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The Context

"The practice of deputing teachers for centralised [e]valuation at the cost of teaching hours seems to take away the advantages of the semester system" begins a recent op ed in *The Hindu*, a reputed English newspaper in India. "Is it time universities reverted to the annual system?" asked the writer. In another South Asian country, Nepal, the debate about whether to roll back the semester system which was attempted once again in 2014 (since it failed in the 1980s) has similarly continued there. The debates about shifting from annual to semester-based system is an outward sign of a wide range of conflicts characterizing higher education in South Asia, from students rejecting mandatory attendance in class to faculty resisting change in teaching strategies and assessment methods to attempts to depoliticize university campuses by their administrators to institutions responding to market demands from local and global fronts. Across South Asia, a tremendous amount of social change in recent decades, as well as the desire to "catch up" to the rest of the globalized world, has exerted a variety of pressures on higher education to change radically. Prompted by dramatic political changes, such as the rewriting of the nation's constitution in Nepal to political upheavals in other countries, the region has witnessed major socioeconomic shifts; but change in education is relatively sluggish. While they respond to political revolutions, consequent socioeconomic transformations, and globalization as external push factors, a variety of internal forces also influence how academic institutions and cultures change. In Nepal, for instance, the establishment of seven independent provinces by the new constitution has led to the establishment of regional universities which have been adapting education to their local socioeconomic needs and material conditions; and yet, curricular and pedagogical practices of the traditional annual, exam-dominant, lecture-dependent approach have persisted even as biannual semesters are being introduced to diversify modes of teaching and learning. Fascinating dynamics of change and resistance, conflicts and contradictions, optimism and frustration have emerged.

In addition to the broader context above, there is another important context in which my research study is situated. Building on informal and virtual collaborations that I had done in the first eight years since I came to the United States in 2006—through blogging, editorial board of a journal, and so on—along with other diaspora Nepalese scholars and American colleagues, I created in 2015 an initiative called the "Writing Across the Curriculum and the Professions," a monthly virtual workshop (webinar) series that ended after a year with an education summit in one of the regional public universities of Nepal. At Nepal's central public university (which has 400+ thousand students and nearly 7000 faculty members), the above initiative was adapted into a series for training professors to make pedagogical shifts from annual, lecture-focused and exam-centered education to a semester-based system where teaching/learning and assessment would be diversified and include writing-intensive and research-based components. The initiative continues, with annual summits on the ground every year, as trained faculty members are increasingly foregrounding writing and related instruments and also going beyond the capital to branch campuses to train their colleagues across the country. Adapting the second initiative to the unique demands of private colleges that are affiliated to the public system, one college has added two more dimensions to the series on teaching excellence: research and publication by faculty and the establishment of enhancement of academic support with a focus on writing and communication skills. The above initiatives have also given rise to the development of an integrated model, now led by a network of transnational scholars called the Society of Transnational Academic Researchers (STAR), for supporting higher education institutions in the

global south with faculty development, student learning, and community engagement—all seeking to center writing, communication, and research as foundational skills for both faculty and students. In Bangladesh, in addition to three series of webinar focusing on research/publication, teaching/learning, and academic support outside the classroom, scholars involved in the collaboration are developing the groundworks for a Writing, Research, and Communication Center that would make the above initiatives. And in Nepal, a transnational collaboration of scholars and social justice activists has just completed a "writing for social justice" seminar that helped a group of activities to produce op eds for national dailies. In general, there is a rich ecology of initiatives within and beyond academe in South Asia, both focusing on the advancement of writing education and involving writing as a key component, that forms the backdrop of my research. Indeed, stalled by an institutional review process at my home institution in New York for almost a year, I am far behind my initial timeline for formally gathering data for my project; I have used the time to continue to enrich my understanding of the context and collaborators, and, indeed, to develop perspectives about transnational scholarship around writing education, both defined broadly. I intend to address the challenges and paradoxes of conducting research within the limitations set by institutions and academic culture of one place when trying to advance knowledge about and for other contexts, as well as across them.

The Objective

It is in the above fluid context of higher education in South Asia, that is, in relation to dynamic social changes affecting teaching/learning and knowledge-making, that I seek to investigate how writing education is advancing in some of the countries in the region. I use the term "writing education" to indicate a descriptive rather than prescriptive view of how academic and other writing skills are taught and learned, or otherwise fostered or addressed, in a particular context. There may be no programs or departments focusing on teaching writing in some contexts, or even designated curriculum or explicit pedagogy for it, so I focus on how teachers and institutions help students learn or "perform" writing as a means or end of their education. My project focuses on the context of tertiary education. On the one hand, local scholars in the region recognize and advocate for a writing education that is more prominent in the curricula and explicit in pedagogy, as well as backed up by professionalization of those who teach writing. They would like to adopt more "global models" or models that have developed in North America and Europe and are adopted in other countries around the world. On the other hand, local scholars recognize that writing education in any country or context--or the discipline and profession advancing it--has to be built upon the expertise and resources the local academe currently has, responding to demands and needs that local scholars can identify through research and exchange of ideas and practices, and in response the needs and advantages of the society. The challenge for me—as a scholar trained in North American Writing Studies who had studied in Nepal and India and also taught in Nepal for a while before moving to the United States—is how to describe South Asian writing education in local/contextual terms while also understanding the intersections of the global and the local as well as the established and the changing, the visible/explicit and the dispersed/diffused, the categorical and the incidental. Similarly, initiatives for teaching of writing as a "general education" subject, as unique sets of skills in different disciplines, as part of other courses such as language or literature all reflect a general increase in the popularity of writing as part of college and university education. However, partly due to the dispersed nature and rapid developments in the field and partly due to the lack of established discourses about it in published scholarship, understanding even the

context of "writing education" in the region requires scholars to ask a set of fundamental questions that foreground this topic but also captures the national, socioeconomic, and educational contexts and changes in the region.

