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AUTHOR Albers, Randall K.
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ABSTRACT

While the "voice agnostics" are right in pointing to the need for a little more light and a little less heat in defining voice, energies should be focused upon providing a context for students' discoveries about how voice functions and is attained in writing. In the Story Workshop approach to writing instruction the elements from which everything else builds for the writer are seeing and voice, both of which, working together, generate and organize movement. Three principles underlie the Story Workshop emphasis upon voice and guide the specific techniques and coachings used by teachers in class: (1) the teacher must accept the students' right to their own language, their cultural background, and their skills level; (2) the class is inherently democratic in that it draws upon capacities most students already possess; and (3) the syllabus takes students through a sequence of writing tasks beginning with familiar basic forms that call forth naturally their own distinct and most often used voices and proceeding through those which place an increasing demand upon more conceptual and analytical capabilities. A story workshop format moves through a series of exercises and activities that build sequentially: opening recall, oral reading of models, recall and comment on oral reading, word exercises, oral telling, in-class writing, oral read-back of in-class writing, oral reading of selections from student work, and final recall. (Seventeen references are appended.) (MS)

Randall K Albers
Columbia College
Chicago, IL

CCCC
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THE PEDAGOGY OF VOICE: PUTTING THEORY INTO PRACTICE IN A STORY WORKSHOP COMPOSITION CLASS

This panel has been assembled under the banner of "What We Mean When We Talk About Voice." Now, this being the age of evangelism, I know what you are saying: "Good Lord! Not another sermon on voice!" And you are thinking about all of the CCCC panels where you got the latest rendering of The New Testament for Teacher Success, complete with easy-to-read notes and non-sexist language: "You shall not teach your students to be inauthentic. You shall not teach him or her to covet his or her neighbor's voice." Or you may simply be muttering, "'What We Mean When We Talk About Voice' nothing! These people can talk themselves hoarse, and we won't be any closer to knowing what voice is. And tonight, if I know them, they'll be locked in their hotel rooms engaged in some shady tryst with a handbook"

Well, I am not sure that what I have to say will make believers out of voice agnostics, but I will do my best to avoid the iniquities that we who believe in the utility of voice have been accused of. I will try to refrain from evangelical fervor. I will enter the field fully aware of the dangers of mystifying vagary. And I will most certainly not dwell on sordid hotel room encounters.

What I will do today is focus on two tasks: (1)that of outlining briefly a theoretical context for making sure that we, as teachers, know at least something of what we mean when we talk about voice, and (2)that of

showing some specific strategies used in a Story Workshop^{R} class to help students apprehend voice immediately and forcefully in the writing of published authors, in the writing of their peers, and in their own writing. My central premise is that while the voice agnostics are right in pointing to the need for a little more light and a little less heat in defining this concept, we must focus our energies upon providing a context for students' discoveries about how voice functions and is attained in writing. Whether or not we can define the term neatly, voice is a crucial and apprehensible concept for young writers, and our attempt to talk about it is ultimately less important than the strategies we use for getting students to hear it and use it in and out of the composition classroom.

II

A theoretical quandary has arisen largely because of a perceived obscurity--perhaps even obsurantism--in defining voice for composition students. This definitional problem is troublesome not simply for our students but also for ourselves. What <u>do</u> we mean when we talk about voice? How do we define it for ourselves in a way that helps us understand its significance and function for the writing process? And how do we convey that understanding clearly to our students?

I call this problem theoretical and initially treat it here as a separate issue, but, clearly, to treat theory as something separate from classroom practice is ultimately as false as to wrench voice itself free from the many other aspects involved in learning to write well. Ideally, theory and practice always inform one another. On the one hand, our inability to pin voice to the wall for scientific examination and rational definition does not, I think most of us would agree, constitute a valid argument for devaluing its

importance or eliminating it from our teaching concerns. Voice exists--and we and our students can recognize it--whether or not it can be defined scientifically. It may take us some time to find a language that describes the experience adequately, but the lack of a satisfactory language does not negate the experience. Moreover, in the classroom the teacher is always defining what she means by everything she says and does. On the other hand, teachers do need to know what they mean by voice. It is not enough simply to tell our students, "Be authentic!" Or "Be natural!" Or "Find your own style!" In order to avoid mystifying students any more than they are already mystified by the myriad elements that must come together in a good piece of writing, we need to be continually defining for ourselves what we mean by the concept--in full awareness that the process involves a trip down a very slippery path.

