

Hawaii Pacific Evaluation Association

*The Role of Culture and Cultural Context in Evaluation: A Workshop on
Culturally Responsive Evaluation*

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Getting to Know You

- Introductions
 - Who you are and where you from?
 - How would you characterize yourself as an evaluator?
 - How is this congruent with who you are, your cultural background, and other experiences?



Purpose of My Visit

- Get to know you and for you to get to know me
- Share some of my thoughts about my work on the relevance of culture in evaluation and basic approach to CRE
- Share with you the thoughts of selected colleagues about the relevance of race and culture within the context of evaluation for our discussion
- ◆ Share a video taped presentation of an example of a CRE



Questions that are at the core of my “work”

- How much do we understand the importance, role, and influence of culture in program evaluation.
- Should culture/cultural context be a critical consideration in the design, implementation, interpretation, and reporting of program evaluations when conducted in communities of color?
- How might we train the next generation of evaluators to be more culturally responsive/competent to conduct evaluations in communities of color
- What is the history and contributions of African American educational researchers and evaluators in the U.S. 1930-1954



How much do we understand the importance, role, and influence of culture in program evaluation

- Evolution of the question
 - Lessons from a school evaluation
 - Chicago 1988
 - Further clarity by
 - Edmund Gordon AERA 1998
 - Culture as “error variance”
 - Understanding
 - Stake Responsive Evaluation
 - Human Observers



- Sadie Tanner Mossell Alexander
 - Ph.D. 1921 U of Penn
 - 1st Af. Am. to receive a Ph.D. in Economics

Should culture/cultural context be a critical consideration in the design, implementation, interpretation, and reporting of program evaluations when conducted in communities of color?

- My Answer

- *I can find no logical explanation as to why our evaluations should not be culturally responsive or that we should not behave in culturally responsible ways in our work as evaluators. (Hood, 2001)*



- Charles H. Thompson
- Ph.D. U of Chicago 1925
- 1st Af. Am. Ph.D. in Education

Rationale for my answer

- Evaluation efforts have typically failed to consider cultural background and context in their design, implementation, analyses, and recommendations
- It is not possible to effectively derive evaluative meaning from educational programs, designed to serve culturally diverse students, unless the evaluation themselves are more culturally responsive



House, E.R. (1999)

Race and Policy

- *Despite attempts to ameliorate racism and raise the school performance of minorities, improvements have been modest. Why does racism persist? How do race and policy affect each other? I want to offer a tentative explanation of this connection.*
 - *First, Americans hold deep-seated beliefs about democracy, equality, and fairness. These beliefs are sincere, I believe.*
 - *Second, America is a deeply racist country in a particular way. Although many countries harbor racist beliefs, those in America are peculiar in some respects.*
 - *Third, most "white" Americans don't fully comprehend that their country is racist, nor the extent of that racism, nor how that racism is embedded.*

Is Evaluation racist?

- Interviews:

- **Juan Martinez,**

- Teacher (native New Yorker and Puerto Rican), Olga Gundynn International School (Romania)
- Evaluation Consultant,
- Member, Romanian Evaluation Association

- **Michael Yellowbird,**

- Professor of Social Work, Humboldt State University
- Arikara (Sahnish) and Hidatsa Nations in North Dakota,



Evaluation and Culture

- All evaluation standards, guidelines or frameworks are culturally saturated—imbued with both implicit and explicit cultural assumptions.
- Cultural competence involves identifying culturally embedded assumptions, understanding one's own cultural position, and doing evaluation that is multiculturally valid.

Cultural Competence

*A set of academic and interpersonal skills that allow individuals to increase their **understanding and appreciation** of cultural differences and similarities within, among, and between groups. This requires a **willingness and ability** to draw on community-based values, traditions, and customs, and to work with knowledgeable persons of and from the community in developing focused interventions, communications and other supports.*

(Orlandi, 1992)

AMERICAN EVALUATION ASSOCIATION STATEMENT ON CULTURAL COMPETENCE IN EVALUATION

Approved by the AEA Membership: April 22, 2011

- Cultural competence is a stance taken toward culture, not a discrete status or simple mastery of particular knowledge and skills.
- A culturally competent evaluator
 - is prepared to engage with diverse segments of communities to include cultural and contextual dimensions important to the evaluation.
 - respect the cultures represented in the evaluation.

