

REIMAGINING OUR CITATIONAL PRACTICES: CENTERING INDIGENOUS AND CAMPESINO WAYS OF KNOWING

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In this teaching resource I focus on citation practices that can be helpful for students or researchers engaging with Indigenous and *campesino* (peasant) ways of knowing.¹ Through this exercise, the instructor will invite students to engage in a critical reflection on inclusive citational practices by producing bibliographic entries that recognize and value Indigenous and *campesino* voices in their research practices. This resource is geared to anyone in the biological or social sciences who wants to reflect upon pre-established and automatic citational practices (normalized by guidelines for scientific dissemination of knowledge) that have historically excised information unidirectionally and, by doing so, have continued to decenter and marginalize Indigenous and *campesino* knowledge. In particular, this exercise can be utilized by students who are planning to engage in scholarship with *campesino* or Indigenous people, at the outset of developing their literature reviews and prior to their engagement in field work with these communities.

Over a series of exercises, students will:

- Review current citational practices used when working in Indigenous contexts and notice the way they may marginalize Indigenous and *campesino* ways of knowing.
- Reflect on ways to create and include more culturally appropriate, ethical, and respectful bibliographic entries that recenter Indigenous and *campesino* knowledge.

Context

The inception of this resource began as a reflection with colleagues on the disjuncture between Western and Indigenous ways of knowing. Indigenous ways of knowing focus on holistic understanding of the world, on the interconnectedness of the living and nonliving, on values of communality and reciprocity. Western ways of knowing are more pragmatic, compartmentalized, individualistic, and ethnocentric. The clash between these different ways of knowing derives from historical approaches, perspectives, methodologies,

praxis, and worldviews which have perpetuated the repression of Indigenous and *campesino* peoples and cultures (Parajuli, 1997).

Concrete contemporary examples of exploitative research can be seen in the neo-colonial ways of extracting information as well as biological or mineral resources from Indigenous and *campesino* territories. Some people call this type of research “helicopter or parachute research” (Haelewaters et al., 2021) because it is unidirectional, non-reciprocal, not culturally informed. Moreover, helicopter research is decided, developed, and conducted by people who hold intellectual hegemony (usually from the global North) and who are usually disengaged or minimally connected with the local communities where research is taking place. The contributions of Indigenous and *campesino* peoples remain hidden, devalued, or largely unrecognized in academic publishing.

Recognizing and elevating the voices of Indigenous and *campesino* peoples is an ethical thing to do. How to create bibliographic entries that recenter and value Indigenous and *campesino* knowledge is instrumental. But in addition, we need to be aware that certain information might not be allowed to be put in print or shared with a broader audience, or that some information might be sensitive and that publishing it with location parameters (village, town, community, territory) could make these knowledge-holders vulnerable. When I spoke with Zapotec, Mam, Kaqchikel, and Guna colleagues, through their different worldviews, they each brought up an important aspect related to citational practices that has to do with the concept of “ownership.” While they value the recognition of the individual(s) who voiced and shared the knowledge, they also want to highlight that some knowledge might be communally owned: they posit that the name of the Indigenous group or the community could go first, as a way to highlight their groups’ cosmovision, followed by the name of the knowledge-holder who provided the information in that particular instance.

Critical and respectful citational practices may require a case-by-case approach that includes co-designing with the community partners the format of some bibliographic references: whose name(s) should appear, what additional information can be included (name of the Indigenous group, location, topic, date, ...), the format of the bibliographic entry, etc. I also recognize that there are many other groups that have been underrepresented and marginalized in science, and how to acknowledge their contributions might require additional reflections and revision of citational practices in a case-by-case manner. I support Carrie Mott & Daniel Cockayne’s (2017) argument for a “conscientious

engagement” with the politics of citation (p. 954): an engagement that will work symbiotically with Indigenous and rural methodologies as critical frameworks (Brunette-Debassige & Wakeham, 2020; Louis, 2007; MacLeod, 2021; Okore et al., 2009; Smith, 2021). This inclusive approach is more likely to create the space for co-designing respectful citations.

