## Transformative Pedagogy and Student Voice:
## Using S.E.A. Principles in Teaching Academic Writing

Sarbani Sen Vengadasalam, Rutgers University, sarbani@english.rutgers.edu

Abstract. This paper describes the principles of transformative pedagogy that lead to the development of distinct student voices in academic writing classes. Whether the course is taught at the undergraduate level through research, expository, and argumentative writing assignments or at the graduate level through literature review essays, research articles, and dissertation writing tasks, students need to be able to develop their voices and make their contributions to knowledge. Correspondingly, professional writing teachers need to teach students how to write voiced project documents such that they have the student's unique signature even when situated within a paradigmatic boundary. The article expands on how facilitators of academic writing courses can incorporate S.E.A. principles of scaffolding, empowerment, and awareness as triple enablers into their teaching methodologies in order to develop student voices and usher in transformation successfully. As one of the few articles to examine how graduate and undergraduate academic writing instruction, including W.A.C. (Writing Across the Curriculum) and W.I.D. (Writing in the Discipline) teaching, can be recast to develop student voices, the paper can be helpful to readers looking for resources and recommendations to incorporate transformative pedagogy into their teaching.

Keywords: academic writing, transformative pedagogy, scaffolding, empowerment, awareness

Writing is a process of being and becoming. The way one writes reflects the way one thinks, so any change in the writing process causes a change in the thinking process as well. As academic writing instructors and teachers who facilitate W.A.C. (Writing Across the Curriculum) and W.I.D. (Writing in the Discipline) classes, we train students on how to write and, therefore, influence how they interpret what they read as well as how they organize their ideas on paper. Teaching writing can be a way to develop student voices such that they can contribute to academic dialogs, knowledge creation, and even social change. If developing voices in students is the goal of writing teachers, what is the pedagogy that teachers of undergraduate or graduate academic writing classes can adopt to better achieve course goals? While there have been numerous publications on the topic over the last four decades as the theme is neither new nor ever irrelevant, this may be one of the few articles to examine the role of both undergraduate and graduate writing instruction in the development of student voices as well as investigate S.E.A. or the principles of scaffolding, empowerment, awareness as triple enablers in the teaching effort.

### What is student voice?

Voice, as used in this article, is how each student contributes to scholarship.

Developing a voice in writing is not easy; it involves struggle, risk-taking, and reconstruction. As the process of acquiring a voice through education in general and writing, in particular, is a way of "becoming," voice acquisition is an important marker of academic success. However "becoming" does not always happen—the student's voice can get shut down because of various factors. As "becoming" does not occur in isolation, students need one another and a mentor in their instructor in order to develop their voices. Since many students today are not producing "voiced" writing, reframing of composition instruction with a new pedagogical underpinning can not only preempt the blocking of student voices but also metamorphose the classroom into a creative space where each student asserts "I am" in his or her writing.

Can a voice echo or should it be unique? Since voice is the active expression of an individual and distinguishes one writer from another, it should exist by itself and in contrast to other voices. Also, voice signals participation and is an active part of the social production of meaning. If voice, as Simon (1987) perceives it, is a "discursive means whereby students make themselves present and define themselves as active authors of their world" (p. 377), voice, as described by Mayaba et al. (2018), is an instrument or "force for social change" (p. 1). In the context of higher education, voice, as a marker of presence or a tool for social innovation, emerges from what Harrell-Levy & Kerpelman (2010) describe as the students' critical analysis of a subject using their individual and collective experiences as and in a class community (p. 80). Byker et al. (2017), on their part, define student voice as a term that "honors the participatory roles that students have when they enter learning spaces like classrooms" and point out that "student voice is the recognition of students' choice, creativity, and freedom" (p. 119). What is important to note here is that there is an emergent consensus that voice is a major indicator of successful participation and scholastic growth in academic writing classes that include W.A.C. and W.I.D. courses.

