitor to the school’s community could have lunch in a Vietnamese restaurant and head to the local Arabic bakery for pastries afterward. People from all over the world come together in Charlotte to learn English and make a new life for themselves and their families. Eastway boasts 214 English language learners; when “Monitored Formerly Limited English Proficient” students are included along with other Language Minority students, the figure is close to half or more of the student population. The absence of those students would see stark reduced teaching allotments across the school. It is in every teacher’s best interest to engage English language learners at Eastway with the maximum educationally valued lesson curricula.

With such a high number of students learning English, Eastway struggles with adequate assessment to gauge the learning of its students. ELL subgroups are typically a struggling group as evidenced in high school graduation rates and test participation at the high school level. Students typical of the secondary newcomer ESL often struggle economically and with varying levels of engagement in academic endeavors. Some ESL

students must eke out an existence to help support their families in a new culture and surroundings. New immigrant families often find themselves in difficult situations with very real obstacles to fulfilling their basic needs. Eastway's strong international foundation is equally balanced by the strong need to excel quickly in the newness of frankly, everything. Cultural and social values can be very different for our students and they must rapidly navigate their new environment and build the most basic of backgrounds to understand the onslaught of media imagery they confront daily.

The challenge I have accepted brings to the forefront past experiences in teaching ESL and my deep hobby and current direction of technological skill deployment. The new position accepts my technological prowess and creates opportunities to apply my work on a more pressing and tangible level. In keeping to my original task of educating English language learners, I have assumed the role of Limited English Proficiency Committee Chair. I will lead six certified ESL teachers in the direction I have taken in educating English language learners. My technologically oriented work along with my initiatives in managing ELL students will have a school wide audience and affect a larger magnitude of ELL student population. My position ensures ELL best practices infused with innovative, engaging student activities will reach a wider number of ELLs.

The basic objectives of my teaching posts remain the same: engage learners, teach to the common core, teach language literacy, help develop critical thinking and foster project based learning to celebrate the learners' academic achievement through tangible production. The modalities will be through production club, teacher education and collaboration, along with leveraging the reach and academic teaching potential of the school's closed circuit system. The production club will bring together learners and actively teach the strategies, skills and activities to foster student leaders in production. School wide professional development will be the avenue of educating teachers to the merits and work flow through digital means from scheduling and communications to incorporating lesson workflows and projects through the digital medium. Engaging school wide attention through the closed circuit system promises to be the anchor and basis of this curriculum unit. Media imagery is pervasive and properly and responsibly controlling the media through school can play a critical role in directing learning throughout the school. Currently Eastway has only seen basic afternoon announcements.

As I write the school's three-year technology plan, I thoroughly plan to utilize the closed circuit system to help lift the rigor and reach of digital production engagement, supporting the principles of the common core. Eastway will have morning and afternoon broadcast announcements. Each of the content areas and electives will have programming supporting the educational aims of their prospective subject areas. Other formats will include programming to engage the learner through interactive Web 2.0 strategies along with other programming to engage the student body in reinforcing lifelong learning and learning outside of the classroom. Students will have the opportunity to see learning and production as a circular form. Lessons learned and projects developed in their own

classroom either will see airtime through closed circuit or be available through teacher and/or class wiki pages. Students will understand learning is something they can do for themselves along with producing work to help teach others the concepts they themselves have learned. Students will come to realize their own work has value and isn't something done in isolation but now has the ability to provide lasting value and create their own digital legacies through 21<sup>st</sup> century technologies.

I feel strongly the future of supporting developing English language learners can be achieved through the digital workspace and project based learning, and will play a strong role in their education. The opportunity to lead a culture of learning revolution is one I do not take lightly. Presentational video digital media production is my response to the age-old question "Just how are our kids doing?" The results of how kids are doing will be measurable in tangible video data points from their work and catalogued in digital portfolios. Teaching ESL in secondary school is not done in a vacuum; it is important to serve the whole child in terms of assuring language learning and academic proficiency in the wide array of academic environments our students encounter. Teaching the processes to teachers and students of reading media literacy to language learning, and producing digital media for the common core will provide an avenue for teachers to follow in helping educate today's youth to tackle tomorrow's challenges.

