

# UC Berkeley

## The CATESOL Journal

### Title

Self-Monitoring, Self-Help, and the Route to Intelligible Speech

### Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/48f6024b>

### Journal

The CATESOL Journal, 13(1)

### ISSN

1535-0517

### Author

Miller, Sue

### Publication Date

2001

### DOI

10.5070/B5.36446

### Copyright Information

This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution License, available at

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Peer reviewed



## Self-Monitoring, Self-Help, and the Route to Intelligible Speech

Self-monitoring has played an important role in teaching pronunciation since Morley, Robinett, and Stevick (1975) introduced the term and stressed the importance of student involvement in the learning process. The recent surge of interest in teaching pronunciation, the establishment of new teaching priorities, and the many advances in technology invite fresh examination of a topic so crucial to the learner's success. This article deals with self-monitoring in the context of up-to-date pedagogy, provides practical suggestions for teaching self-monitoring, and addresses the following questions: (a) Why is self-monitoring important? (b) What kinds of in-class activities build self-monitoring skills? (c) Which correction strategies have the greatest impact? (d) How can students build self-responsibility outside of class? and (e) How can technology facilitate self-monitoring?

### Why Is Self-Monitoring Important?

Current priorities in teaching pronunciation emphasize the need for students to be active learners who take responsibility for their own speech changes. Through *self-monitoring*, or paying close enough attention to their speech to notice and correct their own errors, students can improve their speech intelligibility and effect changes in their everyday communication.

### *Building Independence*

For most students and teachers, the goal for pronunciation training is to achieve intelligible, effective communication rather than native-like speech. Reaching this goal takes longer than the duration of most classes. Equipped with good self-monitoring skills, students can continue to progress on their own after the class is over. They develop what Morley (1979) calls "a sense of personal responsibility for their own learning" (p. 84).

Self-help and autonomy are essential if learners are to improve their day-to-day speech. Although students are ultimately responsible for their own improvement, teachers are responsible for providing them with the concepts and tools for controlling their progress. Instructors can help students build self-monitoring skills gradually through classroom activities, home

assignments, and correction strategies that develop self-sufficiency. They can foster student autonomy through audio and video recordings, which allow students to recognize and correct errors that they missed in real time. Through it all, fostering student independence should be foremost in the teacher's mind. As Firth (1992) emphasizes: "Both teaching and feedback should aim at making the students more and more independent of the pronunciation instructor" (p. 216).

### ***Introducing Core Pronunciation Features***

Students cannot monitor for everything at once. An important component of teaching self-monitoring is to direct students' attention to specific features that will result in the most improvement in the least amount of time. By dividing the whole of American pronunciation into manageable and prioritized *core* elements, a teacher can point students to the salient features that need attention in their own speech. Self-monitoring is the way that students begin to incorporate these targeted features.

Although core lists may vary slightly (see, e.g., Gilbert, this volume), most emphasize suprasegmentals (stress, rhythm, and intonation) and include clear vowels and difficult consonant sounds. Most new pronunciation texts and programs cover the high priority suprasegmental targets that are likely to improve speech intelligibility, such as word stress, focus words, thought groups, word endings and linking, speech rhythm, and intonation. In addition to having students monitor for core suprasegmental and segmental pronunciation features, teachers should make students aware of the natural gestures and movements that accompany speech and make it easier to understand.

To teach self-monitoring, teachers need firm grounding in these core features. They need to be able to identify them when they hear them and notice when they are missing from their students' speech. Students should not wait until they perfect one target feature before they start self-monitoring for another one. Learning pronunciation is not about perfection but rather about progressive improvement.

### **What Kinds of In-Class Activities Build Self-Monitoring Skills?**

Students develop self-monitoring skills gradually through a progression of classroom activities and home practice. Morley (2000) suggests three levels of speaking practice: imitative, rehearsed, and extemporaneous. Grant (2000) describes a similar progression of controlled practice, intermediate practice, and communicative language use. It takes conscious effort, practice, and time before learners can successfully self-monitor during daily conversation.