As such, I do not simply ask conventional questions about the status of writing education South Asia by using scholarly lenses developed while describing the history and issues about the same in North America. Instead, I begin by describing the complex conditions and forces that shape writing education at a few particular sites, developing terms for describing the issues in their own contexts and with an understanding of the broader context of society. Then I shift focus toward discussing how scholars of higher education across nations could develop terms of inquiry that can create meaningful exchange of perspectives and practices of writing education. In other words, I will not simply try to describe the writing education of South Asian contexts by using North American terms for the sake of simply understanding it; I will instead try to describe it in its own context, within the larger ecology of higher education and of society. I will, in fact, discuss the challenges of meaningfully "documenting" writing education in the South Asian contexts by using the terms and tools of "systematic" research developed in the former context, including those of participatory and action research. Instead of assuming my engagement with higher education in the region to be a source of bias, I have strongly felt that it is significantly advantageous to look beyond formalized process of data collection, systematic gathering of field notes and documenting of data, and careful triangulation and analysis of sources of information. The quality of our writing about our professional work in our primary contexts comes from our experience of daily work and the institutional contexts around it, from working and developing ideas with our fellow scholars, and from our knowledge of broader society and culture. Transnational research, I have found, can be greatly enhanced when we similarly work with colleagues on the ground, appreciating their agency and challenges. The immersion helps us to understand the pull of practice and value of research in particular contexts, as does the opportunity to understand who benefits from what focus and outcomes of transnational exchanges. Direct engagement helps us to overcome the Catch-22 of research "consent," whereby the more "respectful" you are, the more discomfort you may create across cultural differences. And involvement with different stakeholders of literacy on the ground helps to address various issues about sensemaking, including who makes sense about what and for whom, as well as why. Ultimately, I ask what economic conditions and social changes shape the demand and implementation of writing curricula and pedagogies in particular institutions and countries. How do the professional backgrounds and identities of those who teach and promote academic writing shape the adoption and counter resistance? What makes advocates and leaders most effective in effecting change in favor of teaching writing more explicitly and substantively? And, most importantly, what does studying writing education from the ground up teach academic researchers trained and working outside of the South Asian, including its particular national and local, contexts?

Key Theorists and Frames

WRITING EDUCATION/SCHOLARSHIP IN AND ACROSS NATIONAL CONTEXTS

To account for the challenges of research and collaboration across vastly different national contexts, I will draw on transnational writing scholarship, from works of scholars like Muchiri et al. (1995); Donahue (2007, 2009, 2011, 2018, and with Horner et al., 2013); Canagarajah (2002, 2003, 2013a, 2013b, 2018); Sullivan, Zhang, and Zhen (2012); Dingo, Riedner, and Wingard (2013, 2015, 2018); Horner and Kopelson (2014); Anson and Donahue (2015); Horner (2015);

Starke-Meyerring (2015); Wetzel and Reynolds (2015); Sanchez (2016); You (2016); Kang (2018); and McKee (2018). Broadly, these scholars have pointed out that "discourses of internationalization" in education are problematically driven by a desire for expansion of US influence around the world. Donahue has similarly noted that this approach is based on or leads to export/import models, as well as "intellectual tourism" wherein the "U.S. picture of writing around the globe—its teaching, its learning, and our theories about these—has been highly partial, portraying the issue in particular ways, largely export-based . . . [and therby] impede effective collaboration or 'hearing' of work across borders" (214). Horner (2015) has further warned that "touristic stance … accommodates, rather than engages with, difference" (335).

ECOLOGICAL FRAMING OF WRITING EDUCATION AND RESEARCH IN CONTEXT

To account for the dynamics of contextual factors/forces behind the writing education in South Asia, I will build on an "ecological framing" that I developed for my recent book. The framing draws on a 1984 Writing Studies article titled "Ecology of Writing" by Cooper; another article describing an ecological orientation to research by Fleckstein et al. (2008); broadened view of how people learn to write by Phelps (1991) and Gere (1994); ecological perspectives from an edited collection by Reiff et al. (2015) that uses the approach to present "profiles of [writing] programs in context"; and insights from other writing scholars including Prendergast (2013), and Shapiro, Cox, Shuck, and Simnit (2016). From beyond Writing Studies, I draw on ecological perspectives such as the "socioecological approach" to research in education Krasny, Tidball, and Sriskandarajah (2009), Weaver-Hightower's illustration of how "ecology metaphor helps us to conceptualize [education] policy processes as complex, interdependent, and intensely political…." (154), and works of Banathy (1992). I will also draw on actor-network-theory to discuss issues of "transnational research" and "international education," including works from disciplines like medicine and bioethics, economic development and I/NGO work, engineering/STEM and agriculture, higher education and language policy insofar as it helps to explores issues about collaboration, mutual benefit, and respect, as well as methodological effectiveness. Some of those sources include Granovetter (1973), Bronfenbrenner (1976), Greeno (1998), Weisser and Dobring (2001), and Berkes and Turner (2006). The ecological framework will help me show how writing education in each institution is set against complex social and national contexts, shaped by historical, sociopolitical, economic, and cultural forces affecting education at large.