The absence of voice, by implication, is the negation of a student's identity. When a student is taught to parrot or merely repeat another's thoughts, even if it is in the name of research, it is a sign of a creativity vacuum. When it happens in the classroom, it may even indicate that oppressive conditions from the outer world have infiltrated within. If students feel marginalized, silenced, or afraid of expressing their individual interpretations in their academic work, it signifies their loss of voice either under the weight of academic norms or from societal inequities. In this context, a writing classroom, by focusing on voice development, can make a difference. When a teacher succeeds in promoting diverse voices in the classroom, it implies that every student has gained the power to be heard. Since to drown voice is to deny students their basic humanity, teaching students—including those from marginalized communities—to acquire voices and usher in change through their writing restores equity into the classroom and academic writing that includes W.A.C. and W.I.D. writing.

Students develop voices and express themselves when the writing teacher succeeds in creating a safe, dynamic, learning space in the classroom despite what may be happening outside. Developing a voice thus becomes, as Lensmire (1998) puts it, "a way to distinguish yourself from others and a way of embedding yourself, your

writing, and your interpretations into public or semi-public spheres such as the classroom" (p. 273). Since the classroom is a microcosm of the world outside and our writing reflects the way we think, fostering voice, whether the student is interpreting readings or writing professionally, is not only integral to the development of the students' persona but can even lead to social transformation.

Given this background, it is obvious that the role of the teacher in the development of voice is both central and critical. Teachers need to operate on the premise that teaching and learning is a two-way proposition and accept the role of mediators in identity formation. They need to recognize that student-writers faces difficulties in articulating complex thoughts in academic prose even if they are native speakers of the English language. While Lensmire (1998) maintains that the writing teacher needs to help students tide over difficulties in finding "outer words to express inner meanings" (p. 273), Harrell-Levy & Kerpelman (2010) contend that the teacher's job is to develop a group of identity explorers and establish:

> a community that fosters the type of openness and daily feedback that facilitates the identity exploration of each student. When students feel respected and safe enough to air their honest thoughts, an atmosphere of trust and community develops. In such an atmosphere, a process of sharing and reflecting leads to a different, deeper type of learning about the material, how to think about the material, and how to think about oneself. (p.83)

Even if the teacher is an important aspect of the students' voice acquisition, it must be noted that the teacher's function is to be supportive, not normative. Voice development cannot happen when, as Turner (2006) points out, "a teacher tells the students what to do, when to do, and how to do everything" (p. 28). Student voices are never static or inert, but evolving and diverse. A cookie-cutter approach cannot lead to voice acquisition in academic and professional writing contexts both in the undergraduate and the graduate classroom. Students acquire their voices in the writing class at a point in life when they do not imagine themselves as capable of doing so. However, if the opportunity is missed, students may end up not knowing how to express their voices all through their lives.

A text's meaning and value, as also that of the research, are dependent on how it is read and interpreted, by whom and from where, and through which ideology and framework. If the acquisition of a research persona or voice, as Lillis et al. (2015) point out, "is to acquire the capacity for semiotic mobility" (p. 24), it needs a student-centered classroom environment to develop and manifest itself. If students are to mature as writers, adopt positive attitudes towards written work, and demonstrate growth in writing performances, they need an academic writing classroom where risk-taking is expected, trust is established, choice is available, authority is shared, and writing is viewed as a meaning-making event. The process by which writing teachers guide students through existing paradigms in the complex world of academia involves some handholding. Since new writers and scholars not only learn the intricacies of writing discourses but also the way to grow their academic voices and academic persona from their instructor, they are like "apprentices" who have come to learn the necessary writing skills from the "guru" or the writing teacher.

What kind of teaching method adopts such a mentoring approach towards writing instruction? What type of pedagogy successfully rewards and recognizes students' attempts at voice creation? What are the markers of such a pedagogic system? How does the practice affect the teacher and the student individually? How, if at all, does it transfigure the framework of undergraduate and graduate academic writing classes including W.A.C. and W.I.D. courses? To be able to answer these questions systematically, the paper is divided into the following sections. Section Two discusses transformative learning and how it nurtures student voices. Section Three elaborates on S.E.A or the scaffolding, empowerment, and awareness principles of transformative pedagogy for their ability to create an academic environment where student voices can be fostered. Section Four wraps up the discussion by pointing out that a transformative pedagogic approach not only grows students' voices but also empowers writing instructors and alters their self-perceptions.