### **Introduction and Objectives**

The Charlotte Mecklenburg School district has chosen to focus on two reading standards and two writing standards of the Common Core. First R1- Students will read closely to determine what the texts say explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text. Second R10- Students will read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently. W1- Students will write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence. W2- Students will write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization and analysis of content. It is from these basic Common Core standards my work will be based but I will incorporate project based learning in the authentic environment of producing tangible video artifacts of learning by students which can be reviewed in "digital lockers" through the digital space.

Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools, my employer district (LEA), has chosen to focus on the four objectives stated above. All of these objectives correlate with reading media imagery to incorporating digital media production. Incorporating digital media production simply increases the rigor and relevancy of what we can do with our students. Digital media production becomes the ideal measure for learning by students. It provides a clear picture of their own work and development over time articulating clearly what they are learning in a better way than a standardized test.

Media is a pervasive force in society and embodies wide-ranging forms. Society uses media to advance a plethora of causes to sell, to manipulate minds and otherwise affect the actions and choices of people throughout the world. In recent history media has led the initial charge to push Americans into accepting armed conflict in hostile areas of the world. Media is an institutional pillar of our lives and the ability to closely read what is said is crucial to understanding and maneuvering the world we inhabit. The focus on developing media literate citizenry is apparent in educational initiatives such as the 1975 National Council on Teachers of English resolution on media literacy skill development:

Resolved, that the National Council of Teachers of English through its publications and its affiliates, continue to support curriculum changes designed to promote sophisticated media awareness at the elementary, secondary, and college levels: ...that NCTE continue to encourage teacher education programs which will enable teachers to promote media literacy in students: and that NCTE cooperate with organizations and individuals representing teachers of journalism, the social sciences, and speech communication to promote the understanding and develop the insights students need to evaluate critically the messages disseminated by the mass media.<sup>3</sup>

English language teachers stand to gain from integrating current and relevant media literacy instruction through the classroom and are exceptionally well suited to integrate authentic instruction based upon the premise of the common core and pervasiveness of digital media production capabilities.

English language learners in particular face the daunting task of building background sufficient to understanding the hidden messages and meanings of media. Media provided to a native English speaker certainly will be interpreted in one manner with the basis and historical understandings they are privy to, as opposed to the same media presented to someone with a new understanding and background in our culture.

The objectives of this curriculum unit are to support English language learners through the WIDA Standards<sup>4</sup> as well as support implementation of the Common Core through Reading Media Literacy. Students will be expected to build background in the area of their learning, understand the concepts their teachers provide and present their learning through the modes and mechanisms of digital media production.

Utilizing presentational video digital media production is an engaging way to facilitate the objectives of the common core in many different aspects. Students must write scripts to use in the recording of the video presentations. Students are accountable for writing and presenting their presentations for further evaluation, creating a foolproof snapshot of their learning at a particular place during the school year. The domains of reading, writing, speaking and listening are all covered during the process of production and assessment and reflection are easily achieved.

## **Rationale**

The fundamental question in my work toward this curriculum unit is simply: What value does incorporating digital media production add to the development of English Language Learners? We must ask ourselves what we are currently doing to address the needs of English language learners. As a career long ESL teacher, I have witnessed a change in tactics in the attempts to merge accountability with very serious realities schools face today. Schools in my current Local Educational Agency ask ESL Teachers to earn a content area certification and many place these dual certified professionals in content area classes with large numbers of ESL students intermixed with students who are not ESL. The thinking is to teach ESL students content and language through the Sheltered Instructional Observation Protocol (SIOP). ESL teachers teach from the content area, through elective SIOP classes or abbreviated classes to groups of students who are ESL only.

Dr. Gary Carkin, a professor of ESL, has long promulgated the notion drama in the ESL classroom is an essential part of the learning process. Dr. Carkin suggests the process of drama in the ESL classroom offers quality engagement and provides context in the language learning process.<sup>5</sup> Our overall goal is to increase the usability and functionality of English to the English language learner. The very fact teachers encourage learning through drama and production commands our students to use each of the domains of the English language: listening, reading, writing and speaking. Students must be able to learn and use the English language in authentic environments to gain the maximum opportunity to risk failure and grow with the hands on activities of actual language use. Drama and presentational production provides students with the necessary venue for language growth. ESL students must be motivated by the simple fact, the more English they can utilize well, the more earning potential they will achieve in their lifetime. Drama and presentational production provide the avenue for practice, practice, practice and essential activities to forward their language proficiency growth, through the context of academic learning.

