Message from IPE TIG Leadership Team

BY ELIZABETH TAYLOR-SCHIRO AND DR. NICOLE BOWMAN

Kii ha Siikwan (It is Springtime) on Turtle Island (North America)! Nii ndahwaaleew Aahaasuwi waak Wuskiixaskwal waak Waaapsowihleewi Niipaahum (I love the crow, grass, and geese moons of March and April). Laapi Anushiik Kiisheelumukweengw eelu miiluyan (thank you Creator for giving us) nii eelaangoomaatiit Asunaamiinzhuw waak Tundeew (our Maple Tree and Fire relatives) wan ha shookulumbuy wchapihkal (who give us the sugar water and sap medicines). Springtime reminds us that it is a time of change, renewal, growth, and learning within ourselves, from each other, and as part of a larger ecosystem. Just like our non-human Maple Tree and Fire Relatives, we learn how to work together to make good medicine.

Our latest newsletter will give you a lot of Good Medicine as you see how busy the leadership, membership, and our Indigenous partnerships have been. A new / revamped IPE TIG website https://comm.eval.org/aeaipetig/home and getting scholarships for IPE TIG members to attend the Canadian Evaluation Society’s 2021 virtual conference https://c2021.evaluationcanada.ca/ are just two of many sprouting seeds we’ve planted that are bringing fresh opportunities to our Indigenous communities.
IPE TIG Updates

We would like to extend a warm thank you to Karen Alexander who has served as Program Co-Chair for the past two years.

She has taken a step back to focus more on her time with family but we are very grateful for the time that she gifted the IPE TIG. Karen remains a member of our TIG and we look forward to engaging more with her virtually (at this year's virtual conference) and in person next year (we hope). We wish you all the best Karen.

Thank you, Karen, for your time and expertise as Program Co-Chair!

Updates to IPE TIG Website

With AEA’s shift to a new web platform, the IPE TIG webpage is in development as new content is added. At this stage, the sections that were on the previous webpage are being updated with current information and links. New website pages have been created and will be populated in the near future to provide more context and history around Indigenous evaluation and the IPE TIG as well as webpages for events and resources for Indigenous evaluation and working with Indigenous peoples and communities. Lastly, two new subpages, the Discussion page and Library page, were created for IPE TIG members to interact and engage with one another.

New Newsletter Format and Content

This issue of the IPE TIG Quarterly Newsletter has begun with a new format and content. The newsletter will continue to provide members with information and updates about AEA and the IPE TIG, resources and publications, and topics relevant to Indigenous evaluation. With the new format, additional content includes an IPE TIG Member Spotlight, a newsletter focus/theme (this issue’s focus is Indigenous Data Visualization), and Indigenous specific evaluation and/or cultural/traditional specific discussions. The intent with this new content is to elevate members’ knowledge and praxis of evaluation and evaluation approaches for the betterment and advancement of Indigenous peoples and communities, and nations.
Monthly IPE TIG Talking Circles
The IPE TIG began holding monthly Talking Circles this year as a safe space for Indigenous evaluators and evaluator allies to meet together as colleagues and as relations to hold each other up and share what’s in our hearts and on our minds.

Talking Circles occur every third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 pm CT. To register, please visit the IPE TIG Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/groups/aeaipetig

Registration reminders for the Talking Circle will be posted on the IPE TIG social media sites the week prior to the third Wednesday of each month.

We hope you join us and we'll see you there!
Indigenous Data Visualization in 4 parts:
At the AEA 2020 Conference, a group of 4 presenters, Nicky Bowman (Lunaape), Mark Parman (Cherokee), January O’Connor (Tlingit), and Dr. Stephanie Evergreen teamed up to share their ideas, thoughts, and perspectives on Indigenous data visualization and how those engaging in data visualization can expand their own ideas of data through self-reflection and questioning who gets to define what counts as data visualization.

