

Developing and Assessing the Writing of ELLs: Using the Six Traits Model to Focus Instruction

Hospital Education Program
Charlottesville, VA
November 4, 2009

Berthica Rodriguez-McCleary, Ed.S.

Education Consultant

Karyn Niles

Fairfax County Public Schools

What is good writing?

Individually read the student writing sample, “Wild About” **(page A)**

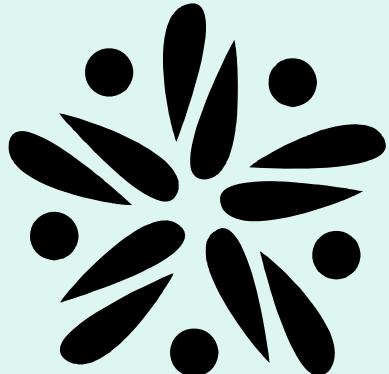
- Make notes and write comments on paper
- What are the writer’s strengths and weaknesses?
- Specify what “grade” or score would you give the writing? Why?

Six Traits

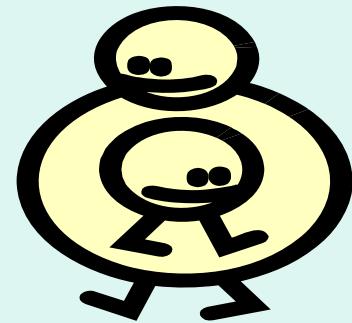
IDEAS



ORGANIZATION



VOICE



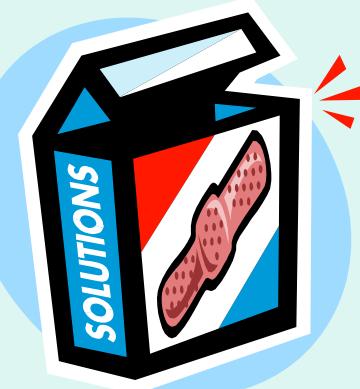
WORD CHOICE



SENTENCE FLUENCY



CONVENTIONS



Workshop Goals

- Explore how we assess student writing
 - **What do we look for?**
 - **How do we score/grade?**
- Look at different components of good writing
- Become familiar with 6-Traits to explicitly help students improve writing and provide a common language for class discussion
- Practice mini-lessons and use literature to highlight at least three specific traits
- Practice the use of the 6-Traits rubric to develop inter-rater reliability

"When I first became a teacher, I did not teach writing at all. I assigned it. That's because the assigning of writing, followed by the collecting and correcting of writing, is what had been modeled for me. My teachers focused so heavily on the final product (along with due dates, minimum lengths, and conventions) that they scarcely concerned themselves at all with the how of writing, nor did they teach anything like a step-by-step writing process, much less model it. "

~Vicki Spandel pg. 147

Writing Issues with Ells

Students:

- **Still have something to say**, even though their grammar and mechanics are still developing
- Need to understand the organizational system of writing in English
- Benefit from explicit help in each trait
- Gain confidence when their strengths celebrated
- Need a structure that allows them to target specific areas to improve

6 Traits of Writing - Descriptors (page B)

Ideas

Ideas are the heart of any piece of writing. Ideas are all about information. In a good creative piece, ideas paint pictures in a reader's mind. In an informational piece, strong ideas make hard-to-penetrate text reader friendly. Two things make ideas work well: clarity and details. Good writing always makes sense. And it includes details-not just any old details, mind you, but those beyond-the-obvious bits of information that thoughtful, observant writers notice.

Keys: MAIN IDEA, FOCUS, DETAILS, CLARITY, RESEARCH

Organization

Organization is the internal structure of the piece. Once a writer has assembled his/her information and thoughts, it's time to put things together in a way that makes sense and that holds the reader's attention. The writer must ask, Where do I begin? What do I say next? And after that? How do I wrap it all up? Good organization makes writing as easy to follow as a well-laid-out road map. The reader moves effortlessly from one thought to the next, and his/her interest and understanding grow throughout the piece until-boom! The power of a just-right conclusion brings the discussion to a close (for now).

