

“Three-eyed seeing: exploring methods and theories for improved research in ethnobiology”

The International Society of Ethnobiology’s (ISE) Fourth Pre-Congress Workshop for Emerging Ethnobiologists

In 2010, emerging ethnobiologists from around the world joined together in Tofino, Canada and created the International Network of Emerging Ethnobiologists (INEE) at the ISE’s first student and early career professionals pre-congress workshop. Since then, ISE student representatives have organized biennial pre-congress workshops to create space for students, recent graduates and early career professionals from around the world to form lasting relationships and discuss key topics in ethnobiology. The fourth pre-congress workshop will take place just prior to the ISE’s 15th Congress in Uganda (likely from 27th-30th July). The theme of the 2016 workshop is “Three-eyed seeing: exploring methods and theories for improved research in ethnobiology.”

The workshop plans to incorporate participatory video training with discussions on the ISE’s Code of Ethics, methods and tools for better ethnobiological research, as well as the role of the researcher in working with Indigenous groups.

Our Goals:

- Expose students to innovative research methods in the context of ethnobiological research
- Focus on participatory video as one method because of the diverse ethical and practical aspects of research that are represented
- Provide a theoretical background to methods discussed
- Provide an insight into ethics and ethnobiological research in general
- Provide an open and ethical space for students to engage in a comfortable manner to engage in meaningful discussion
- Provide a space for engaging in these methods and theories in practice, e.g. PV training

These goals will be developed into more specific objectives through input from mentors, as well as through the input of participants prior to and during the workshop itself.

Themes of the workshop:

Three-eyed seeing- This builds on the two-eyed seeing approach developed in Canada with Indigenous elders of the Mi’kmaq Nation. Two-eyed seeing is “the gift of multiple perspectives treasured by many Aboriginal peoples ...it refers to learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous Knowledges and ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the strengths of Western Knowledges and ways of knowing, and to use both these eyes together, for the benefit of all.” While a useful frame for engaging in ethical research relationships from the perspective of knowledge sources, determining a strategy through two-eyed seeing that can be used for the *benefit of all* is extremely difficult. Within this definition there is a recognition that the knowledge classification strategies that “influence environmental politics are exceedingly important” (Bartlett et al., 2012: 335). In this sense a third eye is not only useful in conceptualising the researcher’s position, but also the position of different stakeholders involved in the research setting, as well as the strategies used to classify knowledge. Positionality is the recognition that our understanding is situated; it is produced in specific circumstances that ultimately shape it in some way, and these circumstances are unique to us as individuals. Two-eyed seeing aims to value one knowledge source as much as the other, and the third

eye aims to understand why the current differences in valuation arise, personally, but also externally. The ISE student representatives hope to use this basic conceptualisation of three-eyed seeing to begin a conversation with participants and mentors on how to conduct ourselves as reflexive researchers capable of viewing the world through the two- and three-eyed approaches. The hope is that, through discussions with participants and mentors, this workshop will be able to formalise some of this into a document, accessible to all workshop participants.

Ethics- Ethics permeates the many aspects of research, and will be incorporated in the different sessions that follow. While ethics is very subjective, beginning to disentangle the varied aspects that make up ethical research is of utmost importance: “how do you promote the importance and interconnections of biological and cultural diversity without facilitating erosion of the very relationships that you seek to protect?” (Bannister, 2007). The different facets of the ISE Code of Ethics will be discussed, with this session focusing on the complexity of ethics within research relationships, but also placing the discussion in wider spheres of interaction: governmental, NGO, community, and personal levels. Through mentors’ own insights and experience of Indigenous ethics and relationships, the hope is to provide participants with real examples of the different elements of ethical research relationships, as well as the different scales at which these manifest themselves.

Methodologies- One of the research methods we will explore is participatory video (PV), which we feel is a unique form of research that has specific uses within an ethnobiological context. Participatory video has a number of ethical goals, such as power distribution, often with ‘the researched’ managing and owning the process and product. In some ways it can be reciprocal in the sense that it provides a means of knowledge sharing as well as a tangible product, the video, which can be used by the group in question. It also has some practical uses for knowledge recording, especially within societies where oral traditions are often more prevalent than written ones. We have a unique opportunity to work with Civiliti, with whom the ISE has recently developed a partnership (www.civiliti.org), who have extensive experience with PV. Civiliti will hold a number of training sessions throughout the workshop regarding PV, and provide the chance to engage in some practical PV exercises. Other aspects of the methodologies session are still in development. An update will be provided as soon as these have been finalised, however tools such as field diaries will also be discussed.

The workshop is still in its planning stage and **the Call for Applications will be announced early in 2016**. Please send any enquiries to the ISE Student Representatives Robin Wild (robertaswild@gmail.com) and Karly Burch (karlyburch@gmail.com).

ISE Website- <http://www.ethnobiology.net/>

Congress Website- <http://isecongress2016.mak.ac.ug/index.html>

References

- Bartlett, C., Marshall, M., Marshall, A., 2012. Two-Eyed Seeing and other lessons learned within a co-learning journey of bringing together indigenous and mainstream knowledges and ways of knowing. *Journal of Environmental Studies and Sciences* 2, 331–340.
- Bannister, K., 2007. The ethics of engagement: An ethnobiologist’s perspective. *Academic Matters* 16–17.