

CHAPTER 18.

**APPROACHING LIFESPAN
WRITING RESEARCH FROM
INDIGENOUS, DECOLONIAL
PERSPECTIVES**

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This chapter provides introductory guidance for those who intend to research writing development by combining a LWR methodology with Indigenous, decolonial research methodologies. One of the objectives of this chapter is to make a call to expand the scope of the vision and mission of Writing Through the Lifespan Collaboration (WTLC) beyond western university perspectives so that writing can be understood broadly, historically, and culturally outside of the confines of the western hegemonic practices. As the contributors of this volume and WTLC participants have expressed at various forums, there is an interest in the collaboration being expansive in its approaches and participation; this chapter tries to argue for one way of doing so. For that purpose, the chapter first provides a short summary of Indigenous, decolonial research perspectives and then discusses how and to what extent Indigenous perspectives can be blended with lifespan research methodologies for a productive research project. The chapter also includes a short bibliography on Indigenous decolonial theories and research methodologies.

This chapter argues that LWR methodologies and Indigenous, decolonial research methodologies can be combined productively because both research orientations focus on contextualization and emphasize the inclusion of nontraditional pathways of literacy development. As the other chapters in this collection and previous LWR show, one of the main objectives of the WTLC has been to understand how writing develops within and beyond standard academic environments. The Collaboration emphasizes the importance of radical contextualization, longitudinal frameworks, and an openness to varied ways through which individuals learn to write and adapt their existing writing knowledge and abilities into the realms of life for which the skills were not originally intended. The Collaboration aims to capture the fullness of literacy development to demystify how humans learn to write and communicate at various points of their lives. Since the majority of the

WTLC members are writing researchers and professors, one key objective behind the demystification of writing development is pedagogical. There is a wish: if a single deep grammar or a formula of how people learn to write were to be found, teaching writing could be so predictable and scientific. Such a formula does not exist yet and most likely will never be found. So, from the Collaboration's perspective, at least studying as many instances of literacy development as possible is important for shedding light on the question of how people learn and change as writers. Indigenous and decolonial researchers are likely find these WTLC orientations reflective of their own interests. However, Indigenous and decolonial researchers are particularly interested in how university research has historically been part of the colonizing process. Many of us in the Collaboration thus argue that researchers should take a more intentional, decolonizing approach in order to serve social justice and decolonizing purposes.

WHAT IS AN INDIGENOUS DECOLONIAL PERSPECTIVE?

An Indigenous decolonial perspective is a widely diverse, interdisciplinary lens that deconstructs western intellectual, cultural, and institutional practices. This perspective views western writing and research practices as instruments of colonialization and demonstrates how those practices have been responsible in the physical and symbolic violence against Indigenous peoples. So, resisting the colonial physical onslaught and exposing the discursive formations that justify colonization remains at the core of Indigenous movements. Along with this resisting angle, this perspective also aims to bring forth and recover Indigenous histories, epistemologies, and ways of being. The purpose is to create a decolonized political, cultural, and intellectual condition for Indigenous Peoples so that Indigenous communities, tribes and nations can regain their sovereignty.

As can be assumed from the statements above, the state of indigeneity automatically assumes the presence of the colonizing other, and thus Indigenous political, cultural, and artistic response is often crafted in response to that presence. A bitter truth reigns through Indigenous movements:

Once absorbed into the 'chronopolitics' of the secular west, colonized space cannot reclaim autonomy and seclusion; once dragged out of their precolonial state, the indigenes of peripheries have to deal with the knowledge of the outside world, irrespective of their wishes and inclinations (Miyoshi, 1998, p. 730).

Undoubtedly, Indigenous sovereignty aspirations may point towards what Dipesh Chakrabarty (2008) calls "provincializing Europe," meaning putting the

dominant western thoughts into its own place in order to imagine different forms of political and cultural sovereignties (p. 3-27) for Indigenous nations. Such imagination is difficult to achieve because of the absence of either the mythical precolonial golden past or the completely noncolonial autonomous present for Indigenous communities. So, most attempts are at crafting sovereignty at the intersection of this in-betweenness, the degree of which itself is different for an Indigenous community depending on its particular historical context.

