TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING: A REFLECTION ON MY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH AN ONLINE ACADEMIC WRITING COURSE

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INTRODUCTION

Self-development is profoundly important in individual life, which gives impacts such as happiness (Bauer & McAdams, 2010), life satisfaction (Bauer & McAdams, 2004; Sheldon & Kasser, 2001), the ability for adaptation (Sheldon & Houser-Marko, 2001), personal health (Robitschek, 1998), and open to new experiences and have a clear direction in life (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). For university teachers, self-development refers to learning how to prepare for a better oneself and performance regarding with their core tasks, which include teaching, research and publication, and community service. Self-development can take in various forms such as participating in long and short-term courses, trainings, and workshops; and being an active member of professional learning community (PLC), in which lecturers can develop lecturer's identity and promote lifelong learning. In the words of Prenger, Poortman and Handelzalts (2019), PLC supports teacher professional development (TPD) and professional learning. The research also revealed a fairly good impact on teachers' perceptions of their level of satisfaction, skills, knowledge, and the development of their attitudes as well as how they had applied them in the classroom (Prenger et al., 2019). The study of a group of teachers at an Australian university reported the benefits of their work-related activities and occasions for the growth of their professional knowledge (Ferman, 2002). Mentoring program is, likewise, one of ways to determine the effectiveness of lecturer's professional learning to develop their teaching practices (Turner et al., 2016) and improve writing skills for publication. Similarly, in the UK, it is advantageous to mentor lecturers and provide them with useful advice as part of their continual professional development (Chadha, 2021). Those findings indicated the importance of developing one's self for having a better teaching practice and performance as professional lecturers in tertiary educations. Under these circumstances, to promote teaching practices and teaching performance, the need of transformation is a must for lecturers as adult learners, which can be achieved, one of which is through transformative learning (TL).

Transformative learning, which is originally proposed by Mezirow (1978, 1997, 2000) can be used to explain key occasions when adult learners' perspectives shift and emphasizes the significance of meaning perspectives, which regard to the notion of assumptions, values, and beliefs. Others view transformative learning as a change in consciousness that enables people to drastically and permanently change how they interact with the outside world (Kroth & Cranton, 2014; Meyer et al., 2010). Mezirow (1991, p. 5) asserted that because of the assumption that "adults have acquired a coherent body of experience-assumptions, concepts, values, feelings, conditional responses-frames of reference that define their world" has led to the widely held belief that transformative learning theory is exclusively applicable to adults. Grider (2011) and Walsh (2007) pointed out that

the focus of most literature is on the transformative learning process in adults over the age of 25. However, studies by Kerr (2014), and Walsh (2007) have revealed that people under the age of 25 have encountered a variety of transformative learning elements, such as the research conducted in Thus, as a reconstructive theory, TL offers a model for comprehending how adults learn in varied cultural contexts (Mezirow & Taylor, 2011).

A myriad of previous research has revealed the implementation of transformative learning. For example, Cho and Johnson (2020) reported that teacher candidates go through transformative learning in a dual language environment, which initially make them feel uneasy and anxious while dealing with emergent bilingual pupils and their teachers. Several success factors for TL implementation were identified including "changing belief system in positive manner, dealing with conflicting values, common goals with a focus on sustainable development, participation in interdisciplinary teams, social-emotional communication and creative problem solving" (Schnitzler, 2020, p. 5), the challenges of the evaluation of procedures (Romano, 2017), the presence of social technology (Scharmer, 2016), and outcomes of TL taken into consideration (Kovacs, 2018). Other study also revealed a connection between students' positive attitudes toward science and their exposure to transformative learning modes of instruction (Gudiño Paredes, 2018). Thus, these findings emphasizes the essential aspects of learning process which can be explored through the atmosphere of transformative learning model.

Teachers' requirement of the interrelated knowledge, abilities, and attitudes to enhance student learning before student learning may be enhanced is necessary (Desimone et al., 2013). Study overseas programs, whether short-term or long-term, as well as international fieldwork and service learning programs are required to meet this requirement. Although these programs have been the focus of several studies seeking for evidence of transformative learning (Fortune et al., 2019; Nada et al., 2018; Walters et al., 2017), a little is known that online courses have been studied in terms of transformative learning. In addition, developing one's teaching practice requires reflection (Carew et al., 2008), which can be an essential thing to have a better teaching performance. Widodo and Ferdiansyah (2018) also explain that reflection is essential to understanding how to restructure one's teaching practice in order to improve it while also emotionally evaluating the teaching experience. Thus, the aim of this study was to reflect on the issues of my learning experiences that I encountered during on online academic writing. To address this objective, the following question is posed: How can the online writing course become a transformative learning model for me as university teacher that could improve the knowledge of writing and my teaching performance?