FOREGROUNDING THE AGENCY OF LOCAL SCHOLARS AND OTHER ACTORS

Also building on my prior work, I will develop a theory of power and agency to account for potential tension between expats and experts. Theoretical perspectives on this issue will help me make sense of both my findings about how writing education in South Asia is advancing in the unique and complex contexts in the region and also to reveal my professional engagements (plus that of the personal and social commitments of fellow diaspora scholars) with institutions and scholars in the region as the context and mode of scholarship. I first ask: how do attempts to adopt and adapt "global" models of higher education in general and writing education in particular play out in particular contexts of the global south today? What approaches taken by institutions, academic leaders, and faculty members in different contexts foster their agency and what kinds of assumptions and ideologies facilitate or obstruct the uptake of more explicit, more systematic teaching of writing? How are forces of globalization and advancements in information technology making academic writing more or less visible, and more or less valued, a

means and end of higher education? What do uptake factors clash with? What pathways can educators find for advancing writing pedagogy and programs that can respond to their contexts and needs? As I explore these issues, I further discuss the productive roles played by diaspora scholars and the value of their collaborations with their local counterparts. I use the theory of agency to explore the theme of tension between experts versus expats and how expat scholars position themselves variously as facilitators, informants, partners, and even research assistants. I analyze rhetorical strategies used by collaborators, including by reframing and shifting their positionalities, for making the collaboration productive. I will draw on research from South Asia, including works on higher education and language policy by scholars like Phyak, Sharma (not me), and Baral in the case of Nepal.

Key Terms

agency: This is a term I have fleshed out by drawing on other writing scholars and scholarship beyond the discipline in another work; I plan to use for discussing the active role that scholars on the ground play in shaping initiatives for integration of writing into curricula and pedagogy across the disciplines, in relation to power and resistance from other stakeholders, in relation to the expertise of expats and guest scholars, and so on

annual system: The traditional system of education in South Asia, based on what is often known as the British model, relying heavily on long, final exams that are conducted by institutional and often national boards of exams; the system favors lectures, note-taking, and textbook content, creating unique room for the learning and teaching of writing

ecology: theoretical and methodological orientation that accounts for the complexity, fluidity, and change of factors/forces affecting the subject of study including the social context, people, and institutions

global south: Countries like those in South Asia that are outside of Western Europe and North America, and in the context of education and research tend to follow models and norms from global centers in the West; the institutions often put pressure on faculty scholars to publish in "international" venues, meaning venues based on the West, and scholars judge one another's works similarly

Project 3 Stars: An initiative at Kathmandu Model College designed for enhancing faculty teaching in the context of gradual shift of Nepalese higher education from annual to semester-based model, for supporting faculty with research and publication, and for adding and enhancing academic support for students outside the class (especially with writing, research, and communication skills)

Semester System Webinars: An "training of trainers" initiative at Tribhuvan University, Nepal's oldest and largest public institution that is designed to facilitate the gradual shift of the university's education system from annual to semester-based system

South Asia: The region of "Indian subcontinent" including Nepal, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Bhutan, and Pakistan; I hope to ultimately expand the scope of my research to the entire region, including a few institutions from each country; while this wouldn't represent the complex educational culture within each country, it would add more nuance to the research

WACAP: Writing Across the Curriculum and in the Professions, an initiative started in 2015 at Midwestern University in western Nepal, initially using webinar training sessions and designed to help support a group of faculty across the disciplines to integrate writing skills

webinar: Online meetings that use seminar-style workshops and discussions; the webinars used by institutions in Nepal and Bangladesh for involving facilitators from other countries usually focus on 2-4 activities (such as write-pair-share, problem-solving groups, and peer review) are followed up by full-group discussion

writing education: The totality of formal and informal, systematic and incidental, managed and spontaneously occurring learning and teaching of writing (its skills, knowledge about it, and experience) especially in the academic context and primarily for academic purposes

Writing for Social Justice: A seminar-style course run for and by a group of social activists for supporting participants to write and improve writing on social justice issues in the form of op eds in national dailies; the group has also shifted focus to integrate research into such writing, expanding the forms/genres of writing as well

Writing, Research, and Communication Center: An academic support center for students and faculty at the North South University in Dhaka, Bangladesh, that participants of a webinar series has been developing by bringing together allies of a long-proposed "writing center" at the institution

Draft [it's rough—apologies]