Thus, the aspiration for sovereignty and political and cultural independence binds Indigenous nations and communities globally. Resistance, survival, and thriving are some of the common themes guiding Indigenous communities worldwide. Whether *Janajatis*—which itself is an umbrella term for many Indigenous communities in Nepal—or Native American tribes in the United States, they can identify with each other in their struggle against colonial encroachment and their quest for sovereignty. But what they exactly advocate for and how they mobilize their cultural and political capital may differ from one community to another, depending on their own cultural history, the state of colonization, and their relative power with the colonizer. For instance, within *Janajatis* of Nepal, they may unite their efforts together against the exclusionary Bahun-Chetri-led Nepali state for their common good, particularly for ethnic recognition, cultural preservation, and sovereignty. What *Tharus* aspire for, and how they think of their relationship with the land, differ from that of *Limbus*. Depending on their needs, what counts as literacy or an effective rhetorical move also may differ. Thus, since even how Indigenous communities define sovereignty may differ, when we think about the global Indigenous perspective, it has to be understood in their pluralistic forms.

For those researching writing from Indigenous perspectives, an understanding of this in-betweenness and hybridity is as important as recognizing the particularity of a community in question. For that, grounding the research project in theories and approaches coming from those communities can help researchers to see literacy practices from the vantage point of those communities better. So, there is no single Indigenous theory or approach, but a variety that originates depending on an Indigenous community's unique historical and cultural context. For instance, while the term "Native American" in itself encompasses a huge spectrum of tribes, heritages, and histories, theorist Gerald Vizenor's (1994) notion of survivance has proven to be productive to interpret artifacts and practices for many Native American scholars in writing and rhetorical studies (Vizenor, 1994; Powell, 2002; Stromberg, 2006). Survivance, as Vizenor theorizes, is a complex term that incorporates a range of existential, political, and cultural positions which together may look contradictory but define the condition of many Native Americans. As John D. Miles (2011) unpacks the term, "survivance is the active presence of Native people in public discourse and the practice of actively resisting dominant

representations” of themselves (p. 40). Dominant representations undermine Native American agency, often presenting them as vanished or vanishing tribes, either through existential attrition or through assimilation. Vizenor contradicts this characterization by highlighting how Native Americans have managed to survive, and even thrive, while undergoing massive colonial occupation and displacement. As Miles writes, “survival offers rhetoricians one conceptual framework for understanding how agency emerges in Native texts that are produced in relation to, and yet apart from and against, dominant discourse” (2011, p. 41). Rhetorical and literacy acts of survival, such as storytelling by Natives, try to enact an agency that is directed to the colonizing power as much as it is the product of the rhetor’s own unique cultural and historical resources.

For literacy development researchers combining lifespan writing and Indigenous decolonial perspectives, one of the ways to ensure the better representation of Indigenous perspective is to use conceptual models, such as Vizenor’s (1994) survival, from within the community they are researching to sufficiently interpret the data. The inclusion of a context-specific theoretical model will demonstrate the nature and purpose of literacy as practiced in a specific historical context. Since those theoretical models are often developed from the perspective of the Indigenous communities, the application of the models may not only reveal the inner dynamics and purposes of the literacies but may also serve the interest of the communities. For instance, literacy practices in Native American communities can often be in response to what Vizenor terms as “manifest manners.” Manifest manners, as Vizenor defines, are falsified/constructed characters said to be possessed by Native Americans. These fictional manners are constructed by generations of mainstream white writers, and the constructed manners have become so powerful over time that they pass as the “knowledge” from which even Native Americans themselves may be forced to learn about themselves. That learning would make the Indigenous people “manifest” the manners as constructed (and asked by) this network of narratives. Vizenor develops the notion of “survival” to counter the “manifest manners,” stating how native experience is marked with complexity that transcends the resistance-assimilation binary, and how Native Americans survive and work for sovereignty by using their own cultural resources as well as by appropriating the colonizers’ tools. For a lifespan writing researcher trying to include an Indigenous angle in their methodologies, using context-specific concepts such as “survival” and “manifest manners” in the case of many Native American tribes could better explain why certain kinds of literacies develop and for what purposes those literacies are used.