Part 1: The History and the Limited Scope of Current Data Visualization
In her blog post about Decolonizing Data Visualization post participation in the AEA 2020 Conference presentation, Dr. Evergreen writes: “What is Data Visualization? A visual representation of quantitative or qualitative data.”

She continues with “The strength of this definition is that it is so broad, lots of things fit under its umbrella. But perhaps that is also its weakness because it leaves what counts as data open to interpretation and this is where the problem lies. Often, people with power and privilege are the ones who get to do the interpreting about what’s in and what’s out. What counts and what doesn’t. The history of data visualization (and often history more generally) is written by white men. And history is upheld by them too, even among the data visualization crowd of today, who cull lists of historically important figures and decide whose stories will be remembered, whose work will become ‘foundational.’” Her examples include “charts of history” that show a blank slate for the United States for the time before initial European contact which fails to acknowledge the existence of indigenous north American peoples. She also shares that a book on the history of data visualization is being released soon and will claim that the beginning of graph communication occurred in the mid-seventeenth century and was invented by a person with a white European background.

The disregard and the complete lack of acknowledgement of representation and examples of data visualization is glaringly obvious. This is particularly true when Stephanie brings up examples of the Incans in 1500 CE using khipus (knotted cords) which were used to record census data, clan, social rank, occupation, and tax payment. Some of the khipus were also used to record stories.

Another example noted by Dr. Evergreen, provided by Wendy Red Star, shows a photo of Peelatchiwaaxpaash which is highlighted and marked extensively to interpret the data held in what he is wearing. Everything that the subject held in his hand or wore was encoded with and told a meaningful story about his history, his clan, his standing in his community down to the number of wives that he had.
Indigenous Data Visualization, cont.

Dr. Evergreen closes by challenging the current status quo to expand notions of what is considered data visualization and how data can be visualized. She specifically mentions Abigail Echo-Hawk and her work on decolonization and encourages others to do the work in collaboration or on one’s own. Full article with figures and images can be found here: https://stephanieevergreen.com/decolonizing-data-viz/

Part 2: Know your Story

Working with Indigenous people you will hear them ask you “where you from”? This is a question that I have encountered working with almost all Alaska Native and American Indian people and communities. To work effectively with Indigenous Communities, it is important to know who you are, what your origin story is and where you come from. At the heart of working with indigenous people is the relationship and relationship begins with knowing each other’s story. Consider the following diagram to fill in your own story and how that affects who you have become and how you see and relate to the world:

To fill in your origin story consider times in your life that you:
- Overcame a struggle and leveled up (or not!)
- Took a bold, risky move that had a positive outcome
- Found motivation for waking up every day and doing the work
- A time you woke up and decided to do something different
- A time you overcame and learned from failure
- A major success/win that added to your development
Indigenous Data Visualization, cont.

For contemporary context and influences, consider major (or minor!) external environmental events such as:

- Family changes and shifts
- Births
- Graduations
- Social

Next, account for your:

- family, friends, partners, community members, mentors that left an impression on you and taught you what it meant to be a human from your community(-ies).

Ask yourself:

- What do I believe underpins my knowledge of life?
- Where did I gain this belief?
- How does this belief influence the way I react to situations and people?
- How do assumptions I have accumulated from my life experiences affect my reflexivity in my work?

Questions from: https://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/2764/4131

Explore these other ways to map your life or origin story:


Where I am From Activity:
https://cech.uc.edu/content/dam/cech/centers/hope/docs/Where%20I%27m%20From%20Activity.pdf

Part 3: Know Your Positionality

When you get your story down, it is also important to examine and acknowledge the role that our worldview and life experiences bring to our work and also to data visualization. In addition to our own personal origin stories, we also have our own societal make up. Some of the societal aspects that we are often born into are demonstrated in the figure on the next page.
We consciously and subconsciously bring these aspects of ourselves into the work we do and it is important to examine this intersectionality and how we might make sure to mitigate any short-sightedness or bias we might bring to the table. Respect for self, elders, and others (a Tlingit value) cannot be achieved if we do not know who we are and what privilege we bring to the table or our interactions. Neither can we hold each other up (another Tlingit value) if we are unaware where we have privilege over others and cannot achieve balance which is a core principle of Tlingit culture. Below is a figure that can be used to examine one’s own privilege:
Indigenous Data Visualization, cont.

