

# Indigenous Innovations in Higher Education

## Local Knowledge and Critical Research

Elizabeth Sumida Huaman and  
Bryan McKinley Jones Brayboy (Eds.)



## **Indigenous Innovations in Higher Education**

## ADVANCES IN INNOVATION EDUCATION

Volume 4

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### ***Aims and Scope***

Industry, government-sanctioned research and development and the private sectors have historically been the champions of fostering innovation with the aim of addressing changing human needs as well as economic gain. The connectivity of the 21st century coupled with advances in information systems and the unchecked advent of globalization have resulted in challenges to existing institutional structures in place as well as a greater awareness of inequities within and across different regions of the world. Innovation and innovation education are the new buzz words increasingly inundating popular discourses in different media. The aim of this avant-garde book series is to unfold the conceptual foundations of innovation from historical, socio-political, economic, scientific and ethical perspectives, as well as apply these foundations towards issues confronting education, science and society in the 21st century.

# **Indigenous Innovations in Higher Education**

*Local Knowledge and Critical Research*

*Edited by*

**Elizabeth Sumida Huaman and Bryan McKinley Jones Brayboy**

*Arizona State University, USA*



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## SERIES FOREWORD

The present book, *Indigenous Innovations in Higher Education: Local Knowledge and Critical Research* is the fourth volume in the series *Advances in Innovation Education* (AIE), and co-incidentally heralds the fourth year of the series. The series was founded in 2013 with the purpose of bringing to the community the conceptual foundations of innovation from historical, socio-political, economic, scientific and ethical perspectives, as well to apply these foundations towards issues confronting education, science and society in the 21st century. The first volume, *Raising the Alarm* (Robert Este) presented a philosophical basis for a discussion of innovation and science; the second volume, *Indigenous Innovation: Universalities and Peculiarities* (Sumida Huaman & Sriraman) examined Indigenous perspectives to innovation through the lens of different Indigenous communities in the world; the third volume, *The Road to Independence* (Gunnarsdóttir & Jónsdóttir) laid the foundation for practical work on innovation – namely the building blocks and steps to pursue entrepreneurship from an idea to a viable, marketable product in a grass roots fashion applicable to poorer communities that constantly innovate to survive!

The present volume by Elizabeth Sumida Huaman and Bryan McKinley Jones Brayboy addresses Indigenous innovations in higher education by reporting on a collaborative project focused on Indigenous graduate education, and specifically on a partnership between an institution of higher education and tribal education. The book features the work of Pueblo Indian peoples writing from within their own communities, who were part of one of the largest graduate education cohorts in the United States, earning terminal degrees at Arizona State University. The lead editor of the book, Elizabeth Sumida Huaman also edited the second volume in this series, with me as the co-editor. Her work is innovative because it examines critically the relationship between Indigenous lands and natural resources, languages, cultural practices, and educational development, policy and practice, through both small scale and large scale collaborative partnerships with Indigenous communities in North and South America. While the previous edited volume brought into attention local knowledge systems from different parts of the world, this book draws specifically on the Pueblo Indian peoples of New Mexico. The innovative aspect of this book lies in ways the local knowledge of Pueblo Indians were supported by an institution of higher education leading to diversity in critical research applicable to their communities, and resulting in knowledge sanctioned by the academy. Although the project is geographically located in the South-western part of the United States, its innovative aspects serve as an example that is worth emulating in other regions of the world.

The series also welcomes numerous new members into the editorial board – namely Rósa Gunnarsdóttir and Svanborg Rannveig Jónsdóttir both from the *University of*



SERIES FOREWORD

*Iceland; Andrew Penaluna, University of Wales – Trinity Saint David, UK; Larisa Shavinina, University of Quebec, Canada, and last but not least Elizabeth Sumida Huaman, Arizona State University, USA.*

I am hoping the series will continue to bring volumes that push a diversity of notions of “innovation” to relevant contexts and situations we are collectively facing in an increasingly polarized world governed by inhumane corporations and institutions. In doing so, we challenge dominant perceptions and ways of thinking that permeate the notion of “innovation” – beyond the marketing of a product to a gullible public.