Keys: LEAD, SEQUENCING, PATTERN MATCHES PURPOSE, TRANSITIONS, PACING, CLOSURE

Voice

Voice is many things: individuality, perspective, expressiveness, sensitivity to audience, enthusiasm for a topic, confidence-and so much more. Voice has the power to hold a reader's attention and to make the reading more enjoyable. It also reveals something of the writer, and the stronger the voice, the deeper the revelation. Even informational pieces can (and should) have strong voice, the kind of voice that resonates from a writer's knowledge of and respect for his/her topic, along with the desire to bring that topic to life for the reader.

Keys: SOUND, TONE CONNECTION TO AUDIENCE, STRONG VERBS, DETAIL, HONESTY

Word Choice

In good writing, the word choice is clear, precise and colorful. It is marked by thoughtful selection of that "just right" word that conveys both the meaning and attitude the writer wishes to project. Good writers learn to spend words like money, making each one count. They also learn that strong verbs give writing energy, while truckloads of adjectives and adverbs do little more than weigh the text down. Strong word choice is free of ponderous, heavy language, written only to impress. It's also free of fluffy language: nice, fun, wonderful, great. IT is clean, clear, and to the point-sometimes quotable.

Keys: VERBS! CLARITY, PRECISION, FRESH WORDS AND PHRASES, SIMPLICITY, NATURAL SOUND, AVOIDING WORDINESS, INFLATION, JARGON AND "WEARY" WORDS

Sentence Fluency

Sentence fluency is the rhythm and flow of sentences that makes a text both easy and pleasurable to read. When sentence fluency is strong, it is easy to read a text aloud with lots of interpretation and inflection; it dances gracefully from one sentence to the next. Strong sentence fluency is also marked by variety in both sentence length and structure. Variety lends interest to the text and helps keep sleepy readers awake.

Keys: VARIETY, SMOOTH FLOW, TRANSITIONAL PHRASES, DIALOGUE, THE WAY IT SOUNDS TO THE EAR.

Conventions

Anything a copy editor might deal with falls under the heading of conventions: spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing, grammar and usage. Layout and presentation can be included as well.

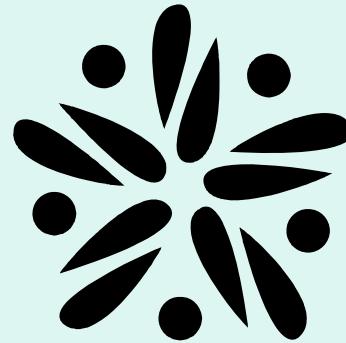
Keys: "EDITING CONCERNS;" CONVENTIONAL vs. NON-STANDARD (based on specific purpose)

Focus on Four Specific Traits

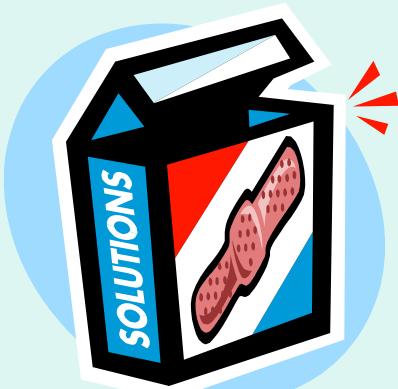
IDEAS



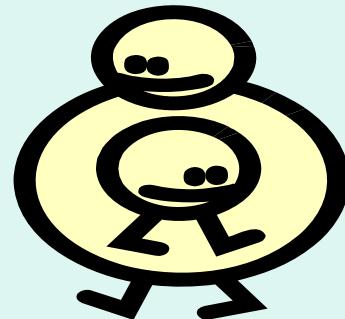
ORGANIZATION



CONVENTIONS



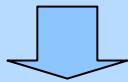
VOICE



Process for Teaching a Trait (C)



Ongoing, explicit teaching of trait specifics, including multiple lessons with exemplars



- Define the trait
- Review the rubric
- Give examples that can be assessed
- Provide writing samples that can be revised in pairs
- Practice revising a variety of pieces

A Primary Goal of Evaluation

“We must constantly remind ourselves that the ultimate purpose of evaluation is to enable students to evaluate themselves.”

