Abstract

Maurice (1983) pioneered a 4/3/2 fluency activity for intermediate to advanced learners in which each student speaks on the same topic three times in shrinking time frames: four minutes, three minutes, and finally two minutes. Shrinking the time frame places pressure on students to use time economically by avoiding hesitations and increasing fluency of speech. While Maurice’s original activity had students speaking with partners and involved little teacher or student assessment of performance, the ubiquity of cheap digital recording technology (computers, tablets, smartphones, etc.) enables teachers of the 21st century to reconstruct the activity as a formative self-assessment with teacher feedback.

In my version of the activity, students watch a humorous short film full of concrete, reportable events two times (Eggleston, 2000). Students then record themselves narrating the events of the film for two minutes, after which they listen to the recording to notice their hesitations and self-assess their fluency. Students then record the same narration in one minute thirty seconds, followed by listening and self-assessment. Finally, students record the narration in one minute and again listen and self-assess. Students discuss and reflect upon their experiences, especially on the extent of self-perceived improvement. The teacher collects the final recording in order to review it and provide written feedback targeting hesitations, word linking, or other fluency-related performance targets.
Here are some more videos appropriate for this activity:

**Four short videos to help your language students improve their fluency**

Enjoy!

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