A great deal of the slipperiness of definition results from the metaphors used to describe voice. Voice itself, treated (as it is generally) as something separate from its physical signification, is of course a metaphorical term; and the definitions accruing to this term are more often than not metaphorical. The most vigorous critique of voice and voice enthusiasts, that offered by Hashimoto, is based largely on this uncomfortable tendency toward metaphor; and, as one example, he cites Elbow's association of voice with "juice" and with qualities of "magic potion, mother's milk, and electricity" (see Elbow 281-86). "We ought to be careful," Hashimoto writes, "about using vague, metaphoric language simply because we can't quite put our fingers on something more specific. There may be room for magical and non-rational thinking in writing, but we probably shouldn't fall too easily into a tradition that has strong and uncomfortably anti-intellectual roots and consequences" (79).

The slipperiness associated with metaphor may go far in explaining why, despite twenty or so years of intense interest in voice as a teaching tool, so few of the numerous composition texts, rhetoric-readers, and handbooks passing through our hands each year devote any time at all to a straightforward discussion of voice. They either ignore it altogether or simply identify it with a single, more easily demarcated element: style, tone, authorial stance, and so on. It may also explain why other, often very fine books ostensibly directed toward taking students through a sequence of reading and writing assignments designed to foster "active voice" or "writing with a voice" approach the issue by indirection, avoiding definition altogether except by implication (see, for instance, Moffett, Hacker and Renshaw, and Macrorie). Finally, it may explain why some of the best discussions of voice are so frustrating for some readers.

Yet, as anyone knows who has attempted such a task, trying to define voice in less-than-metaphorical terms is always doomed to reduce it, just as surely as an imprecise metaphor--one that does not respond to a shared perception of the experience--will lead us away from the context we need for understanding. Voice is dynamic; metaphor responds to the dynamic aspects of this concept. If we do need a definition, then the metaphorical at least has the advantages of suggestiveness and inclusiveness (or, at any rate, less exclusiveness). A suggestiveness that captures the subtleties, range, and power of voice need not lead directly to mystification and evangelism. A definition that aims at inclusiveness without blurring distinctions between voices allows us to employ the concept in meaningful ways without lapsing into an easeful reductionism, and a good metaphor may prompt discoveries that are essential if we are to avoid a cloying sameness or utter voicelessness in our students' writing.

We must simply keep searching for the best metaphors, those that help prompt discoveries about what voice is and help our students achieve it on the page. The call for precision that Hashimoto sounds is one of many that may help to keep us on track; but the search for precision in metaphor is certainly not an anti-intellectual endeavor, and while we may argue about which are the most useful, metaphors such as those put forth by Elbow do point toward that indescribable essence distinguishing voice, at the same time as they reflect both the precision and resistance in metaphor itself.

Faced with many students who have difficulty reading--let alone deciphering--basic texts, we might well ask, can we expect them to understand a metaphorical definition? And there is the prior question: Can we expect ourselves to understand these metaphors? The answers to both questions is a qualified yes. But even good metaphors cannot do all of the work for us. They cannot substitute, either for our students or for ourselves, for the many experiences of reading and writing that it takes to be able to recognize what the metaphors are attempting to describe.

Primarily, we need an understanding of voice that returns the concept to its etymological grounding in ethos, or character. "Voice," writes Donald Murray "is the writer revealed" (183). In other words, voice is more than simply style or language or tone, more than simply attitude or stance or emotion, more than personality or authenticity or sincerity or authority. Voice includes all of these things and more. It is an expression and creation of unfolding character, and of self, as that development occurs in the alchemy of individual motives and social interaction. Voice is, then, personal and social, affective and cognitive, conscious and unconscious.

