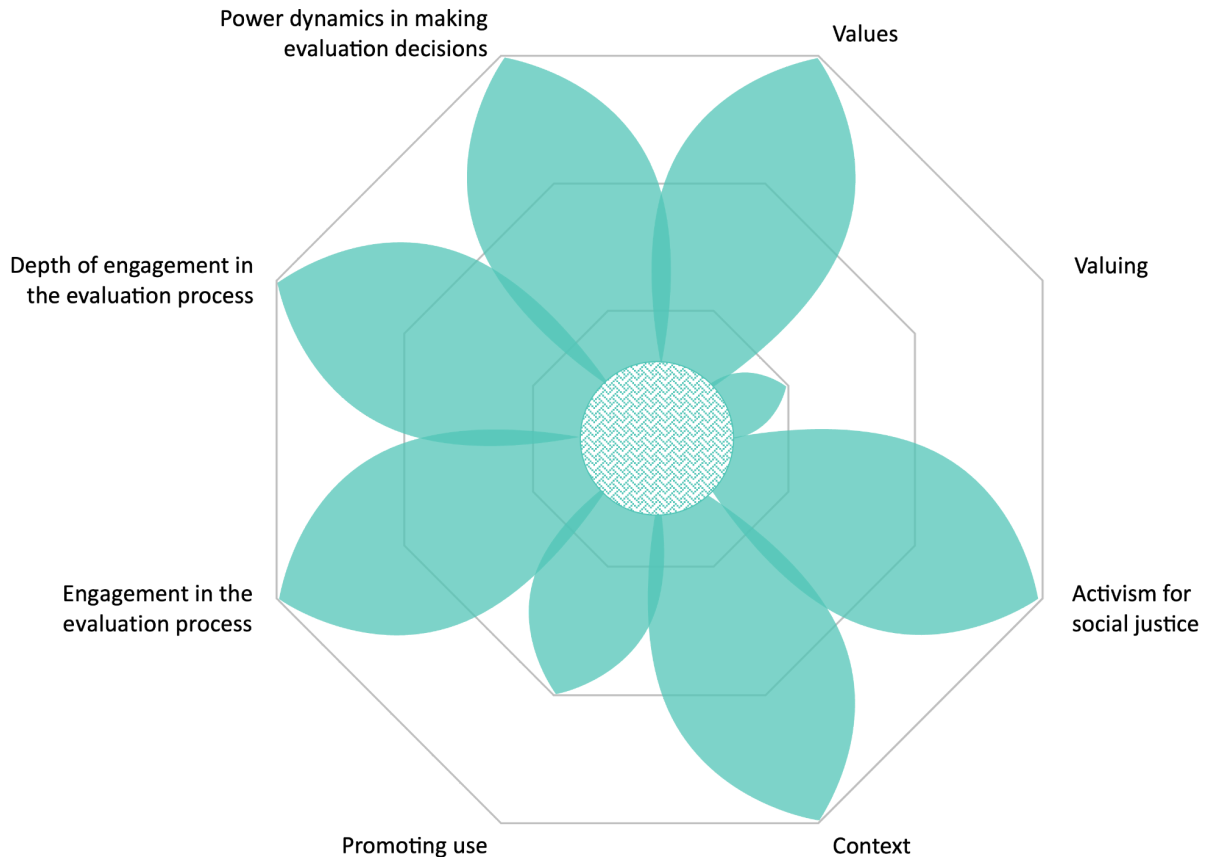


Nation to Nation Evaluation (N2NE)

The Nation to Nation Evaluation approach is in the indigenous paradigm and primarily uses mixed methods. It has been written about by Waapalaneexkweew (Nicole Bowman, Mohican/Lunaape) starting in 2015. The Nation to Nation Evaluation approach is one of many indigenous approaches to evaluation, or Culturally Responsive Indigenous Evaluation, which conducts evaluation with the unique values, perspectives, and culture of indigenous peoples.