*Bharath Sriraman (Series Editor)  
Missoula, Montana  
April 4, 2017*

CHRISTINE ZUNI CRUZ

## FOREWORD

*Does it matter how  
one  
uses language  
and  
for what purpose?*  
(Cook-Lynn, 1996, p. 74)

### FOREWORDS/FORWARD/*FORWARD*/FOUR WORDS

Complexity and multiplicity are emblematic of Pueblo worldview and consciousness. To provide a foundation to engage and address the work of the Pueblo doctoral scholars presented in this book, I employ the complexity and multiplicity of English homonyms. Drawing on different meanings of foreword, forward, and four words, I explore the deep roots from which, and *for* whom, Pueblo scholars emerge and write.

This book features the writings of members of the first Pueblo doctoral cohort emerging from Arizona State University's School of Social Transformation. This first cohort produced doctors in Justice Studies in May 2015 trained in Pueblo and Indigenous theoretical frameworks, broader discourse analysis of imperialism and globalization, critique of historical inequalities, and building Indigenous justice through domestic and internationally relevant research.

The expression of Pueblo intellectualism through the English language brings to mind the preference many Indigenous language speakers have for communicating in their native tongue. Robert Cruz, a Tohono O'odham speaker and linguist, says he prefers his native language because "...when I use English, I feel as if I am lying because there is no feeling in my utterances in the colonists' languages" (2012, p. 97). Orality and literacy in the colonists' languages by Indigenous Peoples are at once, challenging and profound. Profound because they bridge the divide between primary oral cultures and literate ones and allow Indigenous Peoples to express and exchange ideas across multiple Indigenous language groups. They are challenging precisely because of the struggle in matching feelings and profound understandings across primary oral cultures and literate ones whether in speech or in writing.

FIRST, A WORD ON *FOREWORDS*

Anishinabek scholar Professor John Borrows selected four words to organize his memorable “fourword” for the inaugural issue of the Indigenous Law Journal (Borrows, 2002). Similarly, I have selected four homonyms as the organizing device for this foreword. From Elizabeth Hill Boone’s foreword to *Indigenous Intellectuals: Knowledge, Power, and Colonial Culture in Mexico and the Andes*, I consider the connections between the precolonial definition of the Aztec intellectual and the modern work of Pueblo scholars.

Boone’s foreword begins with a “description of [the] sage in the Preconquest society of the Mexico Aztecs” (p. ix). Of especial significance is that the Nahuatl term *tlamatini* for the sage is gendered neutral.<sup>1</sup> Likewise, Pueblo peoples have always possessed *male* and *female intellectuals*. The *tlamatini* is wise, exemplary; possesses writings, owns books; the *tlamatini* is the tradition, the road; a leader, a rower, a companion, a bearer of responsibility, a guide. The description of the *tlamatini* as “the road...” is particularly meaningful (p. ix): Knowing the good road, and to lead along a bright path are apt roles for, and descriptions of, Pueblo Indigenous intellectuals.<sup>2</sup>

Scholarship of Indigenous Peoples, particularly scholarship reflective of the Indigenous knowledge frames is of immense importance to Indigenous Peoples and to all humanity. One of the benefits of diversity (as opposed to homogeneity of all types, i.e. race, gender, age, and yes, tribal affiliation) is the cognitive diversity and group thinking that enriches any space as a result of bringing diverse peoples together (Page, 2008). We see this reflected in the scholarship of the diverse group of the first cohort of Pueblo men and women. All are at different st/ages in their careers, in different disciplines, and from different Pueblo communities, including Isleta, Laguna, Tesuque, San Ildefonso, Jemez, and Cochiti.

Whether called an intellectual, *tlamatini*, sage, or wise one (Boone, 2014), in the past or in the present, Indigenous intellectuals existed, exist, and will continue to exist. Two decades ago, Indigenous scholar Elizabeth Cook-Lynn called out the challenges for the modern Indigenous intellectual, including stereotypes and invisibility. She commented that “American Indian intellectual” to many people, is a “bizarre phrase” and that no image of an American Indian intellectual exists amid predominant stereotypes, including the “primitive figure...[or] worse, the drunk” (Cook-Lynn, 1996, p. 57). Akimel O’Odham scholar David Martínez further recognizes that “intellectual” is inadequate, evocative of ivory towers, scholarly culture, an intelligentsia, all of which are non-Indigenous, yet “necessary for affirming that Indigenous writers are as capable as their European or American counterparts of profound insights expressed in eloquent prose” (2010, p. 30).