Arthur Costa

Ideas (Page B)



Ideas are the heart of any piece of writing.

Ideas are all about **information**.

In a good creative piece, ideas **paint pictures** in a reader's mind.

In an informational piece, strong ideas make hard-to-penetrate text **reader-friendly**.

Two things make ideas work well: **clarity and details**.

Good writing always makes sense.

And it includes **details**--not just any old details, mind you, but those beyond-the-obvious bits of information that thoughtful, observant writers notice.

- **Keys:** **MAIN IDEA, FOCUS, DETAILS, CLARITY, RESEARCH**

Rubrics: Ideas (cardstock inserts)

Teacher

- 6**
 - * Clear, focused, compelling –holds reader's attention
 - * Striking insight, impressive knowledge of topic
 - * Takes reader on a journey of understanding
 - * Clear main idea and significant, intriguing details
- 5**
 - * Clear and focused
 - * Reflects in-depth knowledge of topic
 - * Authentic, convincing info from experience/research
 - * Clear main idea well supported by details
- 4**
 - * Clear and focused more often than not
 - * Writer knows topic well enough to write in broad term
 - * Some new info, some common knowledge
 - * Main idea can be easily inferred, quality details outweigh generalities
- 3**
 - * Clear, focused moments overshadowed by undeveloped, rambling text
 - * Writer needs greater knowledge of topic—gaps apparent
 - * Mostly common knowledge and best guesses
 - * Generalities dominate, writer has weak grip on main idea
- 2**
 - * Writer lacks clear vision—still defining topic, key question
 - * Writer struggles with insufficient knowledge—writing is strained
 - * Broad unsupported observations invented details
 - * Filler dominates—main idea wanders in and out of focus

Student

- 6**
 - * My ideas are crystal clear- you will not be bored.
 - * I know the topic inside out.
 - * My details are intriguing-not just things everyone already knows.
- 5**
 - * This paper is clear-it makes sense from beginning to end.
 - * It is easy to see what my main point is about.
 - * I used research or my experience to make my writing convincing.
- 4**
 - * Most of this paper is clear and focused--Ok-there are a few fuzzy moments.
 - * It's easy to tell what this paper is about.
 - * I have some great details-but some generalities too. I need more new and unusual ideas.
- 3**
 - * I know what I want to say-but it's hard to get my ideas on paper.
 - * At least I stick to my topic-well, most of the time.
 - * You can probably figure out what my main idea is about.
 - * Details? I have a few- I need more information.
- 2**
 - * This is still confusing, even to me. It rambles.
 - * I'm beginning to figure out what I want to say.
 - * I think I have a main idea, but I'm not sure.
 - * This is sketchy-truth is I don't say much.

Looking at the Ideas Rubric **(B & CARDSTOCK: Teacher Rubric)**

Individually:

- Look at the “IDEAS Rubric”
- Identify or highlight places in the IDEAS Rubric where key characteristics/terms of “**6-Traits Ideas Descriptors**” are evident

Practice: Idea Rubric with Sample Writing from Your Class...

Individually:

1. Re-read the sample from your class
2. Use **Ideas Column** on your **CARDSTOCK Teacher Rubric** and assess; rank your student's writing on just "Ideas"

With your partner:

3. Reach consensus at your table on the score for both papers

Where do we go next to improve on ideas and detail development?

How do we teach it (details)...

