

## Unearthing Student Narrative and Cultivating Voice: Breathing Life into Expository

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### Synopsis

Writing is both a social and thought-provoking process, and these two concepts should not be mutually exclusive in the academic realm. As Paulo Freire states, “education is suffering from narration sickness,” that is to say we’re not creating authentic experiences for our students to grapple with reality, but rather we are stifling voice, identity and independent thought by imposing our narratives on them.<sup>i</sup> It’s time for the oppressed to rebel. It is time to make academic writing engaging, to reclaim the scholarly and saturate it with life; to make a place for voice in the seemingly pretentious and detached world of expository writing.

As teachers, we need to remember “that we humans do our most creative and effective work when we are driven by an intrinsic motivation: a human need to investigate, to wonder, to imagine, to share, to teach, to persuade, to learn.”<sup>ii</sup> We naturally desire to explore the questions that arise in the midst of being. If we refuse to allow space for our students’ narratives in the world of academic writing, then we encourage inauthentic, sterile rhetoric that has very little meaning in the lives our students.

<sup>i</sup> Freire, Paulo, Ana Maria Araújo Freire, and Donaldo P. Macedo. "The Banking Concept of Education." In *The Paulo Freire reader*. New York: Continuum, 1998. 67-72.

<sup>i</sup> Gallagher, Chris W., and Amy Lee. "The Joys (and Torments) of Teaching and Writing." In *Teaching writing that matters: tools and projects that motivate adolescent writers*. New York: Scholastic, 2008. 7.

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