Often, such literacies may not resemble the writing the way it is understood at university settings. For instance, the practice of storytelling in Native American culture is a form of literacy that requires sophisticated rhetorical maneuvers such

as retaining, revising, and re-contextualizing narratives to be deployed for various purposes including resistance, survival, and thriving and often those stories have not been “written” in the western sense of the term, or whatever has been written and circulated in the mainstream context maybe a version and a partial representation of the stories in action. And, again, as the concept of survivance captures, the quest should not be in finding the single grand story or an essence of a narrative but should be aimed for the versions of it as Native rhetors adopt and adapt stories to survive and thrive in protean historical trajectories. So, if the inquiry were to be focused on storytelling literacy, one could ask how one person or a group learns to receive, retain, and modify stories, and to what end those stories are used. As it is now widely accepted, literacy, or writing for that matter, is not a disinterested aesthetic phenomenon; it is a tool for survival and growth. While common human biological properties may be at the roots of the human ability to develop literacy, its exact nature, ways of acquisition, and use depend on contexts. In this regard, conceptual frameworks from specific communities would help to define what counts as writing as well as to find the purpose for which the writing is used. Researchers focused on contextualization of literacy research must acknowledge the “protean nature of context” because the purpose itself goes through transformation with the passage of time and space difference (Dippre & Smith, 2020, p. 27). A community in question may have a set of identifying traits that generally define its being, but those traits themselves undergo transformation over time. Recognizing the defining community characters along with the transformational history of the community is equally significant to understand an individual’s lifespan writing development as well as the community in which the individual develops their writing. Such recognition underscores the dynamic nature of a community, something colonizing narratives often disregard about Indigenous communities.

POSTCOLONIAL DISCOURSE AND INDIGENOUS APPROACHES

Understanding an Indigenous context can be further clarified if we distinguish it from the context of the mainstream postcolonial discourse, such as the ones theorized by Edward Said and Homi K. Bhabha. Certainly, Indigenous movements may embody many of the radical lines within mainstream postcolonial discourse and may use some of the theoretical perspectives developed in that discourse, but Indigenous perspectives consider themselves distinct in the sense that they view many postcolonial nation-states (such as India) and their ideological apparatus as implicated within the western colonial and imperial structure. For instance, many tribal communities in India, which from the mainstream postcolonial perspective is a postcolonial nation state that gained its independence after its long struggle

with British empire, conceive the Indian nation-state as the continuation of colonial occupation, sometimes even more ruthless in its encroachment into tribal lands compared to its European predecessor. From tribal Indigenous angles, the Indian nation-state demands resistance even in the post-independence context because the fundamental structure of domination and colonization still reigns over them, although the faces ruling over them might have changed. Within the context of countries like Nepal, which was never technically colonized by a western power, the Indigenous communities would point out how the state power has been monopolized by the upper-class Hindu majority while undermining Indigenous cultural, linguistic practices, and sovereignties. It is in these various contexts and connections that global Indigenous movements have intensified their efforts in the last few decades that have achieved recognition in many fronts, but there is a long way for them to find full sovereignty.

Thus, doing research from an Indigenous perspective asks for ethics, social justice, and the historicization of the notion of research because research in itself has been a part of modernity and its various political and cultural institutions. In her widely used book, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) argues that decolonizing research methodologies are “concerned not so much with the actual technique of selecting a method but much more with the context in which research problems are conceptualized and designed, and with the implications of research for its participants and their communities” (p. ix). Historicizing the practice of research itself, Smith highlights how “research as a set of ideas, practices and privileges . . . [have been] embedded in imperial expansionism and colonization and [have been] institutionalized in academic disciplines, schools, curricula, universities and power” (p. x). In Smith’s theorization, Indigenous research “attempts to do something more than deconstructing Western scholarship” (p. 3). She presents a number of questions that Indigenous researchers should consider: “Whose research is it? Who owns it? Whose interest does it serve? Who will benefit from it? Who has designed its questions and framed its scope? Who will carry it out? Who will write it up? How will its results be disseminated?” (p. 10). These questions are critical when designing writing research from a lifespan perspective as well. For instance, when a lifespan writing researcher creates the writing development biography of a person or of a group of people or of a community, the narrative can be plotted differently depending on the researcher’s project interests. What in that narrative receives accentuation and foregrounding is often the function of the researcher’s choice, which determines the meaning of the produced text, and in turn, that meaning may lead to certain understanding or may call for certain actions. Meanings are to some extent always manufactured, and whose interest the produced meanings serve should be of major concern for a researcher

connecting lifespan and Indigenous methodologies. Disinterested objectivity alone may not always serve the social justice imperative.

In another synthesizing study of Indigenous research methodologies, Alexandra S. Dawson and her coauthors (2017) identify three characteristics: first, researchers require “a contextual reflection, in that researchers must situate themselves and the Indigenous Peoples with who they are collaborating in the research process” (14). Secondly, they should include “Indigenous Peoples in the research process in a way that is respectful and reciprocal as well as decolonizing and preserves self-determination,” (14). And thirdly, the research should have a “prioritization of Indigenous ways of knowing” (14). Embedded in these characteristics is the idea that research should not be merely about a disinterested quest of knowledge as often conceptualized in western modernity; it must consider its impacts in how it is done and whose interests it would serve. Since the privilege of formal research usually emerges within the non-Indigenous institutions, such as universities and governmental organizations, such consideration demands a radical openness on the part of non-Indigenous researchers to embrace and recognize nontraditional ways of knowing.