Focus on four sample minilessons:

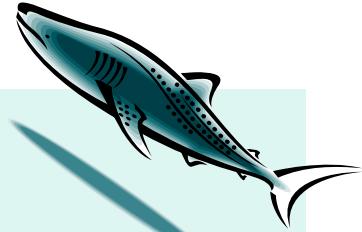
- 1. Selecting Key Points (“Sharks”)**
- 2. Leveling (Own sample; “Korean Festival” “Pizza” and 3 Authors’)**
- 3. Questioning**
- 4. Read-Alouds (Lunchtime for a Purple Snake)**

Mini Break 10

Selecting Key Points (page E) “SHARKS”: Details Minilesson

Think, Pair, Share:

- Individually, pick out the 6 most intriguing, interesting bits of information. Ignore irrelevant details and common knowledge.
- Discuss your choices with a partner
- Share out:
 - *What happened when you shared your choices?*
 - *Did you agree on all?*
 - *Were there distracters?*
 - *How would this activity help students?*



“Leveling Minilesson”

Individual Practice:

Level 1:

First, write ONE sentence about a memorable place, person, or experience, using ONE adjective to describe that person, place, or experience.

Level 2:

Now, write two or three sentences, showing what you said in that one adjective. Don't use the adjective.

Level 3:

And now....put yourself mentally at the scene, in the experience, with the person. See, hear, feel, taste, smell. BE there. Put the reader there, using the most vivid impressions you can call to mind. Let VERBS work for you.

Student Leveling Example # 1

Level 1:

First, write ONE sentence about a memorable place, person, or experience, using ONE adjective to describe that person, place, or experience.

*Korean Festival was wonderful,
but there were many trashes.*

#1 continued...

Level 2:

Now, write two or three sentences, showing what you said in that one adjective. Drop the adjective.

There were many deautiful events during the festival. When I tried to walk out of the festival, there were many trashes near me.

#1 continued...

Level 3:

And now....put yourself mentally at the scene, in the experience, with the person. See, hear, feel, taste, smell. BE there. Put the reader there, using the most vivid impressions you can call to mind. Let VERBS work for you.

In festival, there were many colorful, huge, and amazing event during the show. People did Boxing ,singing ,and Non-ta. Suddenly I felt really hungry. I standed up and when I stepped once. I could felt sometime under my feet. There were stinky and discusting trashes all around me.

Student Leveling Example #1

Korean Festival was wonderful, but there were many trashes. There were many deautiful events during the festival. When I tried to walk out of the festival, there were many trashes near me. In festival, there were many colorful, huge, and amazing event during the show. People did Boxing ,singing ,and Non-ta. Suddenly I felt really hungry. I standed up and when I stepped once. I could felt sometime under my feet. There were stinky and discusting trashes all around me.

Student Leveling Example #2

Level 1:

First, write ONE sentence about a memorable place, person, or experience, using ONE adjective to describe that person, place, or experience.

Pizza is the most delicious food.

#2 continued...

Level 2:

Now, write two or three sentences, showing what you said in that one adjective. Drop the adjective.

*Pizza has many cheese on top.
The cheese, gives the pizza better taste.*

2 *continued...*

Level 3:

And now....put yourself mentally at the scene, in the experience, with the person. See, hear, feel, taste, smell. BE there. Put the reader there, using the most vivid impressions you can call to mind. Let VERBS work for you.

When I go to Pizza Hut, I buy one whole pizza and eat all even if I'm not hungry. When you rip the crust out of the pizza, melted, cheese surprises you.

Student Leveling Example #2

Pizza is the most delicious food. Pizza has many cheese on top. The cheese, gives the pizza better taste.

When I go to Pizza Hut, I buy one whole pizza and eat all even if I'm not hungry.

When you rip the crust out of the pizza, melted, cheese surprises you.

Author Examples **(page F)**

- Bill Bryson (Neither Here Nor There)
- Gary Paulsen (Winter Dance)
- Ralph Fletcher (Twilight Comes Twice)

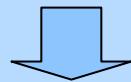
In your small groups:

- **Read samples**
- **Discuss how you might incorporate your own leveling sample and/or these authors' with your students**
- **Share with whole group**

Process for Teaching a Trait



Ongoing, explicit teaching of trait specifics including multiple lessons with exemplars



- Define the trait
- Review the rubric
- Give examples that can be assessed
- Provide writing samples that can be revised in pairs (minilessons)
- Practice revising a variety of pieces

“Questioning Minilesson”: Getting Hector to Think about Details...