Pueblo knowledge is ensconced in orality and in an oral tradition. The *tlamatini* is described as one “possessing writings and owning books” (Boone, 2014, p. ix). It is a description that fits the *tlamatini* with their pictographic script and the Pueblo intellectual schooled in the modern university. Indeed, the relationship between

orality and literacy is worthy of deep reflection (Ong, 2002). However, writings and books of symbolic or syllabic recordings of words need not be thought of as the only “texts” with which Indigenous scholars are familiar. Of importance to any Indigenous knowledge frame is an understanding of other alter/native “texts” (Zuni Cruz, 2006, p. 898)—the land, the cosmos, the patterns, the weather, animals, plants, relationships, the ecosystem (Cajete, 2000). For example, stories are embedded in place and in the landscape itself. Of equal significance in the Indigenous knowledge frame is the embedded meaning in symbols, colors, story and narrative, and performance (Hibbetts, 1992). Cook-Lynn observed that Indian scholars suggest that, “ideas, in general...are to be generated from the inside of culture, not from the outside looking in” (1996, p. 70). This is a hallmark of the contributors to this book. What they have in common is the understanding of their place within, and their connection to, Pueblo peoples. As Cook-Lynn warned Indigenous intellectuals,

[i]f that work becomes too far removed from what is really going on in Indian enclaves, there will be no way to engage in responsible intellectual strategies in an era when structures of external cultural power are more oppressive than ever. Moreover, no important pedagogical movement will be made toward those defensive strategies which are among the vital functions of intellectualism: to change the world, to know it, and to make it better by knowing how to seek appropriate solutions to human problems. (Cook-Lynn, 1996, p. 71)

Represented here are Pueblo writers aware of “*what is really going on,*” engaging in responsible intellectual strategies, and moving toward defensive strategies. Each contributes to the functions of intellectualism – to *change*, to *know*, to *make the Pueblo world* better.

#### SECOND, ON BEING *FORWARD*

Possessed of voice, made louder, more prominent, and permanent by print and electronic reproduction, Indigenous intellectuals and scholars can be viewed as *being* forward within their own communities. Boldness is required of the intellectual to assert a position, a thought, or an idea. Boldness can conflict with community expectations of modesty and humility from leaders. Yet we need the strident, the ardent, and the eager to stir consciousness. It takes strength and perseverance to state the unpopular, to sound the alarm, and to get others to take action. This is an aspect of leadership. The tlamatini was described as “a leader” (of “men,” in the English translation), a “bearer of responsibility” and a “companion” (Boone, 2014, p. ix). A leader and bearer of responsibility, who is also a companion, must balance boldness with continued relationship.

The tlamatini was also known as “the tradition” (Boone, 2014, p. ix). Addressing tradition, in the present and moving into the future, takes boldness. Cook-Lynn describes Indigenous intellectuals as exploring traditional values, revealing truth and falsity about those values from a framework of *tribal realism*. It is diametrically

C. ZUNI CRUZ

opposed to fantasy, which often evades or suppresses moral issues (Cook-Lynn, 1996, p. 72). As such, the Indigenous intellectual must also possess courage. Tribal realism recognizes the paradox of tradition as connected to the past, yet not rigid in past form. Tradition exists in the present. A living tradition requires constant alignment to true values, as pressures shift or sway tradition from true values over time. As Lorenzo asserts in respect to Pueblo women, the comparison of historical-contemporary analysis helps to appreciate the process of negotiation between Pueblo peoples and Spanish colonists when [their] two legal traditions met and is helpful in understanding the past. As Pueblo peoples move into the future, “comparison can assist in determining traces of the Spanish colonial, often patriarchal systems that may exist, to our detriment, among our Pueblos (Lorenzo).”<sup>3</sup>

#### AND FORWARD – AS IN BEING AT THE FORE OR FRONT

Related to *being* forward, Indigenous intellectuals often find themselves in front, literally or figuratively, at the head, scouting, forward looking. They are to help us understand our future (Cook-Lynn, 1996).<sup>4</sup> Cook-Lynn poses a series of questions about Native intellectualism and intellectuals, specifically poets and novelists, but equally applicable across all disciplines.