Thus, when we consider which methodologies would work for Indigenous, decolonial research, it is so far not a question of compatibility of the exact methods and methodologies such as ethnography, phenomenology, narrative inquiry, and others, but the intentions and awareness engrained in the researcher as well as methodologies. What counts is whether the research supports the decolonizing efforts or becomes another tool of further oppression. Thinking from a LWR perspective, when researchers conceive and execute projects, whether they are longitudinal studies that encompass a long period, or short studies focusing on a particular life moment of their research subject, the attention should be placed on the power dynamics and the implications of their studies. They should ask how the research subject gained the literacy development and how the literacy was used. They should interpret the data from a social-justice perspective to tilt their findings towards the decolonial side.

HOW DO YOU DEFINE WRITING AND LITERACY FROM AN INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVE?

One of the major aspects of lifespan writing research using Indigenous decolonial methodologies should be to think about the notion of writing itself. When we think about writing from western, academic institutional settings, we privilege alphabetic and some other forms of multimodal literacies. When we think of the place of communication in many Indigenous contexts, we may have to expand the parameters of how we conceptualize writing. For instance, a researcher may plan to study a seventeenth-century Native American leader’s writing development in the

context when the leader's tribe did not have a "formal" writing script. Undoubtedly, the leader must have developed sophisticated literacy skills in order to lead their constituents. Limiting the definition of writing or literacy within western dominant models would not allow researchers to recognize and appreciate the literacy practices of the leader. The researcher would learn more about the leader's literacy development by incorporating the forms of literacies (and the communicative symbols) that can be vastly different from western literacy practices. This is critical because what is prized as literacy and writing in one historical and cultural setting can be vastly different from another and acknowledging and foregrounding those differences is at the core of Indigenous decolonial perspective. Such a move is significant from an Indigenous perspective because it recognizes Indigenous literacy practices as what they are and also helps to decolonize the Indigenous literacy history from western hegemonic conventions.

Thus, developing a decolonial writing research project begins with an acknowledgement that many Indigenous communities live with a different set of worldviews of their own, and do not want to come within the influence of western political, educational, and economic structures which are so hegemonic in the twenty-first century global context that it is difficult for almost any reader of this chapter to break through its sphere and to recognize the worldview outside of its frame. Nation-states, universities, legal and business forms, and many other western institutional and cultural paraphernalia have structured our minds so deeply that recognizing value in other forms of seeing may be difficult. It is in this context that postcolonial theorist Dipesh Chakrabarty (2008) presents the ideas of "provincializing Europe." Europe, as he defines it, is not a geographical location but has become the intellectual and cultural structure that has gradually gripped the imagination of much of the world for the last few centuries, and it has become difficult to think of alternative worldviews because of its hegemonic dominance. Since how we define literacy, writing, and research are also often the part of this structure, an Indigenous, decolonial research demands researchers being mindful of these structures as the intellectual location that constrains their work and be ready to "provincialize" Europe so as to recognize alternative forms of literacies that an Indigenous writing project may display.

This call for expanding the definition of literacy certainly is a part of lifespan writing collaborators' aims as well. For instance, Charles Bazerman (2020) has indicated the need of having to go beyond standard institutionalized versions of literacy when discussing the ideal of studying the totality of an individual's writing development over their lifetime. He writes, "our idealized model [of an individual's writing pathways] might come from whatever school curriculum we were familiar with or might reflect individualistic rebellion against school values and practices" (Bazerman, 2020, p. xi). Highlighting how researchers may be implicated within

the conventional notion of writing, he further writes, “wherever our ideas about development come from, they likely would be allied with our beliefs about knowing what writing is and what counts as a skilled writer” (Bazerman, 2020, p. xi). Often literacy itself is defined in terms of formal education, on the basis of years someone has spent in the institutional school settings, and on the kinds of marketable and social communicative skills one has gained in the process. The absence of those years and skills is characterized as illiteracy. Bazerman’s call to study the total story of a person’s literacy development asks researchers to suspend common assumptions about literacy so that a diverse, full picture can emerge about how individuals from a wide range of historical and cultural contexts practice, value, and develop their literacies. This suspension of standard Euro-American versions of literacy is particularly critical in the research context of an ingenious person’s literacy development.