THE CONEXT OF COLLABORATION AND EXCHANGE—MORE NOTES

In addition to the social and institutional contexts I described above, the context of transnational collaborations and exchange in the backdrop of this project are worth briefly discussing to set the context. The first project, that was started in 2014-15 was called Writing Across the Curriculum and the Professions, partly because the sound "wak" means "vomit" in Nepal (especially the western parts of it) and partly because there was great interest in teaching students professional skills so they were more job market ready upon graduation. We did a series of monthly webinars on a number of topics such as creating writing assignments and activities, integrating brief written assignments into the curriculum, addressing student failures across the disciplines with writing support, and so on. I invited a few other colleagues, including Charles Bazerman, for some of the webinar sessions. After a year, I invited four other American professors to join me for a "summer summit" where we trainings and workshops for three days on the ground. When the model spread to the capital city, we did similar yearlong webinar series (every month's first Saturday morning, Friday evening for me), this time within a much broader framework of helping faculty at the very large university make the shift to semester-based teaching, which involved teaching and assessing writing, research, and communication skills (we called it WRC). This May, the ten people who were trained for year—including the Provost herself and a dean plus faculty of various ranks—collaboratively designed a 2-day long series of workshops; so the one other American colleague and I only some of the sessions, with me mainly supporting them as a "research assistant," program designer, and facilitator. While we were in Nepal, the earlier regional university, a large private university, and a few other colleges replicated the model in a variety of ways. What was most striking to me was the extreme pressure for publication and changing teaching approach that colleagues in Bangladesh are facing, so the model we had created in Nepal was adapted over the course the about six months when I did online meetings with some of the colleagues. In a 2-day series of events in Dhaka, where instructors from across the Humanities and across the city were invited, we developed three yearlong webinar series, focusing on faculty publication, integration of WRC into teaching, and academic support. Yesterday morning, I joined the first webinar discussion with group coordinators and we will start the webinars from July first week.

I've found the collaborative exploration of how writing, research, and communication skills—which is three major ways in which writing has been adapted and understood—highly effective in the last four years of my experience for a number of reasons. Let me describe some. First, when the traditional approach of doing one-stop events didn't work, I changed strategy and instead built on the backchannel conversations, online collaborations, and exchange of support I had been involved in for many years. With the improvement in wifi bandwidth in the region, it became possible to do webinars where teachers would either get together in one room—and we found sponsors for this—or log in from home for one to two hours of conversation. The webinar training sessions were participant driven in the sense that they decided the topic, the coordinator learned to set up the technology, we together developed the activities that would structure the session, and we discussed team spirit explicitly – by figuring out incentives for the participants, making accommodation for female scholars or scholars with disability, and so on. The activities started with discussions of reading whose ideas the participants were asked to adapt to their local contexts or analyze for another kind of activity. The participants took the strategies they discussed or developed into their classrooms or their research or student support and even though they didn't publish from it, they essentially created a cycle of reading, discussion,

implementation, assessment, and reflection—or action research. My research project is seeking to learn from them and document and theorize the projects with a focus on how writing figured in the process, how it was adopted, adapted, hacked, repurposed, etc.

When we found out that some things required institutional change, we found ways to leverage our program and involved higher level administrators—including, usually, the equivalent of university presidents or provosts. In the case of the largest university in Nepal, the institutional head, the academic chief, all of the deans, and many prominent professors were involved along side 30+ professors of all ranks from across the disciplines. This helped us to involve the faculty and administrators discuss how to institutionalize what they valued from among the work they did for the two or three days. One of the dynamics that we were clear about was that the programs were not run by the expat scholar—in fact, I call myself the research assistant—or the European American looking 70+ year old American expert. There is a great deal of resistance against both types and we built on that "resistance" by confronting that issue candidly in the design and implementation of the training and other collaborative projects. Some of the scholars in the group brought up postcolonial theory in very interesting ways. That is, we were aware of the risks of trying to import the American model, of using terminology or program ideas or practices that wouldn't fit the institutional, sociocultural, curricular or professional realities on the ground. For instance, if teachers do not create their own syllabus, there's no point in talking about "course design" – other than maybe in the limited context of how teachers can create some "course policies" to shift the weight of assessment from one place to another.

Finally, and most importantly, in designing the training and ongoing collaboration programs, we targeted the most urgent or significant needs, which we identified through ongoing conversations and experience of collaboration. We also realized that writing, research, and communication skills have very broad applications and can have many different manifestations. So, sometimes, what we started working on as "integrating writing into the curriculum" morphed into a very important issue about "education" but it wasn't recognizable-–for the time being—as a writing education initiative. We allowed the conversation to continue, and writing cropped up as a vehicle, catalyst or something in powerful ways down the road. From the exposure, experience, collaboration, and exchange—as not just the background to but also a foundation for the research project—I have realized the need for a broad set of perspectives, multiple focuses, and appreciation of its many forms of writing education in many places. For practitioners, it is productive to let writing education take many forms and serve many purposes; the researcher must have as many lenses to be able to recognize and study and appreciate those manifestations of writing education. Scholars from one context can also learn important lessons about how writing education is situated, developed, practiced, adapted, put to use, and hacked in another context. That reflective encounter, to use LuMing Mao's term, could help us to transform writing studies and to make writing studies do more powerful things in our own higher education – where our perspectives may have started becoming a bit blunted in some cases. And, it is important for both practitioner collaborators and researchers/scholars to realize that equitable collaboration and responsible research are not easy. They are hard work, they required trust, support, failure, and rethinking and persistence. Because of the difficulty of shared benefits, collaborators in different contexts may need to pursue different kinds of benefits. So, for instance, if my Nepalese colleagues are not interested in publishing articles out of the work we are doing, I think it is okay for me to pursue that goal, because that is where I find return and value of my time and contribution. This is an area I am still thinking about, so I want to hear what you may have to share with me.

