

Defining the Technological World

The ubiquity of computer-mediated communication (CMC) in recent years has resulted in a unique type of exhaustion – “Zoom fatigue” – arising from common virtual engagements such as Zoom sessions or shared Google docs (Nadler, 2020). Research has shown how technological interface and infrastructure cannot be ignored during human-computer interactions (Monea, 2020). Whether writing consultants interact with their clients asynchronously, synchronously, or in-person across a table, the near-unavoidable presence of a screen in any situation introduces the risk that writers are equated with their blinking cursor. **In the face of these circumstances, writing consultants can employ grounding exercises that engage the five senses to facilitate reconnection with their world and their writers.**

SENSORY AWARENESS allows for a heightened understanding of and appreciation for social interactions and the physical spaces we inhabit. Whether noticing particular scents, textures, pressures, etc., increased sensory awareness can:

- “(i) encode spaces with meaning, (ii) identify bodies with spaces and (iii) punctuate the experience and transformation of space” (Canniford et al., 2017).

Takeaways:

- Ground yourself in your physical space in order to foster a clear mindset
- Recognize and catalogue environmental stimulants
- Use your groundedness to develop a deeper, more tangible awareness of your writer

COLOR ASSOCIATION is an alternative writing strategy that can foster comprehension and improve content when writers struggle with highly abstract learning environments (Otto 2013).

- “The emphasis on sensory experience, perceptual thinking, and visualization is a deliberate attempt to challenge reason, critical thinking, and linearity of thought that have come to dominate the teaching of writing” (Otto 2013).

Takeaways:

- Be familiar with alternative strategies to aid all types of writers
- Utilize physical mediums alongside technology (e.g. highlighters vs. highlighting tool)
- Encourage more connectivity between senses and ideas

THE BREATH is the foundation of the voice; when we focus on the breath and understand how it produces sound, we can ground ourselves physically and mentally, and leverage our voices appropriately in writing center interactions.

- “The power of the imagination, properly used, can stimulate breathing on a profound level and enhance the function of the voice to maximum effect” (Linklater, 2006).

Takeaways:

- Use your comprehension of breath and the vocal process to regulate your voice
- Understand how your voice can and will affect the voices of others
- Practice intentional listening by identifying unique voices in noise-dense spaces

Writers are real people, and you’re a real person too!

We can experience abstract ideas in new ways!

Find your voice in order to help your writer find theirs!

Notes

References and Further Reading

Canniford, R., Riach, K., & Hill, T. (2017). Nosenography. *Marketing Theory*, 18(2), 234–248.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1470593117732462>

Conable, B., & Phelps, T. H. (2000). *The structures and movement of breathing : A primer for choirs and choruses*. Gia Publications.

Linklater, K. (2007). *Freeing the natural voice : Imagery and art in the practice of voice and language* (pp. 13–27). Drama.

Mondada, L. (2021). *Sensing in Social Interaction*. Cambridge University Press.

Monea, B. (2020). Looking At Screens: Examining Human-Computer Interaction and Communicative Breakdown in an Educational Online Writing Community. *Computers and Composition* 58.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compcom.2020.102605>.

Nadler, R. (2020). Understanding “Zoom fatigue”: Theorizing spatial dynamics as third skins in computer-mediated communication. *Computers and Composition* 58. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compcom.2020.102613>.

Otto, C. C. (2013). *The effects of a color-embedded writing strategy on the written expression skills of students with mild-moderate disabilities* (Order No. 3614439). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1520790299). <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/effects-color-embedded-writing-strategy-on/docview/1520790299/se-2>