HONORING INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE IN COMMUNITY-BASED PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH AND EVALUATION PARTNERSHIPS
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Presenters
Activity Question

- Have you ever considered the idea of how indigenous knowledge relates to or is important for your work?

  - Yes
  - No
  - Not sure
Module II: Honoring Indigenous Knowledge

Understanding the role of indigenous knowledge in engaged scholarship
Communities Challenges

- Education
- Environment
- Community Safety
- Economic
- Racial and Gender Inequalities
- Health

Challenges Ahead
Community/University Engagement

- Scientific Knowledge
- Indigenous Knowledge

Solutions to Complex Challenges
Learning Objective

- Understand the role of indigenous knowledge in understanding our world and applying this understanding in our work
Agenda

- Understanding the primary forms of knowledge: indigenous knowledge and scientific knowledge
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- Understanding the place of indigenous knowledge in engaged scholarship
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- Understanding the primary forms of knowledge: indigenous knowledge and scientific knowledge
- Understanding the place of indigenous knowledge in engaged scholarship
- Learning how to honor indigenous knowledge in engaged scholarship
Part 1

What is Indigenous Knowledge?
Definition of Indigenous Knowledge

- “information that people in a given community, based on experience and adaptation to a local culture and environment, have developed over time, and continue to develop. This knowledge is used to sustain the community and its culture and to maintain the genetic resources necessary for the continued survival of the community.” [2003:3]

- American Association for the Advancement of Science

What is Indigenous Knowledge?

A collection of facts, concepts, beliefs, and perceptions that people hold about the world around them.

- By community members
- Cumulative
- Influences every day lives

Different Types of Indigenous Knowledge
Levels of Indigenous Knowledge

Individual Level
Levels of Indigenous Knowledge

Organizational Level

Scott
Joe
Anna
Gia

Trista
Robert
Rick

Mari
Hsu

Mirka
Tye

Mara
Sadavia

Chris
Jailza
Levels of Indigenous Knowledge

Global Level
Indigenous Knowledge Has Many Names and Forms

traditional ecological knowledge
ethnobiology / ethnobotany / ethnozoology
rural peoples'/ farmers' knowledge
indigenous knowledge / indigenous ways of knowing
ethnoscience
local knowledge / community knowledge
indigenous science
folk science

Indigenous Knowledge is Everywhere

Every community, regardless of its location, size, or make-up, possesses indigenous knowledge.

Source: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Training Manual: Building on Gender, Agrobiodiversity and Local Knowledge
The Development of Indigenous Knowledge

Five key components regarding how indigenous knowledge is developed and maintained

Sources:
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Training Manual: Building on Gender, Agrobiodiversity and Local Knowledge

1. Formed Over Time
2. Shaped
3. Individuals and Communities
4. Ingrained and Integral
5. A Powerful Resource
Activity Question

- What are some examples of local or indigenous knowledge in your own Tribe or community that are important for promoting the healthy development of young children?
Understanding Scientific Knowledge

Scientific knowledge is characterized by:

- Information organized into a code or system by:
  - making empirical observations,
  - proposing hypotheses to explain those observations,
  - and testing those hypotheses in consistent ways.

- Withstanding a process of academic peer review

- Can be replicated by other scientists

Comparing Knowledge Styles

Local/Indigenous knowledge is based upon experience, is holistic, and intuitive.

Scientific knowledge is assumed to the at best an approximation and is founded in observable facts, often focused on subsets of the whole.

Working Together

- Indigenous knowledge and scientific knowledge are not mutually exclusive
- Indigenous knowledge blends scientific and local understandings

Qualities of Knowledge Systems

Indigenous Knowledge Systems
- Holistic
- Emphasis on practical application of skills and knowledge
- Trust for inherited wisdom
- Practical experimentation
- Oral record

Common Ground

Western Science

Qualities of Knowledge Systems

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Common Ground

- Part to whole
- Emphasis on understanding how
- Skepticism
- Hypothesis falsification
- Communication of procedures, evidence and theory

Indigenous Knowledge Systems

Western Science

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**Common Ground**

**Organizing Principles**

**Habits of mind**

**Skills and Procedures**

**Knowledge**

Activity Question

- Do you see a need for including indigenous knowledge into early childhood education and/or early childhood public policy?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Not sure
Why is Local/Indigenous Knowledge Important?
Who’s Reality Counts?

Those with power often think they know what is right and real for those who do not have power and privilege.
Voices Matter

Whose appraisal, analysis, and planning?

Whose learning?

Whose action?

Whose criteria and preferences?

Whose reality?

Whose knowledge?

Whose monitoring and evaluation?

Whose values?

Whose empowerment?
Importance and Relevance

provide shelter
animal husbandry
poverty alleviation survival strategies
management of natural resources community development
produce food achieve control
ethnic veterinary medicine health care
agriculture
generational heritage education
Indigenous Knowledge Contributes to Global Knowledge

“The basic component of any country’s knowledge system is its indigenous knowledge.”

--World Bank (http://www.worldbank.org/afr/ik/basic.htm)
Examples

Practical Applications of Indigenous Knowledge
The EPA study of toxic exposures in the Greenpoint/Williamsburg (G/W) neighborhood of Brooklyn, NY


IMAGE: Greenpoint by erin
Alaska Native Local Knowledge Example

Indigenous knowledge regarding weather patterns

- Ability to decipher and adapt to changing patterns of weather and seasonal cycles
- Predict weather conditions based on observations of subtle signs that presage subsequent condition


IMAGE: Alaska mountains 7 by Alana Sise
San peoples of southern Africa have traditionally used the Hoodia gordonii plant as an appetite suppressant.

Sources:

Part 3

Honoring Indigenous Knowledge
People Own their Knowledge – It’s their Intellectual property

- Should not be used without permission
- Should not be misrepresented
- Should not be taken out of context
- Must be properly acknowledged

Local people decide:
- If they want to share their knowledge
- How it can be collected and used by others

Important Understanding

Indigenous Knowledge must not be devalued because of the source
Consider the following when working with indigenous knowledge

- Historical context is important
- Emotions, spirituality, aesthetics, morality, and values influence how we see our world
- Indigenous knowledge is not one thing; it consists of multiple perspectives
- Indigenous knowledge holders are identified by the community
- As Indigenous knowledge evolves, some important aspects of local knowledge might be lost
“By building on local and scientific knowledge, we hope to develop healthy ecosystems with multiple community benefits, where human communities act in concert with natural systems, rather than simply to dominate these systems for short term gain.”

Moving Forward
indigenous knowledge contributions

- Indigenous knowledge provides insight that traditional ‘scientific’ discourse misses.
  - G/W Brooklyn example

- Indigenous knowledge is providing researchers and communities with tangible benefits
  - Alaskan native climate studies
  - San/hoodia benefit sharing agreement
Bringing it all together…
Activity Question

- Do you use indigenous knowledge in your own work?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Planning to in the future
  - Not sure

- Describe some ways you have used or hope to use indigenous knowledge in your work?
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