

## **SESSION 3: Education/Training Opportunities for Native American Evaluators**

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### **Guiding Questions:**

- What mechanisms are available to identify the current population of Native American evaluators?
- Does this population have specific education/training needs? If so, how do we meet them? The discussion will highlight current training activities and how to build capacity of Native American evaluators within the education community.

## Papers/Presentations

### The Relevance of Culture in Evaluation: Workshops I & II

Christine Chee

#### Introduction

Ya'at'eh wha'asiní. Shí éí Christine Chee yinishyé. Diné bikayád55' naashá. Nasht'ézhí Tábaahí shlí dóó Tsénjikiní éí báshíshchíín. The translation of this statement in English is "My name is Christine Chee. I am a member of the Diné Nation, also known as the Navajo Nation. My maternal clan is Zuni Edgewater and my paternal clan is Cliff Dweller People. This is my identity."

I was asked to participate in the National Science Foundation's meeting of Native American evaluators and to write this paper as a result of my involvement with the Relevance of Culture in Evaluation Workshop (RCEW) that was developed by Dr. Stafford Hood at Arizona State University. This workshop is funded by the National Science Foundation Directorate for Education and Human Resources, Division of Research, Evaluation and Communication (REC). RCEW was designed and implemented to enable minority and female teachers in schools with a predominantly minority student enrollment to become better consumers of program evaluation findings and develop a better understanding of the importance of culture in evaluation. RCEW also places a high priority on the inclusion of all teachers who teach in schools with a significant number of Native American students.

#### Culture, Teachers and Program Evaluation

Most evaluations of educational programs do not seriously make adaptations that include cultural background and/or context in their design, implementation, analyses or recommendations. This is particularly true for evaluations of programs that serve diverse and/or poor communities. The changing demographics in our schools and society require that immediate and meaningful steps be taken to address the need for culturally responsive evaluators.

Teachers play a core and vital role in the educational and instructional process and in any effort to reform our schools. However, not enough attention has been given to the important role teachers must play in the evaluation of educational programs and how participants can receive the optimum benefits of evaluative information to improve their practice. Too often teachers consider themselves as conduits for the collection of evaluation data and not as consumers who can make use of the information. One reason for this limited view may be teachers' lack of knowledge about the multiple roles, approaches and utility of evaluation for their classrooms (RCEW, 2001).

#### Purpose of Relevance of Culture in Evaluation Workshops

Efforts such as RCEW are designed to serve as vehicles to encourage participants to make changes and/or refine evaluative practices and to pursue advanced training in program evaluation. This paper describes both the pilot RCEW (January 3, 2001) and RCEW II (December 16 and 17, 2001) that were held as pre-conference workshops at the annual national conference on *Relevance of Assessment and Culture in Evaluation* (RACE), sponsored by the College of Education at Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona. The purpose of the RACE conference is to "initiate dialogue that increases our understanding of culture's relevance in standardized achievement tests, psychological assessments, instruction and program evaluation" (RCEW, 2001). The RCEW organizer, Stafford Hood, is also the founding co-director of RACE.

Participants in the workshops were teachers in the Phoenix area and from the Navajo Nation. Most participants were minority and/or female teachers with three to five years of teaching experience in classrooms with a high percentage of minority students. Principals and/or district administrators nominated the prospective participants. Selected participants received Arizona State University continuing education credits for both the workshop and the annual national RACE conference, at which their attendance was required. In some cases the funds from an NSF grant covered participants' costs for registration at the workshops and conference, meals, materials and lodging. Each participant received a packet of readings that had been recommended by the evaluation consultants as well as the book, *Evaluating School Programs* (Sanders, 2000). The workshops highlighted:

- the role and importance of program evaluation in school settings;
- major evaluation theories/approaches that have defined the field of educational evaluation;
- examples of emerging evaluation theories/approaches that use cultural context as an important factor; and,
- culturally responsive approaches in the design and implementation of program evaluations.