## What is Transformative Pedagogy?

Transformative theory, in the academic context, posits that students can achieve their potential through transformative experiences via participation in an academic community. In this sense, transformative pedagogy can be especially relevant to the teaching of academic and professional writing discourses. In fact, transformative pedagogy may well be a methodological breakthrough in writing pedagogy since it enables students to see the interconnectedness of texts or argue for a new line to problem-solving or approach to research through their writing.

The theory of transformative learning, first propounded by Mezirow (1978), proclaimed that learning can revise the way we think, feel, and act. Believing in transformation as the primary goal of education, this theory impacted these fields in particular: social activism, higher education, adult literacy, and human resources development. Mezirow (1991) eventually turned away from social activist implications of transformative learning in favor of a focus on individual growth and development. Transformative learning, as he saw it, triggers a "critical assessment of assumptions," "exploration of options for new roles," and "building of competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships" (p. 109–110).

Transformative learning, hence, was described by Bass (1998) as seeking ways to include other ways of knowing, of expanding our concepts of reasoning, and, finally, of transforming writers as well as institutions (p. 254). The symbiotic relationship of students with one another and with their surroundings, including the teacher, is central in this pedagogy. Transformative pedagogy not only involves critical questioning that raises students' awareness of their assumptions but also marries contemplation of the subject matter with self-scrutiny and scrutiny of the surrounding environment. In other words, transformative pedagogy reframes a student's relationship with content, fellow students, teacher, disciplinary contexts, and professional writing paradigms. As the transformative approach aims to promote students' awareness of other perspectives, Donnell (2007) correctly indicates that transformative teachers urge students to "think creatively and critically" and foster "collaborative learning practices" (p. 225). Meyers (2008) takes the thought forward when he points out that transformative instruction

discourages teaching styles that increase the power differential between teachers and their students (p. 220). Transformative practice, in fact, disrupts the imperial setup of the traditional classroom where the teacher is at the center and the source of all information flow. Instead, transformative writing teachers situate themselves at the hub of a more democratic, crisscross flow of ideas making it clear to all stakeholders that academic writing is dialogic and can even be oppositional within a local, social, or disciplinary context.

If academic writing teachers, including W.A.C. and W.I.D. instructors, have to succeed in their mission of expanding students' awareness of professional contexts and the big picture so students can shift paradigms or create new ones, they will need to embrace transformative pedagogy and its theoretical perspectives to guide and support their efforts. The following section briefly discusses how academic writing theorizing is reframed in transformative pedagogy before expanding on how the transformative approach can be implemented in both undergraduate and graduate classes in the effort to nurture and grow student voices.

## Academic Writing & The Transformative Approach

Academic writing, as Wideman (2005) describes it, is a way to attain and demonstrate disciplinary knowledge as well as a means to acquire a presence in the academic world (p. i). Academic writing is taught to undergraduates under various names: expository writing, professional writing, argumentative writing, and so on. Graduate academic writing, too, is taught under different appellations and typically works around literature review papers, academic articles, or dissertation writing. All academic writing courses, including W.A.C and. W.I.D. courses, end in student writing outputs such as is common in the field of higher education. Born out of a dialectical interplay between writer, reality, audience, and conventions, the writing output presents research and may or may not include an actionable component. As academic writing classes almost always teach research reporting and citation conventions, Davis (2009) aptly declared that academic writing in the agonistic tradition

> a. Is based on the discourse of the academic elite
> b. Includes critique
> c. Is derived from the works of others
> d. Reflects the student (or the self) as constructed by the 'insider' discourse of the academy. (p. 11)

Agreeing and extending the notion further, Ingle et al. (2015) termed academic writing as an "examination of the multiple identities that one has to negotiate in the process of producing a piece of academic prose, an awareness of how these identities interact with wider structures and relations existing in academia and beyond, and a consciousness of the processes and practices surrounding the production, transmission, and use of academic texts" (p. 154). What this implies is that if academic writing, including professional writing classes, have to develop student voices in both undergraduate and graduate students, it has to begin with the setting up of befitting course outcomes. Put differently, course setup, classroom practice, and assignment construction have to focus on "voice" development if the course is to achieve that objective directly.

