

## Chapter 2: Experimentation, Integration, Play: Developing Digital Voice Through Audio Storytelling

By Crystal VanKooten, Oakland University, Rochester, MI

### 3. Audio Story by Mandy Olejnik

Using narration and self-recorded sound effects and music, Mandy tells the story of the initial confusion of studying abroad in Montreal.

#### Transcript

[*Sounds: stove lighting, fingers snapping*] When people think of studying abroad, they typically don't think of a girl locking herself up in her room and telling everyone to go away when they beg her to come see the fireworks that night on the bridge of Montreal. Well, people might not think it, but something like that is not that peculiar for a study abroad program. Truthfully, that *was* my study abroad experience for the first week of my summer program. It was during the summer of 2014, and I was in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, and during that first week, pretty much everything that could have gone wrong went wrong.

[*Guitar notes play.*] [*Dissonant piano melody plays.*] I didn't really understand the Quebecois French accent so I didn't know how to talk to anyone. When I got into my room, my roommate was there, but I didn't want to talk to her because she was a lot older than me and I was really intimidated. When I got to my French class, my professor started talking, and I literally only understood about 20% of what he said and was put on the spot and had to answer a question that I didn't even understand. And then when I talked to him about it and asked to be placed in a lower class, he said [*speaking French*]. [*Piano chord strikes.*] Yeah, I get it. I don't speak a lot, because I don't know how!

[*Piano melody continues.*] So at this point, I left the room and went to the bathroom, crying in the bathroom stall, wondering what the hell I was doing and why I was there. But lucky for me, I had an ally there in Montreal: my French professor from Oakland, Professor Law-Sullivan. I called her up crying after class, saying how I'm not good enough and I don't know what I'm doing. And then she met me at my room, and as soon as I opened the door, she swept me up in a hug, saying, "Oh, you poor sweetheart! It'll be ok!"

And you know, it really was ok. [*Snapping sounds begin again.*] So I didn't understand what was happening most of the time. That was fine. I was just taking the class for pass or fail. I eventually got better at it; it started making more sense. I started talking to my roommate who I had been avoiding, and she turned out to be a really cool person. We had a lot of fun. And in the end, I just had to get over all the little stuff that was stuck in my head. [*clapping*]

[*Snapping continues*] It's really important not to waste precious time brooding around on a quick study abroad program like this. So, in order to help those of you who may be struggling, the rest of this project will focus on giving you the advice that you need to make the most out of your summer study abroad program. [*Snapping continues and concludes.*]