“Promoting Meaningful Learning through Video Production – Supported Problem Based Learning” is the title of a paper by Paivi Hakkarainen of the University of Lapland, Finland.<sup>6</sup> Mr. Hakkarainen’s research centers on a combination of problem solving in small group tutorial sessions and realizing a practical hands-on project in which the students design and produce educational videos about the topics they are studying. His goals are refining the problem based learning and designing a pedagogical model that combines video production with PBL to support students’ meaningful learning. Mr. Hakkarainen’s previous research into project-based learning and drama pedagogy has been shown to be beneficial for meaningful learning. His results suggest engaging students in the design and production processes can increase their understanding of the subject matter. Students must have close interaction with their subject matter teacher and media production teacher in order to develop successful learning. There are few examples of university students combining this kind of learning and even less for secondary,

however his research is clear this can be a strong motivator toward engagement to effectively convey subject matter into learning and in the same token, it can be construed to provide direct evidence of learning outside standardized assessments. His research suggests students' emotional involvement in learning – a positive tone of satisfaction, feelings of challenge, interest and a sense of community were intense emotions reported by the students.<sup>7</sup>

It is the aim of this curriculum unit to inspire teachers of any content area to intermix the compellingly engaging process of digital media production in the learning process to capture the attention of learners to provide concrete data points in their learning. Digital production offers lasting value and compelling, relevant skills to 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learners. The idea of cameras in school should not be limited solely to closed circuit monitoring of communal areas whose audiences are security and administrative personnel paying attention only to malfeasance. Nor should it be limited to administrators recording entire lessons for teacher evaluations. Teachers should be encouraged to engage learners in authentic learning production to celebrate the learners and their academic learning.

As a technology facilitator, with a long career prior to as an ESL Teacher, I have the academic world-view schools can do more with the equipment, ideology and resources available to us. I will incorporate the tools I have at my disposal along with Web 2.0 developmental resources to provide my school with a comprehensive educationally enhanced closed circuit programming, which embraces and deploys the innovation developed by our nation's technological leaders. As an ESL teacher I started a 10 Words a Day initiative two years ago that required my ESL students to keep a vocabulary journal book and document three vocabulary words from each of their core classes. I taught my students to note the academic content vernacular of their classes within their notebooks and for homework to research the definitions, write them down, share them with their parents and study them. Once a week my students were required to choose 10 of the cumulative weekly words and enter the words and definitions within my website using a "Google Doc" form. I integrated "web widgets" which captured specific rows of words and definitions, utilizing the entries within dynamically produced web page activities. For my ESL-served students participation was mandatory and utilized as a homework grade. For my ESL-consultative students participation was voluntary; however, for all English language learner participants, participation entered them in a chance to win Carowinds (a local amusement park) tickets. As a technology facilitator at Eastway, I will continue the 10 Word a Day initiative and use the closed circuit system to my advantage to push participation. I will work with content area teachers to develop a method so they can use submissions as a homework grade for their students if desired. The 10 Words a Day initiative supports the linguistic and academic needs of the district core focus standards. The 10 Words a Day initiative is my contribution to focus our students on linguistic and academic vocabulary across the content areas. Dr. Margerita Calderon, the author of ExCell Training, stresses vocabulary learning with ELL students. She stated during workshops this summer for the Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools that



ELLs should actually learn 20 words a day to catch up with their native English speaking peers.<sup>8</sup>

## **Strategies and Activities**

### Closed Circuit Lessons

#### “A Word a Day”

Different from the 10 Words a Day program, A Word a Day utilizes the closed circuit Morning Announcements to pitch a focused word of a day. Students and faculty are provided a selected word and definition. Students are encouraged to note the word in their journal books and/or use the word as part of the “bonus word” within the 10 Words a Day program. A word is presented on a slate long enough for the students to transcribe the word within their preferred mode of record (e.g. vocabulary journals, agenda) along with the definition. The Frayer Model of vocabulary learning<sup>9</sup> will be integrated into the production by use of a document camera connected to the closed circuit system. Guest teachers could be used to present the vocabulary to engage the staff and keep the production fresh. Students will be encouraged to reference a web 2.0 site to extend their knowledge and practice acquisition of the vocabulary by sharing sentences of their own creation within a given page.

