

Pre-script for Letters to the World: Student Voices and the Sounds of Poetry

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Here are two Web sites that offer student voices on line. The first, *Electronic Toads* (<http://www.tc.cc.va.us/tcresourc/faculty/tcreisd/dreiss/pomtloads.htm>), is a presentation I made at 4Cs in 1996 after a networked classroom had supported synchronous in-class discussions and provided an opportunity for student collaboration on line. The detailed activity list shows the process by which these students used writing for learning as a first step, met in face-to-face groups to discuss their writing and thinking, and then wrote to and for each other. Eventually each student wrote a formal, traditional academic essay informed by reading, research, and the collaborative experience. Students cited the transcripts of their online discussions as resources for their papers.

The second Web site

(<http://www.tc.cc.va.us/tcresourc/faculty/tcreisd/litintro/11281s98/pomsound.htm>) is more recent, developed specifically for an online class in spring of 1998. You hear the voices of students who listened to the voices of poets and friends reading poetry. My on-site students read to each other in class; every student presents a 300-word prose selection or a poem to the class. For my online students, *Sounds of Poetry* provided an opportunity to hear poetry read aloud. I confess that the Web site, *Listening Booth*, inspired the activity.

These two examples represent one important reason to integrate technology into the teaching of literature: to let the teacher's voice recede and the student's voice be heard. So I am sending you not my voice, but my students' voices.