METHOD
The research context
The online professional English network (OPEN) is a program sponsored by the U.S Department of State with funding provided by the U.S. Government. A 64-hour online teacher training course delivered by private university in United States was conducted for eight weeks, from 10 January until 7 March 2023. I participated in this course because my professional learning community (PLC)'s friend offered me and she gave me the information that I can register through online. Before taking part in this course, the participants need to have an

orientation for about a month. This orientation aims to introduce the course syllabus, the qualifications, the policy, the tasks, the evaluation criteria and grade level as well as the score that the participants need to know. For those who fail the orientation, they are not able to take part in the following course. They also required participants to have a discussion with other participants by giving comments, feedbacks and questions related to topic. During the course, if participants are not able to do such requirements, for example, they could not accomplish certain assignment in a due time, they have to notify through email to the instructor and the host of the program. But they only have the chance to follow and complete projects for a week. Nevertheless, they are still permitted to participate in courses, but they will not receive evaluations or grades, nor will they be granted a certificate automatically. The writing course provide eight modules that participants need to study individually in order that the participants can study the materials in advance.

Study design
This qualitative research describes an auto ethnography case study design to explore the learning issues and obstacles, which I engaged in an online academic writing as a part of my transformative learning journey as a university teacher. In addition, this reflective study identified some factors which helped me finally achieve the learning goals. This auto-ethnographic paper will act as a small-scale case study to show how a number of broad (and possibly global) concerns are broken down into local contexts and how they can affect lecturers' professional development in a tertiary education.

Data collection and data analysis
Data were collected from my reflective journals, and weekly tasks of developing and teaching academic writing course conducted by the online professional English network (OPEN). The participants did weekly tasks given by the instructors, which must be completed in a given time. Two female instructors (main instructor, and assistant) give feedbacks and comments on participants' tasks. To analyze the data which consists of journals, tasks, online discussion and instructors' feedback, I reread all the data, highlighted, coded, and identified the emerged similar themes. Final phase is I interpreted all the data and made a conclusion of the findings.

DISCUSSION
The objective of this study is to reflect my online writing course, which becomes a transformative learning model as university teacher that could improve, particularly the knowledge of writing and my teaching performance. For the last ten years in Indonesia, the requirement for publication as a part of main core of university teachers' duties has been encouraged to obtain academic functional position, which starts from assistant professor (*asisten ahli and lektor*), associate professor (*lektor kepala*) and professor, the highest position as a career path, which probably is the dream of every lecturer. Writing proficiency is therefore essential to publishing the lecturers' work. As Barbara and Knowles (2000) stated that writing is a strong academic instrument that is essential to academic practice. Similarly, writing is acknowledged as one of the most difficult components of the academic activity, despite its importance (and probably even because of it) (McGrail et al., 2006). Lecturers, especially for novice lecturers,

must hone their writing abilities by enrolling in academic writing courses that place a strong emphasis on writing for publications in order to address this relevance. Additionally, professional development is supported by using writing as a "vehicle" (Turner et al., 2015, p. 559). By examining teachers' growth as researchers (Turner et al., 2015), the use of writing as a emphasis can further the mutual relationship between practice-based research and instruction (Cochran-Smith, 2004).

This following reflective journal informs the benefits that I encountered during the online writing course.

"*In this online writing course, not only does this course provide me with learning experiences about the concept of writing and writing practices both from instructors and other participants, it also inspires me with more ideas about the topics of research that I will probably conduct later. In addition, the assignments make me think overtime to reread the modules before accomplishing the tasks. I usually do this activity two or three times to make sure the right answers. In essay tasks, I recheck several times to ensure that I don't use similar vocabulary and uninteresting ideas. I also become more careful of selecting the right part of speech, the coherence and the cohesion of my writing. The participants are also required to engage one another by giving comments, questions and feedback to each task. By doing this, I feel like obtaining something new from different insights.*"

In this point, we are stimulated to read other participants' tasks and perspectives in different contexts since they come from many different countries and professions. As the previous study indicated that the project of professional development initiative in South West England provided the perceptiveness into the lecturers' development of research active which used to be formerly only a minor part of their professional roles (Turner et al., 2015). In their research, they also revealed that participants transform their literary styles, which were portrayed through their metaphorical usage, alterations in tonality, and modes of expression, demonstrated their increasing self-assurance. It can be implied that the transformation learning happens in this writing course, which develop writing performance and professional development since the course instructors facilitates the participants with feedbacks and the modules offers with structured and organized materials. Morrice (2013) also pointed out that participants' educational experiences are diverse and in-depth, necessitating a larger conception of learning and its possible effects. In the arguments of Turner, et al (2015), insights into the meanings and experiences of being a professional were revealed as a result of writing facilitation, demonstrating the potential for the activities of ongoing professional development centered on writing to be effective tools for identity formation and professional development.