#### “Caption This”

A popular activity on the internet today presents the audience with media text or image and asks the audience to chime in on their own title in the case of an article or caption with an image. A weekly or biweekly activity could incorporate this particular genre or Reading Media Imagery by presenting an image or article to students through closed circuit. Students could be presented with a page on a website whereas they would revisit the image or text and they could chime in with their own title or text as seen through their perspective. Teachers could receive the responses and share select ones through follow up pieces giving students an opportunity to see their responses broadcast throughout the school, heightening student engagement and providing a venue to celebrate reading media imagery.

### In Class Lessons

#### “Video Book Reports”

I will encourage English language arts teachers, as well as ESL teachers teaching in the various content areas at Eastway and directed through the Eastway Productions club, to develop video book reports on topics of their choosing. Students will be expected to read a book and develop a short book report. Teachers will work collaboratively to glean the

specific strengths of students during the development process. Video book reports can be developed wholly based upon individual students or students will be able to work collaboratively to develop projects whereas they can assist themselves in leadership roles to develop collaborative projects. Teachers will be selective and encourage development of individual video book reports through technology lab time using *Photostory*<sup>TM,10</sup>. Additionally, teachers will be able to discern quality projects for development using the *Visual Communicator*<sup>TM11</sup> system where resources are currently more limited. Photostory is available to each student upon log in to Charlotte Mecklenburg computer systems. At Eastway, Visual Communicator is currently singularly licensed to me. Given the cost, nature of systems and peripherals used in production, I envision schools could invest in singular systems and a rationing of use would be necessary and feasible. Quality work developed in Photostory could garner attention for further development within the Visual Communicator system.

### Video Production Opportunity

Students can take notes, develop writing with the performance of a reading of text and record their response in a video narrative. Rubrics can be teacher developed or developed in collaboration with students.

### **The Production Process**

*Creating video presentations, Strategies to Aid in the Production Process*

#### Preproduction

So you are ready to make a video -- where do I start? Creating video digital media production can obviously be a serious undertaking involving many different participants and a bevy of equipment and money. Aspiring educator videographers can begin acquiring tools and utilize software free and with modest purchase. Production in the school setting can be of significant quality and equal complexity. Teachers can be executive producers and students play the roles of stars, writers, directors etc. The topic of your project could be as wide or narrow as the producer would like. As teachers and students feel comfortable producing content production can be limited by time and participation by short duration or limited scope such as Reader's Theater or more involved and higher production value, routine or of longer term and involve many jobs to complete. Teachers and students can create work to publish and share with others or make liberal use of images, sound and video and create for private viewing with no intention to share publically. The choice of production is wide open. Tools are proliferant and often times freely available over the internet. More complex tools for production are quickly becoming available at a lower startup costs.

An ESL teacher currently teaching English in Qatar, Jessica Davis has paved serious inroads into teaching ESL through drama. She succinctly imparts four formats of

teaching authentic ESL by Improvisation, Plays, Process Drama and Readers' Theater.<sup>12</sup> Ms. Davis does a great job of bringing light to what is possible in teaching through drama and videography in ESL. Ms. Davis credits Dr. Gary Carkin, her professor in a graduate course of using drama in ESL Teaching at Southern New Hampshire University.

Teaching language through drama creates a wide field of activities to incorporate video digital media production. Presentational work towards oratory, National Forensic League and National Junior Forensic League at the middle school level would be a perfect work for incorporating content into video digital media presentational production.

The preproduction stage of incorporating video digital media production centers on selecting the message of your work. The content area and subject matter you select need to support the aims of your curricula and content matter. Production can be individual or created in groups. Production can be a template, fill in the blank, a reading activity for basic English practice (an adaptation of readers' theater), informative essay involved argumentative essay or group production on a particular topic, interview or seminar.