How does transformative pedagogy impact the setting up of an academic writing class? In an undergraduate writing class, a teacher is no longer content with focusing only on training students to write a five-paragraph or a five-page essay with opening and closing arguments, thesis statements, and topic sentences with research support at appropriate places. Instead, they choose to have students connect complex seminal articles from various disciplines in unexpected ways in expository writing essays. Such tasks lead to the acquisition of voice as it entails that students not only probe into layered arguments to arrive at the learning from one essay but that they also envisage how that idea connects with the learning and ideas of another layered text. Similarly requiring students to do feasibility studies or draw up recommendation plans for change in their workplace, schools, or townships using fieldwork, published best practices, and case studies require student writers to take unique, innovative departures within a theoretical matrix leading to new patterns, pathways, and paradigms. Such W.A.C. and W.I.D. assignments can go a long way in catalyzing change both in students and in their surroundings. With a transformative pedagogy, the undergraduate academic writing teacher offers students opportunities and strategies about how to make their papers voiced, not just well cited. Such teachers create writing prompts that move students from conventional summarizing to connective thinking, problem-solving, and imaginative ideation. Feedback in the transformative undergraduate writing classroom accordingly rewards and recognizes the students' ability to grapple and wrestle with complex ideas in order to create new meanings or real world linkages.

Graduate writing classes face both similar and different challenges. As graduate students write out their literature reviews, academic articles, and master or doctoral dissertations, they often feel, as Stevens (2015) highlights, a "loss of identity during the course of their studies and hold academic writing responsible for it. This loss is expressed as a stripping away of creativity and being made to write in a way that felt abstract and not representative of who they are or want to be. Academic writing feels like something I've produced that is separate to me and is passed on to the audience" (p. 268). Graduate academic writing teachers, using a transformative pedagogy, can fix the sense of loss by urging students not to practice research reporting, uncritical acceptance, and assimilation but highlight their understanding of what is satisfactory, generative, and meaningful in their research. In the transformative schemata, graduate academic writing teachers help students to create knowledge rather than train them just to follow disciplinary norms and academic conventions. They coach graduate academic writers to be non-derivative even when operating within discourses of learning and writing. In transformative pedagogy, graduate academic writing is neither an elitist exercise nor a ticket to academy insidership. Hence the task, the instruction, and the feedback focus on how graduate students display their acquired mastery over current research while finding gaps within it wherein to situate their unique study. Like the undergraduate teacher, the academic writing instructor in a graduate writing class nurtures and rewards the student writers' attempts to find their academic niches. In this sense, transformative undergraduate and graduate writing teachers both work at developing voices in students' writing even if the scope of graduate writing tasks and papers may be larger.

Transformative writing adopts a new take not only on the relationship between students and the teacher but also on the relationship between the student and texts, between the student and peers, as well as the student and the audience. As the writing teachers embrace these changes, they may do well to be grounded in S.E.A. or the scaffolding, empowerment, and awareness principles of transformative pedagogy. The three subsections to follow explore how the three principles of transformative pedagogy can power teachers' efforts and recast academic writing instruction for more positive outcomes.

## The Empowerment of Transformation

Writing in an academic setting should empower and enrich rather than diminish a writer's sense of self. Empowerment becomes possible when students do not turn in lifeless, guarded responses, but develop individual takes on their readings and research. How can the teacher create or incorporate the empowerment principle in the undergraduate classroom? As indicated in the previous section, one way the academic writing teacher can create transformative pedagogic experiences for students is by assigning creative writing tasks and composing inspired writing prompts. What is signified by a creative or inspired prompt? Tasking students to find relationships between disparate readings through the power of their ideas, such as in the sample prompt[1] used in an Expository writing class at Rutgers University does, can work. When students feel empowered enough to interplay non-linked disciplines and unrelated texts such as a war memoir, a psychology lesson, and a religious tenet through layered connective thinking in response to the transformative writing prompt, they become participants in a transformative pedagogic experience.