In small groups:

- Look at Hector’s writing again (“Wild About Girls” **(page D)**)
- Come up with 3 or 4 specific questions to lead Hector toward providing more specific details
- Share out

After Using Ideas Rubric...

Individually:

1. Read Hector's revised "Wild About" writing sample focusing on just his ideas **(page G)**
2. Highlight areas/passages improved
3. Re-evaluate using **Ideas Column** on **CARDSTOCK Teacher Rubric**

Inter-rater reliability check

Read Aloud
Minilesson

Lunchtime for a Purple Snake



Harriet Ziefert • Paintings by Todd McKie

© B. Rodriguez-McCleary; K. Niles
2009

LUNCH

Bats Preschool/Preliterate Adaptations

- 1. Selecting Key Points (“Bats”)**
- 2. Leveling (Adding to describe)**
- 3. Questioning (How does the bat feel?)**
- 4. Read-Alouds (Stellaluna)**

BAT 1



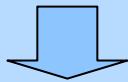
BAT 2



Process for Teaching a Trait



Ongoing, explicit teaching of trait specifics including multiple lessons with exemplars



- Define the trait
- Review the rubric
- Give examples that can be assessed
- Provide writing samples that can be revised in pairs
- Practice revising a variety of pieces

Organization (page B)



Organization is the **internal structure** of the piece. Once a writer has assembled his/her information and thoughts, it's time to put things together in a way that makes sense and that holds the reader's attention. The writer must ask: Where do I begin? What do I say next? And after that? How do I wrap it all up? **Good organization makes writing as easy to follow as a well-laid-out road map.** The reader moves effortlessly from one thought to the next, and his/her interest and understanding grow throughout the piece until-boom! The power of a just-right conclusion brings the discussion to a close (for now).

* **Keys:** **LEAD, SEQUENCING, PATTERN MATCHES**
PURPOSE, TRANSITIONS, PACING, CLOSURE

How do we teach it (Organization)...

Focus on four minilessons:

- 1. Understanding the Concept**
(Group organization activity)
- 2. Sequencing** (Sentence Strips)
- 3. Transitions** (Sentence Strips Paragraphs
Transition Examples)
- 4. Leads and Closures** (“Choosing
Favorite Leads”; “Write a Lead: Four
Corners Lead Search”)

Sequence Strips : Organization

In your small groups:

1. Take out sequence strips from one zip-lock bag
2. Read statements; reach consensus on how to re-order them; and organize them as agreed
3. Be ready to share out why you organized as you did.
4. Repeat with other bag. Leave out on table.

NOTE: Different groups may disagree on order but must be able to justify/explain rationale for group decision

Transitions Minilesson

In your small groups:

- Look at your “sentence strips” paragraphs and identify transition words and implied transitions.
- What other transitions could you use?
- Look at Transition Examples and explore additional choices (***page 1***)

Leads Minilesson

“Choosing a Favorite Lead”

Individually:

- Read the sample leads provided (***page J***)
- Select two favorite leads
- Write down WHY you liked them

In your small groups:

- Take turns sharing your “favorite” leads and together discuss why you think they are good leads
- Make a list of various factors that make a “good” lead

Leads: Organization

Individually:

- Review lead categories (***page K***)
- Take a 3x5 card (don't let anyone see what you will write!)
- Write a lead that YOU would use to begin your own book.
- Turn your card upside-down and pass to presenters

Four Corners Lead Activity

Individually:

- Listen to the four leads the presenters will read
- Determine which lead is by an published writer
- Walk to that corner
- Repeat with new leads.

Ways to End: Closure Activity

(page L)

Pizza is the most delicious food. Pizza has many cheese on top. The cheese, gives the pizza better taste. When I go to Pizza Hut, I buy one whole pizza and eat all even if I'm not hungry. When you rip the crust out of the pizza, melted, cheese surprises you.