And we should also never forget that voice is physical--perhaps above all, physical--as a rhetorical tradition extending back to the ancients, who

associated ethos with physical presence, should remind us. It prompts, and is prompted by, gesture. In oral discourse, when the light finally hits us and we lift our head and say, "Aha! I see!"; when we skate a flat hand through the air as we tell a friend, "That Smokey, he is smooth"; when we raise a finger and tighten the sound and rhythm of our voice as we admonish someone, "Now pay attention this time!", we are seeing the mutual pull of gesture upon voice and voice upon gesture. We are seeing and hearing the physicality of voice. There exists, then, a literal grounding for the metaphors of voice, a check to our mystification and evangelism.

The theoretical understanding of voice in a Story Workshop class includes all of these aspects. John Schultz, the originator of this approach, states this theoretical understanding in Writing From Start to Finish: The "Story Workshop" Basic Forms Reader:

> Voice is gesture got into writing, voice is culture (including the personal background of the writer), voice contains the powers of the unconscious and the conscious and the possibility of style. Voice is also the movement of a telling/writing through time, everything that connects words and perceptions, the economy of which is to use what it needs and to leave out what it does not need. Voice is the articulation fo all perceptions in verbal expression, written and oral, including the so-called nonverbal which we want to get into writing too. (85)

Schultz here states an understanding which is called forth by the more inclusive metaphors but which also includes the literal and physical aspects that come into play in out experience of voice.

How, then, do we define voice? What do we experience in a piece of writing, fiction or nonfiction, that possesses voice? I know of no better

term than presence. Voice is presence. It is physical and gestural, possesses an energizing and clarifying awareness of the presence of a listener, and includes the heightened and heightening sense of the rhythms and patterns of oral speech. When we sense the physical presence of a speaker behind the words that the metaphors points toward--and distinguish this presence from the absence characterized by opposing terms--we begin to have what we need: a working definition, a context of understanding that allows us in good conscience to identify and to convey to our students what we mean by voice.

III

Now we come to the interesting and in many ways more crucial issue of how we help students travel sure-footedly down the same slippery path that we have traveled. Or rather, something like that path, for we must recognize that the uniqueness of our students' voices will lead to differences in their ways of apprehending what voice means.

This is not to say that the recognition of voice is as "mysterious and subjective" as Elbow says it is (285). A fingerprint, an ode, one's character or self, each has qualities in common with other fingerprints, odes, and selves that allow us to distinguish them from other things, however similar--a footprint, an elegy, a mask. When we talk about helping students to discover their own authentic telling voices, what we are really saying is not that we will "teach" them their voice per se, but that we will give them a framework for apprehending what voice is in their own work and in the works of other writers. We will help them discover the connections as well as the contrasts between their speaking and writing voices, ways of getting the power of voice into their writing, and how they can tailor their voices to meet the varying demands of audience, purpose, point of view, and

subject matter without breaking the connection to the movement, rhythm, and rhetorical sense found in their discourse communities outside of the classroom.

"Apprehending" rather than "defining" is the operative term and calls attention to one way in which classroom practice may differ from strictly theoretical inquiry. Voice is apprehensible--even by the youngest of those seemingly ever-more-youthful students entering our freshman composition classes. Time and again, in the Story Workshop composition classes that I have taught as well as in those I have observed as a teacher-trainer of graduate students and more experienced instructors, I have been struck with how quickly even the most inexperienced writers were able to get the powerful presence of their oral voices onto the page and begin to sense the applications of voice to a wide array of writing tasks. (In fact, I might add that many times, in the beginning at least, the less experienced writers are able to do this more readily than the more experienced, probably because the more experienced writers have often been imbued, through countless term papers, book reports, and research essays, with the notion that writing for classes should be voiceless, a translation made mechanically from the emphasis teachers have often put upon the transparent author and the marshalling of "evidence" as well as from the conscious or unconscious instruction they have given to use passive verb forms and constructions.)