How can we use the classroom as a starting point for helping students and future scholars interrogate the pervasiveness of exclusionary and hierarchical practices in Western research paradigms? How can we and our students become aware of the omissions created in our discipline by these relations of power-knowledge? Whose voices have been historically erased and whose have been put on pedestals? What information are we choosing to document? Through which filters are we sifting that information and how are we articulating it? How can we envision a more ethical and mindful practice of citation?

I have arrived at these questions partly as a result of my specific positionality and experiences as a researcher and instructor. I am an instructor and research mentor originally from Iximulew (Guatemala) and currently living in Teejop, the Four Lakes region, the ancestral land of the Ho-Chunk Nation. I lead study abroad programs in Mesoamerica with groups of undergraduate students from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and I collaborate with Indigenous farmers and producers from Mesoamerica, documenting agroecological practices. These experiences have allowed me to recognize the uneven metrics that are used to acknowledge the quality and validity of the information we obtain from Indigenous and *campesino* sources. They also allowed me to notice and to question the biased system we currently use to create bibliographic references.

The original ideas for this resource were further inspired by the “Teaching Citational Practice: A Critical Feminist Approach” 2021 workshop offered through the Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning (CIRTL) and led by Cat Lambert and Diana Newby. Additional information on how this workshop series came to be is better explained in their introduction to “Progressive Pedagogies for Humanities Research and Citation” (Lambert & Newby, 2021). That workshop inspired me to channel the repetitive need to engage with my students in conversations about challenging the normalized extractive nature of scientific scholarship. In most academic spaces, dominant ways of knowing continue to depict *campesino* and Indigenous traditions of knowledge as residual entities that have survived the passage of time. Instead,

they should be viewed as alternatives and as active expressions of resistance to the extractive drive of globalization.

In some settings, such as in traditional medicinal plant use, land management, and water stewardship, a revalorization of Indigenous epistemologies and cosmovisions has occurred, in which the contributions of Indigenous and *campesino* voices are recognized albeit not systematically nor in an equitable way. To offer a counter example, in academia *campesino* agriculture is seldom acknowledged or valued, and is usually referred to as “unproductive” or “anachronistic” (Bellon et al., 2018). Even scholars who claim to use decolonial practices through their work end up inadvertently perpetuating colonial approaches. They may start their work using a decolonial lens, but once data is collected, or resources retrieved, the pressure to publish and advance in their careers pushes scholars to move ahead in ways that erase non-hegemonic ways of knowing.

For example, scholars will move forward in their research without fully acknowledging local expertise in their work and without returning any knowledge back to the communities who were at the center of their work. Publications will ensue most probably in English, as 98% of papers are published in that language (Ramírez-Castañeda, 2020); in journals that may require paywalls; and without local experts included as co-authors. Data analysis or discussion of the results will not include the input from community partners and the citations of the local experts whose knowledge was used to build the manuscripts may appear, if at all, in the format of personal communications.

I’ve found enlightening the work done by Linda Tuhiwai Smith on decolonizing research methodologies when working with Indigenous ways of knowing. For a reflection informed by critical feminist approaches for researchers working in Indigenous contexts, I recommend her book *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous peoples* (Smith, 2021).

Western science remains dominated by circumscribed sets of epistemological approaches of knowledge production and dissemination that usually privilege written discourse in English language over oral or performative modes of communication in non-English languages (Ramírez-Castañeda, 2020; Smith, 2021). These academic procedures create and perpetuate abysmal divides between different ways of knowing (Western and Indigenous, for example), elevating certain modes of communication to hegemonic status. In doing so,

these procedures amplify the voices of the narrators of such privileged communications, while relegating other narrators or knowledge-holders to the periphery of scientific inquiry. By not including and acknowledging Indigenous and *campesino* voices properly, we limit the set of experiences to which we expose the rest of the scientific community and the next generation of scholars, creating an incomplete landscape of information, knowledge production, and worldviews.