It is necessary to study academic writing course development and teaching through the lens of the theory of transformational learning as a suitable analytical tool for looking into participant trajectories in order to comprehend and describe the learning experiences. It does so by enabling academics to look at learning as a whole process (Morrice, 2013) and to move beyond dichotomies that only characterize positive or negative learning experiences (Nada et al., 2018). During the learning process of writing in online course, some obstacles come up as I write in my reflective journal.

"Due to my teaching responsibilities and other academic obligations, I need to manage my time to complete all assignments timely. I need to make sure that I schedule all of my activities and determine their priority. That is why I immediately complete the tasks when I receive an email notification of them. I've never intended to put it off. My own life motto is "Don't put off until tomorrow what you can do today." I have to keep trying. I quite often do the task late at night and even on the weekends. Eight weeks is not a short time to join this course since there are at least three assignments that I have to accomplish for each module and for each week. It is somewhat tiring. Yet, when I am prepared to begin any action, I need to be sure that I will complete it regardless of the circumstances."

The keywords of this reflective journal are time management, stress management, tiredness and resilience. Each participant of the program must learn to manage their time and stress. Otherwise, they will not be able to do the assignment before the deadline. This writing course teaches me how to effectively manage my time and stress in light of my several other professional commitments. To continue the program and complete the assigned project, I must define a priority and limit my leisure time and sleep. Resilience is necessary for achieving this learning objective. Resilience is defined as a constructive adaptation that emphasizes a person's interpersonal and professional success (Ungar & Liebenberg, 2011). Resilience, which is based on a socio-ecological paradigm seen as "overcoming adversity, while also potentially subtly changing, or even dramatically transforming (aspects of) that adversity" (Hart et al., 2013, 2016, p. 3). So it is about qualities, abilities and aptitudes that allow people to adjust to adversities, obstacles, and difficulties (Alvord & Grados, 2005). In other words, having resilience will help you cope with a variety of obstacles and difficulties.

Each assignment is different from one module to other module but some parts will be integrated into one project which is a course writing program as a final assignment. The final assignment that participant needs to accomplish is to design a writing course syllabus, which includes information about the course (course title, required course material, class times, location and learning management system), instructor information, course description, course objectives, assignments, assessment, course policies, course schedule and references. It needs a week to accomplish this project. For instance, in module 7, participants should create a rubric and write a respond to students' draft essay. The participants need to provide comments on the aspects of the essay that you believe are most crucial; mention at least one aspect that is a strength and one aspect that needs improvement and use comments from readers. The following is my comment on student's writing draft.

Figure 1. Comment of student's writing draft

Dear student A

It is nice to hear that you can identify your identity, which affects your life and elaborates on each of them systematically and orderly. In terms of context, you write a topic sentence and thesis statement in each paragraph so the readers can easily understand it. However, it will have better information if you also can give examples about the outdoor activities that your mother encouraged you to do and how you feel about such activities. In addition, you need to inform the readers the reasons that you have to control your emotion. Do you think you are a kind of bad-tempered person or do you have a specific reason? Another thing to remember before submitting the paper is to read and recheck a few things such as the grammatical structure like in the second

To understand the concept of rubrics about holistic and analytic rubric in module 7, the participant is recommended to do the assignment about the reason selecting certain rubric, the given score and the rationale and write a reflection how you as a writing teacher and the student might benefit from the rubric. There are certain following structure for participant's reflection: context score, content score, language score, organization score, style score, why giving this rating and how the rubric may help both students and a teacher/instructor as a writing teacher. This practice makes me pay more detailed attention to certain aspects when giving response and completing the assignment. Here is the task and response of reflection.

I am going to use the analytic rubric to give scores to students' writing. In terms of the context, I will give 10 since a thesis statement introduces the aspect of the topic about identity and the introduction sets the context of the topic. For content, the supporting points are relevant. However, there are some parts that need more elaboration and provide examples. That's' why in this criterion, I will give 7. In the criterion of organization, I will give 10, as it covers the things that need to be in this part such as each paragraph has a topic sentence and each topic sentence has supported information. For the language criterion, I will give it a 7 because it has some grammatical errors. Thus, this writing needs to be proofread and carefully edited beforehand. For the last criterion, style, it is 10 because it has important information such as the name of the student, the instructor's name, the class, and the date. In addition, the writing has followed the right format.