Core cultural competence concepts

- culture is central to economic, political, and social systems as well as individual identity.
 - all evaluation reflects culturally influenced norms, values, and ways of knowing—making cultural competence integral to ethical, high-quality evaluation.
- given the diversity of cultures within the United States, cultural competence is fluid.
 - An evaluator who is well prepared to work with a particular community is not necessarily competent in another.
- cultural competence in evaluation requires that evaluators maintain a high degree of self-awareness and self-examination to better understand how their own backgrounds and other life experiences serve as assets or limitations in the conduct of an evaluation.
- culture has implications for all phases of evaluation—including staffing, development, and implementation of evaluation efforts as well as communicating and using evaluation results.

Contextual Diversity

- **Demographic dimensions**
Race, ethnicity, language, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation
- **Sociopolitical dimensions**
Power, economy, living situation, class
- **Contextual dimensions specific to culture**

(SenGupta, Hopson & Thompson-Robinson, 2004)

Challenges for understanding evaluation in cultural context

- “What has frustrated me in the ways multicultural programs have been evaluated is that the people who do the evaluation generally do not understand the nature of multicultural work...The evaluators and their evaluations often miss the point of what the program is about and use inappropriate standards on which to interpret the program on on which to make value judgments” (Stockdill, 1992:17)

Why is cultural context important in evaluation theory, research, and practice?



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- Interview clips
 - Is cultural context important in conducting the evaluation of programs?
 - David Berliner, Arizona State University



- Henry Frierson, University of Florida-Gainesville



- *Culturally responsive evaluation is a powerful tool that has not been employed in the evaluation community at large. Moreover, there is a growing knowledge base about the practice of culturally responsive evaluation that can assist us in making our efforts more sensible, robust, and useful. We contend that if evaluators consider and become more responsive to cultural context and adopt strategies that are congruent with cultural understandings, the face of educational evaluation can be profoundly changed for the better. (Hood, Hopson, and Frierson 2005 p.1)*

- *In Hood, S., Hopson, R.K., & Frierson, H.T. editors (2005) *The Role of Culture and Cultural Context: A Mandate for Inclusion, the Discovery of Truth and Understanding in Evaluative Theory and Practice*. InfoAge Publishing Co.*

CRE Defined: Expanding Thinking on Responsive Evaluation

- As CRE embeds cultural context into the responsive evaluation framework (Mertens and Hopson 2006) it does so in an effort to
 - **“... [honor] the cultural context in which the program takes place by bringing needed shared lived experiences and understanding to the program. The lived experiences captured by the culturally responsive evaluator include individuals in positions of power in the program, as well as those who have been underrepresented or marginalized (Ryan, Chandler, and Samuels 2007 p.201)**

What is Culturally Responsive Evaluation (CRE)?

- Extension of Robert Stake's (1973) responsive evaluation framework
- Fully takes into account the culture of the program by providing a full description and explanation of its contextual factors
- Embeds cultural context into the responsive evaluation framework

Responsive Evaluation Substantive Structure

- Advanced organizers are issues rather than objectives/hypotheses
- Issues are structure for continuing discussions with clients, staff, and audience
- Issues are structures for data collection plan
- Systematic observations should be those that contribute to understanding or resolving issues identified
- Human observers are best instruments

CRE Resonance with Social Justice orient Evaluation Approaches

- **CRE resonates with:**
 - **Advocacy evaluation models with the intent of serving populations and communities that have been traditionally disenfranchised (Mertens and Hopson 2006).**
 - **Values engaged evaluation (Greene, DeStefano, Burgin, & Hall, 2005)**
 - **Empowerment evaluation (Fetterman, 1994) approaches**
 - **Transformative participatory evaluation (Cousins and Whitmore 1998).**

