

Linguistic choice as empowerment

Teaching rhetorical decision-making in writing

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This article addresses the teaching of writing and examines how a rhetorical approach can generate empowerment and agency. In the context of contemporary digital modes of written communication, which have democratised access to wide networks of communication, enabling children to write well has never been more important. Yet school attainment data suggest that writing proficiency is weaker than reading proficiency. Specifically, this article will argue that a rhetorical approach to the teaching of writing helps developing writers to understand how their language choices shape the interaction between authorial intention and the intended reader, and supports young writers in making the transition, noted in research on children's writing development, from writer-based to reader-based prose. When young writers understand the relationship between linguistic choice and rhetorical effect, they begin to recognize the place of authorship and being an author, allowing writing classrooms to be communities where children can become increasingly agentic, autonomous, and capable writers.

Keywords: writing, grammar, linguistic choice, rhetorical grammar.

Introduction

In the contemporary world of mass communication, writing as a medium of communication has significantly increased its dominance, particularly through digital communication modes. Arguably, the single most significant transformation in writing in the past 50 years has been a democratization of writing, with the diminishing role of gatekeepers such as editors and publishers, and the opportunity for any individual with internet access to blog, or tweet, or self-publish with

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no external monitoring. Of course, such freedom and accessibility bring their own new democratic challenges, for example, in the prevalence of fake news and the greater need for critical discernment in readers. Nonetheless, the reach of mass communication and the accessibility of writing to a public audience is underlining the power of writing. Consider the campaigns that have begun on Twitter (e.g. the #MeToo campaign in 2017) and the way blogs can become access points for public debate. Even the language of “followers” and “going viral” is a reminder of the potency of digital writing for generating large and often global communities of readers. Malala Yousafzai in her Nobel Prize acceptance speech reminds us of the power of language: “We will speak for our rights and we will bring change through our voice. We must believe in the power and the strength of our words. Our words can change the world” (Yousafzai 2013). Her website (<https://assembly.malala.org/>) contains a Blog section where the voices and experiences of disadvantaged girls around the world are brought into the spotlight.

Thus, being able to write well is about empowerment. The capacity to write well is fundamental to educational and broader success in life. Indeed, Steve Graham and Dolores Perin argue that “writing skill is a predictor of academic success and a basic requirement for participation in civic life and in the global economy” (2007 p. 3). Yet, in Anglophone countries at least, children’s attainment in writing appears to lag behind their performance in other subjects. In England, the most recent data show that attainment in reading exceeds that in writing at age 7 and 11 (DfE 2017); in Australia, writing standards appear to be falling, with only 82% of 13-14 year olds achieving the national minimum standard in writing compared with 92% for reading and 96% for numeracy (ACARA 2017, p. 255). In the United States of America, only 27% of 12-13 year olds are assessed as proficient or above in writing, compared with 36% for reading; and 34% for both Science and Maths (NCES no date). And in New Zealand, the latest national data (for 2015-16) indicate that at the primary level, only 71% of students achieve at or above national standards compared with 78% in Reading and 75% in Mathematics (Ministry of Education 2017). How schools enable and support students in becoming confident, creative and empowered writers is therefore a matter of very real importance.

This article focuses on the teaching of writing, and the idea that a rhetorical approach can generate such empowerment. It conceives of writing as empowerment in three complementary ways:

- Language knowledge as empowerment: explicit knowledge of how to shape and craft text gives agency and control to

learners and diminishes dependence on teachers' judgement of what is effective.

- Writing as empowerment: greater proficiency in writing permits writers to understand and express themselves better through writing and to enact agency in writing.
- Democratic empowerment: through overt persuasive texts but also through narrative fiction and poetry, where young people can express their understandings and responses to their world.

