Critical Orientations for Indigenous Studies Curriculum
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PLACE
• **You are always on Indigenous lands**
• Acknowledge Indigenous peoples and homelands of the places where you teach
• Include federally recognized tribal nations, unrecognized nations, traditional homelands, and urban Indigenous communities
• Anchor curriculum around issues that affect local Indigenous peoples, lands, and nations
• Seek out Native place names when possible

PRESENCE
• **Indigenous people are still here**
• Over 6 million people identify as AI/AN and there are over 570 federally recognized AI/AN nations in the US
• Focus on Indigenous presence to challenge the myth that Native people have disappeared
• Focus on contemporary Indigenous leaders and contemporary issues Indigenous peoples face today to highlight diverse sites of strength and struggle

PERSPECTIVES
• **Indigenous perspectives challenge Eurocentrism and dominant discourses**
• Curricula often “faces West” (e.g., expansion, exploration); instead, consider how “facing East” (e.g., invasion, encroachment) (Richter, 2001) might reorient the curricula
• Including Indigenous perspectives doesn’t just mean teaching about “Indigenous issues” or “Indigenous peoples,” but teaching students to learn from Indigenous analyses

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POLITICAL NATIONHOOD

- “Indigenous Peoples are nations, not minorities” (Wilkins & Stark, 2010)
- Indigenous peoples have inherent sovereignty and while protected by civil rights, they also have prior treaty rights
- Teach students that honoring the treaties is part of their democratic civic responsibility
- Include tribal citizenship, sovereignty, and governance within civics education
- Learn about and support nearby Native nations
- Focus on the political status and rights of Native nations and citizens

POWER

- Challenge power dynamics within curricula
  - Beyond including Native perspectives, challenge colonial words and metaphors in curriculum (i.e., land was “free” or a “prize” to be won, or settlers brought “change”)
  - Focus also on collective Indigenous power to recognize Indigenous creativity, agency, and possibilities, and to avoid framing Native peoples as “damaged” or as victims of oppression (Tuck, 2009; Vizenor, 2008)

PARTNERSHIPS

- Cultivate and sustain partnerships with Indigenous peoples, organizations, and nations
  - The federal government and State of Oregon recognize government-to-government relationships and engage in tribal consultation
  - Move beyond token guest speakers to sharing power and developing meaningful partnerships
  - Effective collaboration may include hiring a tribal liaison, creating an MOU, or consulting early and often on decisions that impact nearby Native organizations, nations, and/or students