CRE Particular Resonance with Transformative Participatory Evaluation

- CRE and TPE share:
 - **“foundational principles”**
 - emancipation and social justice;
 - seek to empower members of community groups who are less powerful than or are otherwise oppressed by dominating groups (Cousins and Whitmore 1998).
 - **Development strategies**
 - (when possible) “...social groups, together with their facilitators, decide when an evaluation should take place, what should be evaluated, how the evaluation should be carried out, and what should be the result” (Brunner and Guzman, 1989)

CRE Core Components: **culture**, context, and responsiveness (Thomas, 2004)

- Culture
 - “... historically transmitted pattern of meaning that has explicit and implicit expressions through symbols and beliefs and that is intertwined with individuals' and groups' notions of identity across contexts (Geertz and Pacanowsky's 1988)
 - provides critically important information to the evaluator and the evaluation regarding how a community/cultural group is socialized with respect to:
 - governance and governmental organizations;
 - family and social systems/ organizations;
 - spiritual/religious expressions;
 - relationships/interpersonal processes; and
 - communications sets (e.g. verbal and non verbal cues and language literacy (Relevance of Culture in Evaluation Project 2004).
 - Lack of cultural understanding and sensitivity results in
 - Miscommunication and misunderstanding
 - Impacts the ability to collect accurate and useful information as well as accurately understanding what it means.

CRE Core Components: culture, context, and responsiveness (Thomas, 2004)

- Context
 - the totality of the environment where the evaluation takes place (Thomas, 2004, p.13)
- “Failure to understand how cultural context interacts with program implementation and impact jeopardizes the validity of the evaluation [and] evaluators are likely to miss important information that can shed light on *why* a program has particular outcomes or impact on a community.”
(Nelson-Barber, LaFrance, Trumbull, and Arburto 2005 p.61-62)

CRE Core Components: culture, context, and responsiveness (Thomas, 2004)

- Responsiveness
 - evaluators must be responsive by "orienting the evaluation to the experience of personally being there, feeling the activity, the tensions, knowing the people and their values" (Stake 2004 p. 86).
 - CRE extends stakeholder involvement to all phases of the evaluation (Hood, 1998).

A Culturally Responsive Evaluator

- Must prioritize and be responsive to the needs and cultural parameters of those who are being served relative to the implementation of a program and its outcomes.
- Involves self in learning, engaging and appreciating the role of culture(s) within the context of the evaluation.
- Learns to recognize dissonance within the evaluation context, e.g., between school and community group being served. (Relevance of Culture in Evaluation Project)

Views on culturally responsive evaluation and being a culturally responsive evaluator



- Elsie Moore
 - Professor, School of Social Transformation
 - Arizona State University

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Small/Large Group Exercise, More Illuminations

- 💡 What is your opinion about the role of culture and cultural context in evaluation?
 - 💡 What do you consider to be one or two of the most important programs that have been initiated by your local or national government in response to the education of Native Hawaiian children
 - 💡 To what extent have these programs been evaluated?
 - 💡 What have been the primary approaches used to evaluate these programs?
 - 💡 Have issues of culture and cultural context been important in determining the effectiveness/progress of these programs? Examples?
- How might these program goals (or others you are knowledgeable about) better reflect issues related to culture and cultural context in evaluation?
- 💡 Demographic, sociopolitical, contextual dimensions?
 - 💡 Characteristics, locations, perspectives?