Since interdisciplinarity has valid and strong connections with the experience of transformation, asking students to take and defend innovative positions on interdisciplinary texts can be both handy and effective. Again, when student-writers are encouraged to interpret or illuminate one single text, say Rebecca Skloot's *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* (2017), from various disciplinary standpoints, be it scientific, business, racial, historical, ethical, social, literary, or a mix of them—as we see in Skloot's prompts[2]—students develop voices. Put differently, distinctive academic experiences result, as Virtue et al. (2018) testify, when academic writing teachers empower their undergraduate writing students to make connections and pick perspectives depending on their interests and backgrounds as with Skloot's text. Correa (2010) credits such empowerment outcomes to be the resultant of the teacher's efforts at "helping students recognize not only the various types of voices that can be brought into a text but also the sources of those voices, the cultural or disciplinary ways in which these voices can be brought in, and how the voices can be creatively recombined with other voices to achieve certain purposes (e.g. to argue or explain a point)"(p. 81). Similarly, specialized business or technical writing classes taught in a W.A.C. or W.I.D. program can grow student voices when they encourage students to adopt and justify their unique approach to solving a problem in their project documents that may range from white papers to presentations, business proposals to technical reports. When students take innovative lines of argument within the professional or technological paradigmatic framework in their project writing, voice and originality are achieved and manifested.

When empowerment happens, students write about what they like, like what they write, and share it with others. To Levin (2000), the manifested connective thinking and interdisciplinary takes expressed by students in their writing is a consequence of their empowerment, since students now "recognize unseen capacities and knowledge in themselves and others, writ[e] in new voices, have a stronger sense of voice, question conventional roles, ideas, and stereotypes, bring out feelings and thoughts they didn't know they had, and experience new ways of learning and being" (p. 45). Through empowerment, the academic writing teacher emboldens the undergraduate pupil to exhibit connective, interdisciplinary, and change-oriented thinking or voiced writing.

At the graduate level, empowerment, and the development of an authoritative voice, comes through the slant and the originality of the research. The teacher's task here is to demonstrate how authority emanates from being able to speak from a unique vantage point within a discourse community, be it humanities, social sciences, or the scientific disciplines. Even if writing for publications and writing of dissertations require learning of disciplinary and citation conventions, the academic writing teacher should be careful not to teach these to the exclusion of all else. Empowering graduate academic writing instruction urges and audits how researchers are developing influential voices by what Correa (2010) describes as "the opportunity to discuss the value of both the discourses they already possess and of the discourses they are being asked to produce" (p. 80). Graduate students develop a sense of self and voice from the depth and breadth of their research or literature reviews, the innovativeness and exclusiveness of their approaches, and the positions they take as insiders or outsiders of the communities to which they wish to gain affiliation. Just as with the undergraduate instructor, the graduate academic teacher focuses all instruction, feedback, and grading around voice manifestation.

It must be pointed out that a writer's presence in any form of academic writing, whether undergraduate or graduate, is not connected to the use of the personal pronoun "I". Voice, in the empowerment context of transformational academic writing, is not a resultant of the use of the personal pronoun but is, as Comfort (1995) points out, "a convergence of elements: choice of subject matter for phenomena, methods of working through arguments, types of evidence,…and underpinning assumptions, even what is left unsaid" (p. 37). Such a discourse is empowered and voiced and, even when "conditioned by an array of social, historical, and cultural influences within the hierarchical power relationships that constitute academic institutions" (ibid.), questions, critiques, and interrogates it successfully.