Specifically, this article will argue that a rhetorical approach to the teaching of writing helps developing writers to understand how their language choices shape the interaction between authorial intention and the intended reader and gain control of their linguistic decision-making. Through this, young writers are supported in making the transition, noted in research on children's writing development, from writer-based to reader-based prose. Understanding the relationship between linguistic choice and rhetorical effect recognises the place of authorship and being an author and allows writing classrooms to be communities where children as writers can become increasingly agentic, autonomous, and capable writers.

The Art of Communication

Rhetoric as an Educational Tool for Teaching Writing

The definitional problems of rhetoric have been discussed extensively elsewhere (for example, Fleming 1998 and Eidenmuller 2018), but conceived most broadly, rhetoric is "the art, practice, and study of human communication" (Lunsford 1992, p.79). However, the specific interest of this article is in the saliency of rhetoric to act as a tool facilitating greater control of writing and writerly decisions. Thus, in line with classical rhetorical traditions which emphasise the democratising power of rhetoric (Terril 2016; Enos 2016), this article argues that with control comes agency and empowerment. The argument that positions rhetoric as "a practical study offering people great control over their symbolic activity" (Bazerman 1988, p. 6) aligns with a paideutic view of rhetoric as something which can be learned or acquired (Fleming 1998, p.178) and therefore a purposeful educational tool.

In the context of writing, there has long been a recognition that a challenge for writers, and perhaps especially for younger writers, is managing both *what* to say and *how* to say it. Carl Bereiter and

Marleen Scardamalia (1987) conceived of this as balancing the demands of the content space and the rhetorical space, and there is widespread acknowledgement within cognitive psychology that this is intellectually demanding, “a “juggling act” between two different knowledge domains, content knowledge (i.e., about the substance of the text) and rhetorical knowledge (i.e., about the constraints of audience, genre, purpose, etc.)” (Carey and Flower 1989, p. 5). John Hayes and Linda Flower (1980) suggested that in the teaching of writing, learners are taught too much about planning what to say, but not enough about the higher level rhetorical planning, and they draw attention to the idea of the rhetorical problem in writing, that “whatever writers choose to say must ultimately conform to the structures posed by their *purpose* in writing, their sense of the *audience*, and their *projected selves* or imagined roles” (1980, p. 40).

Bringing together these different disciplinary perspectives from the rhetorical tradition and from cognitive psychology foregrounds both the significant problem for writers of managing the rhetorical space and the potency of rhetoric to act as an educational tool to enable greater control of it. The classical idea of “imitatio” and the pedagogic practice of using texts as models integrate the rhetorical and the cognitive in the practical context of the classroom (for a fuller discussion of this, see Myhill et al 2018). Geist’s argument for the use of classical “imitatio” in contemporary classrooms maintains that teaching writing needs to address “both meaning and expression,” in other words both the message and the medium, “to match the structures for the two lines of production” (Geist 2005, p. 178). This dual emphasis on producer and receiver, and on message and medium, is central to the argument proposed here about how language choices shape the interaction between authorial intention and the intended reader. In contrast, however, to the traditional emphasis on argument and persuasion in rhetoric, this article will consider narrative writing as a means of communication and expression which permits the exploration of life experiences, feelings and emotions, and offers empowerment both through increased writerly control and through empathic understanding.

Rhetorical Grammar

Foregrounding an attention to the interplay of producer-receiver, message-medium and author-reader in the teaching of writing can be instantiated through a rhetorical pedagogical approach. Rhetoric has always enjoyed a more prominent position in the Language Arts in the

United States than it has in England, where the research underpinning this article is located. *The National Curriculum in England: English Programmes of Study* (DfE 2014) makes no obvious reference to rhetoric at all and is strongly dominated by a skills discourse, emphasising accuracy in spelling, punctuation, and grammar. In practice, however, the teaching of argument in England has strong echoes of rhetorical traditions with considerable emphasis on rhetorical questions, anaphora, tricolon and pathos (although this metalanguage is less commonly used to describe it). Beyond fairly simplistic explanations of story structure, there is no parallel for narrative writing. From a New Zealand educational perspective, Terry Locke (2010) calls for a rhetorical approach to the study of texts which is characterised by the following principles:

- People construct texts to achieve a desired result with a particular audience.
- Textual form follows function.
- Texts are generated by contexts.
- Texts assume a social complicity between maker and reader.
- The expectations of participants in such acts of complicity becomes formalised in the conventions of genre.
- These conventions relate to such language, features as layout, structure, punctuation, syntax and diction.
- In a rhetorical approach, literature is not devalued but revalued. (Locke 2010, p. 179)

This definition does bring together the notions of both authorship and audience although it focuses on being a reader, rather than being a writer, and it frames language as concerned with conventions, rather than linguistic choice. A somewhat different emphasis is made by advocates of rhetorical grammar, principally in the United States, who argue for more direct teaching of the relationship between linguistic choice and rhetorical effect. Martha Kolln and Loretta Gray (2016) preface their textbook for teachers of writing by claiming that “rhetorical grammar encourages writers to recognize and use the grammatical and stylistic choices available to them and to understand the rhetorical effects of those choices on their readers” (Kolln & Gray 2016, p. xi). Rhetorical grammar firmly rejects prescriptivist views of grammar, which see grammar as tool for securing correctness in written expression, and recognises that accuracy in writing is necessary, but not sufficient to generate good writers. In other words, grammar is not “a set of rules to be memorised” (Kolln & Funk 2011, p. 308), but something that is flexible and adaptive to context. This is a descriptivist view of grammar, which holds that grammar is central to understanding how

written text generates meaning in different contexts. It requires that teachers of writing need to be able to make the “connection between formal choices and rhetorical effect” (Hancock & Kolln 2005, p. 26).

At the heart of rhetorical grammar is the relationship of form and meaning and the idea of choice. Kolln and Funk state that “rhetoric means that the topic, the purpose, and the audience will make a difference in the way you write, and your rhetorical situation will determine the grammatical choices you make, choices about sentence structure and vocabulary, even about punctuation” (2011, p. 309). One significant shortcoming of prescriptive grammar is its privileging of the correctness of form at the expense of consideration of communicative appropriacy. A similar shortcoming is evident in some genre approaches to the teaching of writing, which give primacy to what Locke called the “conventions of genre” and can result in rather formulaic teaching of writing as reproduction of pre-existing norms. In England, the teaching of argument, mentioned earlier, frequently becomes a formulaic list of features which the writer should put into their writing, rather than generating understanding of the rhetorical effect of these features. The strength of rhetorical grammar is that it “treats grammatical conventions as resources to be exploited, rather than rules to be followed.... [T]he point of grammar study is to enable pupils to make choices from among a range of linguistic resources, and to be aware of the effects of different choices on the rhetorical power of their writing” (Lefstein 2009, p. 4 and p. 9). Laura Micciche (2004) positions rhetorical grammar as empowering and emancipatory, and she places particular weight on the quality of thinking that a rhetorical grammar approach can elicit. She argues that we need to take seriously “the connection between writing and thinking, the interwoven relationship between what we say and how we say it” and that teaching rhetorical grammar in the context of writing develops “a conceptual ability to envision relationships between ideas,” thus positioning grammar “as a tool for articulating and expressing relationships among ideas” (Micciche 2004, p. 718-720). It is through teaching that space is created for the discussion and justification of linguistic choices that developing writers are empowered to understand how to manage the interaction between authorial intention and the intended reader.

Grammar as Choice

Writing from a rhetorical grammar perspective, Hancock (2009) discusses the strengths that Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)

can bring to the teaching of writing, and observes that SFL “heals the split between grammar and meaning” (Hancock 2009, p. 201). As a theory of language, SFL is significant because it moves away from more longstanding views of grammar as descriptions of the language system to a view of grammar as fundamentally concerned with “learning how to mean” (Halliday 1975). In this way, language is positioned as “a meaning-making system through which we interactively shape and interpret our world and ourselves” (Derewianka & Jones 2010, 9). Halliday argues for the importance of function, rather than form: if language is “a resource for making meaning [,] so text is a process of making meaning in context” (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014, p. 3). The three metafunctions of language proposed by Halliday (1975) provide a way to discuss language choices from different meaning-making perspectives:

- Ideational: the world of ideas, experience and consciousness – the clause as representation.
- Interpersonal: the relationship between speaker and hearer – the clause as exchange.
- Textual: the structure and organisation of information in text – the clause as message.