THE SCHOLARLY CONTEXT--MORE DRAFT PARAGRAPHS

Scholars of transnational writing have for some time highlighted the dangers of creating and advancing discourses about writing education in other contexts around the world by using our own lenses here in North America. This caution is especially pertinent for those of us doing research and writing about countries in the global south where academic communities face inequities of power dynamics in relation to globally dominant academic centers in North America and Europe, in addition to similar dynamics of inequity in their own continents or regions. In the context of what Hesford (2006) called a "global turn" of scholarship on writing and rhetoric in the current century, a rich body of scholarship has emerged on the subject of "transnational writing research." This is the body of work that best informs the scholarly context of my project. However, as I indicated above, I have experienced a number of challenges and am interested in paying attention to certain issues that complicate my attempt to explain my "findings" about writing education South Asia (both generally and in particular sites) by using perspectives in the above scholarship. Thus, as I briefly introduce relevant perspectives below, I also reflect on those challenges and complexities, as well as the difficulty of using much of the scholarship I mentioned above.

The research/scholarship being done for an audience beyond the place where the education occurs can lead to a variety of problems, including, most importantly, the scholarship offering limited practical value for professionals and institutions on the ground. In fact, the undergirding imbalance of power, essentially, leads to the very term "transnational" being understood as border-crossing without creating value on both/all sides; for instance, an investigation of how the models of writing education from one place is adopted and adapted in the "outposts" of that place, such as where branch or affiliated institutions implement the center's model does not reflect the writing education of the rest of the institutions in the country of the outpost institutions, or even describe the ecology of writing in the broader institution that is studied very well. Especially when the researcher also has limited exposure to the broader society or is only engaged in formally studying (including if it is "ethonograpic" research), the scholarship may be "rigorous" in itself but unable to paint the big and/or complex picture on the ground, thereby becoming less valuable even to the local scholars who are interested in it. So, the "transnational turn," which turns out to reflect a desire of Western academics and their universities to internationalize the curriculum (Tardy, 2015; Martins, 2015; Rose and Weiser, 2015) rather than to create shared value across national borders, or for that matter to truly seek to understand social contexts, languages, and rhetorical traditions of different countries, as scholars have done in scholarship focusing on their own country (e.g., Baca, 2009; Browne, **; **). …. The "globalizing" tendency undergirds much of conventional transnational writing research and scholarship, contributing to "provincialism [that] places unnecessary constraints on what can be thought, understood, observed, and taught as writing in the first place" (Sánchez 78).

Most of the "transnational" research and scholarship about academic writing comprises of work done by or, more to the point, practically for scholars in the Western hemisphere—meaning even when it is done by scholars outside the globally dominant academic centers of the West (e.g., Armstrong, 2010); collaboration and participation of scholars in other countries included only in a few cases of transnational writing research (e.g., Sullivan, Zhang and Zheng, 2012; You, 2018). The works of other scholars in groups like international writing across the curriculum, international writing center association, and writing programs worldwide also provide useful perspectives, but I find a need to shift the focus from export/import by developing both academic scholarship and professional collaboration across nations, with a deep desire to

learn as much as share our ideas and experiences, programs and models, research and scholarship. There is indeed a need to counter the "spread" of writing studies around the world driven by an expansionist impulse by using more substantive and practice-focused models at engaging with scholars and institutions in other countries.

Citing Grewal and Kaplan, Dingo, Riedner and Wingard note that "the proliferation of the term 'transnational' has been a substitution for a thin understanding of globalization wherein nation state and neocolonial relationships are dissipated in the name of global exchange" (517). Scholars like Donahue (2007, 2009, 2011, 2018) have called for transnational partnerships for research, and Donahue and Anson (2015) also recognize diverse forms of writing instruction. Other scholars such as Fraiberg also look at non-US context. And, of course, there are many scholars in a variety of countries around the world who have written about writing education in their own countries and contexts (***). My research shifts the focus to the intersection of transnational collaboration and locally situated initiatives for advancing writing education in South Asia. My work will draw on scholarship in other disciplines that help to discuss the challenges, as well as to explore the dynamics of transnational collaboration and the development of writing education which I have found the opportunity to learn about. In order to understand the uptake of writing education where local initiatives take precedence and outside scholars' roles are put to the service of those initiatives, I intend to draw on Transnational Studies, using the works of scholars like Levitt and Khagram (2007).