Students learn to discover and correct their own errors by starting with small units of speech. Monitoring tasks should be limited to one or two key features, especially in the beginning. For most activities, the instructor or the pronunciation text asks students to listen for features based on the current lesson. However, as students become familiar with their own speech needs, they can also choose personal monitoring targets.

### ***Early Monitoring Activities***

Monitoring starts from the beginning, as soon as students gain awareness through imitative practice. Students usually have to listen to a new feature as well as repeat it or say it along with the speaker many times. Morley (1992) suggests “loop practice: ‘broken record’ practice” (p. xvi) where students practice 20 or more vigorous repetitions of a word or phrase while concentrating on kinesthetic feedback. Students should move on from such imitative speech as soon as they can say the feature independently.

One way students start learning to monitor their own speech is to listen and to mark pronunciation features on text read by the instructor or by a taped speaker. In the task shown in Figure 1, students first listen and then mark pauses and underline *focus words* (i.e., the most prominent word in a thought group) before self-monitoring for these.

I would have stopped at the <u>store</u> /, but I didn't have <u>time</u> ./
She lives across the <u>street</u> / from a large <u>park</u> ./

**Figure 1.** *Focus words.*

### ***Controlled Practice Activities***

The monitoring task in controlled practice is often limited to one or two features. Students usually work with a partner or small group; they self-monitor while reading sentences, paragraphs, or dialogues. Teachers should circulate around the class to provide individual help and remind students to pay attention to their own and to their partner's speech. To make self-monitoring easier, students can mark longer selections before saying them for word stress, focus, or pauses.

In the following example (see Figure 2), students practice “look alike” nouns and verbs. One partner says either the noun or the verb. The other partner says the matching sentence. The monitoring unit is very short—one word, one sentence.

(1) PROduce	They sell produce at the market.
(2) proDUCE	Cars produce a lot of smog.

**Figure 2.** *Practice with “look-alike” nouns or verbs.*

Similarly, in the next task shown in Figure 3, one participant chooses either sentence “a” or “b,” and the partner responds appropriately. The

monitoring task is limited—in the first pair of sentences students monitor the compound nouns, and in the second pair of sentences they monitor missing final sounds.

(a) Who lives in the <b>WHITE HOUSE</b> ?	the President
(b) Who lives in the <b>WHITE HOUSE</b> ?	my friend
(a) His big <b>FEE</b> amazed me.	How much did he charge?
(b) His big <b>FEET</b> amazed me.	What size shoe does he wear?

**Figure 3.** *Monitoring exercises.*

Activities such as chants, poetry, and limericks, where students internalize new speech rhythm patterns, can easily be turned into monitoring practice by having students write and practice their own verses or sentences that replicate the rhythm of the model sentences. For example, see Figure 4.

Model Sentences	Jack and JILL went up a HILL. Maya JONES is out of TOWN. Print it OUT before you LEAVE.
Student Response	Take a SEAT and have some TEA.

**Figure 4.** *Student speech rhythm practice.*

***Moto-kinesthetic monitoring.*** Although self-monitoring depends mainly upon listening carefully for specific pronunciation features, moto-kinesthetic, tactile, and visual modalities can also help foster students' ability to self monitor. Morley (1992) suggests techniques such as whispering practice, slow-motion practice, and strong, slightly exaggerated practice where students feel the muscle movements of articulation.

Activities that build kinesthetic awareness of voiced and voiceless stops can be useful for students who leave off these sounds or articulate them weakly. In the next task, illustrated in Figure 5, students practice short dialogues, holding final stops. They identify and underline the point of articulation for the stop sounds.