The emphasis of SFL on the function of grammatical structures and how they make meaning makes it particularly amenable to the writing classroom “because it offers students ways of shaping utterances to particular rhetorical effects” (Macken-Horarik 2012, p. 183).

What SFL highlights is that every act of speech or writing is a set of choices within “a network of inter-related meaningful choices” (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014, p. 49), and those choices are critically linked to the context in which they are generated and received. Ronald Carter and Michael McCarthy (2006, p. 7) also distinguish between a grammar of choice, where how we say something is as important as what we say, and a grammar of structure, which analyses and names the structure of language. Thus, increasing proficiency as a writer is, in part at least, about becoming increasingly adept at making those choices with rhetorical awareness. Showing learners how the grammatical choices that they make can alter the way their writing communicates is a form of linguistic empowerment:

We need to understand the possible power effects of our choices. We need to understand how our ideational choices construct participants, processes, and circumstances from a particular perspective; we need to attend to our choices of mood and modality, which encode relations of authority and agency between writers and readers; we need to think about

how textual choices work to foreground and background ideas, to construct cause and effect, to position information as old or new. (Janks 2009, p. 130)

Moreover, ensuring that *all* children are enabled to become confident writers requires that teachers show young writers explicitly the discursive practices that are socially valued, or else classrooms risk simply reproducing existing social power. James Martin (1989) maintains that “bright middle-class children learn by osmosis what has to be learned [while] working class, migrant, or Aboriginal children, whose homes do not provide them with models of writing, and who do not have the coding orientation to read between the lines and see what is implicitly demanded, do not learn to write effectively” (Martin 1989, p. 61). Similarly, Gunter Kress (1994, p. 3) notes that the spoken language of English professional classes is closer to the structures of writing, making it easier to become an effective writer than for socially-disadvantaged or ethnically diverse students. A pedagogical focus on grammar as choice is one way to make visible to all learners, regardless of background, how choices about words, phrases, images and text structure inter-relate to convey meaning in particular ways.

Readers and Writers

Integrating Reading and Writing

It should be evident from this discussion of rhetoric, rhetorical grammar, and grammar as choice that teaching rhetorical decision-making in writing and opening up learners’ thinking about the rhetorical implications of grammatical choices is bound up with notions of the reader and the writer. An empowering pedagogy of writing needs to generate new ways of knowing and understanding the relationship between a writer’s authorial intention, the linguistic choices which realise that intention, and the intended effect on the reader. This is not simply a matter of the writer being attentive to the implied or intended reader: during writing, a writer becomes the reader of his or her own text as well as the composer, and during reading, the reader considers the writer’s intentions. In other words, the reader in the writer and the writer in the reader are highly integrated activities, particularly in more mature learners. Frank Smith (1983, p. 562) has argued that a child “must read like a writer, in order to learn how to write like a writer. There is no other way in which the intricate complexity of a writer’s knowledge can be acquired,” signalling a strong learning

relationship between reading and writing, and the salience of reading for providing models of effective writing. In similar vein, Bazerman suggests that “the active reader reads what the writer is doing. The active reader reconstructs the overall design, both the writer’s purpose and the techniques used to realize that purpose” (Bazerman 2010, p. 104). If reading and writing are highly integrated cognitive activities, then it is important to consider the role of reading texts in supporting linguistic decision-making and understanding of rhetorical effects.