[Are they] articulating the real and the marvelous in celebration of the past... presenting ideas, moving through those ideas and beyond? Are they the ones who recapture the past and preserve it? Are they thinkers who are capable of supplying principles which may be used to develop further ideas? Are they capable of the *critical analysis* of cause and effect? (Cook-Lynn, 1996, p. 74, my emphasis)

With these questions, Cook-Lynn probes not only who Indigenous intellectuals are, but also what they are doing. Her questions capture the work and the purpose of the Pueblo cohort—as senior scholar Dozier Enos writes in this volume, “looking into the past is part of looking forward, and that research, like time, is not really linear,” because the future is connected to the past and the past to the future.

#### FOUR WORD(S) TO GUIDE INDIGENOUS SCHOLARS AND INTELLECTUALS

In answering the question as to whether a traditional Pima knowledge bearer, is an Indigenous intellectual in comparison to his contemporaries in the progressive Indian community, Martinez considers four principles “one ought to bear in mind” in defining an Indigenous intellectual (2010, p. 2). Based on these principles, I suggest four words that mark or define the understandings and characterize the work of the Indigenous intellectual that are present in the Pueblo authors’ work – *mental sovereignty*, *Indigeneity*, *humility*, and *narrative*. These key words capture the attitudes, characteristics, and positionality of Indigenous intellectuals *in relationship to* their communities (Martínez, 2010).

*Mental Sovereignty*

To knowingly engage in the war of words and ideas, is to assert mental sovereignty (Zuni Cruz, 2008). Martinez's first principle recognizes that "each indigenous community in its own way [is] capable of addressing the most poignant issues of the human condition: life and death, human nature, origins, community, and the like" (Martínez, 2010, p. 2). Understanding this is to recognize the existence of a distinct Pueblo mentality, knowledge system, and intellectual tradition. To value it as the starting place in research and analysis and to seek to preserve it are exercises of *Pueblo mental sovereignty*.

*Pueblo mental sovereignty* exhibits itself as the authors in this book speak of Pueblo worldview, Pueblo core values, Pueblo cultural terms, and strengthening Pueblo tribal self-determination and sovereignty (Lorenzo, Sanchez, Luarkie, and Abeita). It asserts itself as a push against convention to explore why mainstream research is problematic from a Pueblo Indian standpoint, so that relevant research and educational approaches grounded in Pueblo thinking can emerge (Suina).

*Indigeneity*

Indigenous identity and relationship to community are crucial aspects of indigeneity. Martinez's second principle describes an Indigenous intellectual as "an indigenous person first and foremost, which includes valuing one's people and their relationship with their homeland, language, kinship, and sacred history (Martínez, 2010, p. 2)." Authors in this book also address valuing Indigeneity and its relational ethic of care. Chosa speaks of migration and youth engagement and re-engagement with their Pueblo communities. Ericson identifies as critical to cultural and "ecological survivance" the engagement of Indigenous youth in establishing place based solutions to environmental and social problems "outside of, and in spite of, external state impositions or interference."

*Humility*

Third is the principle of humility, which recognizes "being an intellectual is not limited to being college educated and speaking and writing in a European language (Martínez, 2010, p. 2)." Humility rejects the elitism of the academy and proficiency in non-Indigenous languages and turns Indigenous intellectuals inward to the knowledge bearers proficient in the alter/native "texts" and the mother tongue. The third principle instructs humility and reminds us of the limitations of western knowledge. In her chapter, Naranjo describes the knowledge bearers who transmit core values and practices to illustrate how life was lived and to explain the reasons we lived our lives as we did, reminding us of the critical work of intellectual forebears. Further, to underscore the need to engage Indigenous knowledge bearers

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directly, Dozier Enos explains that there are very traditional Indigenous people whose research will never be included in publication.

