NEWS | POSTED DECEMBER 19, 2022

Member Spotlight: Dr. Maung Ting Nyeu

Research Scientist, New York University

AUTHOR

Dr. Maung Ting Nyeu

Research Scientist
New York University
https://twitter.com/MTOGHN
Faculty Page

Who inspired you and why (and/or who inspired you to go into your chosen field of study)?

I am blessed with wonderful grandparents and my parents. As a child, I was always excited when my parents planned to visit my grandparents. For me, it meant happy storytelling sessions with my grandmother, a master storyteller. She knew hundreds of oral stories, and she would tell stories for hours in poetic verses. Not to mention, she used to prepare many tasty treats with local fruits, which I loved. Both of my parents were teachers, both inside and outside of school. While schools taught only in the national language, my parents taught Indigenous languages to generations of children outside school hours. Early on, they instilled in me the value of education, community, and service with compassion. My work with Indigenous stories, storytelling, and culturally responsive pedagogy is inspired by the indefatigable spirit and the undying love

of my parents and grandparents. Even though they are no longer with us, they are my saints and I always feel their blessings in my heart.

What advice would you give to a Grad student beginning their Ph.D. studies in Developmental Science or related?

I would ask grad students interested in conducting research in and with Indigenous communities, please do not be fly-by researchers. Take time to learn about the culture, people, and community. Second, lift the voices of people you study. I often remind myself the words of Theodor Adorno and Dr. Cornel West, “The condition of truth is to let the suffering speak.” Finally, as a grad student you may face good times and challenging times. Try to stay true to your heart and you will get there someday.

What are some of your hobbies?

When I am not conducting research, I love to listen to oral stories from grandmothers and village elders. I publish multilingual children’s books based on these Indigenous stories. I also run storytelling and retelling sessions with Indigenous children. It is amazing to see the young children so excited in retelling the stories and growing to be master storytellers someday.

What publication or book would you say is a must read in the field (and why)?

There are many excellent books. I would start with "Decolonizing Methologies" by Linda Tuhiwai Smith.