



# TRANSFORMATIONS AND INCLUSIVE ENGAGEMENT

An English and Comparative Literary  
Studies student and staff collaboration

Ellinor Hopkins, Exec member of Transformations  
and Charlotte Pearce, Widening Participation  
Officer, ECLS (on secondment to WIE)



# Transformations: The Past

Transformations was first established in the department in 2012:

*We wanted to create a project that would enable us to establish long-term, meaningful dialogue with local schools while supporting younger learners and providing Warwick undergraduates with opportunities to gain experience in the classroom.*

*Dr Paul Whitehead WP Officer*

TRANSFORMATIONS

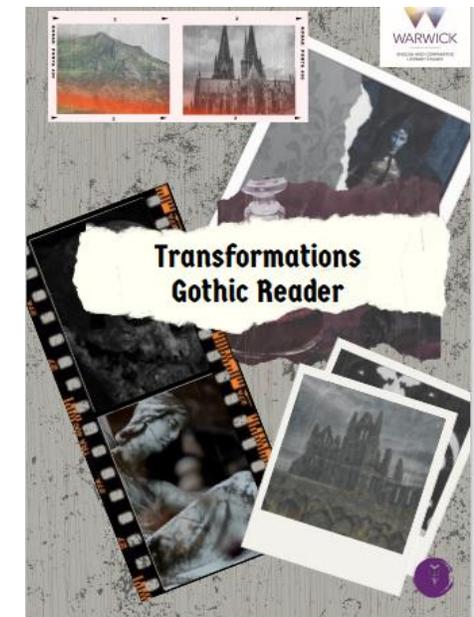
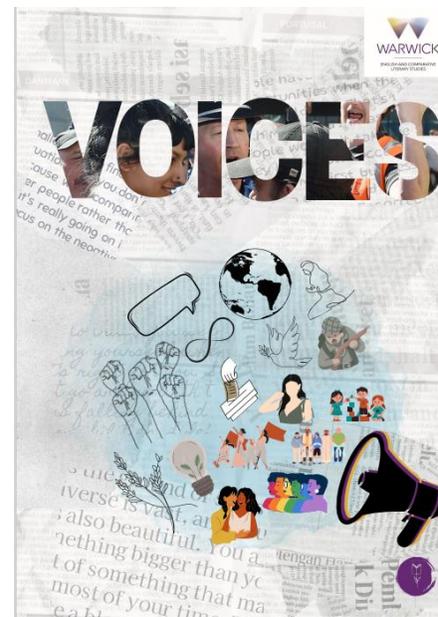
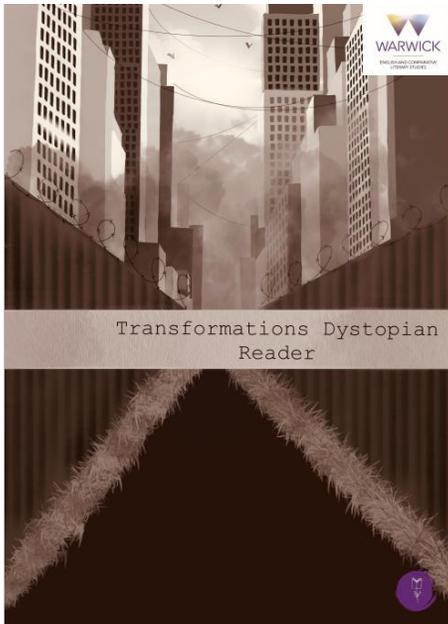
# Transformations: The Present

What?

Who?

How?

Why?