The analytic rubric is somewhat beneficial for teachers and students to check their writing one by one and make it easy for them to give scores. Besides that it can become a key guidance about the scoring

Figure 2. Comment related to the use of rubric and reflection

In addition to create a course syllabus and material packet for the writing course, each participant should write a reflection and make a draft of a complete action plan as the last assignment in module 8.

My reflection of the online writing course

Since academic writing includes a wide range of topics and has a different purpose for a different level, it is not something that can be learned in a short period of time. But, I gain a lot from this course, particularly in terms of the weekly material's organization, which I can use and tweak for my other academic writing classes to emphasize the writing process and the ideas of writing components. Well, it's like recalling my memory. While I was a graduate student, I was used to learning all the writing concepts. I currently concentrate on instructing academic writing for publication, nevertheless. I simply forget those things that are specifically relevant to writing terminology and notions.
I read several action plans of other participants, whom I think are somewhat good and can be replicated by others, including me. In my point of view, some of them are detailed, precise, and systematic. It means that they are incredibly thoughtful in making a good proposal for better changes. But some of them are not really clear about the changes they are going to make to the proposal. For myself, at least I can learn a lot about how to make a good proposal by looking at the evaluation criteria, which becomes a guideline. A thoughtful plan, and strategic plan as well as timing should be considered to make a good proposal be accepted. Last but not least is the importance of feedback to create better proposals.
The instructors, Ms. SD and Ms. FB (initial names), for giving me feedback and comments on my assignments, as well as some of the participants, who have different perspectives and teaching strategies on writing, all contribute to my enjoyment of this course and help me gain new perspectives. Something like that could enhance my teaching methods. I would really like to understand how to create a rubric because I find it difficult to do so as accurately as possible. I also wish to receive a mentoring program up until the work is published since I would like to learn how to publish scientific articles in highly recognized journals.

Those reflective journals, and some examples of assignments, which are parts of online writing course stimulate the awareness in the metamorphic processes that might not be as easily reached through other academic growth avenues. Perspective of the participants, including me changes due to feedback, comments, and virtual discussion among peers and instructors. Furthermore, there is an increase of the "cascading" new knowledge with two key reasons because of this program, namely increasing the course impact and double our learning.

Increasing the impact of the course is related to the learning opportunity that participants can have since they can learn with other peers from around the world and develop professionally as academics. The second is participant can double their learning. Since all of the participants are related to education sectors such as teachers of middle schools and high schools and university teachers, they can attest to the fact that teaching a new idea to pupils forces them to reconsider it and rearrange their knowledge, all of which enhances their own understanding. Additionally, it aids in identifying concepts that require clarification or areas that need improvement.

The concept of transformative learning is understood by scholar-practitioners in three different ways: as a change in one's *worldview*, a person's *learning process* during a transformative experience, and as *practices* that encourage or support transformation (Stevens-Long et al., 2012, p. 184), which may be a gradual process taking place over time (Mezirow, 2000). The primary literature that addresses transformative learning describes it as a dynamic and ever-emerging process. Therefore, when viewed from the standpoint of teacher professional development, TL stops being primarily tied to an individual and becomes a composition within which the individual generates and extends forms that need to alter (Kovacs, 2018). Taylor (1998) described three significant themes for TL including experience, critical reflection, and rational discourse whereas experience, critical reflection, and development were seen by Merriam et al. (2006) as three crucial principles for TL. Transformative learning is a constructivist theory because it suggests that knowledge is constructed by interpreting experience (Anand et al., 2020).

CONCLUSION
The widespread consensus is that learning is a beneficial process that promotes personal growth and development. Publication is necessary for university teachers because it not only promotes career paths but also disseminates research findings, best practices, and ideas to the more global audience. As a result, writing proficiency is essential. Enrolling in writing programs or courses both online and offline courses can be the process of transforming experience and learning that escorts life's transition and foster professional growth in order to have a better writing skill in line with the international standard of writing. On the top of that, it also promotes professional development to use writing as a tool. This research contributes to the continuing discussion on transformative learning and the experiences of participants in the context of writing courses by analyzing the transformational impacts of connecting with people from various different educational backgrounds all over the world and an online setting. To increase the number of publication with good publication record, which impacts lecturers' careers and university reputation, the university's intervention such as providing writing mentoring and coaches, writing workshop and writing courses is profoundly needed. Last but not least, there is an urgent need for additional study that focuses on other issues including how TL is perceived through participants' emotional and psychological experiences or how TL can influence a lecturer's professional identity.

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