CAT BACK	Where's the CAT? She's hiding in BACK.	Lips— <u>gum ridge</u> —throat Lips—gum ridge— <u>throat</u>
BOB TED	What happened to BOB? He's waiting for TED.	<u>Lips</u> —gum ridge—throat Lips— <u>gum ridge</u> —throat
MAP SEAT	Where's the MAP? It's under the SEAT.	<u>Lips</u> —gum ridge—throat Lips— <u>gum ridge</u> —throat

**Figure 5.** Student practice of voiced and voiceless stops.

**Controlled listening for errors.** To prepare students for discovering and correcting errors in their own speech, they can be asked to listen for errors in selections read by the instructor. In the next examples, shown in Figure 6, students check the word they actually hear, not the word they expect to hear. Following the exercise, students can practice saying the correct version.

I _____ a car wash.	____ need ____ knee
The _____ was fun.	____ hike ____ hi
The _____ on my bill are wrong.	____ charges ____ charge
He _____ his rent on time.	____ paid ____ pay

**Figure 6.** Focused listening practice.

For added challenge, students can listen to a dialogue or several paragraphs with an occasional missing “ed” or final “s” and circle the words with errors. After noting the errors, they can practice the selection, monitoring for these sounds in their own speech.

**Intermediate Practice—Guided Activities**

In guided speech activities, students self-monitor for one or two features while generating some, but not all, of the language. The responses are limited,

often to a sentence or two. In the following task (see Figure 7), students fill in the response and self-monitor for enthusiastic agreement.

Sentence Provided	Student Response
That was a long <b>WALK</b> .	<p>_____</p> <p>(That <b>WAS</b> a long walk.)</p>

**Figure 7.** *Guided speech activity—student responds.*

Similarly, to practice contrastive stress, students fill in the sentence preceding the response (see Figure 8).

Student Provides	Response Given
<p>_____</p> <p>(Let’s eat <b>BEFORE</b> the movie.)</p>	I’d rather eat <b>AFTER</b> the movie.

**Figure 8.** *Contrastive stress practice.*

Other guided activities include information gaps where partners ask and answer questions about information that one has but the other does not. Students can also self-monitor while generating language from printed information that shows key ideas, such as invitations, business cards, advertisements, a computer web site, or pictures. For example, students may receive business cards and act out a role play, telling each other why the service provided by the business is recommended, exchanging useful information from the cards, and self-monitoring for two pronunciation features at the same time. Similarly, an announcement from a campus or community event may prompt a short talk whereby the student tells the class about the event and self-monitors for focus words, thought groups or pauses, and word stress.

### ***Independent Speaking Practice***

Although independent speech activities are an important part of most pronunciation programs, the demands of the assignment, the number of monitoring tasks, and the time and attention devoted to planning and review all need to be adapted to the individual student and classroom. More experienced learners might monitor for two or three suprasegmental features and possibly one or two sounds. Less experienced learners might pay attention to only one or two features at a time, starting with suprasegmentals. When students are concentrating on a new feature such as linking final sounds, they may forget to monitor for more familiar features, such as focus or word stress.

Many pronunciation and speaking-listening texts offer a variety of ideas for independent speech practice. Morley (1992) describes 12 speaking assignments including using visuals (e.g., drawings, photos, charts, and graphs), storytelling, interviews, and topic talks. Students should be clear which features they are self-monitoring for during each activity. Following are some sample speech tasks that require students to self monitor.

1. Students mark a paragraph from a book or article for pronunciation features, read it out loud, and then summarize the paragraph in their own words, speaking without the script.

2. Using movie ads from a newspaper, students announce several films, telling the location, the times, and why the film looks interesting.

3. Students perform a role-play such as the following: Your friend has recommended a restaurant. You want to find out more about it before you take your guest for dinner. One partner calls the restaurant for information such as the price range, the dress, the location, the parking. The other partner answers the phone.

4. Students talk about a familiar topic or personal experience. For example, after they have learned some English proverbs, students can then describe a proverb from their native language.

5. Students discuss or debate a controversial topic such as whether drivers using cell phones should be required to pull off the road while talking.