In the Story Workshop approach to writing instruction as it is used in various classroom contexts and formats as well as in tutoring sessions, the centerpieces, so to speak, or elements from which everything else builds for the writer, are seeing and voice, both of which, working together, generate and organize movement. In "The Story Workshop Method: Writing From Start to Finish," John Schultz, the originator of this approach,

writes that this method "assumes that all forms of writing derive from image and story, from image and movement of voice organizing the expression of perceptions through time. The development of these human perceptual, imaginative, and verbal capacities through their many derivations in oral and written forms is always the Story Workshop objective" (411). In Writing From Start to Finish, Schultz expands upon the relationship between these elements: "The most important dimension of basic forms potential, after image, is the physical movement of voice in time connecting and organizing all the elements of the expression, abstracting with the process of imagery to find what it needs in order to get the message across to the audience and leave out what it does not need. Strong imaginative seeing generates movement in language, and such movement makes possible longer and more complex presentations of informative imagery, with more demand for rhetorical artfulness" (8). Seeing and voice have their own organizational as well as expressive, abstractive, perceptual, and conceptual power, and the work of the teacher is to encourage and demand the students' discoveries of this power in writing tasks of varying rhetorical complexity.

(Parenthetically, I might note that the effectiveness of the Story Workshop approach in developing analytical and conceptual as well as what are called "basic" skills, has been measured over a number of years in the Dallas Community College system. There, 90-95% of students coming out of Story Workshop composition classes have passed a rigorous post-test successfully while only 50-70% of students from other composition classes have passed the same test.)

Three principles in particular underlie the Story Workshop emphasis upon voice and guide the specific techniques and coachings used by teachers

in class. The first might be seen as both personal and political. The teacher must begin by accepting the students' right to their own language, their cultural background, and their skills level. If students do not feel the acceptance of these factors by teachers who are intent upon whitewashing their language and thought, or by administrators intent upon re-segregating classrooms in the name of legitimizing testing programs or of some vague and arbitrary notion of "maintaining standards," many students will see no reason for learning to widen their language options to include the features of standard English. And most will see no connection between what they do in the classroom and what they do outside of class.

Geneva Smitherman-Donaldson has written:

> If today's speakers of non-mainstream languages and dialects are rejecting the teaching of standard English, if indeed, as Labov has suggested from his recent Philadelphia study, Black English is diverging from the language of wider communication, particularly among the Black underclass, it may be, in large measure, because educational institutions have never seriously accepted the mother tongue of the speech community. They've paid lip service to it, but they have not really accepted it. (32)

Without voice acceptance--which, since they are obviously linked, means also content acceptance, permission for the material emerging from their cultural, socio-economic, and linguistic backgrounds--students have little or no incentive to stay in school, let alone learn the linguistic and rhetorical forms presently enabling an entree into the power structure.

Betty Shiflett, in "Story Workshop as a Method of Teaching Writing," indicates how a Story Workshop class answers the concerns that Smitherman-Donaldson raises:

> Sameness can properly be seen only as a curse to writers struggling to speak in their own voices.
>
> For this reason, workshop differences of environmental circumstance, cultural, and ethnic background are welcomed, not "overcome," because they are integral to the student's voice and experience. If we accept his voice, we accept his culture and background. We welcome it, wherever he comes from, and work to develop from there the many broadening and heightening cultural, imaginative, and linguistic possibilities. No workshop director should think for one minute that he could pretend to accept a student's voice and then trick or transform him into something standard, and still have authority and presence in that student's imaginative events. (149)

Without full permission for the wide range of student voices and content in our composition classes, we risk the "sameness" of voice I mentioned earlier and undercut an important base for building competence in many different writing modes.