The workshops were designed to entice teachers to participate more willingly and effectively in their school's and district's evaluation efforts and to help them become better consumers of evaluation findings. These workshops were also designed to provide the participants with increased awareness of program evaluation, familiarize the teachers with the relevance of culture in program evaluation research and practice and to appreciate evaluation's importance for improving the educational process and success of minority students in urban and rural settings.

The pilot RCEW was held on January 3, 2001. It was organized and facilitated collaboratively by five minority and/or female evaluators with extensive experience in the evaluation of educational and other programs in culturally diverse settings. The evaluators presented papers and mentored the participants during the conference. The evaluators were:

- Mr. Juan Martinez, Manager of Research and Evaluation, Court Services Division, State Court Administration for the State of Minnesota and Consultant to the Institute for Cultural Affairs (Phoenix, AZ);
- Dr. Floraline Stevens, Floraline Stevens and Associates, retired from the Los Angeles Unified School District as the Director of Research and Evaluation;
- Dr. Henry Frierson, Professor of Educational Psychology, Measurement and Evaluation, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Director of the Research Education Support Program;
- Dr. Michael Yellow Bird, a member of the Sahnish and Hidatsa First Nations and Associate Professor in the School of Social Work at Arizona State University; and
- Dr. Jennifer Greene, Professor of Educational Psychology, University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, and a specialist in educational and social program evaluation.

A total of 22 teachers attended the pilot RCEW. This group was comprised of 19 females and three males. There were 9 African Americans, 6 Hispanics, 4 Native Americans (all Navajo), 2 Whites and 1 Asian American.

After the pilot workshop, teachers from a reservation school in the area invited participants to visit their school. On April 19, 2001, the workshop organizer, two workshop participants (an African American female English teacher from South Mountain High School in Phoenix and a Navajo female teacher from Dzil Libei Elementary School on the Navajo Reservation) and the author visited the Little Singer Community School near Lupe, Arizona. The Little Singer teachers coordinated the preparation of traditional Navajo foods (a three-day process for certain foods) as a vehicle to provide a culturally relevant experience for the visitors, but more importantly to provide an example of how curriculum and instruction could be culturally grounded but still linked to important learning outcomes. The classroom teachers talked with the visitors about how they facilitate lessons in their classrooms that incorporate educational standards for the state of Arizona and Navajo culture. One of the most intriguing discussions was held at the end of the classroom tour when the Little Singer teachers provided the visitors with a presentation entitled: *A Philosophy of Education and Culturally Responsive Evaluation: A Navajo Perspective*.

At a follow-up half-day workshop meeting with RCEW pilot participants on May 11, 2001, the participants discussed what they had learned from the RCEW experience and what they had done since the January workshop that might have been stimulated by the workshop and/or conference.

All of the pilot participants who attended the follow-up meeting reported that the workshop had had a profound and positive impact on them, personally and professionally. The majority indicated that they had made use of the information or experiences from the RCEW workshop and the RACE conference. Several teachers who attended the workshop indicated they had met with their principals about what they had learned and volunteered to make formal presentations about the workshop to teachers at their schools. One teacher had recommended and implemented an effort at her school to provide all written correspondence to parents in both English and Spanish. This led directly to the largest number of Hispanic parents attending a major parent activity at the school. With regard to the impact that the workshop had on the participants, their own words provide the most compelling evaluation of the experience. These few statements provide examples of the sentiments shared by participants:

“This workshop has been an eye opener as to what is being done in integrating the awareness of culture and its influence in testing.”

“I am extremely interested in learning more specifically about what has been learned about the impact of culture on evaluation.”

“This has been very illuminating. I’m eager for more information.”

“I feel so privileged to be a part of this wonderful learning experience.”

“This has been an enlightening and awesome experience.”

“I came here without knowledge and opinion and I leave here with tools, the right questions to ask and deeper thought.”

“I know I’ve been changed. I cannot, will not remain the same in thought, action or intent. I have you and this workshop to thank for that. Kudos to you for allowing me to further develop and evolve into an empowered social change agent.”

One major outcome that may have been partly influenced by the participants' involvement in the workshop is that a number of them later reported that they had been admitted into graduate programs after the workshop. Two of the participants are now pursuing doctoral studies in education and two more are pursuing Master's degrees in education. Additionally, two of the participants attended and delivered presentations at the annual meeting of the American Evaluation Association (AEA) in St. Louis (November 2001) as part of a panel on the RCEW. As members of this panel, they shared their experiences as participants in the first of these workshops. Additional and equally compelling outcomes are the relationships that were established among the participants. For example, one African American participant (now in a School Psychology Doctoral program) has been volunteering her time to work with one of the Navajo participants at the Little Singer Community School.

From the pilot workshop to the planning phase of RCEW II, refinements were made to the workshop's structure and implementation based on the lessons that were learned. For instance, pilot RCEW participants indicated that there was an insufficient amount of time to digest the workshop's information and ideas in one day. Therefore, RCEW was expanded from 1 day to 1.5 days in RCEW II. All of the participants' comments and suggestions from pilot RCEW were used to refine RCEW II.

RCEW II was held December 17 and 18, 2001. Three evaluators from the pilot (Mr. Juan Martinez, Dr. Floraline Stevens and Dr. Henry Frierson) and three additional evaluators presented papers and mentored participants:

- Dr. Calvin White, a member of the Navajo Nation and the Interim Principal Investigator for the Navajo Nation Rural Systemic Initiative, as well as the statistician/demographer for the project;
- Dr. Terry Denny, Professor Emeritus of Educational Psychology and Elementary Education, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign;
- Dr. Corrine Glesne, Associate Professor of Education, University of Vermont, specialist in qualitative research.

Fifteen teachers—all female—were selected to participate in the second workshop. There were 4 African Americans, 4 Whites, 3 Hispanics, 2 Native Americans (1 Navajo and 1 Hopi), 1 Asian American and 1 Black from Britain. In addition to these participants, teachers from the pilot workshop also attended to serve as peer mentors. The evaluators provided insightful presentations that resulted in stimulating discussions and dialogue throughout both workshops.

The RCEW II participants held a follow-up meeting on May 17, 2002. The participants' discussions and evaluative feedback is currently being synthesized and therefore will not be reported in this paper.

A professional film crew videotaped the workshops and interviews with the evaluators. The raw footage was edited to produce a two-hour videotape. An accompanying CD includes excerpts of the interviews and workshop materials. The two-hour videotape and CD are intended for use in future professional development training workshops for teachers.

Additional products from the workshops include the RCEW listserv and website (<http://rceworkshop.asu.edu>). The listserv includes the participants and evaluators of both workshops, as well as other evaluation specialists who are actively involved in this effort. The website includes a description of the workshop, materials from the pilot workshop and video clips from the interviews with the evaluators. The website will continue to be developed for the purpose of exploring its utility for possible use as a distance-learning vehicle for the workshop.

### **Summary**

RCEW I and II provided a select group of teachers with an increased awareness and basic knowledge of program evaluation, as well as the importance of culture in evaluation practice. By all accounts, both the participants and the evaluators believe that something positive has happened in this endeavor and have high hopes for its future. It is expected that efforts such as this will serve as a vehicle to encourage some of the participants to make positive changes in their classrooms, schools and districts. We also hope that some participants may contribute to ongoing efforts to refine evaluative practice and possibly pursue advanced training in program evaluation.

### **A Personal Note**

For the author, it is important to note that there was a Native American evaluator, more than one Native American participant and one Native American graduate assistant who has participated in every stage in the development and implementation of this project.

I feel very honored to have been a part of this endeavor. I was initially involved in this project while pursuing my degree in the Master of Counseling program (recently I was admitted to the doctoral program in Counseling Psychology). I have been a part of the project from the very beginning. Not only did I learn a great deal from this experience, but it also motivated me to learn more about program evaluation. Since my involvement in this project, I have taken a graduate course in program evaluation that required me to design and implement a basic evaluation of an after-school program. I continue to be excited and committed to this project. I have volunteered my services on numerous occasions when funding was not available, and will continue to do so if needed. I believe we are doing important work that must continue.

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**Education/Training Opportunities for Native American Evaluators***David Beaulieu***Introduction**

In the early 1990s, following The Indian Nations at Risk Task Force, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Education Division initiated a system-wide evaluation and monitoring program that included every tribal and federally operated school as well as the dormitories, the education agencies and the central office within the BIA education system.

Under the leadership of Sandra Fox, many teams of approximately four individuals each conducted evaluations of each school within the system. The evaluators included a significant number of Indian teachers, administrators and other education personnel along with academics and others known to have unique and necessary perspectives and views. They were the master teachers and educators working in Indian education at the time.

The process utilized the "effective schools" criteria that had been modified by a team of Indian educators so that the criteria reflected the local context of Indian schools and the experience of the evaluation process over time. The evaluation process was very similar to the approach utilized by the North Central Accrediting Association's Commission on Institutions of Higher Education. Strengths and weaknesses were identified in each of the areas and professional advice was offered. A very strong reference to the mission and purposes of the school and the school's organization to accomplish those purposes, along with determining the extent of the accomplishment, created the focus for utilizing the modified effective schools criteria to guide the evaluation team's review.

Each team was under the leadership of a team leader who was responsible for planning and conducting the visit and writing the required report. The report was shared with the school and with the BIA. At the end of a cycle of visits, the team leaders debriefed about the process, the criteria and what was learned.

The evaluation was based upon a continuous improvement model for school reform. Schools were asked to utilize the recommendations and professional advice of the report as a basis upon which to develop a school improvement plan. The author believes that every school in the system was visited at least twice. In the mid-1990s the evaluation and monitoring system was modified so that a lead evaluator was assigned to each school. That individual coordinated consultation with the school in areas of identified need.

There are components to this system of evaluation that have very significant potential for improvement of schools educating American Indian students, and from which we may begin to discuss the development of effective training programs for evaluators.

1. An evaluation was developed for each school that focused on criteria known to be important for schools that work. The criteria were modified to suit the local context of Indian education within the schools that were being evaluated and an evaluation report was developed from which the school was able to create a comprehensive school improvement plan. The evaluation at the school level determined a number of best practices in teaching and learning, planning and development and programmatic activities supportive of the instructional mission of the school, as well as what needed to be focused on as the school sought improvement.

2. Each school had the opportunity to witness the evaluation process and to utilize the modified criteria as a guide to their improvement work within the school. Its use provided a framework for the development of an improvement culture within the schools.
3. The schools provided significant numbers of teachers, principals and educators who were utilized as evaluators. The core of evaluators was almost entirely American Indian. All Indian and non-Indian evaluators were recognized for their particular knowledge and experience. Yet their involvement in the process over time and the knowledge gained by individual evaluators who returned to their school communities was important to their work within the school. Knowledge of evaluation and growth of the individual evaluator's understanding of his or her own work and the process of improvement were enhanced.

If it had been the intent of this particular evaluation and monitoring process to develop a training program for American Indian evaluators, it would have been fairly easy to identify not only the population of evaluators but to also identify and categorize the knowledge and skills required and gained through the process. Any successful training program for American Indian evaluators must include knowledge growth and must be directly connected to an ongoing evaluation process.

### **Impact of High Staff Turnover Rates**

The evaluation reports developed as a part of the evaluation and monitoring process also were used to illustrate larger policy questions or common issues related to improvement that needed to be addressed system wide. For example, the process identified that one of the single most important factors in school improvement was continuity of educational leadership at a school. Those schools that were doing well had principals with significant longevity at their schools and whose orientation toward development was informed by the evaluation process.