Indeed, the use of texts as models is an important element of classical rhetoric, where close study of exemplary texts is a basis for learning the powers of oratory. Quintilian, in *Institutio Oratoria*, argues that writing practice “without the models supplied by reading [,] will be like a ship drifting aimlessly without a steersman’ (10.1.1.2). He also argued that, through reading the best writers, we “learn not merely the words by which things are to be called, but when each particular word is most appropriate’ (10.1. 1.8). Terrill (2016, p. 158) explains that Quintilian’s advocacy of teaching rhetorical skills through model texts involved two stages: analysis, where the worthy characteristics of the text are surfaced for consideration; and genesis, where students write a text of their own incorporating the same rhetorical features. In line with this, there are a significant number of contemporary books or textbooks for teachers which build pedagogical practices on the basis of mentor texts, or texts that teach (for example, Pytash & Morgan 2014; Marchetti & O’Dell 2015; Culham 2016; Dorfman & Capelli 2017; Wagstaff 2017). One danger of this approach is that rather than fostering the capacity to think about and make rhetorical choices, it over-focuses on a particular feature and its reproduction in the writer’s own text, rather than on linguistic decision-making. It privileges the text as a product with insufficient attention to the writer as a thinker and independent decision-maker. So, a rhetorical approach to using texts as models needs to focus not on reproduction, but on stimulating thinking and awareness of the relationship between linguistic choice and rhetorical effect.

Reader-Writer Relationships

From the perspective of research into children’s development as writers, one developmental shift that writers have to make is from writing writer-based prose to reader-based prose. Linda Flower (1979) illustrates how writer-based prose is egocentric, focused on self, and is thus not sensitive to the needs of the potential reader. It does not manage information or detail to engage the reader or clarify

understanding and it is written in very sequential linear narrative style. At its simplest, in very young writers just beginning to create written text, writer-based prose captures a simple narrative record of an event, as in Figure 1 below, where a five year old tries to write, “Today I brought my cheetah to school. It runs fast.” The text was written one word at a time, and almost certainly was not re-read for clarity of communication. The writer is unable to allocate any significant cognitive attention to the reader because the very act of writing, including letter shaping and spelling, is so effortful.



Figure 1: A five-year old's writer-based prose.

Once children can write with some fluency and automatization, it is not the case that their writer-based prose becomes reader-based. Older writers can also still seem to be stuck in a writer-based mode. The text below is written by a fourteen-year-old boy, and is still principally writer-based, listing sequentially the things he likes about the swimming pool.

My Favourite place is in Ashhampton swimming pool were I can see my mates running off and diving into the water. I can see the lifeguard blowing his whistle at someone doing a flip into the pool. I can see the bottom of the pool underwater and I can see the bricks I want to swim down after.

I can see all the floats and some people paying to get in through the other side. I can smell that nice fresh smell of chlorine as it gets into my nostrils and can feel the blue 49 locker key band on my ankle.

As I swim down lower I can feel the water squeezing me from all sides and I can feel the water fly past my streamlined body as i swim back up to the top and i can feel the water that gathers round the sides of the pool at my feet.

And I can feel as I dive in the temperature rise for the water nice and warm like a giant bath and then the small ripples as I resurface. And that's my favourite place.

Figure 2: A fourteen-year-old's writer-based prose.

The structure is very simply framed around an opening statement of where the favourite place is and closes with a restatement. The listed reasons why it is a favourite place could be re-arranged without altering the meaning, signalling the lack of underlying structure. It is also likely the writer has been taught to describe by showing what he can see, smell, and feel, and this is done in a rather instrumental way. There are signs of trying to describe perceptions for a reader – “nice fresh smell of chlorine” and “my streamlined body” – but these are not yet executed with confidence. There is a sense, perhaps, of a developing writer doing what his teacher has asked him to do, rather than a writer who has a sense of what he wants to convey to his reader and how he might achieve that. We do also have to accept that the boy may have nothing he wants to communicate to his reader because he is not interested in this task and is only doing it because he has to!