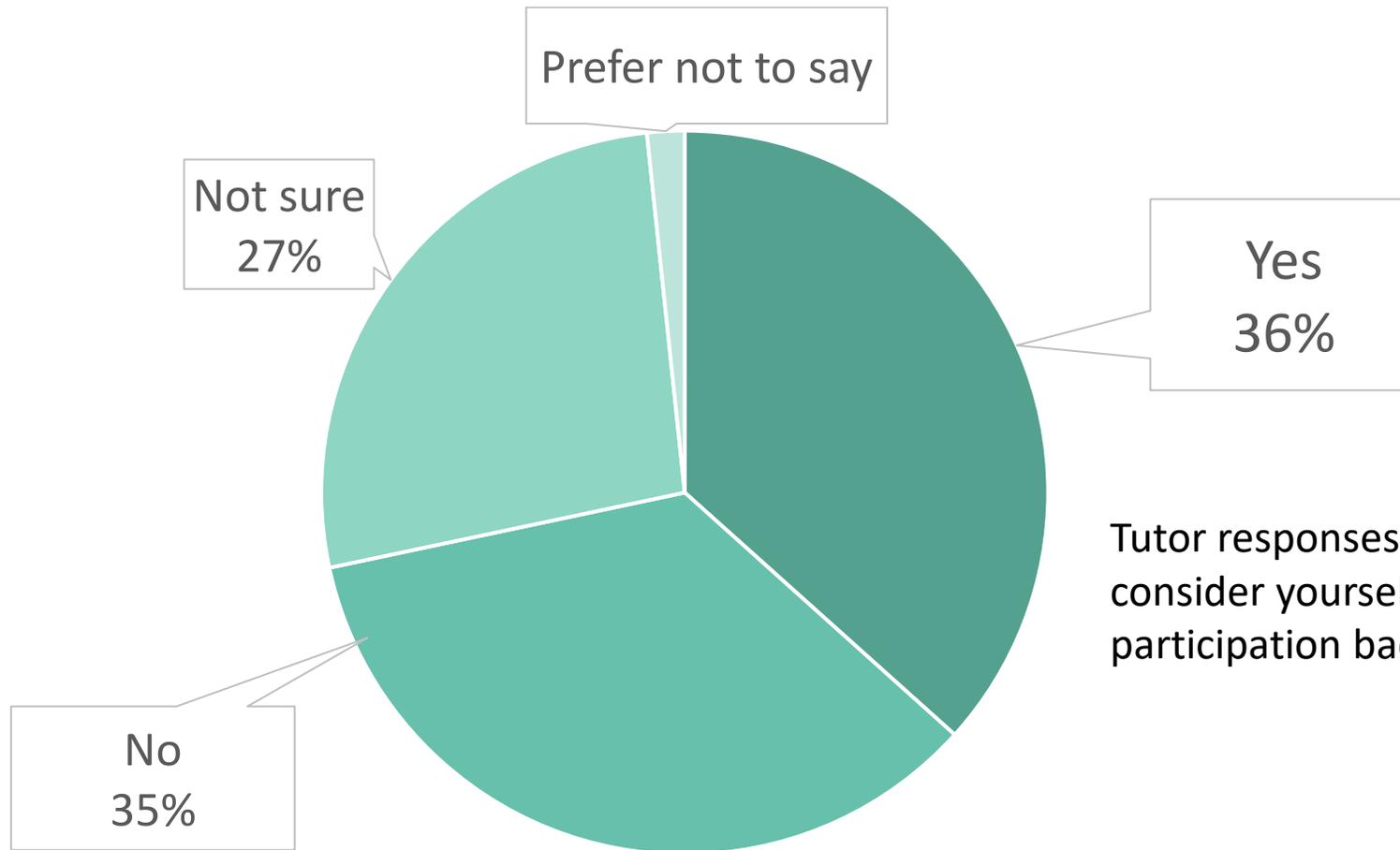
# Approaches to inclusion with our partner schools

- All non-selective state, schools (11 of 12 are WP schools)
- Schools asked to prioritise those with pupil premium status
- Flexibility for schools to choose from 4 readers and select year group
- Reader is a starting point only – responsive to the students we teach and the context of the school
- Readers were designed/re-designed to improve readability
- Students choose what to write and how to write it
- Free anthology for everyone
- Anonymous Qualtrics surveys indicate high levels of enjoyment, a sense of having made academic progress and improved attitude to learning in English lessons by school participants
- Retention of school partners over time indicate high levels of school satisfaction



# Transformations and ECLS WP students

Open to all, but planned with WP students in mind



Tutor responses to the question: Do you consider yourself to be from a widening participation background?