The second principle is related to the first in having both personal and political, as well as practical pedagogical, ramifications. A Story Workshop class is inherently democratic rather than elitist in that it draws upon capacities most students already possess (and, in fact, have used with a great deal of effectiveness in many situations for most of their lives). Nearly all of us have been expanding our abilities to see and tell, orally at

least, in many different contexts for many different purposes and audiences well before we entered high school and college composition classes and began to study the rules of grammar and rhetorical form. The Story Workshop teacher's first aim is to help the student connect her seeing and telling capacities outside of class to those used in class by using the focus, and heightening dynamic, of the immediate peer audience--and then to help the student transfer these capabilities to written discourse. Voice is a central aspect of this connection not because writing is exactly like speaking (Ong and many others have shown the connections and contrasts) but because oral voice is the source of written voice. The power of in-class oral telling leads directly to the extension, heightening, and sustaining power of written voice. And again, when students discover the application of skills they already possess in some measure, they begin to see reasons for developing and sharpening these skills.

The third principle relates primarily to pedagogical issues, especially those having to do with syllabus and format. The syllabus of a Story Workshop composition class takes students through a sequence of writing tasks beginning with familiar basic forms that call forth naturally their own distinct and most often used voices--how-to's, events, journals, letters--and proceeding through those which place an increasing demand upon more conceptual and analytical capabilities--comparison/contrast, description, model or pattern telling, cause and effect, argumentative and expository essays. (In fact, in one important sense, this distinction between narrative and abstract/conceptual writing is largely false, since how-to's as well as argumentative essays call forth abstractive, reasoning, persuasive, inherently "rhetorical" capabilities, while a great many essays likewise include narration, if only for purposes of examples or evidence.)

Similarly, the syllabus plays upon the twin emphases of voice and seeing in order to deal with a host of technical aspects involved in the various forms: sense of address to varying audiences, point of view, tone, the registers and grammatical features of English, and so on.

A basic Story Workshop format moves through a series of exercises and activities that build sequentially:

1. Opening Recall (of previous session's work)
2. Oral Reading of Models
3. Recall and Comment on Oral Reading
4. Word Exercises
5. Oral Telling
6. In-Class Writing
7. Oral Read-Back of In-Class Writing
8. Oral Reading of Selections From Submitted Student Work
9. Final Recall

This format is varied somewhat according to time constraints and other needs of specific classes; but whatever the variations, in each activity the teacher coaches, creates the enabling atmosphere of guided discovery fostering each student's perceptions about her authentic telling and writing voice--and about the many variations possible that draw upon that voice, the many voices embedded in the one. The coachings for voice, along with those for seeing and meaning, are always key, and are given early and often in each activity.

The focus of the teacher is thus upon procedural concerns and upon bringing students face-to-face with those techniques crucial to their writing tasks. As Shiflett states, "The director's 'explaining' energies should be directed on making the directions to the various exercises clear to

the student, and on making clear that both director and student are out to discover the student's writing voice" (149). The focus of the student is likewise primarily procedural and technical (as well as ideational and conceptual), and thus bridges a gap, too often overlooked in many approaches, between talking about technique and putting technique into practice. (Hillocks, for instance, concludes in Research on Written Composition that, in spite of its popularity, use of literary models is the least effective approach to teaching composition, most likely because teachers largely ignore the procedural issues, the strategies allowing students to connect the literary model directly and immediately to their own writing, [153-56, 227-28].) In general, the procedural emphasis leads, as Kate Gardner termed it in her CCCC presentation of 1987, to ways of making literal the metaphor of voice.

Space does not allow me to go into every elaboration of these coachings, but I will offer a few examples of how the most immediately useful and necessary voice-principled coachings are used in some portions of the format. (A more complete list of coachings, designed to answer subtle and individual student needs may be found in Schultz's Teacher's Manual for Writing From Start to Finish.

In opening recall, in the recall and comment activity following oral reading, and the recall following the reading of student work, the teacher coaches the student, "Go to a moment particularly taking your attention from what has been read (or told). See it, and tell it so that everyone can see it, as if they were hearing it for the first time. Keep your eye on what you are telling, and listen to your voice as you give it across the semi-circle." Story Workshop classes use semi-circles rather than rows in order to heighten the sense of telling to an immediate audience, which functions,

in turn, as a stand-in for the wider, "fictional" audience faced by the writer outside of class. ("The writer's audience is always a fiction," writes Ong; see Orality and Literacy, 101-3, and Interfaces of the Word, 53-81.) The coaching directs the teller to listen inwardly to her own voice as it also directs her to sense the way her voice is affecting the external audience. In addition, the teacher also coaches the student to tell with the hand and (seated) body gestures that help her convey what she sees, and to give her perceptions in her own language (mixing or joining with the language of the original wherever she feels the impulse). These coachings draw immediately and powerfully upon the two-way relationship between voice and gesture.