Legend

- Post-positivist paradigm
- Pragmatist paradigm
- Constructivist paradigm
- Transformative paradigm
- Indigenous paradigm
- ⊕ Quantitative methods
- ⊗ Qualitative methods
- ⊘ Mixed methods

Citation:

Becho, L., Montrose-Moorhead, B., & Schroeter, D. (2023, March 16). Nation-to-nation evaluation handout. Retrieved from osf.io/d35r2

Nation to Nation Evaluation¹ (N2NE)

Dimension	Rating	Evidence to Support this Rating
<p>Values</p> <p>Values refers to the extent to which an evaluation approach’s guidance for evaluators includes the surfacing and use of values in an evaluation. Values include the beliefs, attitudes, and ideas of those involved in the evaluation about what is of value, good, important, worthwhile, desired, needed, or preferred. Values guide, implicitly or explicitly, what happens at each stage in the process and how the work at each stage is carried out.</p>	3	<p>The values of Indigenous communities play an active role in the conceptualization and implementation of the evaluation. Some important values for N2NE include the centrality of community to Indigenous thinking, including benefiting and honoring children, elders, and families; supporting the spiritual, emotional, physical, and intellectual health of communities; viewing impacts and consequences through the next seven generations; recognizing traditional, elder wisdom, and practical knowledge as well as contemporary sources of knowledge; humility and balance; visioning and path-finding; and being caretakers of knowledge, not owners.</p>
<p>Valuing</p> <p>Valuing refers to the extent to which an evaluation approach’s guidance for evaluators includes an implicit or explicit process of determining the merit, worth, or significance of something.</p>	1	<p>N2NE does not explicitly discuss valuing as a process for determining merit, worth, or significance. Instead, evaluation is a process of learning and improvement. Bowman (2018) acknowledges that there is no direct translation for the English term “evaluate.” She writes (2018), “In terms of evaluation, our elders tell us that it is a way of understanding the world, ‘something that happens is not good or bad, it just is and we have an opportunity to learn from it’ (Chohkalihke [G. Jacobs], personal communication, July 2015)” (p. 20).</p>
<p>Activism for social justice</p> <p>Activism for social justice refers to the extent to which an evaluation approach’s guidance for evaluators to take clear</p>	3	<p>Activism or social justice is a core purpose for conducting a N2NE. “Evaluation should be a tool of transformation, improvement, and empowerment to solve chronic issues in society” (Bowman, 2018, p. 27).</p>

¹ This description of the Nation-to-Nation Evaluation approach was compiled from writings by Waapalaneexkweew (Nicole Bowman, Mohican/Lunaape). Justification for the ratings draw from her descriptions of both Nation to Nation evaluation and her characterization of the broader Culturally Responsive Indigenous Evaluation (CRIE).

Dimension	Rating	Evidence to Support this Rating
<p>action in support of a cause, and its positioning of advocacy or activism as the primary purpose of evaluation activities.</p>		<p>Specifically, Tribal sovereignty is seen as a “critical lever for creating transformative change in policy, practice, and evaluation” (Bowman, 2020, p. 110). Addressing core issues such as sovereignty, self-determination, and decolonization within the context of an evaluation study serves as a driving principle for N2NE and seen as having the highest impact for Tribal communities.</p>
<p>Context Context refers to an evaluation approach’s guidance on the extent to which evaluations directly and actively attend to their surrounding cultural, historical, and/or political contexts or systems.</p>	3	<p>Tribal sovereignty lays the legal and political foundation for a N2NE, making this evaluation approach inextricable from the legal, political, cultural, and community requirements of each unique Tribal Nation and community. “The unique legal and political distinction of Tribal/First Nations and Indigenous people is what sets the population apart from other racial, ethnic, or marginalized groups” (Bowman, 2020, p. 104).</p>
<p>Promoting use Promoting use refers to the extent to which an evaluation approach guides evaluators to directly and actively facilitate use. This use could be use of evaluation findings, or of knowledge gained through the process of engaging in an evaluation. Use can be immediate and large, or slow and steady, occurring over time.</p>	2	<p>The central purpose of evaluation in a N2NE is learning. The Indigenous paradigm values using your teachings and “seeing challenges as opportunities for applying teaching and community problem-solving activities” (Bowman, 2018, p. 23). While there is an assumption of using evaluation for social change, there are no explicit steps or guidance on how the evaluation should promote use.</p>
<p>Engagement in the evaluation process Engagement refers to the extent to which an evaluation approach’s guidance to evaluators on who is involved in evaluation planning, interpretation, reporting, and decision-making.</p>	3	<p>A N2NE approach centers the voices, experiences, and ways of knowing of Indigenous people throughout the evaluation process. N2NE critically examines “who’s experiences, philosophies, policies, or other sources of information are being represented throughout the process” (Bowman, 2020, p. 110).</p> <p>The evaluation involves Tribal community members in guiding activities whenever possible, for example</p>