## The Expanded Awareness of Transformation

Expanding awareness in students is another strategic and fundamental principle of transformative pedagogy. Student voices acquire authenticity and expansiveness through critical questioning. Critical questioning is the kind of questioning that marries contemplation of the subject matter with self-scrutiny and cognizance of various perspectives. As per Lillis (2015), a transformative pedagogy foregrounds

such questions of the text:

> How have particular conventions become legitimized—and what might alternatives be?
>
> To what extent, do they serve knowledge making—and are other ways of making knowledge, and other kinds of knowledge/knowing possible?
>
> Whose epistemological and ideological interests and desires do these reflect and enable—and whose interests and desires may be being excluded? (p. 9)

When students ask questions when they write about texts or about their projects, they become more aware of how and where their writing is to be situated. What is transformed through the "transformative approach" is the way of seeing and being. For instance, awareness is expanded when students connect or relate various readings or identify problem areas and propose changes. From the new critical awareness acquired, the academic writing student—whether undergraduate or graduate, whether in a W.A.C. or a W.I.D. class—learns how to synthesize and interplay varied contexts and discourses.

Like with empowerment, expanded awareness leads to the opening up of dialogic and community spaces in undergraduate writing classrooms. As with imaginative prompts, critical questioning push students toward transformative goals or what Mitchell (2013) describes as "intertextuality, alternative understandings, and discovery of new frontiers of knowledge" (p. 16). Harrington (2015) endorses the idea when she points out that transformative writers need "to step back, imagine, and actually begin to do things differently—more creatively, more thoughtfully, and more radically" (p. 13). With expanded awareness, such possibilities can be realized in academic writing classes including W.A.C. and W.I.D. courses. As awareness is not a finished state, but something that is achieved through critical questioning, the writing teacher would want to set up communal spaces and co-operative relationships between all classroom stakeholders that include the student, peers, texts, instructor, and audience. When undergraduate students are self-aware, they move from an attitude of "submission" to authors whose works are being read and researched into to connecting and holding a conversation with them and with the audience who may be the students' project patrons.

Expanded awareness in graduate academic writing class reveals itself in multivocality since graduate academic writers are now encouraged to question existing ideas and adopt distinctive research angles. With the help of the teacher, they learn how to present their research innovatively. In transformative graduate writing, expanded awareness generates interdisciplinary conversations and new relationships between the writer's voice, the research hypothesis, and the disciplinary field. Since today's academic writing students are tomorrow's professionals, dialoguing about research discoveries is necessary for progression and development.

Since conflict exists between self-expression and the conformity that disciplinary practices and conventional paradigms impose, writers need to be aware of the complex of activities, experiences, and purposes that are clubbed under the category of academic writing norms even if they intend to transcend them. As the

task is challenging, students need scaffolds to negotiate through expected norms and not be limited by them. Hence, in addition to empowering students through transformative prompts and providing them with an expanded awareness of disciplinary practices, teachers may want to adopt the principle of scaffolding to show how students, as emergent researchers and novice writers, can resolve any conflict that exists and acquire voices. The next section discusses how incorporating the scaffolding principle in teaching academic writing, including W.A.C. and W.I.D. courses, can grow student voices and provide consistent results. The aim of the section is to explore how scaffolding works and can be used effectively to nurture students' voices.

## The Scaffolding of Transformation

Academic writing is challenging because it is located within a global complex of signs and an international knowledge economy. While empowerment has much to do with assignment design and expanded awareness impacts course objectives, scaffolding affects course delivery. Scaffolding, as Bliss and Askew (1996) describe it, involves keeping the task constant but manageable (p. 39). Scaffolding entails breaking up the writing work into chunks and building one part onto another so the parts contribute to the whole seamlessly. As they impact teaching methodology as well as course delivery, scaffolds have to be well defined and comprehensible. If it has to be successful, scaffolding requires organized procedures to be welded onto and developed around the writing process and its three key phases of outlining, drafting, and revising. While scaffolding is required for all writing instruction, it is even more fundamental in transformative pedagogy because the task of nurturing an original voice is an onerous one.