The coachings for voice are particularly significant in the oral reading portion of the class. Oral reading of models is a crucial step in developing the context for understanding voice for a number of reasons: First, it gives students a more immediate and vivid experience of hearing the movement, rhythm, tone, syntactical patterns, and organizing power of voice than is possible in silent reading. They feel the physical presence of voice and sense the presence of the character behind the teller's words on the page. Second, it gives readers and writers seeking to widen their linguistic and rhetorical options the three experiences that Cambourne has shown to be necessary for successful language learning to occur: (1)reading the spoken language that one is most familiar with, that is, one's speech which has been written down, (2)hearing the written language of books that other, more mature users of the written mode have produced, and (3)reading the written language that other, more mature users of the written mode have produced (97-98). An oral reading experience taking into account a variety of peer and more mature voices, with its consequent range of

registers and content, answers these three needs and helps greatly to establish the voice permission so important in tapping the many individual voices of the persons in the class. It also encourages the incorporation of the features of standard English, without displacing the dialect features that may serve the student very well in the many situations where an effective mixed diction is the best diction. Finally, the oral reading is necessary because it lets students hear forcefully the processes of other authors whose voices are engaged in organizing their perceptions as they tell, thereby emphasizing the connection of voice to meaning.

The teacher begins the oral reading activity by reading a part of the selection aloud in order to establish the sound and movement of the voice on the page, then begins handing the text to students and letting them each read a part of the selection aloud. Students are coached to close their own books and simply to concentrate upon listening and seeing whatever the piece gives them to see. Even if the work has already been assigned for reading at home, it will often yield surprising new perceptions, particularly about voice, when read aloud in class. In the beginning of the semester, to establish a sense of peer audience and an ability to listen to one's own voice merged with the voice of the writer, as each student begins to read the teacher instructs her to pick out someone across the semi-circle and address it to that person as a letter--"Dear Blair. . . ." Then, the teacher coaches the reader, "See it as you read. Let your mind's eye linger on anythi' that catches your attention in what you are reading--any image, any ac , any gesture, any object, any language, or anything else--and listen to your voice as you give it to Blair." As the reading proceeds, other coachings for voice (given along with those for seeing and meaning) may be particularly helpful in answering the needs of specific students: "Slow

down. Give full value to each word." "Listen to your voice. Listen to the voice of the piece in your voice. Listen to your voice join with the voice of the teller." "Give it! Give it across the semi-circle to Blair." "Listen to your voice as if you are hearing it from the outside." "Take the time to see whatever the page gives you to see, and let it come into your voice. Exaggerate it." Each of these coachings stresses the need for the student to listen inwardly to her own voice rather than to impose her voice on that of the story or essay. (Imposition often leads to "theatrical" or "performance" readings that distort content. Thus, in the coachings above and elsewhere, "exaggerate" is used in the sense of heightening the natural inflections and rhythms of the voice on the page, a connection to, rather than a distortion of, the writer's voice.) The development of this sense of an internal audience, th s inner listening, is absolutely essential if the student is ever going to write in her own voice. She can't recognize it, and certainly can't write it, if she can't hear it, if she never has a context in which it is possible for her to hear it.

The in-class oral telling, writing, and read-back is the center of the sequence of activities in a Story Workshop class; and here the power of oral reading in conjunction with the procedural emphasis of the recall and comment activity (in which students are asked to recall a moment from the reading and then make a comment on anything that took their attention about the way the piece was told, how it was told, or what it was telling) bears immediate fruit. In the in-class telling portion of the class, the teacher coaches students to see a place--or, if the emphasis is upon a particular form, a moment from the how-to process, comparison/contrast, argumentative essay, etc.-- taking their attention. Once again, the teacher may coach the student to address the telling to someone in the semi-circle.