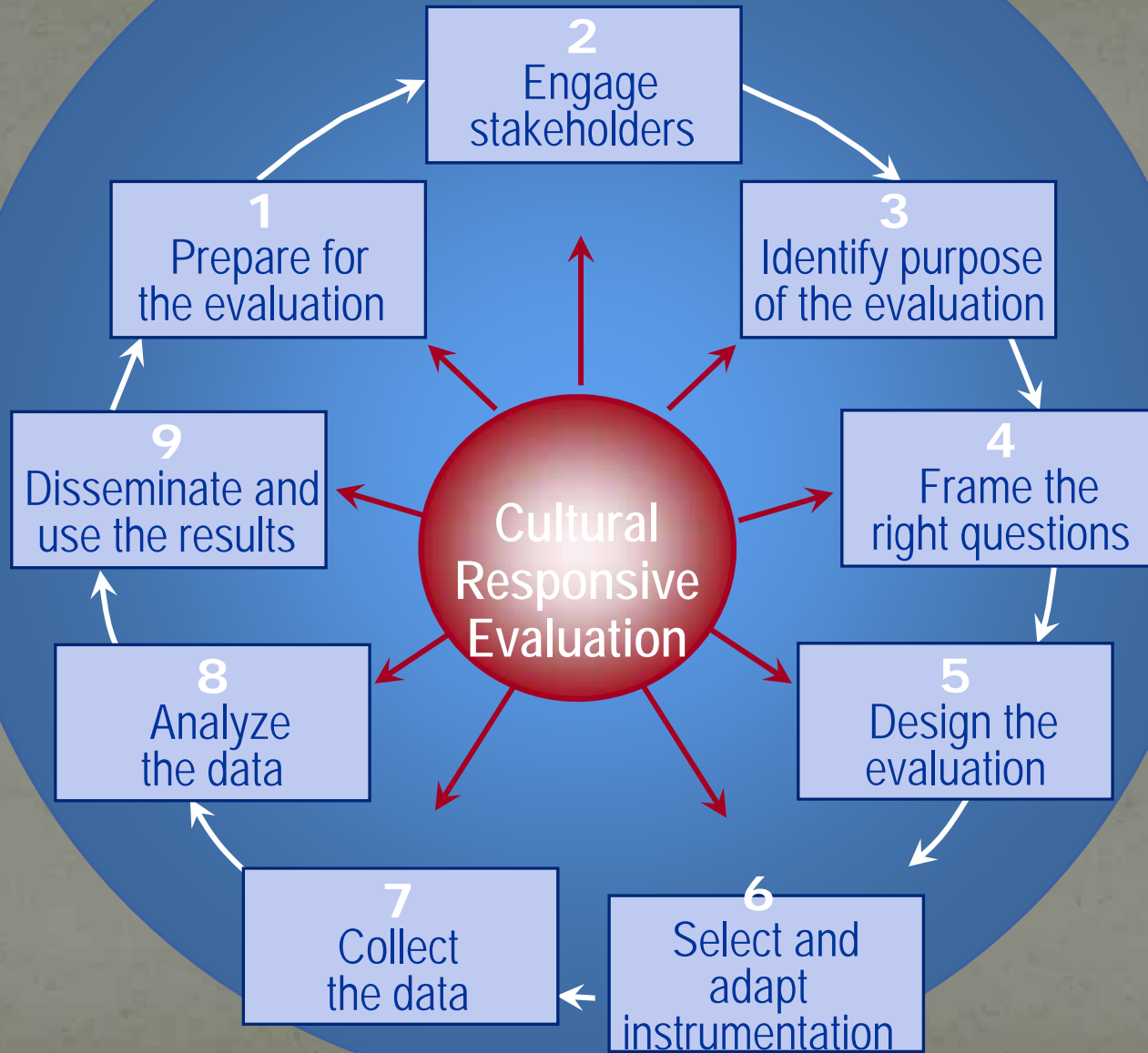
Corrine Glesne
Moving Together through Culturally-Responsive
Qualitative Evaluation



A Guide to Conducting Culturally Responsive Evaluation

Frierson, H., Hood, S., Hughes, G. and Thomas, V.T.(2010).. In National Science Foundation. The 2010 User-Friendly Handbook for Project Evaluation.

Cultural Relevance



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Basic Phases of Program Evaluation

- Preparing for the evaluation
 - Engage stakeholders
 - Identify the purpose of evaluation
 - Frame the right questions
- Evaluation Design
 - Select and Identify Instrumentation
- Data Collection
- Data Analysis
- Dissemination and Utilization

Prepare for the Evaluation

- Examine the sociocultural context of the evaluand, including
 - History
 - Community
 - Intersecting cultural identifications
- Assemble an evaluation team whose collective lived experience is appropriate to the context of the evaluand.

Engage Stakeholders

- Develop a stakeholder group representative of the population served by program.
- Seek to include direct and indirect consumers.
- Pay attention to distributions of power.
- Include multiple voices.

Identify Purpose of Evaluation

- How well is the program connecting with its intended consumers?
- Is the program operating in ways that are respectful of cultural context?
- Are program resources equitably distributed?
- Who is benefiting from the program, and are these benefits equitably distributed?
- What environmental factors must be included to understand outcomes correctly?