***Suggestions for facilitating self-monitoring during talks.*** Although the responsibility for self-monitoring rests with the student, teachers can facilitate the process by following these suggestions:

1. Keep talks short for most students. Students can isolate key targets more efficiently when they don't have to produce a long speech. In a large class, often there is not enough time for each person to plan and to give a three-to-five minute talk and to get proper feedback. With beginning or intermediate level students, key errors show up quickly. Even a talk of eight to twelve sentences or one to two minutes can produce ample material for practice and feedback.

2. Have less experienced students and those who are struggling to express ideas clearly prepare and mark a script for key features (e.g., indicating thought group boundaries, underlining focus words, putting dots over stressed syllables, drawing in pitch changes) rather than speak from notes. This helps them to focus on their pronunciation.

3. Give listeners a monitoring job when another student is speaking. Listeners can mark a checklist, or small groups of students can each listen for a different feature and report what they heard.

4. In class, record all talks on audio or video. Students can bring a blank cassette for the first talk and keep all subsequent recordings on the same cassette for a journal of their talks.

5. For further work, have students transcribe their own speech from a tape of their talk after they give it. They can mark corrections and re-tape their improved talk.



***Planning and rehearsing a talk.*** In my experience, only the most skilled students can self-monitor for pronunciation features while giving an extemporaneous talk with little or no planning. Most students improve their monitoring skills by carefully planning and rehearsing their talk, and reviewing it afterward on a video or audio recording. Some suggested procedures follow:

1. After they plan what they are going to say, students should concentrate on the monitoring tasks.

2. Students should rehearse their talk by recording it on a tape recorder, then listening, deciding what they want to change, and re-recording it until they are satisfied.

3. Students deliver better talks after rehearsing from a script where they mark key features such as thought groups, word stress, and focus.

4. If there is time before a major talk, teachers can meet with students to listen to their rehearsal tape and offer suggestions for further improvement.

***Variables affecting self-monitoring during independent speech activities.*** It is hard to predict how much monitoring a student can sustain during a talk or everyday speech. Some monitoring tasks are more difficult than others. As Grant (2000) notes, "What makes pronunciation learning difficult is not simply the pronunciation feature itself but what students are asked to do with the feature" (p. 81). In my experience, students seem to have more difficulty monitoring while formulating abstract ideas about an unfamiliar topic than while delivering a familiar factual talk or telling a personal story about their family. The ability to monitor seems to also diminish with fatigue and stress. Classes vary in size, length, and duration and provide differing amounts of individual feedback needed to teach self-monitoring. Even advanced students with good pronunciation seem to have self-monitoring skills that fluctuate.

The question remains: How much can students self-monitor their pronunciation during a talk, given the pressure of forming ideas, thinking about body language and eye contact, and attending to speech rate, voice, and delivery? Crawford (1987) warns, "The teacher must be cautioned not to have unrealistic expectations about the amount of monitoring a student can do" (p. 114). It can be argued that students improve their monitoring skills more from the rehearsal and the review process than during the presentation itself.

### **Which Correction Strategies Have the Greatest Impact?**

The techniques that instructors use to correct errors can either empower students (i.e., by making them responsible for their own speech changes) or encourage dependency. To foster students' self-help skills, it is better to start by cueing them to discover and correct their own errors rather than to immediately provide the model. In addition to verbal cueing, teachers can use hand movements and humming to elicit the correct response. If the speaker still cannot self-correct after cueing, it may be possible to elicit the correction from a classmate. Students are often good at hearing each other's errors, especially if the speaker produces familiar material. Furthermore, when students listen closely to the speech of others, they sharpen their ability to hear missing features in their own speech. See Figure 8 for a summary of cueing techniques.