The exercise involved in this teaching resource should therefore be part of a larger historical look at our education systems, in different geographies of our world, to recognize instances of academic colonialism. Moreover, we will need to reflect on contemporary citational practices that continue to exclude different ways of knowing, and to understand our tacit compliance with these. I exhort the reader to engage with this reflection and invite us all to create, as Christa Craven suggests, “pedagogical communities of antiracist politics and praxis” (Craven, 2021).

Ultimately, this resource will enable students to work toward the co-creation of ethical and respectful citations with the local collaborators and knowledge-holders who inform the body of our work. This is of particular importance, as each knowledge-holder and the information that they share are tightly bound and contingent to a place, time and political context. As a result of their participation in this exercise, students should be able to recognize citations as a place-based practice, because the information provided and the knowledge-holder are tightly linked to that space, to their communities, and to a particular political and historical time.

Implementation

Activity summary: Instructor(s) will invite students through this exercise to engage in a critical reflection on inclusive citation practices by producing bibliographic entries that recognize and value Indigenous and *campesino* ways of knowing in their teaching and research practices.

Audience: Undergraduate and graduate students, in the biological or social sciences, engaging in research dealing with Indigenous science, or in participatory action research involving rural or Indigenous people. This resource can be also helpful for advisors, mentors, instructors, reviewers, editors, or scholars, across different disciplines, working with Indigenous and *campesino* communities.

Context of use: Citation practices used in academic field work, community work, service learning, study abroad, internships, or research done with Indigenous peoples.

Goal: To reflect on Western citational practices that tend to displace to the periphery of academic scholarship the information that Indigenous or local knowledge-holders bring to our work.

Learning objectives: Students (and also scholars working on this exercise) will be able to (1) review the current citational practices used when working in Indigenous contexts and notice the way they may marginalize Indigenous and *campesino* ways of knowing, and (2) reflect on ways to create and include more culturally appropriate, ethical, and respectful bibliographic entries that recenter their knowledge.

Notes on adaptation: This teaching resource has been divided into three sessions to scaffold a deeper analysis of citational practices of *campesino* or Indigenous knowledge. Feel free to revise and adapt as needed.

The instructor can have the students look for publications related to traditional ways of knowing or provide a pre-selected subset of articles to their students to use for sessions 2 & 3 if preferred. An example of a publication that can be used as a case-study has been included in the instructions below.

TEACHING RESOURCE

Student-facing Instructions

[Information for the instructor appears in brackets below.]

Session 1

[The instructor can ask students to discuss the following prompts in small groups.]

Prompt 1:

What is considered ‘personal communication’? Consider verbal, gestural, and visual information that are shared between people in a way that cannot be reported by others.

[Any communications obtained or retrieved by the author that cannot be accessed by the readers—such as interviews, in-person or phone conversations, emails, text messages, not public social media posts, conference or class presentations that are not recorded, storytelling, etc.—are considered examples of personal communication.]

Prompt 2:

It is a common procedure that academics summarize the information they collected and paraphrase in their manuscripts. Sometimes, authors want to highlight or acknowledge the source of a specific piece of information shared orally to them. Where and how are personal communications reported in the literature you use or the literature you found for this exercise?

[Personal communication appears in the body of text, parenthetically, with some variations of the following: name of the communicator, the date the communication took place, sometimes even the general topic of the communication. Personal communications do not appear in the references. In the humanities, it is common to see personal communications as footnotes.]

Pre-assignment—to be completed before session 2: Search for 1-3 examples of publications that were conducted with groups of *campesinos* or Indigenous peoples and made use of their traditional ecological knowledge and look in the paper for information that derived from these knowledge-holders.

[Articles can be found by using Google Scholar searches of key terms such as: Indigenous knowledge, traditional ecological knowledge, aboriginal knowledge. The instructor can also share this article as a case-study: Lavallée, L.F. (2009). Practical Application of an Indigenous Research Framework and Two Qualitative Indigenous Research Methods: Sharing Circles and Anishnaabe Symbol-Based Reflection. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 21-40. doi:[10.1177/160940690900800103](https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690900800103).

Session 2

[The instructor can ask students to work individually on the following prompt.]