Dimension	Rating	Evidence to Support this Rating
<p>These groups of people might include those who work on the design, implementation, and/or management of an evaluation (e.g., donors, funders, taxpayers), those who are the immediate recipients of a program (e.g., program participants, or those who receive services), and those who are not direct recipients but benefit nonetheless (e.g., families of people who participated in the program, others conducting similar activities).</p>		<p>“engaging Tribal scholars, Tribal/First Nation governments, Indigenous non-profit or educational and policy agencies (e.g., local, national, international), and including traditional Indigenous leaders” (Bowman, 2020, p. 111).</p> <p>N2NE operates from a tri-lateral model, allowing for the inclusion of Tribal sovereignty and self determination of communities. “The trilateral model (Reinhardt & Maday, 2006) is a decolonized and indigenous-centered way used to situate Tribal sovereignty to frame, test, and modify the design, inclusion, and implementation of legal/political aspects and cultural/community context of Indigenous communities and Tribal governments” (Bowman, 2018, p. 21). In this model, “Tribal, Federal, and State governments share a tri-lateral responsibility to carry out educational policy and systems practices” (Bowman, 2020, p. 106).</p>
<p>Depth of engagement in the evaluation process</p> <p>Depth of engagement refers to the extent to which an evaluation approach’s guidance on the extent to which different groups of people are engaged throughout an evaluation, and in what roles (i.e., no role, consulted, partners, or co-directors).</p>	3	<p>“CRIE uses traditional knowledge and contemporary Indigenous theory and methods to design and implement an evaluation study, so it is led by and for the benefit of Indigenous people and Tribal nations” (Bowman, 2018, p. 22).</p>
<p>Power dynamics in making evaluation decisions</p> <p>Power dynamic in making evaluation decisions refers to the extent to which an evaluation approach’s guidance about who is</p>	3	<p>Indigenous communities are involved in the decision making process throughout the evaluation, reflecting both the cultural values and legal rights of Tribal Nations. “Traditional Indigenous leadership decides, by consensus, all matters including equitably and appropriately within the ecosystem” (Bowman, 2020, p. 115).</p>

Dimension	Rating	Evidence to Support this Rating
engaged in decision-making and how.		“Elected Tribal/First Nations have government officials to make decisions in contemporary governance activities. Traditionally speaking, Indigenous leadership is carried out in various roles by families, clan, gender, and appointed responsibilities are bestowed to Indigenous community members by traditional leaders” (Bowman, 2020, p. 114).

Steps for Implementing this Approach in Practice

Every Tribal/First Nation is different; therefore, Culturally Responsive Indigenous Evaluations (CRIEs) are expected to respond to and be driven by the unique political, cultural, and community requirements of each Tribal Nation. Bowman (2018) writes, “each tribal community is different, and each will have a unique historical narrative, cultural traditions, language, community practices, and political, legal, and governance structures” (Bowman, 2018, p. 19). Instead of explicit steps for implementing a CRIE, Bowman puts forth several core tenants and unique practices that set this evaluation approach apart.

