

Indigenous Science Discussion Questions

- How might your research or field of work be relevant to Indigenous peoples and communities and/or Indigenous worldviews?
- ‘Helicopter research’ is one example of problematic trends in western science to be counteracted with the inclusion of local and Indigenous people in the research. What attributes make this practice problematic?
- “I alongside many others have continued to make many of the same avoidable mistakes when trying to do collaborative work, suggesting we need to reconsider what is core to the education of natural scientists.” What in the education of a scientist needs to change?
- Can you think of examples where predominantly white institutions or federal agencies collaborating meaningfully with Indigenous communities? What about them made it seemingly successful?
- Are there opportunities to apply the Six R’s of Indigenous Research to areas of your work or research?
- The US government acknowledged “Indigenous Knowledge has also been historically marginalized in scientific communities and excluded from research and academic resources, funding, and other opportunities.” With this in mind, what do you think equitable research looks like?
- What responsibility do you think federal governments have in establishing ethical research practices? Is the answer different for universities and academic institutions? Private-sector?
- CARE Principles “should not be thought of as only applying to Indigenous Knowledge or Traditional Knowledge, but also scientific data to enhance the wellbeing of all people.” Do you agree? Are there aspects you already apply to your work or ways to better incorporate them into your practices?
- Compare and contrast the CARE Principles, FAIR Principles, and the Six R’s of Indigenous Research. Does each set of principles appear complementary to one another? Are there facets that may be challenging to reconcile in implementation?

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Adapted from [USFWS Library's Braiding Sweetgrass Discussion Questions](#)

- Throughout *Braiding Sweetgrass*, Kimmerer writes about how her experiences in traditional academic settings has been influenced by her knowledge and Potawatomi heritage. Have you had similar experiences where your background and way of seeing the world clashes with the mainstream way of seeing and thinking?
- “The more something is shared, the greater the value,” Kimmerer believes. In what ways can we incorporate reciprocity, exchanging things with others or nature for mutual benefit, in our jobs or personal lives? How would this practice shift our thinking?
- Scientific knowledge and indigenous ways of knowing are complimentary, just like goldenrod and New England asters, do you think there’s a need for objectivity (science) and subjectivity to mesh together for there to be a fuller appreciation of plants, animals and the natural world?
- Kimmerer writes that science can be a path to kinship and act of reciprocity, and that none of the ecologists she knows entered the field “for the love of data or for the wonder of a p-value” but rather, they are heart-driven. Have you found this to be true?
- The Three Sisters, corn, beans and squash grow and flourish together in harmony and the “gifts of each are more fully expressed when they are nurtured together rather than alone.” How can we combine our individual strengths to build community and reciprocal relationships?
- Kimmerer writes about the chasm between Western science and “ecological compassion” and her dream of a world where “revelations of science” are “framed with an Indigenous worldview- stories in which matter and spirit are both given voice.” Do you think this is possible, and how could it come about?

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