Prompt 1:

Choose one of the publications that you found in the pre-assignment and search for sections that include information retrieved from local community knowledge-holders. Are there details on how that information was accessed?

How is that acknowledged in the publication? Who has a voice in the text and how is knowledge-holding being recognized?

[The instructor can invite students to take notes on their answers to these questions. Students will notice that in most publications, the author will summarize the knowledge shared by informants. Since the information is not in writing, an attribution of the source of the information might appear as a personal communication and most commonly as a general acknowledgement at the end of the article, addressed to the general group of people where research took place.]

[The instructor can divide the class into small groups (2-3 students). Provide 10 minutes or so for the groups to discuss the following prompts and share their findings.]

Prompt 2: What, if any, are the commonalities that you noticed across the different articles you analyzed in terms of how Indigenous knowledge is or isn't acknowledged?

Prompt 3: What are some conclusions you can draw based on your collective exploration of existing citational practices around Indigenous knowledge? What voices did you hear from the knowledge-holders in the articles? What information about them was included? If you were to envision a different system of citation, how would it look?

Session 3

[The instructor leads this session by sharing the following citation templates and asking the class as a whole to respond to the prompts.]

Begin by considering the following citation templates taken from Lorisia MacLeod's article "More Than Personal Communication: Templates for Citing Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers."

APA traditional style: D. Cardinal (personal communication, April 4, 2004)

APA template for Elder citation: Cardinal, D. Goodfish Lake Cree Nation. Treaty 6. Lives in Edmonton. Oral teaching. Personal communication. April 4, 2004.

MLA template for Elder citation: Cardinal, Delores. Goodfish Lake Cree Nation. Treaty 6. Lives in Edmonton. Oral teaching. 4 April 2004.

Prompt 1:

What differences do you notice between the Elder citation templates in comparison with either the personal communications in the APA traditional style above or the citational examples encountered in the articles you analyzed? What do you make of these differences? What information do you think might be relevant for members of Indigenous tribes and nations when they share their knowledge?

[The first name is included in full, rather than just an initial; and information is provided on the nation/community, treaty territory, where they live, and the topic of the communication. Information on the nation/community to which the knowledge-holders belongs, the relationship to a treaty, and the city or community where they live are all very important to situate Indigenous knowledges—in plural—and acknowledge that different nations might hold different teachings.]

Prompt 2:

What are your thoughts regarding the generalization of these Elder citation templates? In other words, think of scenarios in which this template may not be applied for citing other Indigenous peoples from around the world (non-Native American). What features of these templates can be applied to cite *campesino* knowledge in your work?

[Indigenous groups are not monolithic; recognizing their uniqueness is relevant to their communities. This may result in different formats of the bibliographic entries and the need to sit with the knowledge-holders involved in our work to co-design these entries on a case-by-case basis.]

Prompt 3:

Citational practices can enter into conflict when information derives from communal knowledge. How can citations recognize knowledge ownership when it spans more than one community or groups of people?

[Including the name of the knowledge-holder provides the direct source of the information. Specifying the Indigenous group to which the knowledge-holder ascribes is a way to recognize the relationship of the knowledge-holder with the existing knowledge in their community. As mentioned earlier, it might be a

good practice to ask the knowledge-holder how they suggest to best cite the communication they are sharing with us, and to co-design the bibliographic entry with the knowledge-holder.]

Final assignment

With this teaching resource, we have engaged in a critical examination of current citational practices reporting Indigenous or *campesino* ways of knowing. We observed how the current citation templates are not adequate to highlighting and recognizing Indigenous and *campesino* knowledge-holders. Please summarize in writing how you would proceed to retrieve and share knowledge from community informants in your scholarship. This assignment will be exchanged among participants in the class for a peer discussion that will be centered around the ethical and culturally informed principles that these new practices may enact and the impact they can have, particularly for Indigenous and *campesino* knowledge-holders.

NOTES

[i] We recognize that some campesinos but not all ascribe to specific Indigenous communities, so mentioning them separately is a way to recognize the value of their own ways of knowledge as well.

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