Frame the Right Questions

- Include questions of relevance to significant stakeholders.
- Determine what will be accepted as evidence in seeking answers to the questions.
- Examine whose voices are heard in the choice of questions and evidence.
- Is the lived experience of stakeholders reflected in these choices?

Design the Evaluation

- Build design appropriate to both evaluation questions and cultural context.
- Seek culturally appropriate methods that combine qualitative and quantitative approaches.
- Try to collect data at multiple points in time, extending the time frame of the evaluation as needed.
- Construct control or comparison groups in ways that respect cultural context and values.

Select & Adapt Instrumentation

- Establish reliability and validity of instruments for the local population.
- Norms must be appropriate to the group(s) involved in the program.
- Language and content of instruments should be culturally sensitive.
- Adapt instruments as needed and conduct additional validation studies.

Collect the Data

- Procedures used to collect both qualitative and quantitative data must be responsive to cultural context.
- Nonverbal as well as verbal communications provide qualitative data.
- Careful training of data collectors in both technical procedures and culture is key.
- Shared lived experience provides optimal grounding for culturally-responsive data collection.

Analyze the Data

- Cultural context is a necessary component of accurate interpretation.
- Disaggregate data to examine diversity within groups.
- Examine outliers, especially successful ones.
- A cultural interpreter may be needed to capture nuances of meaning.
- Stakeholder review panels can assist in accurate interpretation.

Disseminate & Use the Results

- Cultural responsiveness increases both the truthfulness and utility of the results.
- Communication mechanisms must be culturally responsive.
- Inform a wide range of stakeholders.
- Make use consistent with the purpose of the evaluation.
- Consider community benefit

Relevance of Culture in Evaluation Institute (RCEI) 2003-2007



Goals

provide schools labeled as “under-performing” or in danger of being labeled as such, with a viable opportunity to ascertain which portions of their curriculum are working as intended and where modifications are necessary

train and support teams of teachers and building administrators to design, implement, and report their own school based evaluation

Relevance of Culture in Evaluation Institute

- Phase I
 - Teams of 5-6 (including principal) established at 8 school
 - provided professional development workshop to equip teachers and principals with basic skills in culturally responsive program evaluation
 - develop an evaluation design for use in their school.
 - four months of technical support by an expert evaluator provided to assist in the development of evaluation plans linked to the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Legislation.
- Phase II
 - Implementation of evaluation design (data collection and analyses)
 - Develop and submit final report of findings
 - 5 teams completed Phase II
- Phase III
 - Case studies conducted
 - All data and information currently being synthesized
 - Determine evidence of CRE in the teams experiences

RCEI Phase I and II Findings (External Evaluator)

- *Culture and Evaluative Thinking*
 - “Even though we have the same [Native American] culture, each school has its own different culture. Students have their own culture...we thought of culture as the old traditional way of life...Our students don't live that kind of life...our parents and grandparents did. We had to change the way we looked at culture.”
- *-Meanings of Culture*
 - Struggled with the meanings of culture
 - CRE called for increased engagement and communications across different cultures, exposing teachers' understanding of culture as homogenous, while at the same time introducing a framework for recognizing the uniqueness of each school site's own diverse cultural beliefs culture became connected to data-based decision-making..

RCEI Phase I and II Findings (External Evaluator)

- *Thinking Evaluatively*
 - How their data fit into the overall understanding of achievement and culture at their schools
 - “learned that through the use of a data driven decision making process, [we] can impact a system through this type of capacity building”
- Evaluative Capacity Building and Knowledge Deficit
 - CRE was a challenging concept to understand but they worked to include culture in their evaluation designs
 - “[Culture] was easy to talk about, easy to visualize, yet really difficult to implement...to incorporate CRE and the school context”
- Organizational Constraints
 - “If we are to continue to make institutional change...and capacity building...there has to be an agreement that we be released from some responsibilities