In examining our origin story and our positionality, we work to uphold our own personal values that would ideally resonate with balance and holding each other up through striving for equity and a balance in power in relationships that we enter into either personally or professionally. Gunalchéesh
– January O’Connor, Tlingit

Part 4: The Importance of Asking Why

Before heading out to learn and implement any sort of Indigenous data visualization or evaluation theories, methods or methodologies, Mark Parman, Evaluation & Outcomes Measurement Specialist, Community & Cultural Outreach, Cherokee Nation, would like you take a moment to ask yourself a question: Why?

As an evaluator, why becomes one of your most important questions. Did this intervention work or not? WHY? What were they trying to accomplish? WHY? What is important but WHY tells you a lot more. It is in that space that learning takes place, and with luck, things get better.

As an evaluator working in an indigenous community you have lots of why questions to ask yourself. WHY are you in this community? Maybe you’re lucky enough to be working in your community, with your people. You know the culture, the language, the history. You’re here to honor the sacrifices of your ancestors.

Maybe, you’re not that lucky. In which case, you’ve got a lot of work to do on yourself. WHY are you here? Were you invited to come in, or imposed on the community by an outside funder? Your relationship to the community will be easier to build if you were invited. If you were imposed on them, then you’ve got a lot of work building relationships and trust. In my community it’s all about who your mother is or your grandmother or maybe your great grandmother. We need to know your family and where you’re from. I suspect that this will hold true in some form in many Indigenous communities. Do your homework. The quality of work you do, will depend on the quality of relationships you build within the community.

When you get to the reporting stage of your work, you get to ask WHY all over again. WHY have you chosen that symbol, color or graph type? Does it have meaning within the community? Do you have permission to use it in this manner? If you’ve built a strong relationship with the community and have their trust, getting answers to these questions will be easier. They will know your heart and more freely give you the answers you seek.

Working in Indigenous communities is one of the most rewarding jobs you can undertake. I get to work for my Nation. I tell people that I have the greatest job in the world. Every day I have to get up and go to work, helping people who volunteer their time and sweat trying to make the lives of our citizens better. It don’t get any better than that.
– Mark Parman, Cherokee
Indigenous Data Visualization, cont.

Practice & Reflection: A Data Visualization Comparison

Here are two images, one with a more indigenous lens applied (image from Urban Indian Health Institute) and the other using more western methods.

Compare the two visualizations. What are your gut reactions to these two images? How do they make you feel? What stories do you get from these two different images?

Other thought questions when approaching data visualization:

• Why couldn’t or shouldn’t other forms of data visualization count?
• What statements of value and importance are embedded in different examples of data visualization?
• What stories do they tell and how do they expand on our ideas of data visualization and even how we see and interpret the world?
• Who is presenting the information and why?
• Who gets to say what counts as data visualization and why?
• Does this represent who it is supposed to represent in a “good way”?
Indigenous Data Visualization, cont.

The Impact:

When we give presentations, often we do not know what comes to fruition from the seeds that we plant. After the data visualization presentation at AEA 2020, we were blessed to hear back from Sana Ahmed Wilder who is a “data visualizer specializing in building capacity of federal and state education agencies”. During the presentation, she writes, when being presented with the Incans’ khipu data visualization method, she was prompted to refelect on her own history.

She shares her own knowledge of Punjabi women and their practice of the phulkari embroidery which has occurred since the 15th century. All aspects from the colors of the threads to the designs were chosen purposefully and each contained encoded data.

Her final reflection touches on colonization of India, the monetization of the embroidery and the downplaying of the extensive knowledge, skills and ability of her ancestors and begins to challenge the notion of information and data needing to be written to be counted.