# The Transformations Year



## Term 1

Recruitment activities

3 x 2 hour training sessions

4 teaching sessions in school

Regular socials



## Term 2

Creative writing training for tutors

8 teaching sessions in school

Creative writing competition

Marking event for tutors

Campus event for school finalists

Regular socials



## Term 3

Optional extra role in the creation of the Transformations anthology

Thank you party for all tutors

# Transformations Team Structures to support inclusion

## Teaching team (10-12 teams each year)

3-5 Tutors

1 Senior Tutor

1 Exec member

## Exec team

8 Exec members work in pairs with each pair having an area of responsibility

1 WP Officer

2 Co-Presidents

## Anthology Team

Term 3 only

Totally optional

Designs the anthology

Edits the content of the anthology

Creates original artwork

# Transformations: Warwick students and inclusion

- Warwick students determine what is taught and how it is taught
- Flexibility – Choice of days of the week
- Cost of participation in programme and socials
- Types of socials
- Silent support – students can provide confidential information about their needs to WP Officer
- Small team structures for community and support
- Leadership opportunities for all – option of Senior Tutor role after completing one cycle as a tutor
- WP students well represented in leadership roles - work with WP Officer to set strategic direction of programme as well as run its operations
- Recruitment of exec – recruiting a group of leaders and potential leaders



# Diversity and Inclusion Officers – Exec Team Role

- In charge of delivering training to encourage Warwick Tutors to be diverse and inclusive in their lessons
- Making and developing lessons that move away from the reader to be more diverse (form, content, themes)
- Compulsory to complete one Diverse and Inclusive lesson per term (two lessons in the programme)
- Form created for tutors to suggest text/lesson ideas for the D&I officers to make
- Teams are encouraged to make their own lessons then share them in the Teams Channel for others to use



Class in *Harry Potter*

<https://youtu.be/x8kab102PG0>



This clip is from the first movie, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*.

Draco Malfoy says, "Think my name's funny, do you? No need to ask yours. Red hair, and a hand-me-down robe; you must be a Weasley. You'll soon find out that some wizarding families are better than others, Potter; you don't want to go making friends with the *wrong* sort. I can help you there."

This scene from the film may be paired with the accompanying scene from the novel, and you can ask students to compare the dramatization of the narrative and see if there are any differences.

Things to think about:

- Name-dropping: how Draco uses his family name to present the idea that he is better than Ron.
- Could link to an eco-critical, environmental reading – Draco implies that "hand-me-down" clothes are a bad thing, links to capitalism, fast-fashion etc.
- The significance of the different settings of the same scene e.g. the film is inside Hogwarts, and the novel is on the train – does this affect the way the reader interprets what Draco is saying? A big, grand building which feels alien to both Harry and the reader in comparison to a train which is a "normal" thing?



# Transformations: The Future

## Developing skills and creating career opportunities

Presentation skills

Team working

Practical experience in publishing

Teaching

Leadership

References related to a sustained volunteer role

Teaching and publishing-specific work experience and references



# Transformations: The experience of an international PG student

*Being an international student in a foreign land, the Transformations programme allowed me to be a part of a diverse community that gave me a smooth pathway into the UK's education system and a sense of functioning within the university.*

*For me personally, being able to teach and interact with school children gave me a sense of how best to approach my studies since the system was quite different from what I was used to in my home country. Moreover, being part of this, helped ease a sense of loneliness through the various interactions and activities we had throughout the year.*

*The big takeaway for me was the various indirect and direct skill sets that I acquired; like management, planning and communication. With children one needs to be creative to engage with them; communication too needs to be well thought-out. These in particular help me with my role in the publishing industry when I am engaging with authors and editors.*

**Prisha, MA in World Literature (2023) now Editorial Assistant with Taylor and Francis, Delhi, India**



# Transformations: The impact on the future of ECLS students

*Transformations is transformational. We aren't telling students that they need to go to university or that they need to do special things in their examinations or present themselves in a certain way to do well. We are giving them the tools – and hopefully confidence – to realise that universities and the places that may feel exclusive to them are open to them too.*

*Transformations has also influenced my further education and career choices. I was lucky enough to study for a Masters degree in Cambridge last year on the interplay between knowledge, power and politics in education.*

