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English Composition

OER – Reflection

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In the development of a new theme and materials for English Composition, a course I teach multiple sections of every year, I plan to develop our class around the question: *What might decolonial teaching and learning look like?* and principles introduced in Robin Wall Kimmerer’s book *Braiding Sweetgrass*. Throughout my often thematically focused teaching of composition, the work of our justice-oriented class consistently bumps up against students’ lack of learning around the history of colonization in our country and region, and I often find myself teaching unsatisfyingly limited mini-lessons to supplement our collective lack of knowledge. This missing knowledge makes it hard for us to trace though lines to current manifestations of white supremacy and colonization in our culture and limits the collective critical thinking work of our class. In addition, this missing knowledge separates us from profound sources of wisdom, truth, and resilience, resources that first-year college students need.

The diverse range of sources will offer my composition students the opportunity to develop their active and critical reading skills; skillfulness in working with and across varied sources, contexts, and conversations; and an Indigenous-centric framework for entering their future disciplines and coursework. It feels right to weave decoloniality into the fabric of a course so foundational to students’ understanding of expression, research, and scholarship; to support students in developing their analyses of and relationships with power; and to do this in a slow, thoughtful, relational, and reflective way.

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