Besides the suspension of standard definitions of literacy, researchers studying lifespan writing from decolonial perspectives should account for the fraught relationship between Indigenous communities and the western educational system if the research context demands that. Boarding schools and many other institutions opened for Indigenous children’s education by Euro-American governments and missionaries have transformed literacy habits of many Indigenous individuals. The impact of those schools has not always been welcome news for many Native American tribes in the United States and First Nation communities in Canada. Many of them have interpreted western formal education as an assimilationist, colonizing weapon—as an intrusive encroachment into a person’s cognitive developmental process, designed to alienate Indigenous persons from their native culture and identity so as to produce an “amenable Indian.”

What this discussion leads us to is that many LWR projects from Indigenous perspectives may end up foregrounding literacy hybridity. Many Indigenous writers such as Leslie Marmon Silko combine literacies from multiple cultures and civilizations, and many of the Indigenous writers educated in western institutions channel their training for activist causes, to write back to the empire, while also using it to revive, rearticulate, and foreground their own Indigenous culture and identities. As Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988) has argued in her widely anthologized “Can the Subaltern Speak?”, a truly subaltern person or community completely free from western discursive hegemony may rarely be a subject of a university research project, let alone be someone with a voice or a literacy exhibition to be studied and analyzed, although such absence does not indicate the absence of literacies of such individuals in itself. The question should center around what colonial and Indigenous cultural and literacy systems shape the Indigenous writers to speak for, and what Indigenous and western philosophical and political ideas these writers draw upon to advance their own Indigenous and personal quests for sovereignty and self-determination.

DEVELOPING A RESEARCH PROJECT

One way to study lifespan writing from a decolonial perspective is to research the range of texts that the individual encountered, or found themselves in, and examine how that network of texts served as a catalyst in the research subject's writing development. There can be two trajectories of such research. One can focus on the transformations in the skill set of the individual, looking at language, stylistic, and rhetorical moves. While ideas and language forms are not exactly separable, another route of inquiry may focus on the ideas themselves, investigating what texts might have influenced the kind of thought the research subject is expressing. To understand such development, researchers can concentrate on the following questions: why could the writer write that particular piece of writing or compose a multimodal form of expression at that particular juncture in their life? What were the personal, contextual, and lifespan conditions that opened a space for the individual to generate the text?

While the study of the text itself is important, decolonial methodologies to lifespan writing should also go beyond the close-textual reading to understand and interpret the historical and personal context that conditioned, constrained, as well as enabled the composition, production, and dissemination of that particular piece of writing under investigation. And, besides the study of the person's writing development in terms of its kind, genre, and even stylistic sophistication, researchers should look for the rhetorical moves used for various purposes that may range from active resistance to communal glorification. For instance, Cherokee Nation's John Ridge's 26 February 1826 letter written to the book project of the Thomas Jefferson's Treasury Secretary Albert Gallatin can be an interesting project from this angle. In the letter, Ridge recounts the recent progress made by the Cherokees and claims that the Cherokees have become better than neighboring whites in terms of education, agriculture, and overall-civilization. He writes that Cherokees now "are farmers and herdsmen, which is their real character" (36). He continues, "there is not to my knowledge a solitary Cherokee to be found who depends upon the chase for subsistence" (36). He highlights the swiftness of the Cherokee progress: "And many a drunken, idle & good for nothing Indian has been converted from error & have become useful citizens" (41). This letter in its context was a complex and powerful rhetorical move. In the letter, Ridge emphasizes recent Cherokee "progress." He undermines the Cherokee past, particularly the pre-agricultural, hunting lifestyle, and presents that part as a drawback. Were these the true feelings of the writer, or were these the parts of a rhetorical performance intended to accomplish certain purpose? The Cherokee as a Nation and John Ridge as a person in that community were going through a difficult existential crisis. Ridge was looking into every avenue to address that crisis, and this letter was not an exception.

The questions from lifespan and Indigenous perspectives in that context would be to explore how and from where the writer developed writing and related literacy skills. One needed a certain skill-set to compose a letter like that. How did it become possible for a Cherokee whose tribe had just developed a written language in the last two decades to come up with such a letter? What of Cherokee oral tradition was transferred to the written culture of which this letter became part? Where did the letter composer develop the rhetorical skills embedded in this letter? Were the ideas and rhetorical moves injected in the letter generated within Ridge's tribe? To what extent did the Euro-American education that Ridge was part of play a role? What hybridity could be seen in terms of literacy? What aspects of the western education in Ridge's life were empowering? What of the western education did he have to un-learn and undermine in order to develop an Indigenous, decolonial writing?

