

Native Science

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We have talked, discussed and suggested activities in Native science, but have not really defined what we are talking about. During the regional meeting in Kotzebue, a group of interested people got together to talk about Native science. The following are thoughts that were produced attempting to understand what it is. It is requested that the staff and readers review and make additions, deletions and modifications to the stated “givens” as this is a beginning draft.

- Within our Native mythology and stories are the sciences and within the Native sciences are the mythology and stories.
- Native Science is concerned with asking the right questions to learn from nature and the spiritual worlds.
- Native science is centered on studying natural phenomena requiring long and patient observation—a matter of survival.
- The Native empirical knowledge of habitats and niches is conducive to intuition which may originate from the subconscious, natural or spiritual worlds. The way of knowing is qualitative and is conservation-based to ensure sustainability.
- Native ways of knowing are holistic or holographic that recognizes relationships in place and influences to processes in the ecological system.
- A belief in everything having a spirit establishes a sense of spirituality which is inseparable from everyday life. This spirituality is embedded in respect which gives honor and dignity to all things. “We are biologists in our own way.”
- Native science deals with all aspects of life: health (healing plants), psychology, weather prediction, earth science, shamanism, animal behavior according to

seasons, stars and constellations, reincarnation, natural permutations, rituals and ceremonies to maintain balance and many areas of life.

- The Native scientist checks on past history and events to see and understand the present situation.

Ideas on assessing educational change process in Native language acquisition and learning of Native cultural and modern lifeways:

- Is the study based on natural phenomena?
- Is the inquiry logical and meaningful?
- Is the historical (mythology & stories) data available?
- How was the conclusion arrived at?
- Does the data gathering process include holistic thought?
- Does the process use the five senses and elements of intuition?