As an ESL teacher, my aims are to increase the English ability and usability of all my students and my students must excel across a number of varied content areas. With presentational production, the focus is on creating a story for the audience. Students are active learners of the vernacular of the subject along with understanding the content, researching and ultimately writing an essay, report, etc. The thought processes involved in creating, editing and reviewing work has the highest educational value on student learning. The importance of producing high quality work to be shared using the advanced available technologies is a strong motivator to overcome "writer's block." Students are motivated to work at a level rarely seen in the public schools to produce what they may. Isolated initial reluctance gives way to eager participation and comments like "How does my hair look?" in spirited anticipation of filming. Students then convert their work into workable scripts and storyboards gathering imagery, to assist in creating slates. Teachers and students can use these slates to display graphics and text during production. Creating basic black and white PowerPoint slides, prior to developing more feature-filled, crafted graphics is a useful step in planning the sequence of events in digital media production. Power Point slide files can be embedded in digital timelines to denote when artifacts or events are to occur. In group productions students can be assigned different parts of a whole allowing for differentiated pre-production educational activities. Students with disabilities can completely participate in production in a myriad of ways. Group centered activities provide real world experiences in project management and direct a warranted avenue for student self-expression.

Tools to help in the Preproduction Process

Digital Storyboards as referenced on my BMS Productions page of my website at <http://joserios.cmswiki.wikispaces.net> can provide a good paper tool to plan to convey

work through digital video representation. The template noted has space for text and graphical representations of the work flow process.

*Microsoft Power Point*<sup>TM13</sup> is useful in creating slides for the sequence of events and to creatively convey text and graphics. It is important to develop standardization for any slides to be featured per production and choose the appropriate sized text and design to display well within video. PowerPoint slides can be easily ported to video editing software by saving your projects as jpeg images and will produce an individual picture file artifacts for each slide.

*Google Docs*<sup>TM14</sup> to collaborate online to produce the sequence of events for projects produced in groups. Longer term projects allow for students to build presentations in the Google cloud accessible as available. Students can share files with each other and collaborate using the *Google Suite* and the latest social media technological integrations provided.

*Pixlr.com*<sup>15</sup> is a website offering *Adobe Photoshop*<sup>TM16</sup> like functionality and, as of this publication, free. Users can visit the site upload images and retouch, enhance or otherwise manipulate a digital photo to subsequently save and use in a digital media production. Unwanted imagery in photos can be obscured allowing the audience to focus on what the producer intended.

Desktop capturing, *Mr. Captor*<sup>TM17</sup>, etc. – tools used to copy imagery from your computer screen – are useful if you need to convey images or activity obtained on a computer. With the flood of new useful websites presentational projects can convey a student's concrete representation of knowing and articulating the learning in a live moving product. It is important to express copyright concerns in any work. Educational institutions are afforded more rights because our work is nonprofit. Nonetheless, it would be prudent to provide copyright information prior to embarking on production and publishing for the public. Private audiences provide the greatest leeway in digital media production. If your intention is to publically publish your work it is important to ask permission from the copyright holder. In my experience, copyright holders are generally agreeable to use for student, not-for-profit presentations. Invariably such contact promotes healthy promotion of public school educational activities, in essence letting the public know we are here, we are creative and we would like to practice for our future by incorporating some of your work.

Stock sound and images can enhance a video presentations effect on the audience. Visual Communicator, the video production software I personally use, has a number of different video, pictorial and audio royalty free items to incorporate into a production. Other commercially available production software offer a wide arrange of quality stock for their licensees. Stock can also be acquired online at varying commercial rates. It would not be outside the realm of possibility for students to create their own stock.

Once students have completed the scripts (or consumed the content and practiced the readings from a Reader's Theater style production), edited and revised their work, created their storyboards, slates and compiled artifacts for use in the production and practice delivery, the actual recording can begin. Students can work on their oral language fluency and presentation skills in pairs and/or alone to prepare themselves for on screen delivery. Teachers and students can practice speaking and students are more prone to listen and respond to correction based on the implicit idea the production is of higher value.