I will also address the issue of scholarship produced by scholars on the ground, including the scarcity of it, the negligence of scholars in global centers to engage it, and so on. There are many reasons behind the limitation of scholarship on writing education focusing on the global south, especially scholarship produced by scholars in the region. First, "scholarship" in many contexts does not mean or require documenting "academic conversation" in written form; publication of research-based accounts of issues isn't supported or rewarded as much, or in the same ways. This leads to scholarly knowledge being invisible to outsiders, passed on through professional conversation and dispersed into practice. The inability to capture that complex, living knowledge leads to outside scholars "finding little or nothing" of what they can cite or document. Second, the local informants of their research may not use the same kind of language as they describe a different kind of writing education, which is also often dispersed across disciplines and contexts, courses and practices. Third, research and scholarship opportunities may be limited to fewer scholars, research on writing may be done by scholars in disciplines that are not familiar to outsiders, or simply not accessible through expected channels. And, finally, even the work that is produced by scholars in the global south and accessible to Western scholars isn't cited by the latter scholars (Tapia Ladino, Navarro, & Bazerman, 2016; Harbord, 2000; Kubota, **). A few writing scholars have highlighted most of the challenges above, writing about the unequal production, access, and exchange of scholarship from the global south. For instance, Dingo, Riedner, and Wingard (2018) as well as Sullivan, Zhang, and Zhen (2012) have highlighted the limitation of transnational research, scholarship, and partnerships with their colleagues in other countries.

CHALLENGES AND ISSUES--MORE DRAFT PARAGRAPHS

In the context of the above scholarly conversation, as someone interested in doing research and writing about writing education in my home country Nepal and in South Asia more broadly, I have struggled with many questions about how to represent in my scholarship my understanding of issues from experiences prior to or outside of formal research, about how to

design and conduct research projects being restricted as they are by professional norms that are foreign to the local contexts, about how I can account for the context and dynamics on the ground where writing figures in diversely and differently that it does here, about how I can continue the collaboration and exchange of support and mentorship while pursuing more formal research, and about how I can pursue the research and writing in ways that are valuable to the diverse audiences and stakeholders in different places. More broadly put, what are methodologically the best strategies to adopt, and how can scholars make this question itself a part and parcel of the process of research and scholarship—rather than deciding it beforehand and assuming that he or she is best equipped to determine it ahead of time? Similarly, how do we know which method and methodologies to use for answering specific questions about very different kinds of writing educations, language and literacy practices, and the social and national contexts and forces we seek to understand? It is equally challenging to account for varied notions of literacy practices, including "academic writing," as they are shaped by different national backgrounds and socioeconomic contexts, not to mention when they are further shaped by the dynamics of virtual collaboration, private versus public institutions, rural-urban divides, unique professional identities and curricular demands, and so on. Accounting for the different contexts and dynamics in them means that we must often unpack—as we somehow focus on our subject—the shifting conditions of education, the interactions of different forces, movement of people and ideas across borders, and so on. It means accounting for language practices as influenced by the constructions of people's national, political, socioeconomic, and educational identities; the subjectivities as cultivated and regulated by politics and policies; the relationships among rhetors and their audiences and the world; the strategies of navigation and negotiation used by people to make and convey meaning, with the materials means they have access to, and to affect change or overcome obstacles through written language; the neoliberal logic of literacy and education and the opportunity and privilege that they (seem to) offer; and so on. And addressing these questions and accounting for these complexities ultimately means respecting the complex and fluid identities, aspirations, potentials, and achievements of individuals engaging in language and writing in ways that is hard to do justice to within the limitations of our research methods, institutional regulations, and the amount of time and energy we can invest in understanding the issues and individuals across contexts.

One of the strategies researchers use is to convey their positionality to the audience, to make their intentions and interests clear, and to follow established guidelines and values they find relevant in doing the research and presenting findings. Another consideration transnational researchers should make is to create or share opportunities. In fact, scholars are also practitioners not just in the sense that they translate scholarship into "actionable" projects but also in that scholarship is itself consequential action or it may follow or precede programs in action; so their scholarship as/before/after practice must also ask questions of mutual benefit and respect. How can we make research and scholarship productive for all collaborators, given that collaborators across national borders in particular are not usually similarly interested in producing written scholarship, may need to produce different kinds of writing or resources, or don't receive the same amount of incentive or recognition for investing their time and energy? Even more complicatedly, what can we do to make research respectful and collaboration equitable when non-Western colleagues are formally recognized by their institutions and societies for "international" publications that tend to ignore their own local contexts and needs, applications and perspectives toward making scholarship meaningful in their own life worlds?

It is not easy for scholars conscious of inequities in transnational scholarly research and collaborations use their work to resist and counter the inequities and to expose paradoxes while also ensuring that their work is received well and capable of engaging different stakeholders. For instance, in the context of private colleges in Nepal, my collaborators are interested in teacher training, change in curriculum and pedagogy, enhancement of the academic environment through mentorship and academic support for students. I have invested a lot of time in training teachers, in organizing and facilitating virtual and onsite initiatives and discussions for developing effective programs and practices, in reflections and exchange of ideas among teachers on the ground and across contexts with me and other colleagues on my side of the world. But when it comes to research and scholarship—documenting the initiatives, finding meanings in them, and presenting ideas and perspectives—the interests and incentives for my collaborators are very different than they are for me. While my institution supports my research as part of my employment, my colleagues in South Asia (especially in the private sector) do it out of different kinds of demand from their institutions and the society, with often little or no reward for their investment. As a result, they may see and pursue a different set of benefits in the collaboration than I do. In fact, this challenge has broader implications for transnational research as well. Scholars involved in ethnographic research have unpacked the risks and consequences of distancing scholarship from the world that it tries to understand. Transnational academic research is not only done across different material and social contexts but also across seemingly similar contexts that are shaped by very different national/political conditions, different forms that the similar disciplines and professions have taken even with the same names, and vastly different rewards and recognition for doing the same kinds of things.