Nonetheless, the shift from writer-based to reader-based prose is a challenge: “the skills of conceptualizing a reader and his needs, establishing a mutual goal, and simulating reader reactions suggests that writing for readers is a complex, high-level skill” (Flower 1981, p. 73). Reader-based prose requires a representation of the reader in the writer's head; in Flower's study, expert writers constructed “a flesh and blood reader with needs and interests” (Flower 1981, p. 73). It is a shift from writing for oneself to writing for others (Perera 1984) and requires a move from simply capturing in writing the ideas in your head as they occur to a re-shaping of text with the reader in mind. Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) explain this as a move from knowledge-telling to knowledge-transforming, which involves managing both the content space of ideas and what to say and the rhetorical space of how to say it.

A rhetorical approach to the teaching of writing, which discusses and reflects upon language choices and the developing writers' linguistic decision-making, offers a new way to think about writer-based and reader-based prose. Through focussing on the writer-as-writer and

encouraging them to take ownership of authorial choices, and by also focussing on writer-as-reader, both the reader of their own writing and the reader of other texts, a rhetorical approach can support developing writers' understanding that language choices are at the interface of both authorial intention and the relationship with the reader.

Theory in Practice

A Pedagogy for Grammar as Choice

Over the past fifteen years, the research team at the University of Exeter has been researching linguistic development in writing and students' metalinguistic understanding of the choices they make in their writing. This has been investigated through a cumulative series of studies which have analyzed a corpus of children's writing to determine trajectories of linguistic development (Myhill, 2009); undertaken randomized controlled trials to evaluate the efficacy of teaching grammar as choice (Myhill et al 2012; Susan Jones et al 2013); conducted quasi-experimental studies to interrogate efficacy further (Watson & Newman 2018); and analyzed classroom talk about linguistic decision-making (Myhill & Newman 2016; Myhill et al 2016). The pedagogical approach developed through this suite of studies is theoretically informed by Halliday's (1975) functional view of grammar as a resource for meaning making, where an understanding of choice the development of rhetorical awareness are central. The pedagogy integrates grammar meaningfully into the teaching of reading and writing, shows learners how the grammatical choices they make can alter the way their writing communicates and their understanding of the power of choice, and develops learners' metalinguistic understanding about writing with the goal of transferring that understanding into their own writing. To support teachers in using the approach, an acronym, LEAD, has been created which encapsulates the four key pedagogical principles to consider when planning and teaching (see Table 1).

Principle	Explanation	Classroom Example
LINKS	Make a link between the grammar being introduced and how it works in the writing being taught.	Analysing the narrative effect of sentences with no finite verbs in the opening of Dickens' <i>Bleak House</i> , then writing a narrative opening of their own.

EXAMPLES	Explain the grammar through examples, not lengthy explanations.	Displaying the opening two paragraphs using colour to highlight the verbless sentences and the non-finite clauses.
AUTHENTICITY	Use authentic texts as models to link writers to the broader community of writers.	Using Bleak House as the model text and understanding Dickens' choices.
DISCUSSION	Build in high-quality discussion about grammar and its effects.	Discussing the effect of the verbless sentences; the long sentences with multiple non-finite clauses; the absence of a main clause with a finite Verb.

Table 1: The “LEAD” Pedagogical Principles.

These principles foreground the relationship between linguistic choice and rhetorical effect and bring together reading and writing in complementarity around the idea of writers' choices, be that published writers or the child as writer. They help developing writers to engage with Hayes and Flower's (1980, p. 40) the notion of rhetorical problem, that “whatever writers choose to say must ultimately conform to the structures posed by their *purpose* in writing, their sense of the *audience*, and their *projected selves* or imagined roles.” The emphasis on high-quality discussion is critical (Myhill & Newman 2016; Myhill et al 2016), since through well-managed classroom talk about linguistic choice, writers are enabled to make independent and autonomous decisions in writing, rather than seeing the models as sources for reproductive imitation.

