

Minnesota Writing Project

---Demonstration Lesson---

Title of lesson: Revision by Changing Point of View (POV)

Suggested grade/age: Any age – younger students might revise orally or with scaffolding; students 3rd grade and up would likely be able to revise independently.

Approximate time needed to complete lesson: 45-60 minutes

Learning objective(s) and significance of lesson

To explore revision through 3rd person POV to adjust the psychic distance for the reader, provide new perspectives for the writer, and to “relocate the personal” by giving the writer the opportunity to create subjectivity and write as a more critical producer of text.

Brief summary/outline of lesson

1. After hearing the teacher’s 1st person POV example, writers create a short 1st person POV piece (or return to a first person POV work in progress). For the demo lesson, the focus was writing about an endowed object.
2. Share teacher’s example writing in 3rd person POV, so students experience the differences between 1st and 3rd person POVs.
3. Writers draft a 3rd person POV version of the same scene/idea.
 - Rewrite a new draft (don’t just change the tense/pronouns)
 - retell the idea/story in 3rd person
 - step back
 - take a broader perspective
 - can say things you couldn’t say when you were in 1st person and only from your own “inner voice”
4. Independently, writers note the differences/new perspectives (process and product).
5. Partners/small group/whole groups discuss the differences and what new perspectives occurred.
 - What do you notice? (as the writer? as the reader?)
 - What happened to you as a writer?
 - Discuss shifts/new perspectives in the text
 - Discuss shifts/new perspectives for the writer
6. Discuss POV (Film camera metaphor of far away vs. close-up)
 - Intentional decision by the writer depending on how s/he wants reader to feel - outside character’s mind/inside character’s mind
 - Examples:
 - looking from afar/more psychic distance (Gardner):
 - *(The car drove down the winding mountain road, rain spraying from its tires and bouncing off its hood.)*
 - engaged, involved, living in the scene:

- (*The wipers beat left, right, left, right, not keeping up with the pace of the rain; the smeared windshield blurring the never ending mountain road stretched ahead.*)

7. Discuss “relocating the personal” (Kamler).
 - 3rd person writing can support writing “voice” that is relocated in a more critical framework
 - 3rd person alone won’t do this, of course, but it can be a tool
8. Share the purpose of writing from another perspective.
 - one is not better than another – just intentionally serves a purpose
 - can bring new insights to the author
 - by changing the POV from 1st person to 3rd person it “distances” the voice
 - can be helpful in writing a difficult scene
 - moves the perspective “outside” so new/broader ideas are possible
9. Apply to other pieces so the experience of changing POV can become a tool for uncovering ideas and/or gaining perspective.

Related resources

Emma Darwin, <http://emmadarwin.typepad.com/thisitchofwriting/psychic-distance-what-it-is-and-how-to-use-it.html>

John Gardner, *The Art of Fiction: Notes for Young Writers*

Barbara Kamler, *Relocating The Personal: A Critical Writing Pedagogy*

Timothy Lensmire, *Powerful Writing, Responsible Teaching*

The Pen and Ink Blog, <http://thepenandinkblog.blogspot.com/2011/06/props-for-emotion-objective-correlative.html>

Draft of WIP or new piece with writing prompt of endowed object/other prompt, writing supplies (computer, pen, notebook)

Possible extensions or adaptations for different purposes/student needs

1. Try other points of view to gain insight/perspective.
 - 3rd person close
 - 3rd person omniscient
 - 2nd person
 - Change 3rd person to 1st person to “get closer”
 - For younger writers, try this language: “You’ve written this like you are the character; now write it as someone *watching* the character.”
2. Reasons to use with students:
 - Gets them “out of their heads” to see the scene from another perspective
 - Helps students get a different view of how one character’s actions/words impact another
 - When students “watch” a character in 3rd person, they see things differently – possibilities become known

3. Ways to use with students:

- Inquiry-based: have students write and experience different points of view and *then* name them and teach them
- You've read *Harry Potter*. Now YOU are Harry Potter.
- Give students a general topic/prompt to write about. Then flip-flop it so they write from different characters' perspectives.

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