RCEI Lessons Learned – Framework Implications

Data Collection & Analysis Topic	Synthesis From Mini Cases	Implications for Culturally Responsive Evaluation Framework
Change Dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Change typically initiated by Principal ■ Importance of an evaluative culture was recognized ■ Change dictated by the requirements of NCLB and particularly related to AYP. Data driven decision making was viewed to be a priority for Valley schools ■ Navajo schools valued traditional Navajo values in their curricula and instruction but struggled with how it should be accomplished 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Criteria for judging or asserting that CRE has occurred: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ questions raised will suggest a level of understanding; ■ evidence of profound level of engagement; ■ increased confidence in using the tools of CRE+

RCEI Lessons Learned – Framework Implications

Data Collection & Analysis Topic	Synthesis From Mini Cases	Implications for Culturally Responsive Evaluation Framework
School Dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Significance of issues related to race and culture at all schools ■ All schools articulated cultural sensitivity and respect for culture was a priority. ■ Four of 5 final schools had principals of color with 3 being Af. Am. ■ 2 of the schools in a district known for its Black and Brown tensions. 1 principal has long tenure where there is high principal turnover ■ Only one school could show evidence of district support for its RCEI efforts while the Navajo Nation office paid attention to the RCEI effort because of the legal implications of the revised teacher evaluation. ■ Significant presence of teachers of color at all schools except one 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Links to people as first instrument; and use of a local informant or gate keeper as entry into the setting –. ■ What contributes to an understanding of the lived experience of the local community or context. ■ What does the shared lived experience notion require of those in the setting...what is the significance of “lived” since those without it could effective in being sympathetic and responsive in the setting of the evaluation/project etc.

RCEI Lessons Learned – Framework Implications

Data Collection & Analysis Topic	Synthesis From Mini Cases	Implications for Culturally Responsive Evaluation Framework
Team Dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Three teams remained fully in tact from the beginning to the end of the project ■ Team dynamics at the Navajo School Leupp often influenced by clan relationships ■ Four of the five teams maintained regular and focused meetings around the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Team dynamics were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ a significant reflection of school and community culture. ■ provided the best prediction of success in completing final evaluation product. ■ The CRE Framework must acknowledge the complex overlays of various patterns of expectations in each site, some related to culture but others related to established behavior patterns spurred by other factors. ■ Intact relationships and intellectual or academic orientation seems also noteworthy given the patterns of performance observed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ more salient than prior evaluation knowledge in impacting success.

RCEI Lessons Learned – Framework Implications

Data Collection & Analysis Topic	Synthesis From Mini Cases	Implications for Culturally Responsive Evaluation Framework
Team Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ In some cases leadership was <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ aligned with contribution directly related to the project and its goals ■ in other cases reflected more symbolic and episodic styles. ■ One school had strong leadership at the school and team level, creating stronger and empowered team members who saw themselves as providing leadership throughout the project. ■ Another school there was outside leadership (principal) overpowering and disabling internal leadership. ■ Leadership may have been the most salient illustration of cultural context, reflecting and standing at the intersection of school, community and ethnic culture forces. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The CRE Framework must <i>explicitly</i> refer to or acknowledge the importance of leadership in promoting change whether it is in the evaluation or another area.

RCEI Lessons Learned – Framework Implications

Data Collection & Analysis Topic	Synthesis From Mini Cases	Implications for Culturally Responsive Evaluation Framework
Through our own lens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Distinct and palpable difference in the black/brown tensions at three schools. Two schools seemed to reflect a solid working relationship while the third was in turmoil on this dimension. Reflected in campus orderliness. ■ A related cross-site phenomenon was this issue of whether the project was viewed as bringing status either to the participants or the school. Where this was the case the school's level of participation and resilience was better. ■ Interaction of project staff status and ethnic or racial affiliation and RCEI team dynamics. For example RCEI staff (Navajo female doctoral student) was received differently when accompanied by other project staff as compared to her reception when arriving alone. even as evaluators make an effort to be culturally responsive the community would probably choose an evaluator with a common background first if given a choice 	<p>A good evaluation always does some capacity building but using capacity building to generate evaluation expertise is probably idealistic</p> <p>Working with culture means dealing with assumptions, working culturally responsively means constantly checking those assumptions.</p> <p>Does the evaluation framework address the question of how to manage the dynamics created by the evaluation effort</p>