As a foundational tenant, N2NE, along with other CRIE approaches, centers on the global Indigenous framework created by the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) in 2008. The forty-six articles within the UN Resolution 61/295 are organized around nine areas: Foundational Rights; Life and Security; Culture, Religion, and Language; Education, Knowledge, Media and Employment; Political and Economic Rights; Lands, Territories, and Resources; Self-Government; Implementation; and Minimum Standards. (Bowman, 2020, p. 104). This global framework upholds the inherent, political, and legal rights of Indigenous communities.

The sovereignty of Tribal Nations also has direct implications for evaluation practice. “Indigenous people belong to sovereign nations with inherent legal and political rights afforded to no other racial or ethnic group. Sovereignty must be respected (that is, utilizing Tribal IRBs and Tribal Council for study approval), and Tribal governments involved in our evaluation, policy, and political discourse. This requires scientific, cultural, legal, and governance competencies and skills by evaluators. To do less than this is marginalizing Indigenous people and Tribal nations, causing further trauma and harm, and demonstrates the technical deficiencies of the evaluation profession” (Bowman, 2018, p. 27). “Respect for the legal ramifications of Tribal sovereignty is a critical aspect of any professional or academic pursuit undertaken in Indian country” (Bowman, 2018, p. 16).

Unique practices that honor the rights and sovereignty of Indigenous Nations include, but are not limited to: “use of Tribal Nation ordinances/policies, Tribal IRB’s, engaging Tribal PIs/Co-PIs on studies, utilization of Tribal theories, methods, and evidence-based models” (Bowman, 2020. P. 104).

N2NE is also rooted in Indigenous culture, traditions, values, and ways of knowing. N2NE, an approach specific to the Lunaape/Mohican people, Bowman (2015) frequently draws on the traditional “four doors” of the Lunaape/Mohican Medicine Wheel:

1. Ktanaxkihlaak – Eastern Door: honoring traditional knowledge, rights, and responsibilities
2. Shaawaneewang – Southern Door: honoring oral and other histories; treaty rights and other traditional agreements
3. Wsihkaang – Western Door: honoring contemporary tribe constitutions, laws, and policies
4. Loowaneewang – Northern Door: honoring community social and cultural histories and practices

Honoring oral histories, ancestral knowledge, learning, humility, community building, and respect for tradition are centered throughout all aspects of evaluation, from the purpose, conceptualization, co-creation of instruments, analyzing, and reporting of data.

Critically Reflecting on the Philosophical Orientation for this Approach

N2NE shares philosophical similarities with culturally responsive evaluation, critical race theory, and other critical and complex systems theories. Bowman (2020) calls out “important philosophical, theoretical, epistemological, and ideological differences of western/colonial people and nations as compared to Indigenous communities and Nations” (p. 103).

N2NE ways of knowing and philosophical orientations are inextricably linked to historical trauma and oppression. “Traditional knowledge is at the heart of oppositional consciousness and Tribal critical systems theory because it provides the spiritual roots, cultural content knowledge and community and sovereign-driven Tribal nations applications that directly push back against the western policies and systems of trauma, oppression, and death” (Bowman, 2020, p. 103).

“Philosophically, improvements and success for Indigenous communities and governments differ from western definitions. Learning, progress, and growth is the focus of Indigenous

communities. Wisdom comes from experience and humility. A responsibility to pass that on to future generations. From a contemporary standpoint, data sovereignty and performance improvement models in Tribal/First Nations is being utilized to include western measures of success” (Bowman, 2020, p. 114).

“Grounded by traditional Indigenous knowledge and ancestor wisdom/teachings is where we should start. Learning through practical application and lived experiences, we apply traditional teachings to contemporary contexts and practices. Finding areas of commonality, respect, and strength helps guide perceived differences to places of consensus” (Bowman, 2020, p. 116).

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Further Reading

Bowman, N. R., Dodge-Francis, C., & Tyndall, M. (2015). Responsive Indigenous evaluation: A cultural and contextual framework for Indian country. In S. Hood, R. Hopson, & H. Frierson (Eds.), *Continuing the journey to reposition culture and cultural context in evaluation theory and practice*. Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing.