

Planning, Implementing and Celebrating

In the former sections, we described the major elements needed to plan an evaluation: creating and connecting the program’s story, identifying key questions, constructing the design, and considering the approaches and methods for gathering information. In this section, we put these elements together to develop the evaluation plan and describe analysis and our learning. As we move forward in evaluation planning, we also consider how the plans will reflect our cultural values and beliefs.

Reflecting Cultural Values and Beliefs

Indigenous evaluation requires an ongoing reflection about cultural values and community protocols. The AIHEC Indigenous Evaluation Framework describes Indigenous ways of knowing and four core values that guide our approach to evaluation planning. Throughout the planning and implementation of an evaluation, we should always consider how we are incorporating these values into an evaluation. This reflection is not linear, and aspects of planning will overlap. For example, we may have developed evaluation questions and outlined the plan, but we also might examine our planning in light of the core values (either those in the *AIHEC Indigenous Evaluation Framework* or those identified in the community) and make changes to better reflect these in the plan. Or we can begin by exploring our core values and describe ways to develop and implement the evaluation.

In our example, we have taken the summer youth employment program and examined how we will incorporate elements of Indigenous ways of knowing and the core values of the AIHEC Indigenous Evaluation Framework into the evaluation. The table on the next page lists these elements and describes how the evaluation addresses them. It may not be possible to address all elements, but it is important to take time to reflect on how our values are realized in the evaluation.



Krisna LaFrance, Daybreak Star Center, Seattle, WA
Photo by Maria LaFrance

Reference

See Resources, University of Alaska GK-12 Evaluation Plan for an example of connecting evaluation planning to core values.

FRAMEWORK

Planning, Implementing and Celebrating

Beliefs and Values (AIHEC Framework)	Plan for Connecting Values to Youth Project
<p>Indigenous Knowledge Creation—Context is Critical</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation becomes part of the context, it is not an external function; and evaluation knowledge is used to better understand and improve programs. • Evaluators need to understand the relationships between the program and community. • Mixed methods—qualitative and quantitative approaches should be used. • Care must be taken that specific variables are analyzed without ignoring the contextual situation. 	<p>The evaluation and program evaluators were part of the program from the beginning, being included in proposal development and in meetings and workshops during the planning of the program’s implementation. Findings of the evaluation will be used to improve the program.</p> <p>The evaluation used mixed methods: qualitative methods such as interviews and focus groups, as well as surveys and record reviews to create the program’s story.</p>
<p>People of a Place—Respect Place-based Programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honor the place-based nature of many of our programs. • Describe the program’s relationship to the community, including its history, current situation, and the individuals affected. • Respect that what occurs in one place may not be easily transferred to other situations or places. 	<p>The evaluation will describe findings within the community’s context, noting the history of graduation rates, youth employment, and other salient factors.</p> <p>Although the program may discover useful youth employment practices, it will not assume that these fit other situations. The unique qualities that lead to success such as range of possible employers on the reservations are not transferable to other settings.</p>
<p>Centrality of Community and Family—Connect Evaluation to Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage community when planning and implementing an evaluation through use of participatory practices that engage stakeholders. • Make evaluation processes transparent. • Understand that programs may not focus only on individual achievement, but also on restoring community health and wellbeing. 	<p>The program will have an advisory committee whose members include representatives from the reservation’s businesses, youth serving programs, the school and Elders. This committee, with program staff, will participate in planning the evaluation. Consideration should address linking the summer youth involved in employment with other programs that can support successful school achievement, such as tutoring and bridge programs.</p>
<p>Recognizing our Gifts, Personal Sovereignty—Consider the Whole Person when Assessing Merit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow for creativity and self-expression. • Use multiple ways to measure accomplishment. • Recognize that people enter programs at different places and with different skills and experience. • Make connections to accomplishment and responsibility. 	<p>The experience and performance of the youth are measured in multiple ways. Employers describe youth performance and youth describe their experience to the advisory committee and community at a summer-end feast celebrating the program. Attendance and GPA records also describe youth’s progress throughout the year.</p>
<p>Sovereignty—Create Ownership and Build Capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow Native Institutional Review Board processes. • Build capacity in the community. • Secure proper permission if future publishing is expected. • Report in ways meaningful to Native audiences as well as to funders. 	<p>Local tribal college students will learn important research skills by assisting in data gathering and youth interviews, and working with the evaluator to transcribe and code interviews.</p> <p>A community feast will be held in the fall to explain some of the findings from the evaluation, and to have youth describe and demonstrate what they learned during the work experience. Employers, youth and others who contributed to the program will be honored.</p>



Shaping the Evaluation Plan

An evaluation plan is a blueprint that describes the ways in which we capture information to tell our story. A useful way to outline the plan is to create a table that describes how the evaluation will be done. The first step in developing the table is to list the questions or evaluative statements that are important to address while implementing the program. These questions will guide the design and the methods used to gather information. For example, our questions or statements will suggest whether we need to use quantitative or qualitative approaches and if we need to create a design that incorporates a comparison. Once we determine our approaches, we then define the data gathering methods. Sometimes the plan can also describe the source of the information and a schedule for data collection. The evaluation plan consists of:

- Major evaluation questions/statements that the evaluation will address.
- Approaches to gathering information to be used (qualitative information describing experiences or assessing changes; quantitative information describing progress and/or measuring changes).
- Specific methods for collecting information.
- Sources for the information.
- Timeline or schedule for collecting information.

The plan can also include who will be responsible for various evaluation activities. If we were to create an evaluation plan for the summer youth employment program, the first element is the overarching questions or evaluative statements (previously stated on page 60) as follows:

Key Question	Evaluative Statement
How many youth participated and did those participating meet the demographics of the program?	We want to know who participated and whether they were the youth for whom the program was designed.
How satisfied are the youth and the employers with the project?	We need to understand the experience of both the youth and employers and whether each was a good experience.
Were any of the youths' work habits carried over to their school behaviors?	We want to follow our youth after they return to school. We want to see if the program changed their attendance and academic performance.
What major lessons were learned from the summer experience?	We have lessons to learn so we can continue to improve this program when it is offered next summer.

These questions/statements provide the structure to our evaluation plan. We can consider the information we need and the ways in which we can gather this information to address each question. It may be useful to build our plan using each question/statement as the initial guide, and then add more detailed questions to shape our inquiry. The following table illustrates an evaluation plan that includes our questions, approaches, methods, sources, and schedule.



Evaluation Plan for Summer Youth Employment Program				
Questions/Statements to Guide Our Inquiry	Evaluation Approach/ Design	Data Gathering Methods	Source of Information	Schedule or Timeline
How many youth participated and did those participating meet the demographics of the program? We want to know who participated and whether they were the youth for whom the program was designed.				
Who enrolled?	Quantitative	Enrollment application	Students	May
Information on age, grade level, career, interests, family size & income.	Quantitative	Enrollment application	Students	May
How were youth recruited?	Qualitative	Interviews with program staff	Staff	May
What was the attendance for the job-skills training sessions?	Quantitative	Attendance records	Staff	Collected for each session
How well did the youth attend to their jobs?	Quantitative	Attendance records	Employers	Collected weekly Conducted in August
	Qualitative	Interviews	Employers	
How many youth completed their job placements?	Quantitative	Attendance records	Employers	Collected weekly
How satisfied are the youth and the employers with the project? We need to understand the experience of both the youth and employers and whether each was a good experience.				
How do youth describe their experience with the project in terms of: satisfaction, learning about work skills and career development?	Qualitative	Interviews	Students	Conducted in August
How do the employers describe their experience with the project in terms of student's work, their relationships with the students, interest in continuing with the project?	Qualitative	Focus group	Employers	Conducted in August
Were any of the youths' work habits carried over to their school behaviors? We want to follow the youth after they return to school to see if the program changed their attendance and academic performance.				
Have the youth demonstrated better school attendance?	Quantitative	Baseline attendance (school year prior to summer program) compared to subsequent school year	Student records	January & June–following year
Have students demonstrated better school performance?	Quantitative	Baseline GPA (school year prior to summer program) compared to subsequent school year	Student records	January & June–following year
Have students indicated interest in educational planning for future careers?	Qualitative	Interviews	Counselors	January & June–following year
		Interviews	Students	

Evaluation Plan for Summer Youth Employment Program (cont.)

Questions/Statements to Guide Our Inquiry	Evaluation Approach/ Design	Data Gathering Methods	Source of Information	Schedule or Timeline
What major lessons were learned from the summer experience?				
We have lessons to learn so we can continue to improve this program when it is offered next summer.				
Is there any relationship between youth demographics (age, school attendance, performance, home address) and their successful participation in the program?	Quantitative	Analysis of demographics with work attendance & student and employer interview/focus group data	Students	June following year
	Qualitative		Employers	
Is there any relationship between job placement and youth participation in the program?	Quantitative	Analysis of job placement with work attendance & student and employer interview/focus group data	Students	June following year
	Qualitative		Employers	
What lessons were learned from the perspective of staff, students and employers?	Qualitative	Interviews	Staff	August
		Interviews	Students	
		Focus group	Employers	

The goal in building the scaffolding for the evaluation is to produce a blueprint that includes the direction for the inquiry and the approach and methods to be used. The table in our example is one template on which to build the blueprint. However, we do not recommend only one format to organize the evaluation direction, methods, and schedule. The matrices used should fit the ways in which the staff and other stakeholders prefer to construct.

Not all of the information we want to consider can fit into the table. In addition to a table that serves as a blueprint, the evaluation plan should describe ways in which program staff or community members might be engaged in doing different tasks, or how an external evaluator will be engaged. It could also describe how capacity could be built by explaining that an external evaluator will train tribal college students in how to conduct a focus group and supervise their work as data gathers. The evaluation plan should include all the elements of good Indigenous evaluation practice

through combination of tables and narratives that describe how the evaluation will be done.

Interpreting the Information

Vine Deloria reminded us that: **“The old Indians were interested in finding the proper moral and ethical road upon which human beings should walk. All knowledge, if it is to be useful, was directed towards that goal.”**⁴² To honor our traditional ways of knowing, we are responsible for carefully interpreting our experience, celebrating what we have learned, and using the knowledge we gain to move forward.

To interpret the information, we need to analyze our data. In general, the goal when analyzing the information is to reduce it into numerical or narrative summaries that capture the essence of the information. As we analyze the information, we must consider the many audiences with whom it is to be shared. Our first concern is to distill information so it is understandable to our own community and program participants. The analysis shared with our community may differ in its scope and emphasis from the analysis that is shared with funders, although both will be based on the same overall analyses of our program data. The ways in which the information is analyzed depends on the methods used to collect the data.

Analyzing Qualitative Information

For qualitative information (words, stories, and documents), analysis usually involves reading the words, listening to recordings of interviews, viewing images on a video, noting what is being said, then organizing the information. Often a coding system is used to sort the narrative data. The codes can emerge from the data, or they can be established in advance.

⁴² Deloria, Jr., V., *Spirit and Reason: The Vine Deloria, Jr., Reader*, Fulcrum Publishing, Golden, CO, 1999, p. 49 & 52.



White Clay Language Retreat, Fort Belknap College



Science Classroom, Chief Dull Knife College

FRAMEWORK

Planning, Implementing and Celebrating



Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute

For example, when coding transcripts of interviews of participants in a summer science program, pre-established codes might be used such as: **those that are critical or negative** and **those that are positive**. Notes from the transcripts of the interviews are listed under each of the two categories. Alternatively, as the transcripts are read, the analyzer may start listing patterns of information that emerge from the readings: for example, **comments on field experiences**, or **comments on guest speakers**, or **comments regarding the scheduling**. These simple coding schemes begin to sort the information. Further sorting can occur within each coded category to reveal more detail from the data.

Once the information is sorted, the analysis summarizes the information based on the coding system or other means for organizing the information. The summaries explain the overall quantity of information within a coded area. For our example we might report that **75% of those interviewed had comments regarding the scheduling of summer camp and of these, the majority expressed concern that too many activities were planned for each day**.

In reporting the summary of the coded information, descriptions and summaries of the various categories are often illustrated with a direct quote. These quotes give life to the summary by allowing the voices of those who contributed the information to emerge. Of course, if confidentiality is important to protect, the quotes should not identify the speaker. Further, those who are quoted should have an opportunity to read their words prior to publication. In some cases, the speaker may want to be identified in the report. If so, consent for the use must be clearly documented.

Qualitative analysis can be time consuming. It often requires that any recorded information be typed into a written transcript. Sorting

information and organizing into codes requires a concentrated effort of carefully reading the information and thinking about how to organize it. As noted above, in a survey that used open-ended questions (different words written in response to questions), more time was consumed to sort and categorize than a closed question that asked for a rating or ranking number. A number of electronic programs facilitate qualitative data analysis; however, they are costly and require training to use.

It is important to describe the analysis process when reporting the findings. For example, how were the codes determined and who did the coding? Did more than one person code information? If so, did they tend to agree on the information that was categorized into the coding system? By describing the process, the analysis is more transparent and the summary of findings will be more credible.

Despite the challenges of analyzing qualitative information, it is essential to telling the story of a program. It gives a face and voice to our story, and describes relationships and experiences that cannot be captured with numbers, percentages and scores, and provides stories that we can share and celebrate with our community.

Analyzing Quantitative Information

Since quantitative information yields numbers, the analysis involves summarizing numerical information. Just as in the analysis of qualitative information, the goal is to reduce the data. This is usually accomplished by using descriptive statistics and completing the analysis with an electronic spreadsheet such as Microsoft Office Excel or some other statistical software spreadsheet. However, care must be taken to review the data for inappropriate or erroneous responses prior to entering it into a spreadsheet. For example, a person may



Haskell Indian Nations University Classroom

FRAMEWORK

Planning, Implementing and Celebrating

have circled two ratings on a five-point rating scale and only one rating can be entered. Usually, this questionnaire is not included in the data.

Common statistical procedures include doing a frequency analysis and creating a table or graph to report the information. If the metric being used is a continuous number such as age, or a test score (compared to ordinal numbers that order opinions such as: strongly disagree, agree, strongly agree), a mean or average can be calculated. It is important to understand the difference between continuous measures and ordinal measures because each requires different statistical approaches.

Often it is good to disaggregate numerical data. For example, did males differ from females, did those who received different types of service differ in their opinions of the program, do younger people differ in their opinions compared to older participants? Cross tabulations and inferential statistical tests can provide this type of information. Again, it is important to understand what type of numerical data is being used because the statistical procedures the evaluator will use is determined by the type of data.



Haskell Indian Nations University Alumni

Working in Partnership with External Evaluators

A core principle of the AIHEC Indigenous Evaluation Framework is to broaden the role of community in the evaluation and to base the evaluation process on commonly held cultural values. However, we acknowledge that in many cases there will be a need to use the expertise of external evaluators. In fact, many funding sources require that a program work with an external evaluator who is not directly employed by the program. External evaluators have expertise to ensure that evaluation design and methods are appropriate for the interests to the program staff, community, and funders. They have the training to do data analysis and time to dedicate to preparing reports. However, external evaluators should be aware of the values central to the community's view of the role of evaluation and should be willing to work in ways that support participatory evaluation practices and elements of the AIHEC Indigenous Evaluation Framework.

In reframing evaluation, we encourage a strong partnering relationship between evaluators, program staff, and the community. We encourage external evaluators to facilitate a sense of partnership through respectful processes of community engagement. We also encourage evaluators to find opportunities to build capacity within the community as much as possible by including community (for example, tribal college students) in aspects of the evaluation such as gathering data or assisting with the analysis.



Little Priest Tribal College Candling

Reference



See Readings, "Culturally Competent Evaluation in Indian Country."



*Leech Lake Tribal College Carpentry Students
Working on Red Lake Home Project*

Reflecting, Learning, Celebrating

As the story of the program unfolds, we must allow ourselves time to reflect on information we are gathering and analyzing, and celebrate what we have learned. Often the only evaluation report is the one written for the funding agency. It is important to meet the reporting requirements of those providing the resources for the program. However, our most important audiences are those engaged in the program and the community being served by a program.

Our reflections on what we are learning allow us to extend our knowledge and continue to move forward. The learning we have gained from our story is reason to celebrate and should be viewed as both an educational and celebratory event.

There are many ways to customize evaluation findings and report them to the community. Some ideas for reporting are:

- Highlight one or two evaluation findings in community newsletters.
- Develop a short report that is shared widely in the community.
- Host a dinner meeting and provide an oral report or presentation of key findings, or use a regularly scheduled event to make a short report.
- If the program served youth, ask them to take photos of their experience and present these at a community meeting or some other venue with an explanation of why they chose the images and what they were illustrating.
- Ask program participants to put on a short, dramatic sketch describing their experiences.
- Report key findings to the tribal council or to a council committee or tribal commission.

We can be creative and experiment with different ways to customize reports and present evaluation findings to the community. As Indigenous evaluators, our goal is to make information available and accessible, using formats that make sense for our purposes and audiences. However, we should always treat the learning from our evaluations as an event worth celebrating and attempt to engage the community in this celebration.

Grounding the Evaluation in Core Values

Before constructing the evaluation plan, we should consider grounding our work within traditional knowledge and community values. It is important to take time to identify any values important to your community that should guide your evaluation. If you decide to use the core cultural values described in this *AIHEC Indigenous Evaluation Framework*, the table

on the next page is a guide for ways to address Indigenous ways of knowing and the core values when planning an evaluation. This guide was used in the example of the summer youth employment program stated earlier in this section.



Haskell Indian Nations University Veterans

Strategies for Grounding the Evaluation in Traditional Ways of Knowing and Core Values

BELIEFS AND VALUES (INDIGENOUS FRAMEWORK)

Indigenous Knowledge Creation—Context and Use are Critical

- Describe how the evaluation itself will become part of the program and will be included throughout the program's implementation.
- Consider how to analyze specific variables without ignoring the contextual situation.
- Use evaluation approaches that ensure multiple perspectives such as mixed methods designs.
- Ensure that the context of the program is fully understood by any external evaluators and is described in any evaluation reports.
- Allow time for continuous reflection on what is learned and ensure that evaluation findings will be used.

People of a Place—Respect Place-based Programs

- Honor the place-based nature of many of our programs.
- Include information regarding how the program is situated within the community and how it connects to other programs or initiatives.
- Celebrate success, however do not conclude that what works in the local situation can be transferred or generalized to other contexts without appropriate contextual adaptations.

Centrality of Community and Family—Connect Evaluation to Community

- Create opportunities for engaging community through participatory evaluation practices when planning and implementing the evaluation.
- Make evaluation processes transparent so key stakeholders understand its role and how it will be implemented.
- Understand that programs may not focus only on individual achievement, but also on restoring community health and well being, and find ways to capture this in the program's story.

Recognizing our Gifts—Personal Sovereignty; Consider the Whole Person when Assessing Merit

- Allow for creativity and self-expression.
- Recognize that people enter programs at different places and with different skills and experience.
- Use multiple ways to measure accomplishment of individuals and/or groups.
- Honor accomplishment while recognizing that everyone has value and different gifts.
- Make connections to accomplishment and responsibility to self and community.

Sovereignty—Create Ownership and Build Capacity

- Follow Native Institutional Review Board processes or other tribal/community protocols for evaluation and research.
- Include consent processes that allow people to see how their information is interpreted.
- Use approaches and methods that will build evaluation capacity in the community and create opportunities for community members to develop evaluation skills.
- Secure proper permission if future publishing is expected.
- Share evaluation information in ways that celebrate your accomplishments and describe what you have learned.

