Attending to Detail: Culturally/Contextually Responsive Evaluation

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Face Valu
Learning what works through study and induction

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Today’s Journey

• Culture Mandate
• Impact on Evaluation
• Cultural Competence
• Discussion
• Roles and Strategies
• Learning Community

My Assumptions

• Evaluation has power.
• Evaluation contexts are complex.
• We must work to hear all voices.
• Evaluation influences social justice and equity.
• Our worldview is informed by our own culture and experiences.
• Race, class and gender influence evaluation.
• Attending to culture supports culturally appropriate and responsive evaluation practice.
E-val-uation is ....

- Systematic data collection
- Utilization focus
- Designed for specific people, organizations, or others working on similar issues

From Michael Quinn Patton, 1997

Entering...

What are aspects of culture?

Share and document your thoughts with your team. Be ready to share insights.
Culture Defined

- Culture is the intersection of “rules for living” that an individual or a group of people develop based on who they are and where they are. (Stephens)

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<th>AEA (2011)</th>
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<td>Culture: Dynamic, fluid, reciprocal</td>
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<td>World View</td>
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<td>Ways of knowing</td>
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<td>Ways of communicating</td>
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<td>Contextual dimensions</td>
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<td>Groupings</td>
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Why Cultural Competence?

- Ethical imperative
- Validity: “Minimizes systematic error grounded in cultural biases, stereotypes and lack of shared world view.”
- “Theories are inherently cultural.”

AEA, 2011
Evaluator Competence

- Learning, unlearning, relearning
- Awareness: Self reflection, genuine interaction
- Accepting inability to fully understand different backgrounds
- Competence is not transferrable: specifics are needed.

AFA, 2011

Conceptualizing Evaluation

Read Case 1.
Discuss the following questions with your team.

- What key steps would you take to develop the framework?
- Who would be involved in the work once your framework is complete?
- Be ready to share your insights.

Evaluation Process

- Negotiating
- Collecting information
- Analyzing information
- Interpreting information
- Reflecting/Lessons learned
- Reporting progress
- Use: Influence, impact, effectiveness
Evaluator Competencies
- Identify value system, belief frameworks and work beyond them (Self-examination).
- Evaluators are not "value-free".
- Avoid monolithic assumptions of racial, gender, or ability.
- Attend to context: power, economics, class, race, geography, history, politics, social justice.

Competencies (cont.)
- Articulated "common ground"
- Develop language consciousness
- Strengthen culture knowledge to avoid missing critical information
- Attend to cultural throughout the process.
- Strengthen knowledge of cultural competence literature

A Question of Theory
Read Case 2
Discuss the following questions with your team.
- What cultures are represented?
- How do you negotiate the logic model?
- What are key considerations an evaluator must address?
- Be ready to share your insights.
Negotiating Evaluations

- Cultural translators
- "Transparent and participatory knowledge creation" (LaFrance, 2004)
- "Rules for living"
- Clear, consistent feedback
- Open communication
- Address cultural contexts

Planning

- Include appropriate team and stakeholder cultural representation (Joint Committee Standards, Utility 1)
- Address evaluation team's cultural competence
- Allow adequate time

Preparing for Data Collection

Read Case 3.
Discuss the following questions with your team.
- What aspects of culture must be represented?
- What are key considerations an evaluator must address?
Collecting Information
- Pilot instruments with cultural representatives
- Sample a representative cultural mix
- Consider having participants/stakeholders assist
- Use multiple methods to more clearly hear cultural voices
- Involve "cultural translators" at each step
- Consider your evaluation team's training needs
- Examine effectiveness of using interpreters for interviews and focus groups

Feedback and Reporting
- Examine information viewed through various cultural lenses
- Mediate language
- Share drafts
- Avoid distorting/biasing information by personal predispositions (Joint Committee Standards, Accuracy 11).
- Maintain a clear, consistent feedback cycle

Reflective Analysis and Interpretation
- Bring summarized data to evaluation committee and engage "collective meaning making".
- Examine trustworthiness of your inferences (ICS Accuracy 5).
- Examine differences found between groups (race, gender, etc.), within groups AND across data collectors. Important within group variation is often overlooked.
Key Evaluator Roles
Capacity building approach
- Co-learning with actively engaged, accountable staff, stakeholders
- Negotiated work, expectations
  - Leader and staff engagement
  - Regular meeting times
  - Homework!
  - Reflection
- Address cultural, contextual, and theoretical complexity

Reflections
Think about our session today and share an idea or practice you can use to support your cultural responsiveness and competence.

References
- AEA Statement on Cultural Competence in Evaluation (2011)
- Kirkhart, K. (1994) AEA Conference Presidential Address