To: ELA Illinois Learning Standards Writing Workshop Participants

From: Tom O. McCulley

Re: “Voice” in College Level Writing at Heartland Community College

Date: 30 April 2015

**“Voice” at Heartland Community College**

Voice is a force in almost every one of our ENGL 101 Learning Outcomes. However, for the sake of our workshop today, I am going to break voice down in a few distinct ways.

1). Voice and Authority/Authenticity (Course Outcomes # 4, 5, 8)

First and foremost, for our writing courses at HCC we look for students to claim authority for their work. In basic terms, this means that we look for the author’s presence in the text—a sense that the text is being generated by a human who has feelings, ways of shaping material, and ownership of her/his ideas. Voice is lacking, therefore, if a student is relying too heavily on source materials to make a point and/or if a student’s voice only reflects “common knowledge” about a topic. We want students to assert their own ideas beyond “common knowledge” or source ideas.

2). Voice and Genre (Course Outcomes # 2, 3, 5, 8)

Once a student has mastered #1, we want the student to realize that writing occurs in a variety of genres and that each genre also has a voice. A business memo is different than a letter to the editor is different than an academic paper is different than a film review. Students need to learn to blend their authorial voices with genre voices so that the authorial voice does not negate the genre voice and vice-versa, students need to blend genre voices with their authorial voices so that the genre does not drown out the authorial/authentic voice.

3). Voice and Audience (Course Outcomes # 1, 2, 3, 4)

Each genre has an audience. The audience for a business memo is different than the audience for a film review. Audience is, to some extent, created by genre, but it goes beyond the “text” of genre into the realization that real people with real expectations are going to read a text. The genre of a film review creates an audience that is used to how film reviews read and that carries with it an expectation that the voice delivering the film review will respect the audience created by the genre.

4). Voice and Collaboration (Course Outcomes # 1, 3, 6, 7, 8)

While it is important that a student create an authorial voice, it is also important that students recognize, through realizations of genre and audience, that all writing is a form of collaboration. This document is being created in collaboration with the other individuals involved in this workshop and it is being created in collaboration with my (limited though it is) knowledge about Common Core and College Readiness Standards. Collaboration in its clearest form includes the interplay between source voices and a student’s authorial voice.

5). Voice and Critical Thinking (Course Outcomes # 9, 10)

Voice also includes the multiple voices that come into being whenever a student creates a text. What are other voices saying about the topic of the text? Who might disagree with what the student is writing and what is the basis of that disagreement? How can a student recognize and incorporate multiple voices into her/his text in an ethical way that fairly represents those voices while still maintaining her/his authorial voice?

**ENGL 101 Learning Outcomes**

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|  | *Course Outcomes* | *Essential Competencies* | *Program*  *Outcome* | *Range of Assessment Methods* |
| 1 | Identify & describe multiple modes of information |  | PO1 | **Projects** such as an essay, blog post, feature article, persuasive editorial, etc.  **Process Assignments**, which may include but are not limited to, invention exercises (e.g., listing, concept mapping, claim structure outlining, etc.), topic proposals, annotated bibliographies, drafting, peer review, documentation practice, revision, editing,  in-class assignments (individual and collaborative), class discussion of writing or readings, attendance, and quizzes. |
| 2 | Articulate the role of conventions in shaping & designing rhetorical situations | CT 1 | PO1 |
| 3 | Articulate how genres shape reading & writing |  | PO2 |
| 4 | Identify & define rhetorical concepts |  | PO2 |
| 5 | Contribute, through writing, their own ideas & opinions about a topic to an ongoing conversation in ways that are appropriate to the academic discipline or other context | CT 2 | PO3 |
| 6 | Practice efficient research methods by locating & organizing research materials |  | PO4 |
| 7 | Read critically through comprehension, analysis & critique of a variety of texts |  | PO4 |
| 8 | Write about texts for multiple purposes including (but not limited to) interpretation, synthesis, response, summary, critique & analysis | CO 3 | PO4 |
| 9 | Recognize and navigate the ethical responsibilities required by complex environments | CO 5 | PO5 |
| 10 | Recognize the importance of collaboration in textual production | CO 4  DI 1 | PO6 |
| 11 | Control the appropriate surface features of a text, including (but not limited to) syntax, grammar, punctuation, spelling, & documentation |  | PO7 |