

## Teaching Note

# Constructing Learners' Self-Confidence Through Recorded Speech

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As schools offer more flexibility in the ways students are assessed, recording tools such as Flip, Padlet, and various learning management systems can be useful alternatives for written assignments. Students can demonstrate their learning verbally, but first they must be comfortable using recording tools so the medium does not hinder their communication.

For many English learners, recording their own speaking creates anxiety that reduces the utility of the exercise. Students with this anxiety focus on being succinct rather than showing depth of knowledge. Teachers can help students reduce this anxiety with low-cognitive load exposure to recording practice.

### **Use model narration from authentic sources**

Mimicking the fluency of natural speech is a useful scaffolding strategy to begin building students' confidence. To find authentic examples, teachers can locate source material through broadcast resources such as Voice of America, News in Levels, or National Public Radio's Morning Edition. Next, identify a clip of recorded speech (30 seconds or less) that comes with a transcript. Divide the transcript to make Partner A and Partner B roles. As a class, read the transcript aloud in a manner that engages all learners. Echo and choral reading allow multiple opportunities for English learners to practice forming unknown words and tricky pronunciations. The goal is not for them to comprehend the story they are reading, but to read as fluently and confidently as possible by imitating the expression and tone of the original broadcaster.

### **Repetition and feedback are keys to constructing confident speakers**

Once whole-class reading and discussion is complete, have students practice Partner A & B reading with four separate classmates. This is a great time to stand up and move, as movement can release some tension students will feel from the discomfort of reading unfamiliar words.

After practicing the transcript four times, it is time for students to record. Have them create a single recording. If they make a mistake, encourage them to not stop or re-do, just keep going. Overcoming stumbles is required to build true confidence, and fluent English is not synonymous with error-free English.

Teachers can assess by listening for one or two key lines or words that they expect students might struggle with—listen for how they handle their errors. Did Marco stumble over a challenging word? How did he recover? Did Chaeyun read with expression similar to the broadcaster? Remember, the goal is recording their voice speaking with as much fluency and confidence as possible.

Repeat this process as many times as your students need until they all understand the purpose of the exercise. After 5-10 practices, teachers should be able to hear student fluency increase as they overcome recording anxiety. At that point, ELs are ready to have some scaffolding removed.

### **Increase rigor by interleaving recorded speech with content**

English learners can remain focused on building confidence with recorded speech while expanding their abilities by substituting sentence frame scaffolds in place of transcripts. The sentence frames can be about any topic, but it is helpful to incorporate content as an alternative to a written assignment. For example, in language arts a teacher might ask students to practice using character voice from a specific text. The image below shows an example of a recorded speech assignment students complete after reading the beginning of *Treasure Island*. Not only does this assignment allow them an opportunity to record their speech using a natural, first person point of view, it also allows the teacher a means to assess what students understand about Jim Hawkins' character.

## Recorded Speaking Practice

**Jim wants to leave home and begin an adventure.**

**First, he must tell his mother.**

1. Mom, I need to tell you \_\_\_\_\_.
2. I must go there **because** \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Of course I love you, **but** \_\_\_\_\_.
4. I will never forget to \_\_\_\_\_ **or** \_\_\_\_\_.
5. I promise I will always \_\_\_\_\_ **and** \_\_\_\_\_.

  
 record on Schoology

English learners can benefit greatly from speech recording tools if they are suitably prepared before clicking the RECORD button. Beginning with heavily-scaffolded

broadcast narrations and transcripts to build familiarity with recording exposes students to the medium in a way that limits their cognitive load. Repeating this practice will reduce anxiety while building confidence and fluency necessary to speed them along their journey to full proficiency.

### **Author**

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