*Pizza is the most delicious food.
Pizza has many cheese on top.
The cheese, gives the pizza
better taste. When I go to
Pizza Hut, I buy one whole
pizza and eat all even if I'm
not hungry. When you rip the
crust out of the pizza, melted,
cheese surprises you.*

*It's so good, I don't mind the
stomach ache and burnt tongue!*

Mini Break



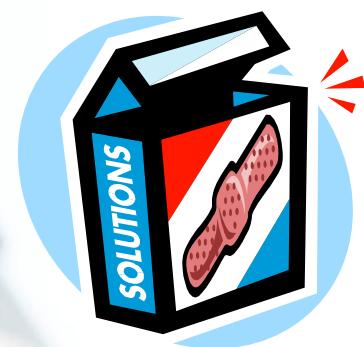
Focus on One Trait...

In Pairs:

1. Read, “Five Tips on How to Lose a Girlfriend” **(page M)**
2. Review “6-Traits Descriptors” **(page B)**
and select the area that:
 - immediately “jumps out” as a strength
 - immediately “jumps out” as an obvious weakness

Let's focus on that one weakness...

Conventions



*Anything a **copy editor** might deal with falls under the heading of conventions: **spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing, grammar, and usage.** Layout and presentation can be included as well.*

- **Keys: “EDITING” CONCERNS; CONVENTIONAL vs. NON-STANDARD (based on specific purpose)**

Conventions Rubric (cardstock rubric)

- 6 * Only the pickiest editors would spot errors
 - * Thoroughly edited-conventions enhance meaning, voice
 - * Complexity of text showcases wide range of conventions
 - * Enticing layout (optional)
 - * Virtually ready to publish
-
- 5 * Minor errors that are easily overlooked
 - * Edited-conventions support meaning, voice
 - * Sufficient complexity reflects skill in numerous conventions
 - * Pleasing layout (optional)
 - * Ready to publish with light touch-ups
-
- 4 * Noticeable errors- message still clear
 - * Edited for general readability
 - * Shows control over basics (e.g. cap's , end punctuation)
 - * Acceptable layout(optional)
 - * Good once-over needed prior to publication
-
- 3 * Noticeable, distracting errors- may slow reading, affect message
 - * Erratic editing-many things missed
 - * Problems even with basic conventions
 - * More attention to layout needed (optional)
 - * Thorough, careful editing needed prior to publication
-
- 2 * Frequent, distracting errors get in the way of message
 - * Minimal editing-if any
 - * Numerous errors even on basics
 - * Limited attention to layout (optional)
 - * Line-by-line editing needed prior to publication
-
- 1 * Serious, frequent errors make reading a real effort
 - * Lack of editing leaves even patient readers struggling
 - * Errors on basics obscure meaning, put up road blocks
 - * No apparent attention to layout (optional)
 - * Word-by-word editing needed prior to publication

6-Traits Rubrics: Conventions

Individually:

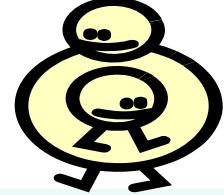
- Refer to the **Conventions Column** on the **CARDSTOCK Teacher Rubric**
- Re-read and rank, “Five Tips on How to Lose a Girlfriend” (**page M**) according to **conventions** trait rubric

Inter-rater reliability check

Minilessons for teaching Conventions?