But in spite of the different incentives and pathways that scholarship and other educational initiatives may take across national borders, there is not just a need to share the process and outcomes of the collaboration, to try to find common grounds, to support one another, and to work in favor of one another. With writing education, there are uniquely powerful affordances that scholars can explore across and in spite of differences in institutional and professional conditions across the national and sociocultural contexts. Writing education is a uniquely powerful catalyst that is able to facilitate the above engagements even across vast differences; by virtue of its value as a means for advancing or enhancing education, across wide varieties of disciplines, professions, and societies, it is able to bring scholars from across those contexts together. Being both an end and means of education, it is also able to help collaborating scholars to communicate and translate meaning, to create and apply knowledge, and to transform and improve professional and social condition for themselves and others. It is a resource with which they and their students create and shape their identities—disciplinary, professional, and sociopolitical—and carve economic opportunities for themselves and for others. In addition, the fact that people, texts, ideas, and resources move across borders increasingly faster means that there are increasingly greater and often mutually beneficial reasons for collaborations and conversations across those borders.

Sticky issues and Questions

How could I write for different transnational audiences?

How could I best represent, engage, and create value for local collaborators and participants?

METHODOLOGICAL & THEORETICAL SOLUTIONS—ROUGH DRAFT

One of the strategies for avoiding the known pitfalls of transnational writing research is to focus on language practices and literacy events within the framework of a network or ecology, rather than as disparate situations, focusing on differences first, not as a footnote. Researchers should not idealize writing in a given context or expect different societies to develop writing education along the same trajectory: the use and teaching/learning of language take shape and work very differently in different contexts. As such, I seek to unpack issues of context (institutional, professional, socioeconomic, cultural, political/national) and the dynamics of identity and motivation, opportunity and privilege, community and change while exploring how writing education is taking shape in a given context. The use and the teaching/learning of language and writing mobilizes the other elements/forces, weaving them together or disentangling them in diverse ways. I find it necessary to broaden the discourse about writing education – from programs to initiatives, courses to curricular opportunities, pedagogies to ecologies of learning, grades/incentives to motivation, teaching to trusting, and so on. I will consider push and pull factors such as exams, teacher autonomy, student-teacher relationship, resources, and so on, all the while avoiding binaries and spectra in favor of situational analysis and lessons that can be drawn from it. I will explore the dynamic relationship among practitioners and experts on the ground with expats who participate/ contribute as experts/facilitators of scholarly conversations and educational innovation or, in some cases, scholars from the outside who are guests or invited consultants rather than visiting expats. Collaborations in scholarship, practice, or program building are all shaped by the dynamics of the interaction, depending on their relationships, approaches they take, and the roles they play in the process. In order to discuss the negotiations of power and knowledge, I will draw on scholarship about diaspora scholars and their work as researchers and collaborators in a globalized world (***). I am guided by basic ideas about writing, such as that writing matters, that it is key to the ongoing educational change, and that transnational collaboration and mutual benefit are needed and possible.

One of the theoretical approaches for accounting for the complexity of writing education is to use an ecological framing for understanding and for conducting its research. In Writing Studies, Cooper's (1986) article "Ecology of Writing" provides a starting point: "an ecological model of writing, whose fundamental tenet is that writing is an activity through which a person is continually engaged with a variety of socially constituted systems" (367). Cooper also viewed the writing researcher as an ecologist who "explores how writers interact to form systems…. made and remade by writers in the act of writing" (368), which is "both constituted by and constitutive of these ever-changing systems, systems through which people relate as complete, social beings" (373). Fleckenstein et al. (2008) has presented a substantive framework of writing research using ecological theory, which I intend to for discussing diversity, fluidity, and change and to show how "actors, situations, and phenomena … [are] interdependent, diverse, [and] fused through feedback" (390); an ecological approach to research also directs the researcher to focus on relationships, including their own to the rest of the system, thereby fusing the "knower, the known, and the context of knowing" (395). This orientation also "destabilizes that monoculture [of traditional research], requiring researchers to consider who is empowered to ask questions and solicit answers, who can be the object of study, who can be authorized to analyze the data, and who can conduct and report research" (401). More recent works, such as chapters in the collection by Reiff et al. (2015) use ecological views while presenting ecological "profiles of programs in context." Works like *Writing Programs that Work* could also help me think about