Students are coached to tell it in their own language as they see it, to use naturally vivid and precise gestures to help them tell, and to be aware of what their audience needs to know in order to see it as clearly as they are seeing it. Later on, after the external audience awareness has been established, the director may coach the student, "Keep your eye on what you are telling, and listen to your voice telling it across the semi-circle," this in order to heighten the sense of internal listening.

In the in-class writing that follows oral telling, the teacher coaches students to pick out someone across the semi-circle to tell to (an audience choice which may be varied in number, in degrees of sympathy with the views of the teller, and so on over the course of the semester): "Write, 'Dear Blair' at the top of the page, and tell it right to that person, beginning with a compelling image, a thesis statement and image example, whatever is taking your attention most strongly. See it, and tell it as fast and as fully as you can. Keep your eye on what you are telling, and listen to your voice as you write. Just let your pen be an extension of your voice." After a few moments, and periodically throughout the writing, the teacher will offer a side-coaching that re-affirms these directions--for instance, to keep telling it directly to the person they have chosen to address, to exaggerate their voice on the page, to see what happens next, to be aware of any contexts that the audience needs at any point, to find ways of getting the gestures they used in oral telling onto the page, and so on.

In the read-back immediately following the writing, the teacher coaches the student for sense of address, seeing, listening to her voice as she reads--all the things coached earlier during oral reading of models, and most recently during in-class writing. The read-back allows the students to hear immediately where the voice is coming through on the page

forcefully, freely, clearly, and coherently--and, by contrast, those places where it slides off base, becomes twisted in syntax, fails to hold the reader's attention, loses physical presence. At this moment (actually even earlier during tellings, but here most clearly), the rewriting process has already begun as the students let their voices guide them to toward distinctions between effective, clearly-seen and ineffective, vaguely-perceived passages, and as the teacher listens and offers suggestions for what was heard in the voice of the read-back, what was in the oral telling but is not yet on the page, what needs heightening, context, examples, sharpened movement, and so on.

The importance of this reading aloud of one's own work with the emphasis upon developing inner audience and listening sense (also used extensively in one-to-one conferences and in tutoring sessions) cannot be overstressed. It offers each student a particularly strong impetus to apprehending the peculiar power, precision, and effectiveness of her authentic voice. Furthermore, the whole sequence of activities and coachings encouraging discoveries about voice provides a supportive, but demanding environment for experimentation and development, a sound, deeply integrative base from which to build competence in the wide range of voice and voice registers coming into play in the various writing tasks students will have to face in and out of school.

IV

There are no shortcuts to becoming a competent, let alone engaging, clear, and effective writer. The act of writing is too complex, calls upon too many parts of the brain and body to work in unison, involves too many aspects of conscious and unconscious processes to admit of shortcuts. But it stands to reason that an approach allowing a student to make discoveries

and expand their writing capabilities productively from a firm base must be experiential, process-oriented, and integrative, must work from the inside out, so to speak. Outside-in approaches attempting to put the cart before the horse--for instance, to teach by rules or treat writing as a series of discrete, virtually disconnected elements (phrases, then sentences, then paragraphs; prewriting, then writing, then rewriting; parts of speech, then grammar, then style) that once mastered promise fine writing--will more often than not result in frustrated students and mechanical prose (see the New Zealand study, Elley et al.). The sum will never be greater than the parts mastered.

A definition of voice may elude us, and it may elude our students; but an apprehension of voice, a sense of the physical presence of voice, of ethos, of a speaker addressing a reader, must never elude us. We do not need to preach the power of voice and we do not need to skulk around guiltily apologizing for our inability to say calmly and scientifically what it is. We need simply, as clearly and sure-footedly as we can, to teach ourselves and our students ways of identifying its occurrences, of discovering, developing, refining its potential, and of extending its applications.

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