In the Classroom

In order to exemplify how this pedagogy is realised in a classroom context, two examples taken from a teaching unit using the award-winning children's novel, *A Monster Calls* by Patrick Ness (2011), will be discussed below. The beautifully-written story is about Conor, a young boy whose mother is dying from cancer. Through his encounters with a tree monster, Conor comes to terms with the truth about his own feelings and his sense of love and loss. The first example addresses the idea of character presentation by *showing* the reader what the character is like, rather than *telling* them. The concept of “show, not

tell” is familiar in English classrooms, but it is rarely explained with sufficient clarity for young writers to fully understand what it means. In this example, the close focus on how the linguistic choices show the reader the character of Conor’s grandmother makes the abstract idea of “show not tell” more concrete. The extract that is the focus for teaching is presented below:

Conor’s grandma wasn’t like other grandmas. He’d met Lily’s grandma loads of times, and she was how grandmas were supposed to be: crinkly and smiley, with white hair and the whole lot. She cooked meals where she made three separate eternally boiled vegetable portions for everybody and would giggle in the corner at Christmas with a small glass of sherry and a paper crown on her head.

Conor’s grandma wore tailored trouser suits, dyed her hair to keep out the grey, and said things that made no sense at all, like “Sixty is the new fifty” or “Classic cars need the most expensive polish.” What did that even mean? She emailed birthday cards, would argue with waiters over wine, and still had a job. Her house was even worse, filled with expensive old things you could never touch, like a clock she wouldn’t even let the cleaning lady dust. Which was another thing. What kind of grandma had a cleaning lady? “Two sugars, no milk,” she called from the sitting room as Conor made the tea. As if he didn’t know that from the last three thousand times she’d visited.

Figure 3: An extract from *A Monster Calls* by Patrick Ness.

In the planning and teaching of this lesson, the LEAD pedagogical principles are realised thus:

LINKS	The structure of verb plus noun phrase is linked with how Patrick Ness shows us grandma’s character.
EXAMPLES	The verb plus noun phrase structure is highlighted in colour.
AUTHENTICITY	The use of <i>A Monster Calls</i> is use of a mentor text.
DISCUSSION	A discussion about what kind of character grandma is and how the verb plus noun phrase structure shows us her character.

Figure 4: The LEAD Principles exemplified in practice.

The lesson looks closely at how Ness creates Grandma as an atypical grandmother, who does not behave like other grandmothers. He achieves

this in part by showing us what she does, with a repeated verb plus noun phrase structure (e.g. wore tailored trouser suits; said things that made no sense; had a job). From these descriptions, the reader has to infer what kind of woman Grandma is, rather than being told directly. Following discussion of Grandma's character and the way the linguistic choice helps to convey this, the class are invited to write a description of someone they know well, choosing the descriptions carefully to show the reader the character, rather than to tell them. The explicit linking of the verb + noun phrase structure with "show, not tell" offers developing writers one concrete way to understand the concept of show not tell, and one strategy, amongst others, to choose to adopt in their own writing.

The second example focuses on narrative structure and the idea of thematic unity in openings and endings. Many developing writers struggle with narrative endings, often resorting to abrupt and formulaic closures such as "And then I woke up," and this lesson opens up ways of thinking about how to close a narrative with reference to its opening. The opening and closing sections are presented below:

OPENING	ENDING
<p>The monster showed up just after midnight. As they do. Conor was awake when it came. He'd had a nightmare. Well, not <i>a</i> nightmare. <i>The</i> nightmare. The one he'd been having a lot lately. The one with the darkness and the wind and the screaming. The one with the hands slipping from his grasp, no matter how hard he tried to hold on. The one that always ended with – "Go away," Conor whispered into the darkness of his bedroom, trying to push the nightmare back, not let it follow him into the world of waking. "Go away now." He glanced over at the clock his mum had put on his bedside table. 12.07. Seven minutes past midnight. Which was late for a school night, late for a Sunday, certainly. He'd told no one about the nightmare. Not his mum, obviously, but no one else either, not his dad in their fortnightly (or so) phone call, <i>definitely</i> not his grandma, and no one at school. Absolutely not.</p>	<p>"I don't want you to go," he said, the tears dropping from his eyes, slowly at first, then spilling like a river. "I know, my love," his mother said, in her heavy voice. "I know." He could feel the monster, holding him up and letting him stand there. "I don't want you to go," he said again. And that was all he needed to say. He leaned forward onto her bed and put his arm around her. Holding her. He knew it would come, and soon, maybe even this 12.07. The moment she would slip from his grasp, no matter how tightly he held on. <i>But not this moment</i>, the monster whispered, still close. <i>Not just yet</i>. Conor held tightly onto his mother. And by doing so, he could finally let her go.</p>