Read her full response and call for exploring one’s own ancestral practices here:
https://dataliteracy.com/handmade-in-punjab/
IPE TIG MEMBER Spotlight
Carolee Dodge Francis, Ed.D.

Biography:
Dr. Carolee Dodge Francis is an Oneida Nation of Wisconsin tribal member, a social behavioral researcher and an Ecology of Human Well-Being Professor at the School of Human Ecology, University of WI, Madison. She strives to intertwine community engagement and research/evaluation scholarship as a reflection of her cultural understanding within a contemporary context that is focused upon the well-being of Indigenous populations. Dr. Dodge Francis has over 35+ years’ work experience in public health/community wellness, Indigenous evaluation & program development, curriculum adaptation, and qualitative & community-based participatory research within urban and rural Native American communities nation-wide. She is a published author of both journal publications and book chapters. Dr. Dodge Francis has a remarkable passion for mentorship that spreads across the next generations of Native American evaluators and researchers. Full CV here: https://kb.wisc.edu/images/group402/105849/Dodge-Francis-CaroleeCV.pdf

“If there was a Guinness Book of World Records that tracked the number of Native American students Dr. Dodge Francis helped graduate from secondary - graduate school level, including me, she’d be the clear global leader.” -- Dr. Nicole Bowman (Lunaape/Mohican), IPE TIG Co-Chair and Community Member, Indigenous Evaluation global community

Links to Dr. Dodge Francis’ publications and work
-Faculty Page: https://sohe.wisc.edu/staff/carolee-dodge-francis/
-Publications: https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&as_sdt=0%2C50&q=Carolee+Dodge+Francis&btnG=
Questions for Dr. Dodge Francis about her professional practice and work

What evaluation approach do you bring to your work?
I believe that Indigenous evaluators must challenge the ideologies that name the traditional evaluation systems and dispute the hegemony that encompasses evaluation beliefs and practices that are not reflective of cultural understandings and perspectives. Culturally responsive Indigenous evaluation (CRIE) illustrates the perspectives of cultural, community, and political constructs that should be at the heart of any Indigenous model. For Tribal communities, culturally responsive evaluation models and practices have begun to heighten the awareness of bridging cultural context issues of Native/non-Native, federal/self-governance. The breadth and continuously expanding definition of CRIE is an ongoing fluid construct which must span a multitude of levels within the academy and in harmony with Indigenous people and place.

What evaluation project/work was the most important work or your favorite project?
I was involved with the authorship and Chaired the evaluation committee for a national effort to decrease the incidence of type 2 diabetes among American Indian/Alaska Natives (AI/ANs), which was a eight year development and evaluation process with Tribal Colleges, National Institutes of Health, Centers for Disease and Control and Prevention, and Indian Health Service. This was a first-of-its-kind, kindergarten-through-twelfth grade (K–12) diabetes prevention curriculum, known as Diabetes Education in Tribal Schools (DETS). What makes this curriculum unique is the blending of diabetes science and the American Indian cultural context. The evaluation was done nationally among tribal and non-tribal school systems.

What is a resource that inspired you and shifted your perspective for your work or changed what and how you do your work?
The book Decolonizing Methodologies by Linda Tuhiwai Smith provided a reciprocal lens for me to articulate and substantiate my conviction as an evaluator, I must be the catalyst for constant Indigenous participatory consensus, question the constant mimicking of the dominant culture, and ensure that the Indigenous voices resonate with their cultural understandings and traditions.
Minobimaadiziwin Evaluation

BY ELIZABETH TAYLOR-SCHIRO

The Delight Song of Tsoai-talee
By N. Scott Momaday (Kiowa)

I am a feather on the bright sky
I am the blue horse that runs in the plain
I am the fish that rolls, shining, in the water
I am the shadow that follows a child
I am the evening light, the lustre of meadows
I am an eagle playing with the wind
I am a cluster of bright beads
  I am the farthest star
  I am the cold of dawn
I am the roaring of the rain
I am the glitter on the crust of the snow
I am the long track of the moon in a lake
  I am a flame of four colors
  I am a deer standing away in the dusk
I am a field of sumac and the pomme blanche
  I am an angle of geese in the winter sky
  I am the hunger of a young wolf
I am the whole dream of these things