<p><b>Cueing Word Stress</b></p>	<p>S: It's compliCAted!</p> <p>T: On that last word, move the stressed syllable to the beginning of the word. [Or] Try stressing another syllable. [Or] Listen and copy this pattern [hum the pattern with a hand gesture]. HUMhumHUMhum. Now say the word.</p>
<p><b>Cueing Focus</b></p>	<p>S: I'll wait for YOU.</p> <p>T: Where did you put the focus in that sentence? [T encourages recall of the pattern used.]</p> <p>S: [Student thinks, rehearses what s/he said], On "you."</p> <p>T: Good monitoring. Now, say the sentence again and focus on the verb. [Or] Move the focus to a different word. Focus on the last important word. [Or] Follow this pattern: hum HUM hum hum.</p> <p>S: I'll WAIT for you.</p> <p>T: Very good! I'll WAIT for you. [Repeat and reinforce the correct response.]</p>
<p><b>Cueing Thought Groups and Pauses</b></p>	<p>S: She was LATE for our date.</p> <p>T: Put in a pause and make two thought groups. [Or] Pause after LATE and add another focus word at the end. [Or] Add a pause and give more focus to the last content word.</p> <p>S: She was LATE / for our DATE./</p> <p>T: Good! She was LATE / for our DATE./ [T reinforces the corrected pronunciation.]</p>
<p><b>Cueing Thought Groups, Pauses, Focus Words</b></p>	<p>S: The little dog followed me all the WAY home.</p> <p>T: You need two thought groups. Try again. Pause after "dog"</p> <p>S: The little DOG / followed me all the WAY home.</p> <p>T: Better! Now shift the focus in the last thought group. Follow the rules for the basic focus pattern and give focus to the last important word.</p> <p>S: The little DOG / followed me all the way HOME./</p>

	T: Excellent! The little DOG / followed me all the way HOME./ You are doing a good job of figuring out your errors and correcting them.
<b>Cueing Missing Sounds and Linking</b>	<p>S: We stop at the corner.</p> <p>T: There was a sound missing in that sentence. Can you find it? Go over what you said and find the missing sound. [S. thinks/recalls the sentence. If necessary, T. might replay it.]</p> <p>S: The “ed” at the end of “stopped.”</p> <p>T: Good! It’s terrific the way you can find your own errors. Now link the “ed” to the next word.</p> <p>S: We stopped at the corner.</p> <p>T: Excellent! We stopped at the corner. [T reinforces the correct production.]</p>

**Figure 8.** *Examples of cued corrections. T=Teacher, S=Student.*

Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin (1996) suggest “generat[ing] an atmosphere in class that encourages self-correction” (p. 350). This includes writing the student’s utterance on the board and underlining the mispronounced feature, writing the type of error on the board (e.g., r/l), and posting wall charts around the room that remind students of common errors, such as “intonation,” “word stress,” or “focus words,” “s,” “ed,” or “r/l.” When hearing an error, the teacher can point to the appropriate chart.

The following correction tips help students develop self-monitoring strategies:

1. Reinforce the corrected version by saying it again. After students correct an error, reinforce the corrected version by saying it again.
2. Remind students to accompany the corrected version with hand movements. For example: T: Good! You found your error. Now say it again correctly, tapping for the stressed syllable or using your rubber band. [Or] don’t forget to tap and lean forward for the focus word.
3. Only correct the agreed upon target for any given selection. Resist the temptation to correct other errors you may hear.
4. Give students time and space to notice and correct their own mistakes, especially when listening line by line to a recording of their speech. Sometimes if you wait quietly, students will notice an error on their own. Try pausing and asking, “Is there anything else?” and then replaying the line.
5. When you provide a model, make sure the student actually repeats the corrected form. Some students merely nod or say “yes” to indicate that they know what to do.

6. Errors are part of the process. Expect students to move forward and slide back. Their speech will sound improved even when they partially integrate the new features.

7. Congratulate students for finding their own errors. This is a significant sign of progress. Create a supportive atmosphere that builds self-confidence.

### **How Can Students Build Self-Responsibility Outside of Class?**

In order to make optimum progress, students need to work on their own. There are a variety of ways that they can take charge of their own improvement.