## Production

After the in depth preproduction work has been accomplished, students move into the active "Studio" portion of video production. Again the bulk of my work has been using Adobe Visual Communicator a real time video editing and rendering system using specialized hardware to capture real time video footage implemented with teleprompter functionality with easy slates and text overlays integration running concurrently. Teachers may find recording with simple digital video cameras and onboard microphones to be a cheaper venue for production. You may need to convert your recordings into a format your choice video editor can use.

Cameras come in a variety of capturing quality and price points. I do not bother with high definition video simply because it is more expensive and standard digital is sufficient for the purposes of our production. Flip cameras offer the easiest way of getting your footage into video editing software. Many videographers have difficulty getting their chosen video editing software to accept the format of their given camera's digital output. If software is incompatible with your camera's format, you may be able to render the output through a free program called *Super*.<sup>18</sup> With Super you can render your output into a format compatible with your video editing software. It adds an additional step but saves the user the cost of a hardware based solution. I use a *Canopus*®<sup>19</sup> analog to digital converter. You can plug a 3.5-inch male connector directly into the camera and the output will be converted into digital and into the computer through a firewire port. Visual Communicator then converts the feed into real time video for recording. Audio is mixed from the lapel microphones through the mixer and into the computer by the audio in port of the computer. More information on the process can be found at [www.schooltvmadeeasy.com](http://www.schooltvmadeeasy.com)<sup>20</sup>.

Lighting is very important. The more light you can display on talent the better your recording will be. Studio lighting kits can be found relatively inexpensively on the internet. I found mine using *Amazon*<sup>21</sup>. It must be stated the umbrella style lighting using compact fluorescent bulbs on tripod mounts are preferable for safety's sake rather than boxed lighting. If the tripod were to fall, the umbrella acts as a cushion protecting the bulb from hitting the floor, an important characteristic when filming with youth.

Greenscreening can be accomplished using a modified version of Windows Movie Maker as noted on Jenny Grabiec and Jake Standish ITWeekly, a Video Publication by two Charlotte Mecklenburg School Instructional Technology Specialists available on *ITunesU*<sup>22</sup> or by following the procedure as noted on <http://www.wikihow.com/Chroma-Key-in-Windows-Movie-Maker><sup>23</sup>. Greenscreening adds a fascinating dimension placing your talent in front of static or dynamic imagery helping to convey the meaning of your message. The audience can find your talent immersed in a magical visual representation where things are not really what they seem.

Photostory is free software from *Microsoft*® that allows users to narrate a pictorial visual sequence adding sound music, transitions, text and graphics. A teleprompter function can help users narrate the story; rendering the work to a publishable format is as easy as point and click. Video narration without on screen talent is an effective way of presenting material and widely utilized by videographers, aspiring and professional. Photostory is an easy way to present and, once accustomed to its use, students can make small-scale publications relatively easily.

Visual Communicator is a robust, feature-filled, video authoring tool that allows users to quickly and efficiently create video presentations. VC allows users to create on a real time vertical timeline synthesizing video, sound and graphics effects with multiple cameras with the use of a teleprompter function. Visual Communicator was developed by *Serious Magic*® which was then purchased by Adobe®. Adobe® incorporated patents used in Visual Communicator but no longer publishes newer versions of the technology, instead pushing users toward their own software offerings. In my opinion, Visual Communicator makes the task of teaching through video presentation production easy and efficient, characteristics essential to teaching in the public schools. Visual Communicator is still available. A license for its use can be acquired for a few hundred dollars. The teleprompter function is highly prized and is useful in helping students practice reading and presentation skills. Students can develop writing and develop it into text to literally copy and paste into Visual Communicator's Teleprompter feature. Students can then develop reading and oral language fluency by slowing down or speeding up the teleprompter's presentational speed. Other commercially available teleprompter software can be found and installed on a PC and used with a monitor. [www.teleprompters.com](http://www.teleprompters.com)<sup>24</sup> even has the optics and transparent mirror systems to present an *Ipad*<sup>TM25</sup> teleprompter app, all through the lens of a camera.