You see, I am alive, I am alive
I stand in good relation to the earth
I stand in good relation to the gods
I stand in good relation to all that is beautiful
I stand in good relation to the daughter of Tsen-tainte
  You see, I am alive, I am alive

---------------------

Taking in this poem from our relative N. Scott Momaday, member of the Kiowa Tribe in Oklahoma, I can’t help but slow down. I hear the rolling water, feel the cold air, and see the moonlight on the lake - and I am grounded. I go about my day with the reminder of the interconnectedness I have with the physical world around me; to give thanks, cleanse, and heal through ceremonies, prayer, and song; and to bring this all into all of the work that I do.
Minobimaadiziwin Evaluation cont.

By Elizabeth Taylor-Schiro

For Anishinabe (Ojibwe), this balance is called minobimaadiziwin, or “to have a good life”. It is a concept that Anishinabe aim to live by, when we are able to live with the intellectual, physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects of life in balance with one another, interconnected.

How do we practice minobimaadiziwin evaluation?

Allowing for aspects of the evaluation and research process to take shape from Indigenous values, beliefs, and traditions could be a starting point. There is no single definition of what defines “Indigenous” evaluation because there is no single definition of who or what is Indigenous. In general though, many Indigenous cultures and peoples around the world share similar beliefs that we can see translated into many of the Indigenous oriented evaluation frameworks that are being used today. Some of these values include acknowledging that there are multiple perspectives because we are all on different journeys and pathways. Allowing space for multiple knowledges whether that is knowledge that we hold from our ceremonies and language; knowledge that we receive from our elders; or knowledge that comes from visions and dreams. Collecting these knowledges may come in different formats too, for example, talking circles instead of focus groups, stories instead of interviews, or art instead of surveys. It’s about finding the right balance for your program and project, and it won’t always be the same, but at the center of all we do is - how is this working for our people, our community. To do that requires some ability to practice humility and vulnerability as we reflect inward and act intentionally on those reflections to move forward toward minobimaadiziwin, which is something that Indigenous folks have been doing from the beginning as we consider ourselves in relation to others.

As you continue working on your current research and evaluation projects and take on new projects, consider how it’s balanced. Have you thought about how your project is coping spiritually and emotionally? What does that mean to you? To the client? To the project? How do you nurture all four of these pieces (physical, mental, emotional, spiritual) to create a holistic, balanced evaluation? How do you create a minobimaadiziwin evaluation?
EvalIndigenous Resources

Indigenous Voices Project

The Indigenous Voices project (the Voices project) is a project being led by EvalIndigenous, a global collective of Indigenous Evaluation practitioners. The Voices project was developed as a means of highlighting the presence and work of Indigenous people that have the tools and knowledge to practice evaluation, especially with their communities. In part, this project has a way of speaking back to those that wish to do evaluation work in Indigenous communities but who express a lack of awareness of the Indigenous evaluators that are already present and practicing in their communities.

Currently, there are 45 interview clips of Indigenous evaluators publicly available, with practitioners from Aotearoa, Turtle Island, Australia, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, South Africa, Tanzania, Burkina Faso amongst others. In these clips, practitioners speak about their work, their tools, their community knowledge and knowledge systems and experience working as evaluation practitioners. This year, EvalIndigenous are seeking to highlight more voices from the global south. To find all 45 clips, click [HERE](#). Clips are also shared out on the EvalIndigenous Facebook page. For more information and/or if you would like to be one of the voices in this project, please contact Fiona Cram (EvalIndigenous Co-Chair) at: fionac@katoa.net.nz

Resources for Evaluators

Since 2021, the EvalIndigenous members have created several new documents and publications that may be of interest to you:

1. [10 Questions Indigenous Communities Should Ask Evaluators](#)
2. [Indigenous African Ethical Protocol for Evaluations](#)

Resources and Publications for Evaluators
Cont.