#### ***Practicing With Text Audio Tapes***

Listening and practicing with text audio tapes at home or in a lab is an important technique used to build independence. Students listen for specific features, match their speech to the taped model, and learn to correct their own errors. To use the tapes effectively, students should be encouraged to (a) repeat challenging selections many times, (b) develop a regular schedule for short but frequent practice periods, and (c) practice only as long as they feel alert and can hear their own speech. It is important for students to establish the target feature in class so that they will not practice it incorrectly on their own. Good class preparation and clear monitoring assignments minimize the risk that students will reinforce old speech patterns when practicing.

#### ***Transferring Pronunciation to Everyday Speech***

To transfer what they have learned in class, students can extend their self-monitoring to real-life situations outside the classroom, including the workplace. Some suggestions follow:

1. Pair students (preferably from different native languages) for a “phone meeting” to talk about a topic or a class lesson.

2. Have students leave a short speaking assignment (a few phrases or sentences) on the instructor’s answering machine or in an audio e-mail message. Following this, provide feedback by phone or e-mail.

3. Ask students to note words and phrases that they use frequently or find difficult at work. They can practice the correct pronunciation and then self-monitor while using the target words or phrases at work.

Even beginning students can do an easy transfer activity to practice applying what they have learned in class to a real-life situation. One example is asking for items with a compound name at a market or drugstore, for example “tuna fish,” “peanut butter,” or “toothpaste,” and self-monitoring for word stress. As an extension of such activities, Miller (2000) describes a model for transfer called *Talk Times*. This model begins in class with a role play and continues after class with students communicating on the phone or face-to-face in everyday situations. Students set an individual goal to self-monitor for one or two features. After the Talk Time activity, they assess what happened, rate their comfort level, and plan the next activity. See Figure 9 for sample activities.

Role Play	You are planning to take a trip during a busy travel season.
Talk Time	Call an airline and inquire about flight availability and prices.
Role Play	Your car will be in the shop for a week and you need a rental car.
Talk Time	Call car rental agencies and get information about prices and availability.
Role Play	You want to join a health club and would like to know about the classes and the fees.
Talk Time	Call or visit the local YMCA or other health club and ask for information.

**Figure 9.** *Role play and Talk Time activities.*

### ***Using Checklists, Contracts, and Journals***

Checklists and contracts that aim at specific goals can build independence by focusing a student’s attention on practicing self-observation and self-assessment and on setting priorities. Acton (1984) advocates contract learning. After one-on-one negotiation with the instructor, students sign contracts committing to the changes they wish to make in their pronunciation and to how and where they will implement these changes.

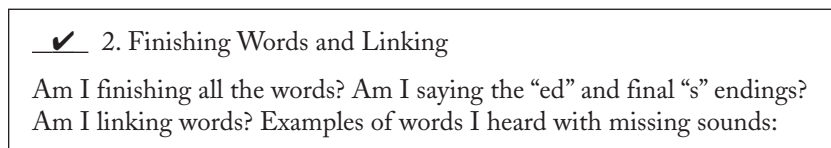
Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin (1996) provide a checklist of suprasegmental and segmental features for self-evaluating videotaped role plays. Figure 10 presents a sample item from their checklist (p. 405).

Prominence	Did you highlight the words that are important or that show new information? Give two examples and mark the words you stressed.
Word Stress	In multisyllabic words, did you stress the proper syllables(s)? Give five examples and mark the syllable(s) you stressed.

**Figure 10.** *Sample checklist of suprasegmental and segmental features.*

Miller (2000) provides “My Speech Checklist” that students can fill out as they listen to tapes of their speech. They describe one strength as well as

noting errors. From a short selection of suprasegmentals or consonant and vowel sounds, students are asked to check the targets on the list that they will listen for each time. See Figure 11 for a sample item (p. 242).



**Figure 11.** *Sample target checklist.*

Following an initial assessment and using a checklist of pronunciation features as a guide, the instructor can direct students’ attention to the features they can practice to improve their particular speech patterns. Later, on a class quiz, students might be asked to “List your three most important personal pronunciation goals—the targeted features that will have the biggest impact on your speech” and “Tell three things that you are doing to move closer to these goals.”