*Narrative*

Narrative is at the core of oral tradition (Ong, 2002). The fourth principle asserts, “while indigenous communities possess an intellectual tradition, they do not have a theoretical one; instead, philosophical and religious ideas and insights are conveyed primarily through *narrative*, be it in the form of a story, song, or speech (emphasis added) (Martínez, 2010, pp. 2–3). Naranjo highlights the messaging in everyday speech. She states:

To the generation in which I grew up, the community was the whole world, and Tewa, the language spoken at Santa Clara Pueblo, captures the core values held dear in that world. For example, everyone in the community was your ko-o, your aunt, your mae-mae, your uncle. In other words, we are all related.

Likewise, Sanchez, drawing largely from Tewa oral tradition, including story-sharing, describes Tewa Women United’s methodological framework in both research and practice and Suina, in her effort to understand her own relationship to research employs autoethnography. The authors’ use of narrative in its different forms: to convey principles, as a frame, and as a method of study demonstrate its centrality to the conveyance of ideas and insights.

A FINAL THOUGHT ON “FOR/E/FOUR”

The prefix of foreword is also a homonym, with homophones and homographs: for/fore/four. These homonyms provide powerful connections between the writers and their Peoples and to core Pueblo principles. The work in this book is *for* the community, emerging from the work of intellectual *forebears*, *for* those to come, arising from *four* critical principles: mental sovereignty, Pueblo indigeneity, humility, and narrative.

*And  
ah’um, Elder Sister (Elizabeth),  
how  
and  
for what purpose  
one  
uses language  
does matter.*

*Her’kem*

C.Z.C.  
University of New Mexico

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> In Nahuatl, “tlamatini-In tlamatini tauilli ocutly, tomaoac ocutl apocio, texteatl, coiaoac texcatl, necoc xapo, tllie, tlapale, amuxoa, amoxe, tllilli, tlapalli, utli, teiacanqui, tlanelo, teucani, tlaucani, tlalacanqui.” (italics removed) In a Spanish to English translation, the tlamatini becomes “The Wise Man-The wise man [is] exemplary. He possesses writings; he owns books. [He is] the tradition, the road; a leader of men, a rower, a companion, a bearer of responsibility, a guide” (Boone, 2014, p. ix).
- <sup>2</sup> In *Tiwa, Pae kui*. The good road. “Once we are born into this world, we have a chance to make it back to our Creator, but whether we do or not depends on the choices we make in life. Thus, we set upon our life journey...As we travel the road of life; we come upon a place where the road goes in opposite directions. The horizon in one direction appears to be cool and shady while the horizon in the other direction is bright and sunny. The road that goes in the direction of the cool and shady horizon gets darker and darker as one travels until it is completely dark. So dark that the traveler must open the eyelids with the fingers to make sure the eyes are open. As one travels in the other direction, the road gets brighter and brighter as one goes on until one sees the brilliant glory of our Creator. The traveler steps right into that brilliance and the spirit is reunited with the Creator. That is the good road. (Tiwa translation and commentary by Edward Fernando Lucero)”
- <sup>3</sup> From here forward, I reference the essays in this book by the author’s last name parenthetically or in text.
- <sup>4</sup> Cook-Lynn specifically asks, “If it is true that writers are the intellectuals of any nation...Is anyone doing the intellectual work in and about Indian communities that will help us understand our future? (Cook-Lynn, 1996, p. 74)

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**SECTION I**  
**ESTABLISHING LOCAL CONTEXT**  
**AND LOCAL KNOWLEDGE**

ELIZABETH SUMIDA HUAMAN AND  
BRYAN MCKINLEY JONES BRAYBOY

## 1. INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND ACADEME

*Building Learning Spaces through Innovative Educational Practice*

### INTRODUCTION

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* first published in 1968, Brazilian educator-scholar Paulo Freire discussed what he referred to as the “absolutizing of ignorance,” among other myths invented and perpetuated by oppressors for the purposes of maintaining power over the conquered, the colonized, “the oppressed.” Freire argued that the inhumanity of oppressors and revolutionary humanism, which are—on their surface—contradictory, both made use of science and technology that would either reduce the oppressed to subjects of scientific interest if the former, or promote humanization in the case of the latter (2005, p. 133). Freire (2005) claimed that the very definition, categorization, and certification of knowledge by those in power elevated the perceived intellectual superiority of the oppressors who would ultimately come to believe completely in the ignorance of others. He wrote:

This myth implies the existence of someone who decrees the ignorance of someone else. The one who is doing the decreeing defines himself and the class to which he belongs as those who know or were born to know; he thereby defines others as alien entities. The words of his own class come to be the “true” words, which he imposes or attempts to impose on others: the oppressed, *whose words have been stolen from them.* (pp. 133–134, our emphasis)

While the absolutizing of ignorance is applied to science, where Indigenous peoples have indisputably been constructed as subjects (Deloria, 1997; LaDuke, 2005; Smith, 1999; Whitt, 1998) this myth applies widely to diverse fields that make up higher education today, including the social sciences and humanities. In academe, knowledge tends to remain situated by—and through—Western traditions and rigidly defined and managed by dominant society shaped through colonialism (Brayboy, 2005; Dei, 2002; Leonard & Mercier, 2016). Similarly, education as the method of knowledge transfer (and validation) is rooted in Eurocentrism and accepted only as schooling, despite the myriad ways societies teach and learn.<sup>1</sup> However, over the past several decades, Indigenous researchers have challenged dominant definitions of knowledge and mechanisms of transmission and their colonial underpinnings while bringing

to the forefront Indigenous knowledges from diverse regions around the world as crucial for human, intellectual, and ecological diversity and survival (Aikenhead & Ogawa, 2007; Cajete, 2000; Johnson, 2012; Kawagley, 1995; McGregor, 2004; Pierotti & Wildcat, 2000). Indigenous peoples have engaged these conversations by using approaches to research and discourses that transcend characterizations of our peoples, homelands, and ways of knowing as victims of colonization rather than as actors who have disrupted, resisted, negotiated, adapted, and innovated subjugating agendas and oppressive conditions. In this regard, Mi'qmaq scholar Marie Battiste reminded us of not only our abilities, but also our responsibilities to push limiting characterizations as scholars who “move beyond the existing Indigenous experience of colonization by liberating Indigenous thought, practices, and discourses rather than relying on existing Eurocentric or colonial theory” (2000, p. xix).

Our responsibility in this chapter is to therefore share work we chose to do with our students and to situate this work in a broader context across space and time. We expose pervasive myths regarding dominant constructions of knowledge and education and interrupt them by highlighting local Indigenous knowledges and epistemologies reflected in the work of the authors in this volume. Drawing from Indigenous scholarship and with explicit conscientiousness of ourselves as Indigenous community members, we hope to contribute to the iterative (re) framing of education by describing our experiences within academe that address resistance in and through education, including discussion of anti-colonialism (Dei, 2002; Simmons & Dei, 2012) and mental colonization (Zuni Cruz, 2008). We revisit the conscientious uplifting of Indigeneity through education redefined and co-constructed by Indigenous peoples (Lomawaima, 1999; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006). We discuss the power of Indigenous narratives in education while underscoring Indigenous presence and scholarly contributions in higher education before introducing the authors and the significance of their work independently and as a collective to Indigenous and local discourses of self-representation and giving (Romero, 1994; Smith, 1999). In this way, guided by the work of Ojibwe scholar Scott Lyons (2000), we seek to re-set “the terms of the debate” (p. 452).

As educational researchers, we aim to follow Battiste's example to continually work alongside our community members, Indigenous colleagues, and allies to identify and create spaces where Indigenous knowledges and epistemologies can be cultivated—including those where they have not been seen as valid or welcomed. As educators, we also take up Freire's call to consider how our interactions with multiple knowledges and the rich and varied sources from which they come can be used for humanistic purposes, such as rebuilding educational opportunities towards Indigenous self-determination (Brayboy, 2004; Brayboy & Sumida Huaman, 2016) and where “stolen words” are reclaimed by their rightful speakers. Moreover, as Indigenous peoples, we have an obligation to hold close and defend our Indigenous communities, knowledges and epistemologies, which remind us of where we come from, who we are, and what we bring to this world.