

From Student To Individual:

The Importance of Developing Author's Voice Via Tutoring

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My Experience As a Writing Fellow



Being a Writing Fellow this past semester, I had wonderful opportunities to...

- ✱ See how my tutees engage in class content and devote themselves to discussion by utilizing their own opinions and the course content
- ✱ Facilitate in honing each of my tutees' own authors voices as they came to realize they each have their own
- ✱ Watch as my tuttes found the fun aspects of essay writing at a college level via incorporating their own personal experiences
- ✱ Help with my tutees' grammar, paragraph structures, and exposition within their essays

What really intrigued me, however, was helping students develop their own individual author's voice. I watched each student find a love for essay writing that I was able to bring out through peer to peer discussion. I could tell feeling heard and understood was what a lot of my tutees wanted from me, but also out of their writing; and helping them develop their authors voices helped channel that need. They enjoyed the deep dive I was taking into their work as individuals, and how working on the revision process as two people instead of one lead to an interesting 'zen state' of focus and synergy over each half-hour meeting. I truly enjoyed helping each tutee expand upon their authors' voices via Professor Brod's guidances each lecture, Professor Miller's guidances each practicum meeting, and my own applied guidance as someone they could see as a peer *and* as a mentor.

The Importance of Your Author's Voice



Some pointers I gave to my tutees on incorporating their authors' voices in their essays are as follows:

- * Lean into your own opinion in every corner of your essay
- * Utilize punctuation- people often get scared to
- * Read more! Different kinds of literatures help broaden your vocabulary, but also your perspective! You'll have more to say when you consume varied kinds of information through forms that aren't just books or academic essays.
- * Don't overuse metaphors, especially in academic writing, but don't be completely scared to use them!
- * Read your work out loud whenever possible- you'll catch grammatical mistakes amongst others, but you'll also identify where you can add more of a point to get across.
- * Pull from experience- people love individuality because of the peer to peer relation your work may represent! There's an audience for everyone- you have to put yourself out there for them to find you first
- * Lean on quotes- they act as a basis of opinion, evidence, and a catalyst for inserting your perspective

In any sort of literature, author's voice does more than set you apart from a crowd- individuality is a form of genius. It separates a generic read from a riveting *experience*. It's helped flex who my tutees are as writers through a culmination of learned literary devices and good written storytelling- *even in academic writing*! Being a good writer means having an organized flow of thought translate to paper, and in academic essay tutoring it especially makes people feel understood by grounding an audience in the author's experiences and train of thought, *and* emphasizing the individual.

Source One



My first source, “*What Color Is My Voice? Academic Writing and the Myth of Standard English.*” by Kristin DeMint Bailey, An Ha, and AJ Outlar, explores the realization that one doesn’t have to conform to the stereotype that academic writing must be bland.

- ✱ “We believe that good academic writing is complicated and abstract, that it uses words we don’t know or hear very often, that it is objective and neutral and essentially personalityless. We believe that academic writing doesn’t have a voice.” (page 64)
- ✱ “the voice that is there has been normalized and disembodied. In other words, when people talk about “academic” writing, they don’t talk about the people who are doing that writing, who set those standards” (page 64)
- ✱ “How often do you think about what the speaking voice of the person writing the academic texts you’re reading sounds like?” (page 64)

An Ha in particular shares a story about how in high school, she would over-edit her friends’ essays when they’d turn to her for peer review. “what I actually did was censor their voices, stripping their colorful essays of what made them profound and thought provoking.” Page 72) She goes on to explain how she’d assumed that in academic writing you can’t give way to your own voice- she hadn’t recognized that maybe it would have *influence*. She’d ended up hindering her friends’ author’s voice because to her, “their language was not deemed academic.” (page 73) My own goal in pushing my tutees to share their author’s voice has been successful and imperative to the creative freedom that Ha writes about. “I took their narratives and shoved them into a box when I should have been the friend to set them free. To me, writing is freedom.” (page 72)

Source Two



Teaching tutees to have confidence in themselves as authors makes them a better public speaker and more confident writer. Robin D. Johnson, Kimberly S. Reinhardt, and Sarah Rafael Garcia's journal "*Your Voice is Your Weapon! Empowering Youth Through Community- Based Writing Workshops*" agrees with me. Through the unique lens of a writing workshop, Barrio Writers, this journal explores how fostering an author's voice in youth fuels them to "write narratives that reflected their true self instead of the stereotype that was imposed on them," (page 45) and how they are thankful for their writing mentors because of this newfound confidence in their voices.