Huntley (1999) describes the successful use of reflective journals in which students list weekly pronunciation goals such as “improving intonation while discussing some topic,” (p. 18) and discuss how they carry out these goals. Students are encouraged to try a variety of activities that range from holding a conversation with a partner to analyzing the speech patterns of a television personality. Afterward, they record their reflections on what happened. Huntley reports that by raising their awareness in this personally meaningful manner, students were better able to transfer their speech efforts to real situations.

Greenberg (2001) reports more peer correction and increased active listening with the use of speech journals. In this technique, students hand in a weekly report on the following three stated goals and how they achieved them: (a) speech sound goal; (b) idioms, vocabulary goal; (c) word stress, intonation goal. For each goal, students contract to practice and observe themselves saying specific words and phrases. Afterward they report “how and where” they practiced these items and what they observed.

### **How Can Technology Facilitate Self-Monitoring?**

Most students have difficulty noting their errors as they talk. Technology has developed tools to help students analyze and review their speech electronically. Although newer technology exists, tape recorders are still the most available and practical way to capture “real time” speech, allowing learners to listen to their speech as many times as necessary. A tape recorder thus remains an essential tool for teaching self-monitoring and should be used regularly to record home assignments and to prepare oral presentations.

## *Newer Technology*

Although video camcorders are not available for all ESL instructors, video can be an even more powerful medium for feedback because students can watch the paralinguistic aspects of their message as they listen. Students can also observe an important, although less traditionally noted part of effective communication—the appropriate use of the body and gesture in synchrony with stressed elements. Morley (2000) reports that in the program at the University of Michigan, “All in-class presentations are video taped and the ‘speech coach’ conducts individual and/or small group feedback sessions” (p. 89).

Electronic visual feedback (EVF) matches speech visually against a native model. Although not widely used due to its cost, such technology has proven helpful in the controlled practice of phrases and sentences. Anderson-Hsieh (2000) reported that at Iowa State University “EVF was consistently rated as very useful by the ITAs [international teaching assistants] who reported that seeing their own intonation on the screen simultaneously while they were speaking helped them to understand how their intonation differed from that of native speakers and what they needed to do to sound more native-like” (p. 64).

For sharpening these monitoring skills, digital video disc (DVD) recordings provide impressive possibilities. A disc can be inserted into a computer that plays DVDs and with a click of the mouse students can replay small sections, endlessly viewing or listening and repeating frame-by-frame either their own speech or a speech model. Hopefully, more schools will acquire the capability to convert a VCR videocassette to DVD or to record directly with a DVD camcorder. Although voice recognition by computers is not yet perfected, some new pronunciation programs on CD-ROM incorporate this feature.

Exchanging voiced e-mail messages is an easy and highly effective way for instructors to provide individual feedback and to promote self-monitoring. A student can send a short recorded selection and the teacher can insert comments into the student’s recording and send it back.<sup>1</sup>

## *Other Techniques*

There are many ways that students can improve self-monitoring by recording and listening to their own speech. They can record selections from their textbook, a newspaper paragraph, or a short passage that they compose. They can record extemporaneous speech by answering written questions or interviewing a classmate. By turning on a tape recorder in the room, they can record a face-to-face conversation or their part of a phone conversation with a friend or business employee whom they have called for information.

Providing feedback for audio and video tapes of talks and home assignments is crucial for teaching self-monitoring and deserves careful attention. The instructor can listen to a student’s tape, record comments, provide speech models, and fill out a checklist. The student is more likely to listen to the tape again if the instructor inserts comments directly into the student’s tape after each error. Willenborg (2001) suggests dubbing the student’s recording onto a

second cassette and inserting teacher comments directly after the error on the dubbed tape. The software for sending voiced e-mail files makes it easy to insert comments into short, student recorded selections.