Sound recording is essential for quality video presentations. In ESL, we often have access to good microphones, which can easily be incorporated into production. No one wants to sit through a video with low quality sound so it is important to place thought, investment and gain practical knowledge on the process used to create quality audio with your recordings. I use a *Behringer*® 5 channel audio mixer<sup>26</sup>. It gives me the ability to incorporate multiple audio sources into my production. I also couple lapel preamped microphones to give students the authentic feel of production although the microphones

generally available in middle and high schools through CMS technology are just as good in capturing quality audio.

You will need a tripod or a steady, disciplined hand to hold the camera. You can also incorporate different cameras such as a document camera to show three-dimensional objects or other objects. Using multiple cameras affords a small production unit to incorporate debates and interviews thus widening the formats available to produce. A tripod, or stick, on wheels would be very beneficial in Socratic seminars. A Socratic seminar is a formal discussion, based on a text, in which the seminar leader asks open-ended questions.<sup>27</sup> Within the context of the discussion, students listen closely to the comments of others, thinking critically for themselves, and articulate their own thoughts and their responses to the thoughts of others. They learn to work cooperatively and to question intelligently and civilly.

### Post Production

Visual Communicator allows users to run postproduction concurrently with production text. Graphics, imported video and audio can be overlaid and sequenced with talent narration. Rendering can be done quickly after the video is finished allowing for quick uploading to a content platform and publication.

Postproduction in *Windows Movie Maker*<sup>TM28</sup> is essentially putting together the pieces of the video on a timeline and overlaying text, graphics, transitions. You can play the video, revise and edit your work prior to rendering it into a digital video. With WMM you are limited to publish your work in *Windows Media Video*<sup>TM</sup>. However if you upload your video to a Content disseminator like *YouTube*<sup>TM29</sup> your video may be reconverted into *Flash Video*. It is important to note if you are publishing for a wide audience the higher quality video is best. If it is for personal use you can publish a lower quality video to save space and download time.

Transitions are used to go from one scene or idea to another. It is important to give text and graphic slates sufficient time to be read by the audience. Also transition effects should be used strategically and not take away from the message of the video. Microsoft Movie Maker offers a number of transition effects to provide users opportunity to make visually appealing products.

*Apple Final Cut*<sup>®30</sup> is the newest standard for creating quality production. I do not own any Apple products and cannot speak to their capabilities but I have seen work produced with Final Cut and I am impressed. *Adobe Creative Cloud*<sup>®31</sup> offers an educator rate of \$30 a month for access to Adobe's entire line of production software. Adobe easily has a number of different software packages enabling high quality production from *Photoshop* to *Adobe After Effects*<sup>®32</sup> and software to create applications for slate computers. Previously users would have had to spend well over \$3,000 on software

alone. Adobe now offers its suite to educators for a nominal price. The Adobe Suite is in a premier class of software utilized by professional videographers to produce content for television. Proficiency in the Adobe Suite requires a high learning curve but can pay off large dividends for those who take the time to learn and become proficient in any of the software offerings. Talent in maneuvering the suite is prized by audiences throughout the world.

Publishing your work on *YouTube* offers content providers a secure way of managing and publishing work. Work can be published in three different ways: private, unlisted or public. Private publishing requires viewers to log on with authorized credentials in order to view content. It is the most secure way of publishing and can ensure content is intended for authorized viewers. If your work is private, you will have the most protection and latitude when incorporating audio and images within your work. Not for profit, for private use only video is the choice video when working with students. Publishing this way allows students to be more creative and have practice with available content while learning valuable skills. The majority of the work I publish I publish as unlisted. It is embeddable within a web page or can be accessed by URL address but is not intended to be found in search results of a web search engine. Unlisted work offers a layer of security for maintaining the privacy and protection of our students. Publically publishing work allows the work to be returned on search engine results. Any accompanying Metadata will be indexed with your work viewable by anyone in the world. A good rule of thumb is to maintain photo release forms prior to uploading videos and most definitely, when publishing as unlisted and more so for publically published works. Some students may not want their likeness to be published; audio only narration is a possibility. It is certainly prudent to maintain the notion of self-regulation. No one is published without explicit written consent signed by a parent. Teachers may want to impart the idea of recording solely for in class reflective purposes only and/or provide digital copies of works to students through the use of flash drives.