Newly Published Resources:
1. The latest 2020 volume of this Aotearoa New Zealand Evaluation Association (ANZEA) journal is now online, and contains a commentary from John Njovu on Covid-19 and Indigenous evaluation in Zambia.
The 2021 Canadian Evaluation Society's Virtual Annual Conference
The 2021 Canadian Evaluation Society virtual conference is coming May 9 – 14th https://c2021.evaluationcanada.ca/ and workshops are starting April 30th ! This is a very inclusive and interactive event for Indigenous peoples with global north and south being intentionally included in the design, offerings, processing, and networking events. More info on the details on conference activities are available here: https://c2021.evaluationcanada.ca/program/

Consider attending this virtual evaluation conference as it always holds the biggest representation of Indigenous peoples and welcoming / safe non-Indigenous allies. Active and authentic engagement, land recognition, resources, and the human, land, treaty, and other rights of Indigenous peoples are celebrated and valued by non-Indigenous colleagues at CES. You need not be an evaluator to attend and we will be doing a lot of networking, sharing, and celebrating in between conference sessions too with CES! Come join the fun! If you have questions, please e-mail Dr. Nicky Bowman at nicky@bpcwi.com.

EvalIndigenous Monthly Meetings
EvalIndigenous continues to meet monthly on the second Thursday of the month at 1-2 p.m. Central Time, USA. Come be with us and be part of our monthly meetings! EvalIndigenous is a multi-stakeholder partnership which, through the recognition of the different world views and valuing the strengths of Indigenous evaluation practices advances the contribution of Indigenous evaluation to global evaluation practice. If you are interested, please e-mail Serge Eric at serge.eric01@gmail.com (EvalIndigenous Chair), Fiona Cram at fmcram@gmail.com (EvalIndigenous Co-Chair), or Melina Menard at melina@megram.com (EvalIndigenous Zoom Meeting Organizer). Follow EvalIndigenous and/or become part of the global community through the Facebook Group page here: https://www.facebook.com/groups/1713353522260387.

IPE TIG Talking Circles
The IPE TIG began holding monthly Talking Circles this year as a safe space for Indigenous evaluators and evaluator allies to meet together as colleagues and as relations to hold each other up and share what's in our hearts and on our minds.

Talking Circles occur every third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 pm CT. To register, please visit the IPE TIG Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/groups/aeaipetig

Registration reminders for the Talking Circle will be posted on the IPE TIG social media sites the week prior to the third Wednesday of each month.

We hope you join us and we'll see you there!
Parting Message
BY ANETA CRAM

This newsletter has given us food for thought on how we might visualize data in our work, how we might bring in Indigenous values and to reflect on our roots and the words and teachings of our ancestors.

I recently had a conversation with a friend of mine who was telling me about her PhD topic. She shared that she is looking at the uniqueness of the mita (the tone, the flow of language in the Māori language) from her tribe in music. She was telling me that the mita flows and changes as you move up the river between tribes. Not only was this a reminder of the diversity of language and people but also how even the sounds that we make in speech and song are inextricably tied to the land and rivers that we come from.

Perhaps the language in our evaluation projects could serve to flow better with the environment and the lands that we walk on the rivers that we drink from.

Thank you for reading. We hope to see you soon on our social media platforms at one of our monthly talking circles and at this year's AEA conference.

Be well,

The IPE TIG Leadership Team

IPE TIG Leadership Contact Information
Elizabeth Taylor-Schiro, TIG Chair at tayl0564@umn.edu
Nicky Bowman, TIG Co-Chair at nicky@bpcwi.com
Aneta Cram, Program Chair at anetacram@gmail.com
Mark Parman, Secretary at mark-parman@cherokee.org
Nate O’Connor, Communications Chair at nate@ravensgroupak.com
January O’Connor, Communications Co-Chair at january@ravensgroupak.com

For more information, follow us on our social media and webpage!