Nine discusses the importance of evaluating context in research through ethnographic methods. The analysis in the next chapter, “Computers and Composition Studies: Articulating a Pattern of Discovery,” by Christine Neuworth and David Kaufer, was weaker than other essays. Their essay tries to establish a model for research methodology unique to the field; if their model offers something fundamentally beyond “identify a problem, propose a solution, test the solution,” then I missed their point. Paul LeBlanc’s concluding essay, “Ringing in the Virtual Age: Hypermedia Authoring Software and the Revival of Faculty Based Software,” successfully synthesizes a number of themes such as the marginalization of composition teachers, the positive correlation between modern pedagogical theory and computer-assisted composition, and the potentiality associated with computer programs such as networks and hypermedia. LeBlanc leaves the reader with the plausible hope that the advent of hypermedia will make software production time-effective for the composition instructor.

While much of the writing provides a sense of promise associated with new technology, Re-imagining’s equal analysis of potential and limitation within computer applications makes this book worth reading. On the one hand, the reader well versed in computers and composition will find the attempt to envision the future frequently provocative. On the other hand, the novice will probably be amazed to discover the territories that this increasingly influential area of composition currently explores.

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One very promising—and perhaps unexpected—outgrowth of much current theory has been a revived interest in the problem of written voice. Linda Brodkey and Jim Henry’s “Voice Lessons in a Poststructural Key . . . ,” for example, is but one of many recent attempts to offer a new understanding of this very old problem (*A Rhetoric of Doing: Essays on Written Discourse in Honor of James L. Kinnevy*). Ed. Stephen P. Witte, Neil Nakadate, and Roger D. Cherry. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 144-60). Other attempts, of course, can be gleaned from much feminist theory, which suggests that our present understanding of voice will remain
incomplete until it accounts for, and includes, those other voices traditionally marginalized from institutional discourses. Similarly, and for obvious reasons, voice is at the heart of most dialogic theories of language and learning.

We should hardly be surprised, then, to witness the emergence of certain texts that give voice top billing on the pedagogical marquee. Dona Hickey’s *Developing a Written Voice* is just such a text. Hickey’s approach to voice, though, originates not so much in postmodern theory as it does in classical rhetoric. This is evidenced in a number of important ways.

Starting with the premise that voice is the one quality “that separates merely competent writing from good writing” (v), Hickey proceeds to divide voice into three major groupings—colloquial, formal, and informal—and then uses these Ciceronian-inspired categories to organize her material. Before moving readers through a discussion of each category, she provides an introductory chapter wherein she defines voice, makes a key distinction between voice and style, and explains how voice can be, at once, a personal, social, and rhetorical feature of good writing. The next two chapters are devoted to the colloquial voice, the two after that to the formal voice, and the two after that to the informal voice. A separate chapter devoted to the “voice of the paragraph” then appears, followed by a final chapter that asks students to apply the various skills they have learned to different audiences in different situations. An appendix provides a sampling of rhetorical problems through which students can gain further practice in modulating the range of voices now at their disposal.

Within each chapter, Hickey begins with a general discussion of the particular focus for that chapter, followed by illustrative samples of both student and professional writing. In keeping with her opening claim to provide a “student-centered, process-oriented writing text” (v), Hickey includes examples of multiple student drafts, peer review and collaborative exercises, and questions for whole-class discussion. Yet the gist of Hickey’s approach falls squarely within the tradition of classical pedagogy, as revealed by her choice of imitation as the preferred method for helping students develop a repertoire of voices. To her credit, Hickey asks readers to think of imitation not as mindless parroting but rather as inventive play, a method that enables the imitator to “see another way of thinking and to hear other ways of voicing ideas” (111). This emphasis on the heuristic value of imitation is, of course, one way to subsume imitation within the writing process. Occasionally, though, this connection is too easily lost or forgotten, and some exercises in imitation seem to have little to do with the writing process, “trying on” the voiced perspectives of others, or negotiating the demands of a rhetorical situation.
In fact, if Developing a Written Voice has one weakness it is a tendency for a few (though by no means all) exercises to seem removed, abstracted from any larger purposes. Such a problem results not from any oversight but from an uneven parceling of emphases. Though Hickey offers a sensible discussion of voice as a rhetorical concern, and though she appends a list of writing prompts that asks students to change voices in response to diverse audiences and situations, she nonetheless tends to privilege the kinds of exercises designed to help students find an expressive, personal voice—one more or less self-sufficient in its relationship to other voices, one more or less unfettered by rhetorical constraints.

Personal voice thus forms the basis for the first (and larger) part of her text, a section premised on the axiom that "certain kinds of voices suggest certain occasions and audiences" (27). The second (and far less elaborate) part deals with how voices are defined in response to audiences and situations. The relationship, then, between audience-invoked and audience-addressed provides Hickey with a fulcrum upon which to structure her two approaches. This is an admirable and, for the most part, effective strategy. It could be more effective, though, if the latter received as much attention as the former. Too, students might find these exercises more illuminating had the author chosen to integrate both approaches within individual chapters, rather than delaying audience-addressed concerns until the final two sections of her text.

In any case, this book is a welcome and timely addition to the genre of companion texts, one probably most useful in Honors or Advanced Composition courses or—more generally perhaps—in any writing course that allows teachers the luxury to explore stylistic concerns. In its thoughtful attention to the writing process, in its acknowledgement of the relationship between voice and rhetoric, in its inclusion of quality selections from the writings of students and professionals, Dona Hickey's Developing a Written Voice offers much sound advice for those readers who may not otherwise know how to approach such a complex and elusive feature of good writing as voice. Hickey has some ideas on the matter and is willing to share them with those who will listen.

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