Scaffolding, in the context of voice, refers to a set of techniques that the instructor uses to move students towards understanding how and finally manifesting their voices independently. While a literature search shows an agreement with the viewpoint of Read (2010) that instructors' inputs during the scaffolding process are all important when it comes to students' voice development, some critics like Bodrova and Leong (1998) caution that the goal is to progressively decrease the level of assistance they initially provide so students can develop their voices on their own and become self-sufficient (p. 5). What this means is that even though the teachers provide the pupil with a range of resources through the outlining, drafting, and revising stages of the writing process, they should leave the choice to students to use the resources as per their needs. In the next three paragraphs, I share strategies from the scaffolding toolkit I have evolved and used successfully since 2008 while teaching transformatively at both levels in my academic, business, and technical writing classes.

A key scaffolding strategy that works well and can be used across the board in undergraduate academic writing classes is modeling. In the outlining stage, graphic organizers can be used to model and help students with ideation. Mini-lessons could be devised using newspaper editorials to model Aristotle's persuasive triad of ethos, pathos, and logos. As students go through various levels of outlining—so an idea grows into a leveled detailed plan—students can examine models provided by the teacher with the intent to learn how to attach microdetails to their macro outlines.

As students begin drafting, workshops for analyzing successful voiced writing models can be held where current students closely read, dissect, and analyze writing samples of former students (after obtaining their permission of course) individually and in small and big groups. This can go a long way in promoting student understanding of how transformation works and voice is manifested. Students not only comprehend how to isolate writing stratagems that sample writers used to manifest their voices in these writing workshops, but they also figure out how to mix and match the strategies while writing their own essays. In the revision stage when the essays are being completed, it becomes necessary to hold stepped revision cycles and guided peer review sessions. So that the peer review workshops are useful, questions, criteria, and checklists that focus on voice manifestation are required. Students can use them both for peer and self-review of their essays and projects while revising, proofing, and finalizing them.

Scaffolds and models can be used similarly in a graduate writing class to help students incorporate transformative processes into their writing. As in undergraduate classes, each stage has a distinct focus, with the teacher offering feedback particularly at the beginning and end of every stage. In the outlining stage, the teacher could proffer models and mind maps to help in the creation of a multi-leveled plan. Components of an introduction such as an opening statement, need-establishment, literature review, hypothesis construction, and essay overview can be innovatively demonstrated with reading and writing exercises that incorporate an examination of model papers published in reputed journals.

What the scaffolding and modeling does here is to offer graduate writing students practice in expanding their range and comfort in reading and writing for academia. This is important because transformative pedagogy at the graduate level prompts students to move beyond the normative "academic socialization approach," as Jacobs (2015) terms it, to the kind of academic writing where the literacy practices of disciplines are critiqued and contested (p. 152). Covert tensions may exist between entrenched, legitimized, scientific writing conventions, such as the classical I.M.R.A.D. (or Introduction, Methods, Results, Analysis & Discussion) template for scientific writing and their disciplinary variations, or even within the thematic arrangement that the arts and the humanities require students to adopt. As per Stevens (2015), departmental academic writing cultures and university guidelines, where these exist, also inevitably, come into play (p. 276). Graduate students could evolve a scholastic guide for themselves, with the teacher's help wherever necessary, through searching, isolating, and evolving best practices from a close and thorough inspection of model articles in periodicals picked by the students themselves. Techniques for discussing the literature or the methodology whether they are related to a laboratory setup, market research, or sample distributions could be scrutinized. Guidelines have to be extracted and practice has to be offered in various ways of presenting hypotheses and interpreting artifacts, outlining procedures and analyzing results, highlighting inferences and forecasting impact through scholarly article analyses for modeling purposes. What transformative graduate writing pedagogy does here is not just tender models as scaffolds to facilitate the writing of each subsection of the article within the disciplinary macrostructure, but also proffer ways to turn granular presentational practices into co-acting synergistic ones. Whether graduate students are writing

scientific studies or literary papers, sociological treatises or marketing investigations, a scaffolded transformative writing pedagogy offers models and exercises as well as self-study opportunities and group review platforms to ensure that students are moving away from homogenized to original, inventive, and voiced writing, irrespective of the disciplines they belong to. The goal here is to help graduate students place their research at boundaries or intersections of various theories and perspectives so they can manifest their voices and carve their own niches in the graduate academic writing world.