Although it is not always possible, a conference where the instructor and student review audio or video tapes together is highly instructive. Teachers can stop the tape after each line and encourage students to discover and correct their own errors. Taping the feedback conference with a second tape recorder gives learners a chance to listen again later. Other possibilities for providing feedback follow:

1. Students can self-review tapes and turn in a checklist to the instructor.
2. Pairs or small groups of students can meet after class for peer feedback using a checklist.
3. Graduate students or tutors can provide feedback sessions.
4. A motivating in-class procedure called "strip review" gives everyone a short turn for feedback. After working on a paragraph or dialogue with numbered lines in class, students practice and tape record the whole selection on their own. Each student corrects the whole recording independently and brings the tape to class set to play at a pre-assigned sentence. Then, students review the paragraph by listening to one sentence at a time, in sequence from first to last, and receive feedback on their own sentences.

### **Conclusions**

Teaching students to self-monitor is a vital part of shifting responsibility for developing intelligible speech to the learner. Teachers can weave opportunities for students to self-monitor for core pronunciation features into every stage of learning and practice. When the instructor relinquishes the role of primary arbiter, students learn to discover and correct their own errors. The use of technology to record and review student speech is crucial for building self-sufficiency. As students learn to self-monitor, they acquire tools to continue improving their everyday speech over time after the class has ended. With better control over their pronunciation, learners gain self-confidence and make more progress toward their ultimate speech goals.

### **Author**

*Sue Miller, a licensed speech pathologist, is a consultant and private pronunciation coach. She is currently affiliated with the American Language Center, UCLA Extension, and previously taught pronunciation at Santa Monica College for 10 years. She is the author of Targeting Pronunciation, a college ESL text.*

### **Endnote**

- <sup>1</sup> Free software, such as PureVoice at <<<http://www.eudora.com/purevoice/pluginDL.html>>> can be downloaded for listening, recording, editing, and attaching short audio messages to email.



## References

- Acton, W. (1984) Changing fossilized pronunciation. *TESOL Quarterly*, 18, 71-85.
- Anderson-Hsieh, J. (2000, Northern Summer). Improving ITAs' intonation in oral presentations through electronic visual feedback. *Speak Out!: Newsletter of the LATEFL Pronunciation Special Interest Group*, 25, 58-65.
- Celce-Murcia, M., Brinton, D. M., & Goodwin, J. (1996). *Teaching pronunciation: A reference for teachers of English to speakers of other languages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Crawford, W. W. (1987). The pronunciation monitor: L2 acquisition considerations and pedagogical priorities. In J. Morley (Ed.), *Current perspectives on pronunciation* (pp. 101-121). Washington, DC: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.
- Firth, S. (1992). Developing self-correcting and self-monitoring strategies in teaching American English pronunciation. In P. Avery & S. Ehrlich (Eds.), *Teaching American English pronunciation* (pp. 215-219). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Greenberg, C. (2001). *Speech journals*. TESOL Interest Section E-List for SPIS. Retrieved December 12, 2001 from <http://lyris.tesol.org/scripts/lyris.pl?enter=spis-l>.
- Grant, L. (2000, Northern Summer). Teaching pronunciation communicatively: Merging form and meaning. *Speak Out!: Newsletter of the LATEFL Pronunciation Special Interest Group*, 25, 77-82.
- Huntley, H. (1999, October/November). Reflective pronunciation journals. *TESOL Matters*, 18.
- Miller, S. F. (2000). *Targeting pronunciation: The intonation, sounds, and rhythm of American English*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Morley, J. (1979). *Improving spoken English*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Morley, J. (1992). *Extempore speaking practice*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Morley, J. (2000, Northern Summer). An EAP speech/pronunciation program. *Speak Out!: Newsletter of the LATEFL Pronunciation Special Interest Group*, 25, 83-91.

- Morley, J., Robinett, B. W., & Stevick, E. W. (1975). Round robin on the teaching of pronunciation. *TESOL Quarterly*, 9, 81-88.
- Willenborg, B., & Hahn, L. (2001, March). *Principles and practice in pronunciation diagnostics/feedback*. Demonstration presented at the 35th Annual TESOL Convention, St. Louis, MO.