*Now, I work in Liverpool running a network of over 120 advice-giving charities. We're working to improve access to advice for people who need it most and to provide much-needed resources for an incredibly over-stretched charitable sector. I think of advice a bit like Transformations – we're never telling people what to do, simply showing them the options available and reassuring them that they have the power and ability to change their circumstances.*

**Edward, English Literature graduate of 2022 and former Transformations President**



## Transformations: The impact on the future of ECLS students

*There were so many skills that I learnt from taking part in transformations and from being a part of the executive team. I remember in my second year when I was applying for legal training contracts, a lot of what I wrote about was my experiences from Transformations. I wrote why the charitable aims of giving back and helping to improve educational attainment and spreading the joy of literature was so important to me, I wrote about how I learnt about being punctual, leading a team, public speaking, drafting a presentation and so much more from being part of Transformations. The programme was the perfect vessel for me to practise a lot of the transferrable skills that are needed to be a solicitor.*

*Since graduating from Warwick, I have completed my conversion course to Law and am now half-way through my LLM and SQE qualifications.*

*As a result of my work with Transformations, I have also been able to work with OCR as the Chairman of the EDIB Strategic Board, even helping with their recent review of 11-16 Curriculum and Assessment in England. I am very thankful for the skills and experiences I gained from being part of such an important programme like Transformations.*

**Yinka, English and History graduate of 2023 and former Transformations Co-President**



## Transformations: The impact on the future of ECLS students

*Transformations, for me, was not only a great way to meet new people but enriched me with the experience of having an insight into what teaching really feels like. Over the two years I have done the programme, I developed from a tutor to a senior tutor, allowing myself to have a sense of responsibility when working in my teams across the schools I visited.*

*I found Transformations really interesting since I actually took part in the programme as a student myself whilst I was at secondary school. I've loved being able to see things from another perspective – which made me remember how fun and engaging I saw the programme when I did it at school.*

*During this experience, I developed a range of valuable skills – including communication, patience and classroom management. I also learnt how to effectively explain and teach concepts in clear and engaging ways – all valuable assets which I had used in order to help myself progress into the teaching position that I have been working towards. The experience I had gained here was instrumental for helping me gain a place on the TeachFirst programme where I will be teaching English in a Secondary School this upcoming year. I am so thankful for what Transformations has opened my eyes to, as I'm sure this experience will be reflected in my upcoming career.*

**Courtney, English Literature (due to graduate summer 2025) Current Transformations Senior Tutor**



# Example Transformations Lesson

VOICES READER -  
DISABILITY



# The Voices Reader

Voices is about activism writing & representing underrepresented voices.

- We specifically look at five different themes: Climate Change, Feminism, Racism, Marriage Equality, & Disability.

Our lesson today will focus on Disability and Accessibility – focusing on the experience of disabled people, their family and young carers.



# Introduction to the week

## Families with disabilities

- It is important to listen to voices about disability; disabled people, and the people around them, as it affects many people's lives and helps create good representation

What is a young carer?

- The Young Carers National Voice organisation defines a young carer as a "child or young person who provides substantial unpaid care for a relative who has disabilities."

Remember the Equality Act 2010!



## Disabled People in the Media



Chris McCausland, a blind comedian, recently rose to fame after being the first blind contestant on *Strictly Come Dancing*, who went on to win the competition in 2024.



Ade Adepitan MBE is a TV presenter and famous wheelchair basketball player. He was given an MBE for his services to disability sport in 2005.



Tasha Ghouri was the first deaf contestant to enter the Villa on Love Island. She has re-entered the spotlight after coming runner up in 2024 *Strictly Come Dancing*.



## Visible and non-visible disabilities



### Visible

- Cerebral palsy.
- Limb Difference
- Paralysis (wheelchair users)
- Down Syndrome
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Blindness
- Deafness
- Bodily differences
- Mobility Aids

### Non-Visible

- Anxiety
- ADHD
- Autism
- Crohn's Disease
- Diabetes
- Bipolar Disorder
- Epilepsy
- Dementia
- Chronic illnesses

## Disabled Representation in Children's Media

This character is Toph from the series *Avatar: The Last Airbender*. She was born blind, yet is still a very powerful 'Earth-Bender' - and is a very notable (but not the only!) disabled character from the series. A lot of people consider her to be positive representation.