Scaffolding is central to student success whether in an undergraduate or a graduate academic writing classroom or a W.A.C. & W.I.D. course. A common element in teaching at both levels is not only the structuring of the process into three distinct phases of outlining, drafting, and revising, but also the marking of the milestones with peer review workshops. Both undergraduate and graduate instructors are encouraged to put in much care into devising the peer review workshops as they are important scaffolds to support and nurture the growth of student voices. Since the output of one process becomes the input for the other, students get to experience how each stage is linked and builds on the one that went before. If time permits, one-on-one student-teacher conferences can also be held at the end of each stage as it can prove a useful scaffold for the student writer. In fact, the scaffolding principle itself goes a long way in bringing in structuring and organization into academic writing instruction as well as in ensuring that positive results are achieved consistently in growing student's voices in both undergraduate and graduate academic writing courses.

## Conclusion

The value of transformative learning is often difficult to gauge because it is an outcome of invested deliberations, creative ruminations, and change-oriented thinking. It results in students developing close reading skills, layered writing skills, and independent thinking skills. These skills take time to manifest themselves, but what is important is that undergraduate students leave a transformative academic writing class with an awareness of their emergent voices and enhanced skills of interpretation and argumentation. The takeaways for graduate students from their academic writing class similarly are enhanced composition skills and the ability to balance and interplay individual expression and interdisciplinary components. When academic writing students—whether undergraduate or graduate, or from a W.A.C. or a W.I.D. class—understand the value of transformative writing practices in the development of their professional identities in academic writing and community spaces, they become aware of their ability to contribute to change and scholarship even as they develop individualized distinctive voices.

From the teacher's standpoint, the rewards are high as well. Incorporating S.E.A. principles not only make instructors acutely aware of their augmented role in developing student voices, but it also empowers them to reach out to students more effectively through creating scaffolds. As individuals who transformed students' writing, academic writing teachers experience elevated self-esteem. While receiving positive student evaluations is a bonus, what is perhaps the most rewarding for transformative writing instructors is the immense satisfaction they

gain from the knowledge that they helped their students develop voices and contribute to the academy and the community.

## Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

## Notes

[1]      The sample transformative writing prompt that follows is from my Expository writing class. In "Selections from Reading *Lolita* in Tehran," war memoir writer Azar Nafisi and her select group of students find that imaginatively engaging with fictional works help them contend with the "absurd fictionality [that] ruled our lives" under a totalitarian regime. How far, if at all, does that engagement reflect the smart shopping of the psychological immune system that Daniel Gilbert, social psychologist, discusses as happening "behind closed doors, in the back room, outside of our awareness" in "Immune to Reality"? Or would you rather say that the secret deliberations lead to the group developing interconnectedness that Buddhist thinker, Robert Thurman, terms in his essay, "Wisdom," as the manifestation of the deepest awareness that comes "when your consciousness begins to turn inward and gaze upon itself"?

[2]      *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot narrates the case of Henrietta Lacks, "a poor black tobacco farmer whose cancerous cells, taken without her knowledge in 1951, became one of the most important tools in medicine, vital for developing the polio vaccine, cloning, gene mapping, in vitro fertilization, and more. Henrietta's cells have been bought and sold by the billions, yet she remains virtually unknown, and her family can't afford health insurance" (Book cover/promotion). The incident sparked off a host of debates around questions of racial discrimination, medical ethics, scientific research, and medical waste ownership. A list of transformative argumentative essay prompts on this non-fiction book is available on pages 19 to 28 of the Teacher's Guide. Here is the link to the resource: http://rebeccaskloot.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/RHSklootTeachersGuideLORES.pdf

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