Putting It Together

The AIHEC Indigenous Evaluation Framework is a demanding process that requires we commit to viewing evaluation as knowledge creation and grounding our practice in core values. It is an approach to telling our story that leads to learning. This learning should be celebrated and should contribute to the health of our communities. Some elements are easy to apply in an evaluation process, while others take time. As we implement the AIHEC Indigenous Evaluation Framework, we will also continue our learning about ways in which to move forward with this concept of Indigenous evaluation.

In applying the AIHEC Indigenous Evaluation Framework, it may be helpful to review the key elements and what they suggest for evaluation practice.

Ground the Evaluation in Traditional Ways of Knowing and Cultural Values

- Commit to learn from and use evaluation knowledge.
- Understand that a program fits within a context and must be understood within that context.
- Review the traditional ways of knowing and core cultural values and consider how to incorporate their principles into the evaluation.
- Consider the values or practices of your community and identify how these will be honored in the evaluation.

Creating Our Story

- Describe the story the program plans to tell by using an inclusive process.
- Diagram or draw the major relationships in the story; describe how activities are related to desired outcomes.



WINHEC Jon Henri, Chairman, with Sami University Group, Melbourne, Australia



*Gary Tanner, Haskell Indian Nations University,
with Sami University Group, Melbourne, Australia*

- Identify assumptions that are being made about relationships between activities and outcomes.
- Develop key elements to explore as the story unfolds using questions or evaluative statements.

Building the Scaffolding

- Employ keen observation and interpretation of individual and communal experiences through the use of multiple approaches to explore the story; both qualitative and quantitative methods.
- Consider ways to assess changes that the program wants to influence.

Responsive Information Gathering

- Identify the different methods that will be used to gather information.
- Consider issues of cultural and community appropriateness for each method used to gather information.
- Look for and use approaches that fit within an Indigenous value system such as authentic assessment and appreciative inquiry.

Planning, Interpreting and Celebrating

- Identify the sources of information and the schedule for collecting data.
- Construct a blueprint in the form of a table or set of tables to guide the implementation of the evaluation.
- Interpret information using appropriate analysis techniques for qualitative and quantitative data.
- Organize evaluation findings to meet the needs of multiple audiences.
- Celebrate with the community the learning from the story that is finally told.
- Use the knowledge created through the evaluation to move forward and improve services.



Continuing the Dialogue

The AIHEC Indigenous Evaluation Framework presents initial thoughts regarding the core elements within Native epistemology and tribal values that form a framework from which to conduct evaluation. We have suggested strategies for using this AIHEC Indigenous Evaluation Framework to reframe the basic elements of Western evaluation practice to be more responsive and respectful of our values. True ownership of evaluation will occur within tribal communities only after those community institutions and/or agencies (such as TCUs and K–12 schools) apply these ideas to their educational programs, particularly STEM education, and mold them to fit their settings and circumstances. As we apply these ideas, we will continue to expand our understanding of the concept of Indigenous evaluation.

AIHEC will continue this dialogue through an open access Web-based Indigenous Evaluation Resource Center located on the AIHEC Web site: <http://www.aihec.org>. This online resource will include additional readings and resources; lists of people who do evaluation and who are responsive to the ideas in the *AIHEC Indigenous Evaluation Framework*; and space for those who have applied ideas and experimented with different approaches to evaluation in their communities to post comments, suggestions, and share stories. All of the participants in the workshops will have access to the online resource center.

We encourage those who want to integrate ideas and practices outlined within this curriculum to continually expand the knowledge and practice of an Indigenous framing of evaluation. It is only through our experiences in learning from each other as a community of Indigenous evaluators that we will reclaim our Indigenous ways of knowing and our traditional ways of assessing merit.



Indigenous Evaluation Resource Center Web Page Example

Reference

Indigenous Evaluation
Resource Center:
[http://www.aihec.org/
IndigenousEvaluation](http://www.aihec.org/IndigenousEvaluation)

FRAMEWORK

Planning, Implementing and Celebrating