- Use books for mini-lessons (see bibliography):
 - Eats, Shoots, and Leaves
 - Punctuation Takes a Vacation
 - Caught'Ya Again! More Grammar With a Giggle
- Work with “**YOU SAID ITs...**” (straight from student samples)
 - *He came to U.S. five month ago.*
 - *She likes to write her school work with pen then pencil*
 - *A bunny is such a adorable creature with a “true image”.*
- Have **paired/small group editing sessions**
- Use **PVC Pipes** for “Hearing what others hear...”
- Model with first and final drafts

VOICE (page B)



Voice is many things: individuality, perspective, expressiveness, sensitivity to audience, enthusiasm for a topic, confidence-and so much more. Voice has the power to **hold a reader's attention** and to make the reading more enjoyable. It also **reveals something of the writer**, and the stronger the voice, the deeper the revelation. Even informational pieces can (and should) have strong voice, the kind of voice that resonates from a writer's knowledge of and respect for his/her topic, along with the desire to **bring that topic to life** for the reader.

Keys: SOUND, TONE CONNECTION TO AUDIENCE, STRONG VERBS, DETAIL, HONESTY

Rubrics: VOICE

Teacher

- 6**
 - * As individual as fingerprints
 - * Begs to be read aloud – reader can't wait to share
 - * Uses voice as a tool to enhance meaning
 - * Passionate, vibrant, electric, compelling

- 5**
 - * Original – definitely distinctive
 - * A good “read aloud” candidate
 - * Voice appealing and well suited to topic/audience
 - * Spontaneous, lively, expressive, enthusiastic

- 4**
 - * Sparks of individuality
 - * Reader might share a line or two
 - * Voice fades at times – acceptable for topic/audience
 - * Pleasant, sincere, emerging, earnest

- 3**
 - *Voice emerges sporadically-not strong or distinctive
 - *A “share-aloud” moment
 - *Voice often distant, not always directed to audience
 - *Quiet, subdued, restrained, inconsistent

- 2**
 - *Writer seems to be in hiding
 - *A hint of voice- text not ready for sharing
 - *Voice faint- OR, not right for audience, purpose
 - *Distant, encyclopedic-OR inappropriate for informal

Student

- 6**
 - *This writing is as individual as my fingerprints.
 - *Trust me- you will need to share this aloud.
 - *I use voice to make the message resonate in your head.
 - *Her the passion in my voice? I want you to love this topic.

- 5**
 - *This is original and distinctive. It's definitely me.
 - *I think you will want to read this aloud.
 - *This voice goes with the topic, and reaches out to the audience.
 - *The paper is lively and expressive. It has energy.

- 4**
 - *This writing strikes a spark or two. You might recognize me.
 - *You might share a line or two aloud.
 - *My voice might fade here and there- usually I reach out to the audience.
 - *This paper is sincere. It sounds like I mean what I say.

- 3**
 - *My voice comes out here and there. I'm not sure you can tell it's me.
 - *There could be a “share aloud” moment in there somewhere.
 - *I wasn't always thinking of the audience.
 - *My voice is very faint. It's hard to hear even when you listen closely.
 - *My voice is pretty quiet in this paper. It's a careful, reserved voice.
 - *I'm hiding behind the words. It's not me yet.

Voice: Whose voice is it? Minilesson

Listen to the voice clips and jot down what the voice sounds like to you: be ready to share

- [http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php
?storyId=88668665](http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=88668665)
- [http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php
?storyId=5617413&sc=emaf](http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5617413&sc=emaf)
- [http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php
?storyId=89853006](http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=89853006)

Voice: Multiple Choice

“As I ate she began the first of what we later called ‘my lessons in living.’” She said that I must always be intolerant of ignorance but understanding of illiteracy. That some people, unable to go to school, were more educated and even more intelligent than college professors. She encouraged me to listen carefully to what country people called mother wit. That in those homely sayings was couched the collective wisdom of generations.”

- a. Edgar Allen Poe
- b. Maya Angelou
- c. Jerry Seinfeld

Voice

At your tables, discuss:

- How you selected your choice
- How you excluded any choices
- Key phrases that may have helped in your decision

Name that Voice !!! *(page 0)*

At your tables:

1. Read the three samples on ***page 0***
2. Determine the author and discuss how you made the selection
3. Call out “**GOT IT**” when your table has agreed!