Hiccup, from *How To Train your Dragon*, lost his leg in the battle at the end of the first film. The three-film series also includes representations of limb differences in the Vikings from his village.



# Wicked (2024)

- We're looking at Wicked and the character of Nessa Rose!
- Wicked is a retelling of The Wizard of Oz from a different perspective.
- The character of Nessa Rose is a disabled student at Shiz University. She is Elphaba's sister, and we will be looking at how her disability is received by those around her.
- Using popular culture, as well as film and television, is a way to get our students to engage with topics they may not be as knowledgeable about but would have still encountered.





# Wonder (2017)

- *Wonder*, follows a Auggie (a boy with a severe facial difference – Treacher Collins syndrome) and his sister Via through day-to-day life.
- It was a book, by R.J. Palacio in 2012, then turned into this film in 2017.
- It was based off the author's son meeting a young girl with the same condition.
- The actor playing Auggie wore makeup (prosthetics) to represent this character.





meet  
*Via*



0:01 / 0:27



# Discussion Prompts

Please take five or so minutes to discuss these prompts!

This is how we encourage our students to talk about topics that they may not be as knowledgeable about or not know how to approach

- What does it mean to be "tragically beautiful"? How is this description of Nessa Rose harmful?
- Is Elphaba's response an appropriate reaction? Why or why not?
- How is Via presented in this extract? How does her life differ to Elphaba's, in terms of their relationship with their sibling and family?



# Blackout Poetry

This is an example of how we encourage students to create creative writing pieces from the relevant discussions, in this case about disability.

We have given you printouts of different articles / news stories/ pages from books that look at disability, as well as black markers.

Please use these, as well as the discussion you were having, to create your own Blackout Poetry!

- Erasure poetry, also known as blackout poetry, is a form of found poetry wherein a poet takes an existing text and erases, blacks out, or otherwise obscures a large portion of the text, creating a wholly new work from what remains. (poets.org)
- We have some examples in the next slides.



families are all alike;  
on an intrigue carrying  
living in the same house  
This position  
all members were  
painfully conscious  
stray people brought together by chance  
leave the wild  
home wild  
a new situation

people passing in sleeping cities  
after hours of stillness,  
There is romance in the  
black hours,

Vladimir Nabokov

trying to push or pull the swing board; he finally succeeded in getting himself knocked down by it, and bawled loudly as he lay supine on the grass while his mother continued to smile gently at neither of her present children. I recall so clearly these minutiae probably because I was to check my impressions so thoroughly only a few minutes later; and besides, something in me had been on guard ever since that awful night in Beardsley. I now refused to be diverted by the feeling of well-being that my walk had engendered—by the young summer breeze that enveloped the nape of my neck, the giving crunch of the damp gravel, the juicy tidbit I had sucked out at last from a hollow tooth, and even the comfortable weight of my provisions which the general condition of my heart should not have allowed me to carry; but even that miserable pump of mine seemed to be working sweetly, and I felt *adorari d'amoureuse langueur*, to quote dear old Ronsard, as I reached the cottage where I had left my Dolores.

To my surprise I found her dressed. She was sitting on the edge of the bed in slacks and T-shirt, and was looking at me as if she could not quite place me. The frank soft shape of her small breasts was brought out rather than blurred by the limpness of her thin shirt, and this frankness irritated me. She had not washed; yet her mouth was freshly though smudgily painted, and her broad teeth glistened like wine-tinged ivory, or pinkish poker chips. And there she sat, hands clasped in her lap, and dreamily brimmed with a diabolical glow that had no relation to me whatever.

I plumped down my heavy paper bag and stood staring at the bare ankles of her sandaled feet, then at her silly face, then again at her sinful feet. "You've been out," I said (the sandals were filthy with gravel).

"I just got up," she replied, and added upon intercepting my downward glance: "Went out for a sec. Wanted to see if you were coming back."

She became aware of the bananas and uncoiled herself tableward.

What special suspicion could I have? None indeed—but those muddy, moony eyes of hers, that singular warmth emanating





**THANK YOU**