LIFESPAN WRITING DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH FROM INDIGENOUS, DECOLONIAL PERSPECTIVES

In many ways, the LWR approach developed to date opens productively to a research project that takes Indigenous, decolonial perspectives into consideration. As should be obvious from the description above, both approaches share their orientation to context. Lifespan approaches to writing aim to understand the development of a writer in its possible totality. LWR also takes a longitudinal approach in its attempt to understand "how writing changes throughout the entire lifespan" (Dippre & Phillips, 2020, p. 3). As Bazerman argues, this is an idealistic aspiration, "a heuristic for an impossible dream," but it is something to strive for as literacy scholarship tries to demystify the acquisition and development of writing in a person's lifespan (Bazerman, 2018, p. 326).

One particular advantage of lifespan writing research approaches to an Indigenous writing development project is that it allows researchers to view a particular set of writing in a more comprehensive longitudinal perspective. Instead of capitalizing on some of the iconic texts and performances, the lifespan longitudinal perspective would instigate researchers to see a writer's development from a holistic, bigger frame as well as from micro-details of personal history to understand the generative forces conditioning a person's writerly development. As Anna Smith (2020) writes, "a power of lifespan studies is that not only are time and space points A and B within the scope of the research, but so too are points C, D, E, F, etc." (16). This is particularly important for Indigenous contexts because what counts as writing and literacy could be different compared to the western perspective, and LWR's longitudinal vision can capture that difference.

Yet, there are caveats that the researchers should be concerned about. In the course of charting out the objectives for LWR, Bazerman and his collaborators (2018) highlight Writing Studies' limited understanding of how students learn to write. For writing scholars, cracking the code—if there is any—would revolutionize the teaching of writing. From a LWR perspective, they first expect to “identify the kinds of challenges students in different situations and with different experiences and from different language backgrounds may be able to address productively and learn from” (Bazerman et al., 2018, p. 381). The main objective is to develop a theory of how people learn to write so that the knowledge can be used for instructional purposes, for which the LWR perspective tries to expand its horizon to incorporate the “radically longitudinal and radically contextual” study of a developing writer accounting for individual idiosyncrasies so that a pattern can be identified and articulated (Smith, 2020, p. 16). When we think from an Indigenous, decolonial perspective, there is no problem with the method and logic that tries to study writing development with a comprehensive approach. What could be problematic is the purpose of such research. Two simple questions should be: *For whose benefit will the knowledge created from the research be used? Will the research help Indigenous communities' quest for their sovereignty and freedom, or will the knowledge be further utilized to sharpen the colonizing process?*

CONCLUSION

The best way to conclude this essay would be going back to Bazerman and his collaborators (2018) when they tried to define the significance of LWR methodology. They write, “We still lack a coherent framework for understanding the complexities of writing development, curriculum design, and assessment over a lifetime. Because we lack an integrated framework, high-stakes decisions about curriculum, instruction, and assessment are often made in unsystematic ways that may fail to support the development they are intended to facilitate” (p. 21). In another study, Jonathan Alexander and Susan C. Jarratt's (2014) examination of the sources of student activism in college campuses found that college courses—including liberal arts and writing courses—have not contributed to activist orientations. In their article, the students who had previously participated in protests received their inspiration and moral imperative for their actions in their family histories and communities, not in the university curriculum. Both works suggest the insufficiency of what universities offer at present and point to the need of finding a better framework. From Indigenous, decolonial perspectives, the most critical aspect in Bazerman and his collaborators' (2018) statement would be the idea of the development that the new writing development framework could facilitate. While it is not the whole story, an activist mindset is what defines Indigenous, decolonial

rhetorical activities, and since the dominant underlying approach to humanities education seems to be geared towards “fitting in” by producing graduates with skills and mental habits suitable for neo-liberal capitalist industries rather than questioning the status quo, a decolonial approach would ask for a larger, more social-justice oriented definition of writing development. The Indigenous activist orientation questions even the much-prized critical thinking methodology in terms of how it could itself sharpen the existing colonial and colonizing practices instead of questioning them and asks for how writing development frameworks should not be only about the stylistic and language sophistication that one gains through practice but should also be about the rhetorical modes and argumentation designed to interrogate hegemonic structures.

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