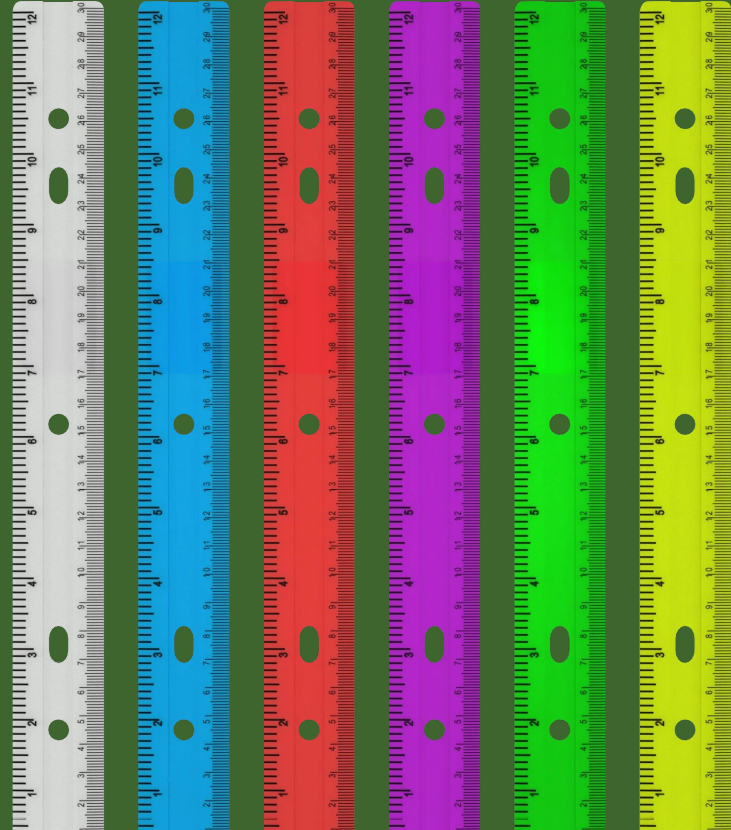
- ★ "Their recognition of themselves as agents of change and their voices as weapons provoked new feelings and perceptions." (page 45)
- ★ "The BW workshop offered exposure to key forms of power that are held by the writing advisors who delivered the workshop." (page 45)
- ★ "'I wish there were more programs like Barrio Writers because in this world art isn't always taken as seriously as science.' The student participants realized, by the end of the workshop, the shift in their social identities toward something bigger." (page 45)
- ★ "For many of the participants, this workshop was the first time during which they felt empowered to share thoughts and emotions that were not predetermined by the cultural norms of school" (page 45)

This journal emphasized just how important it is to foster an author's voice in our youth so they can better express their opinions, feel heard and understood by their audience, and write through a creative lens in academic writing.

My Essay: “From Student To Individual”



I'd love for my essay to center around this same idea: just how important emphasizing an author's voice is within tutoring, especially in this day and age where AI is rampant, the humanities feel like a dying art, and individuality is being marketed. Students outside of humanities fields don't understand how far individuality can get them, especially with how hive minded our society has become. There are little ways we can fight that rhetoric- and keeping the art of writing from your heart alive is my personal favorite.



Sources



Demint Bailey, Kristin, et al. *What Color Is My Voice? Academic Writing and the Myth of Standard English*. 2022.

“Your Voice Is Your Weapon! Empowering Youth through Community-Based Writing Workshops.” *Open Words: Access and English Studies*, vol. 10, no. 1, 2017, pp. 36–59, wacclearinghouse.org/docs/openwords/v10/johnsonetal.pdf, <https://doi.org/10.37514/opw-j.2017.10.1.04>. Accessed 4 Nov. 2025.