~J.K. Rowling

~Dr. Seuss

~E. B. White

Voice

“It was a single long piece of heavy rope tied to the beam over the north doorway. At the bottom end of the rope was a fat knot to sit on. It was arranged so that you could swing out without being pushed. You climbed a ladder to the hayloft. Then, holding the rope, you stood at the edge and looked down, and were scared and dizzy. Then you straddled the knot, so that it acted as a seat. Then you got up all the nerve, took a deep breath, and jumped. For a second you seemed to be falling to the barn floor far below, but then suddenly the rope would begin to catch you, and you would sail through the barn door going a mile a minute....”

Voice

“Then the feathers popped out! With a zang! With a zing! They blossomed like flowers that bloom in the spring. All fit for a queen! What a sight to behold! They sparkled like diamonds and gumdrops and gold! Like silk! Like spaghetti! Like satin! Like lace! They burst out like rockets all over the place!”

Voice

“Nobody said anything to this extraordinary pronouncement. Professor Trelawney delicately rearranged her shawl and continued, ‘So you have chosen to study Divination, the most difficult of all magical arts. I must warn you at the outset that if you do not have the Sight, there is very little I will be able to teach you. Books can take you only so far in this field.....”

Voice: Other Suggestions

Try it in your classrooms using:

- Sound clips
- Music
- Text
- People students know

Have students discuss how they how they identified or described the “voice”

Voice: More practice

- **Play: “Take it Away”**
 - Go Back to *How to Lose a Girl*
 - Take out the voice
 - Example: **“Did you ever have a girlfriend that was so annoying? Well now you could get rid of her by five simple and easy steps.”**
 - **There are five ways to stop an annoying girl”**

Patterned Writing

Use “patterned text” to help students find their voice:

- The Important Book (Margaret Wise Brown)
- IF you aren’t from.....

Voice:

Patterned Writing Sample: “If You’re Not From Bosnia”

- If you’re not from Bosnia, you don’t know Bosnia. You can’t know Bosnia. You don’t know how they talk. You don’t know what their stores look like. You don’t know how our money looks. You don’t know what our streets look like. You can’t know our streets. You don’t know the watery blackness- the hardest stone. You don’t know the city. You can’t know our city, the ruined, the broken, the cracked city.”

Voice : Tips for Success

- Be yourself!
- Match your voice to your purpose
- Think of your audience as you write
- Know your topic
- Care about your topic
- Think of all writing as a letter to someone

Review: Voice Minilessons

- NPR “Voice Clips”
- “Name that Voice!” -
Recognizing famous voices
- Play: “Take It Away”
- Patterned writing

Reflecting on Pet Peeves...

In your small groups:

- Select a “Reader” for your group.
- The **Reader** holds the stack of Post-It notes with “pet peeves” and “writing concerns” you created at the start of the day.
- The Reader takes one post-it concern, reads it to the group. (Work on only **one** at a time)
- The group discusses and reaches consensus on which of the 6 Traits would *best* describe the writing concern.
- When agreed, the Reader hands the Post-It to another group member who sticks it on the appropriate Trait on laminate. (***Individuals take turns “sticking”***)

Questions to Consider When Planning Activities

- Does every student need to target the same thing?
- Is each student aware of one area on which to focus next?
- Can students with different strengths be paired/grouped together for peer reviews?
- Are there centers with resources and examples of the traits?

Remember: Start Small...

The first useful concept is the idea of **short assignments.**

Often when you sit down to write, what you have in mind is an autobiographical novel about your childhood, or a play about the immigrant experience, or a history of –oh, say-say women.

But this is like trying to scale a glacier. It's hard to get your footing, and your fingertips get all red and frozen and torn up....

~Anne Lamott (*Bird by Bird*)

Contact Information

- **Berthica Rodriguez-McCleary**

Email: Berthica.RodriguezMcCleary@fcps.edu

or: Berthicarm@gmail.com

Cell: (540) 454-9818

- **Karyn Niles**

Email: Karyn.Niles@fcps.edu

Phone: (703) 313-3992

- **Online resources available at:**

www.academicesl.com