Publishing on YouTube affords teachers the opportunity to view production and make annotations throughout the video. Teachers can make remarks upon the YouTube timeline for students to view teacher feedback. Published videos can be used as drafts, with feedback for future enhancements before final productions. If videos are to be used as drafts, users may want to publish lower quality video to speed up the publishing time and reducing the download time for previewers. Users should maintain the artifacts of the video until the final production is released. In addition to annotation, YouTube allows some light postproduction work on content loaded onto its servers.

Looking forward, limitless possibilities

Incorporating video digital media in your curriculum only supports the aims and goals for future generations' economic activity. The national Common Core Standards sets the stage for students to produce well-conceived works of academic production. Video digital media production capitalizes on the future trend. Video Media is an essential and rapidly



growing aspect of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Digital living. Students with a practical understanding in production will have an extra edge in most aspects of business moving forward in their lives.

Coordinated school activity could include teams of students working collaboratively to document the daily lives and activities of their schools. Use of technologies such as *Adobe Visual Communicator*, *EZNews*®<sup>33</sup> automated television production and bundled licensing of Adobe Creative Cloud Suite will provide schools with equal access to the same tools universities and top-flight middle and high schools in the U.S. The more involved a school moves toward production the more abundant leadership roles are needed to fill. Students can work in aspects of production that tailor to their own interests and hobbies. It is not too far from the realm of possibility for some students working to create a repository of stock, which they could trade for work in the strengths of other students, a microcosm of pseudo economic activity at the school level if you will.

Producing Video Media Production adds unlimited opportunities to engage our students in learning relevant skills and encouraging them to step up their game to share their learning with others. I hope you use and can reference the work I put together in this seminar to create something special for your own classrooms and students' educational experiences.

### **Student Leadership Roles in Digital Media Production Supporting Common Core**

The size of the production could affect the number of leadership roles necessary to complete the project. Students will be expected to wear different hats dependent upon the production requirements and stages in the production process. Production can be as flexible as the students would prefer. Camera shy students can audio narrate. The important thing to remember is all students should cycle through the different roles and it is possible to accommodate reluctant participants creatively in production. In this section, I will outline the typical leadership roles in each step of the process.

#### **Preproduction**

In this stage, students learn and actively research the topic to be presented, in addition to gathering artifacts and script development. Preproduction is a "High Value" educational component of presentational production and should encompass the bulk of student engagement. Typical roles at this stage include:

*Researchers, Production Management Team Members, Writer, Scriptwriters, Graphic Designers, Editors, Director.*

Students must realize the groundwork of lesson learning will pay off with a better understanding when they work to complete their assigned job duties.

## Production

At this stage scripts are finalized, artifacts are aligned to the script, narrators are prepared to present. Typical roles at this stage include:

*Narrators (Talent), Set Director, Lighting, Sound, Technicians*

## Post Production

The final step of the process entails use of video rendering software such as Super and Video/Photo editing software such as Windows Movie Maker, Visual Communicator, Adobe Premier, and Final Cut. Typical roles include:

*Video Effects Technicians, Editors, Director*

For a more in depth understanding of the process described visit [www.atomiclearning.com](http://www.atomiclearning.com) featured in the spotlight section of the website is “Video Story Telling<sup>34</sup>” which provides a closer look at the process and applications useful to producing video digital media production.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, teachers and learners can derive significant benefit from the multifaceted learning approach of digital media production along with satisfying the rigorous standards called upon by the adoption of the common core. The varied subject areas and enthralling process of creating meaningful work from learning engages students with compelling, interesting and innovative approaches to create tangible work products from their learning. It is my sincere hope teachers will gain inspiration from the work within this curriculum unit and integrate ideas within your own classroom and school. The road I have taken has evolved and the future course of my work is evolving further still. My new role as technology facilitator is relatively new in the state of North Carolina; I look forward to adding this needed dimension within the scope of my employment with schools in North Carolina. I feel, with the adoption of the Common Core and the novelty of this position, along with my experience, drive and determination, we can truly usher in an exciting, dynamic method of teaching which challenges the learner. Production compels students to work as teams and provides them an authentic learning environment, which propels them to seize opportunities for their future they may not have realized before.

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