

## PART 2.

# LEVERAGING OUR TRADITIONS

We encouraged the authors of Part 1 to be bold—we wanted to see the new vistas that opened up by innovating well beyond the disciplinary boundaries that often constrain. In Part 2: *Leveraging Our Traditions*, we return to more familiar methodological and theoretical approaches and consider them through a lifespan lens. The authors of Part 2 thus work within the boundaries of a variety of established research traditions, sharing research projects that feature focused innovations to their methodologies to better equip them for lifespan writing research. In so doing, their research suggests new pathways that these traditions might (and perhaps need to) explore.

The first chapters in Part 2 do this while focusing on specific segments of the lifespan. These chapters give readers from Composition Studies a glimpse into writing at other stages of life, but they also operationalize lifespan writing research by demonstrating how to add a lifespan lens to ongoing studies. Lauren Bowen takes a sociohistoric approach with novel methodological choices by diving deeply into the complex literate actions of one senior writer in order to uncover the sometimes-unimaginable complexity of a literate life. Yvonne Lee then expands our attentions beyond a lifespan segment by considering the writing lives of not only one writer across a lifetime, but of several writers across multiple, overlapping, and related lifetimes. This exploration of new innovations within particular disciplinary traditions continues with an autoethnographic investigation of how one author—Zebroski—negotiates the complex writing tasks demanded of him during the challenging social and emotional work of retirement. Costa et al. then employ the Structural Equation Modeling that Zajic and Poch (Chapter 3) described in a study of the executive functioning of students in Grades 1 and 4, considering ways to orient such work through the lifespan.

The remaining chapters in Part 2 also work to expand our understanding of how we make meaning. Arya et al. engage not just the production of texts but also their reception as they examine acts of data representation and the emergent understandings that school-aged children have about them. Data representations, in this chapter, serve as a strategic site for uncovering the complex work that readers engage in to construct data in their reading of it. Next, Poch et al. highlight the complex cognitive landscapes that semiosis occurs with and through, bringing to light the work of producing texts and the challenges with textual production that individuals with learning disabilities and autism spectrum disorder may face. They also provide some paths forward for thinking

about semiosis across the internal-external divide and using psychometric techniques to locate semiosis within contemporary psychological thought. Erin Workman, like Knappik earlier, asks us to think about how we make sense of our own literate development, but Workman achieves this by adapting cognitive researchers' mind maps for lifespan writing research. Kevin Roozen concludes Part 2 by tracing inscriptions via the interpretive work of Latour (1990) and Gries (2015), rendering more robust the complexity of semiotic acts that Poch et al. and Arya et al. build up in their work.

Just as Part 1 provided some starting points for writing researchers to re-conceptualize their thinking about theoretical orientations and methods toward the lifespan, Part 2 allows writing researchers to imagine new approaches that are more tightly tied to existing disciplinary structures—new, creative methods of repurposing that take advantage of the insights and innovations of existing fields and traditions. If we are to conceive of lifespan writing research as a long-term endeavor requiring both immediate and extended pay-offs, then Part 2 provides the short-term return on innovation that the ideas in Part 1 do not easily support. *Leveraging Our Traditions* also paints a picture of the incredible variety of disciplines, methods, and theories interested in the phenomenon of writing through the lifespan.