Figure 5: The opening and ending sections of *A Monster Calls* by Patrick Ness.

In the planning and teaching for this second lesson, the LEAD pedagogical principles are realized thus:

LINKS	Show how lexical repetition or contrast can connect openings and endings of narratives.
EXAMPLES	Students highlight lexical repetition, verbs in one colour and nouns in another, in a learning activity.
AUTHENTICITY	The use of <i>A Monster Calls</i> as a mentor text.
DISCUSSION	Discussion about how lexical repetition/contrast draw attention to key themes and to problem/resolution.

Figure 6: The LEAD Principles exemplified in practice.

The activity allows the students and teacher to discuss the way in which the ending echoes themes and motifs from the opening: for example, several nouns in the opening are repeated in the ending: the monster; the time 12.07; the protagonist, Conor; and his mother. Verbal images such as holding on, slipping from a grasp, and whispering are in both. The nominal and verbal repetitions create a thematic unity, but they also underline the narrative resolution because although there are thematic repetitions, there are also important differences. Conor is alone in the opening, but is with his mother in the ending; he is holding on at the beginning, but letting go in the ending; the nightmare is present in the beginning, but is not present in the ending. The explicit analysis of the thematic unity between ending and opening created by nominal and verbal repetition offers developing writers one way to think about how to manage narrative introduction and resolution. In the case of this particular text, another lesson could also look at how minor sentences in both the opening and ending reflect Conor's emotional state of mind. In both these examples, the explicit teaching of the link between linguistic choice and rhetorical effect illustrates the symbiotic relationship between being a reader and being a writer, and how attention to the choices published writers have made can generate authorial possibilities for writers in schools.

Conclusion

This article has explored how greater rhetorical understanding of choices made in writing is an enabling and empowering form of learning for developing writers. This empowerment is realized through increased knowledge about language and how particular linguistic choices create meaning, leading to greater proficiency and control as a writer, the ability to communicate and express ideas that matter to the writer, and the ability to engage in democratic participation

through writing. Central to this way of thinking about empowerment is authorial ownership and agency, an increasing capacity to know and verbalise authorial intention, and to feel a sense of autonomy and control over the generation of text.

Pedagogically, supporting this capacity to understand and make linguistic choices for rhetorical effect is enabled through the explicit teaching of grammar, not as an exercise in grammatical identification, nor as prescriptive teaching of compliance to usage rules. Rather it is a pedagogy which discusses and explores connections between particular grammatical choices and how they make meaning in a particular text, and which foregrounds the reader-writer relationship. Theoretically, this pedagogy is founded upon a view of grammar as choice which helps writers understand that every act of writing is an act of decision-making and *some* decisions are linguistic. It draws on Halliday's functional theory of grammar and his argument that "text is a process of making meaning in context" (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014, p. 3) and that language users can select from "a network of inter-related meaningful choices" (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014, p. 49). Such an approach also helps young writers to be sensitive to "readers, to take into account what they already know, what they expect, what they need to know" (Kolln & Funk 2011, p. 308) and opens up new ways of knowing and understanding the relationship between a writer's authorial intention, the linguistic choices which realize that intention, and the intended effect on the reader. Ultimately, enabling developing writers to understand the relationship between linguistic choice, rhetorical effect and the making of meaning positions them as authors, capable of autonomous and agentic decision-making.

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