writing initiatives and programs, defined broadly. In addition to building on the above scholarship in Writing Studies, I draw on ecological perspectives from other disciplines. In particular, I adapt ideas from the "socioecological approach" to research in education as described by Krasny, Tidball, and Sriskandarajah (2009). Reviewing prior scholarship on "social and adaptive learning theories," the authors illustrate the relevance of that literature in educational research, especially because it complicates "systems notions of unpredictability, emergence, and interactions" (1), which they find inadequate for describing more situated and adaptive modes of education. Finally, using ecological perspectives for theorizing educational policy and systems, I will draw on this perspective used by scholars in other disciplines, such as Weaver-Hightower (2008) and Banathy (1992). Weaver-Hightower, for instance, shows how the "ecology metaphor helps us to conceptualize policy processes as complex, interdependent, and intensely political…." (154). I will also draw on theories of network, such as the one presented by Bennette (**) in the book *Vibrant Matter*, as well as from insights from actor-network-theory. Scholarship on "transnational research" and "international education" could similarly help me make the research across national and cultural borders productive and ethical. This scholarship, often coming out of disciplines like medicine and bioethics, economic development and I/NGO work, engineering/STEM and agriculture, higher education and language policy—focuses on collaboration and mutual benefit and respect, as well as methodological effectiveness.

I envision my research as a small piece of the puzzle that I may be able to share with scholars of (or interested in) writing education across the world. Given that transnational writing research is too often conducted by American and European scholars for consumption back home, I plan to produce scholarship that will be read by writing educators in South Asia, as well as in the West. I hope to share a few themes about how writing education is shaped in different countries and contexts by different socioeconomic and professional realities, obstacles faced by fellow writing educators and approaches they use for overcoming the obstacles, lessons about uptakes and possibilities of advancing writing education in the unique contexts, and theoretical insights drawn from the etic/emic approach that I take for transnational writing research.

It is necessary and useful to ask the status of the discipline and profession behind writing education. For example, scholars in South Asia ask how their academe could adopt and advance writing as a discipline and pedagogy, as a profession and vocation within the academic context. How can a community of scholars and teachers advance writing as an independent subject that is taught by academic scholars or teachers who have studied it as a subject? How can it advance scholarly conversation and research about writing, in its academic and professional forms, for improving its social and economic applications? How can it develop writing as a field of study and practice, as a matter of curriculum and policy, as an issue of public awareness and demand? How can it help our schools and universities adopt systematic teaching, research, and training of teachers and other professionals around writing as a foundational part of secondary and higher education, as a vehicle for professional development? How can that community write a writing education of our own?

Another way to do justice to the varied forms of writing education in different countries and to write about them for audiences with different interests in and across those contexts is to use a mixture of genres, platforms, and styles. In addition to the current book, I have been writing a monthly column of op eds for a national English daily called *The Repubica,* which allows me to write for a broader readership in Nepal and also share with social and professional networks in the region at large. I have converted some of my findings from direct experience into handbooks for faculty training, course syllabi and teaching materials, institutional policy and

program frameworks for faculty development, proposals for launching academic support centers, and contributions to national educational policy documents. Scholars can use a variety of other platforms and use reflections, thick descriptions (of work conditions, professional incentives), dialogs, interview segments, crotches of a time/place or situation someone goes through, qualitative data/discourse analysis, data and statistics, provide historical context, unpack themes and forces, and so on. In other words, it is when scholars try to only produce "scholarly" works that most directly contributes to their own professional development—not to mention by further using their own local social perspectives and speaking back to their own local audiences—that they ignore opportunities for transnational scholarly collaboration and exchange and to create value for those who are interested in or even involved in the collaboration. If scholars are less concerned about the value of work produced for them and their institutions or professions locally, that is, if they can envision the broader professional community and are not limited by the nationalistic regime of education and scholarship, they can write for broader audiences, using reflective narratives, producing practical guidelines, offering candid critique, and creating productive pathways for increasingly robust transnational collaborations.

TENTATIVE CHAPTER OUTLINE

CHAPTER 1: Situating Writing Education
- Transnational ecology: Global, regional, local dynamics
- Writing as solvent, solution, and catalyst
- Pressure points: Semester system, pressure to publish, specific initiatives, changes in humanities, professional development
- Different stakes, interests, perspectives in different places
- Finding common grounds, shared interests
- Key questions, objectives, outline

CHAPTER 2: Framing and Theory
- Scholarly context: global, regional, local
- Methodology: Experience, exchange, and the limitations of "data collection"
- Ethical issues: Interest, benefits, and etic/emic perspectives
- Expats and Experts: Tensions, roles, and representations
- Approaches to collaboration & production of knowledge

CHAPTER 3: Developing the Projects
- WACAP – experiments, explorations, experiences
- Technology – networking, partnership, affordances
- Semester system training and summer summits
- Text – Topic – Techniques – Topics – Team sprit
- Project 3 Stars and the STAR Network of scholars
- Local coordinators, experts, participants
- The Dhaka Project
- From webinars to retreat – online vs. offline
- Writing for Social Justice
- From writing to research

CHAPTER 4: Dynamic Designs
- Training of trainers, local expertise and outside support
- Building resources, relationship, research project
- Applying writing: research/scholarship, teaching, acad. sup.
- Power, politics, identity, race, and value

CHAPTER 5: Writing Ecologies
- Implications for transnational writing research
- Writing as a discipline: means, end, and methods
- Writing and decolonial work (ESL, Eng. St., Academic writing)
- International, global, transnational, and beyond

CHAPTER 6: Sharing (and) Learning
- Reflective encounters
- Reflections on Writing Studies in North America
- Historical, geographical, political perspectives
- Looking forward

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