

Lessons Learned from an Indigenous Evaluation Framework

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American Indian Higher Education Consortium AIHEC – an Indigenous Evaluation Framework

- Cultural Competency
- American Evaluation Association
- Culture is central to economic, political, and social systems as well as individual identity.
 - Culture is fluid.
 - Evaluator must maintain a high degree of self-awareness and self-examination.
 - Culture has implications for all phases of evaluation.



In the Indigenous Evaluation Framework focus groups, these values were identified as central to most tribal cultures:

- Being People of a Place
- Recognizing our Gifts
- Centrality of Community and Family
- Tribal Sovereignty

If we value community, engagement should begin early, during the first step of story creation.

Developing evaluation statements may be more appropriate than questions.
Avoid use of western terminology such as logic model, formative evaluation – frame within the story.

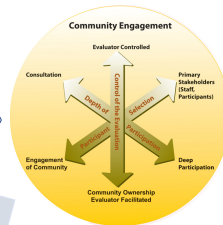
Parallels to ‘Western’ Evaluation Theory

- Appreciative Inquiry
- Participatory Evaluation
- Empowerment Evaluation

Evaluation of the Geoscience Alliance 2015 Meeting introduced the model at the beginning of the meeting, observed, and follow-up survey.

Creating the Story
What are your expectations for this meeting?

Scaffolding
Post your insights on the wall each day.
Paper – hand them to Susan Eriksson throughout the conference.
Keep a journal – any paper or digital format will do – and pass it to Susan at the end of the conference or when you get home.
Email Susan – susan.eriksson@gmail.com
Talk to Susan – record your voice.



The four questions are:
What are your own expectations for this meeting?
How did the conference fulfill these expectations?
In looking at your experience in this Geoscience Alliance Conference, describe the times when you felt most alive, most fulfilled, or most excited.
As you share your story, consider what made it a high point, who was involved, what made it a good experience.
What are some of the things you value about the Geoscience Alliance?

Leech Lake Tribal College and University of Minnesota (Duluth and Twin Cities)

An NSF TCUP project



- Now in Year 2 of a 5-year program:
- Early listening-sessions
 - Formative evaluation in close coordination with project personnel
 - Building tribal engagement

Lessons Learned

- Some skeptical of model
- Tribes have different cultures: storytelling in multi-tribe setting would take time/trust among participants
- Turn-over in tribal college personnel common
- Robust formative evaluation as a story
- Who is the ‘tribe’ – perhaps the college?

Stress :

- Ownership of data,
- Stakeholders determine goals
- Options for data collection and reporting
- Education on ‘what is evaluation’ – western versus indigenous models
- Evaluator as facilitator
- Build evaluation capacity

References:

LaFrance, J. L., “Culturally Competent Evaluation in Indian Country,” *New Directions for Evaluation*, no. 102, Summer 2004, p. 39–50.

LaFrance, J and R Nichols, 2009, *Indigenous Evaluation Framework: Telling Our Story in Our Place and Time*, 1 American Indian Higher Education Consortium, Alexandria, VA, 40 p



The Geoscience Alliance is a national alliance of individuals committed to broadening participation of Native Americans in the geosciences. Its members are faculty from tribal colleges, universities, and research centers; native elders and community members; industry and corporate representatives, students (K12, undergraduate, and graduate), formal and informal educators; and other interested individuals.

The goals of the Geoscience Alliance are to:

- 1) create new collaborations in support of geoscience education for Native American students,
- 2) establish a new research agenda aimed at closing gaps in our knowledge on barriers and best practices related to Native American participation in the geosciences,
- 3) increase participation by Native Americans in setting the national research agenda on issues in the geosciences, and particularly those that impact Native lands,
- 4) provide a forum to communicate educational opportunities for Native American students in geoscience programs, and
- 5) to understand and respect indigenous traditional knowledge.