When the top principals within the BIA system who were identified as having high performing schools were asked several years later what made a successful school, they recounted the effective schools criteria that were modified and adopted by the evaluation and monitoring process to the local context. The information that schools that were successful had long-term leadership focused upon improvement, though essentially a common sense understanding, revealed upon analysis that there existed significant vacancy and high turnover rates among principals and indeed for all education professionals within schools that have predominantly American Indian student populations.

There are obvious issues associated with the constant need for schools to search for personnel, and there are significant implications related to high rates of education staff turnover on the ability of schools to accomplish their primary instructional purposes much less maintain a sustained effort at school improvement.

What the situation also suggests is that our basic approach to school improvement and reform is inappropriate for the task at hand. Since we rely upon a model that sees development as a continuous long-term process that is the result of appropriate informed professional development of the staff, including its organization to accomplish its purposes, consistently high turnover rates significantly mitigate the potential of our principal model for school improvement and reform.

Schools as social organizations focused on learning must become learning organizations if they are to improve the quality and effectiveness of education for American Indian students. Professional development focused on individuals and the group as a whole including organizational, administrative and governance changes supportive of the school's purposes and

its goals for improvement is the primary tool available to improve schools. Appropriate, meaningful and effective evaluation including research directly connected to schools educating American Indians is the most effective way for new knowledge growth and must become the principal input for professional development.

Very high teacher and education staff turnover rates including that of educational leadership as well as high vacancy rates in positions critical to the educational mission of the school, not only hamper schools with predominantly Indian student populations in accomplishing their instructional purposes but also hamper the school's ability to improve or retain any developments that have been accomplished. One consequence of high staff turnover rates is that schools are required to focus primarily on induction and orientation rather than continuous improvement based upon authentic and informed evaluation and assessment activities that can inform an improvement process. We may not be able to ever fully rely upon our existing model for school reform and improvement since that model is based upon certain assumptions that are largely not true for schools with predominantly American Indian students (Beaulieu, 2000).

### **Efforts to Stabilize and Mitigate the Effects of High Education Staff Turnover Rates**

Informed and effective evaluation is the basis for all significant change and improvement at all levels of the education process. However, no matter how informed and effective it is, evaluation may have little utility if we are unable to stabilize the high professional staff turnover and/or mitigate its effects. Two larger efforts, the Indian professional development program of the U.S. Department of Education, and the evaluation and monitoring approach of the BIA now being carried out by the National Indian School Boards Association through its effort Creating Sacred Places for Children and the BIA through Building Effective Schools Together (BEST) not only provide an opportunity for continuing the work but also an opportunity for stabilizing and mitigating the effects of high professional staff turnover (Creating Sacred Places for Children).

### **Indian Teacher and Administrator Development Program**

The high turnover rate situation provided the impetus for supporting the creation of the American Indian Teacher Training Program and the American Indian leadership pre-service and in-service programs. These programs support the training of local American Indian people at the undergraduate and graduate level who are required to work in schools with predominantly American Indian student populations upon graduation.

These programs are more than an effort to increase the numbers of American Indians in the education professions. Through the training of local American Indian people and requiring that they work in schools with predominantly American Indian populations, the focus of the program is on attempting to create a local group of education professionals who are already aware of the culture and society of the students' communities and are more likely to stay employed at the school over time if they are provided professional training.

The teacher-training program also has a required third year mentoring component where the teacher training institution will stay connected with the student and provide guidance and mentoring during the American Indian teacher's first year. Given the typical relationships established between a school and a teacher training institution such as student teaching, teacher training and placement, mentorship and the potential for long-term professional relationships of teacher graduates with their teacher training institution, a goal of the program is also to shorten

the “distance” between the professional training, consultation, public service and research purposes of Colleges of Education and schools educating American Indian students within their service region (Office of Indian Education).

### **Evaluation System Strategies**

The issue with high professional staff turnover rates and school reform concerns the retention of knowledge and experience within the social organization of the school and school system.

Individuals working within schools educating American Indian students have created some of the most innovative and effective education practices. Though these practices have been increasingly shared and have been incorporated into other schools, knowledge gained must be retained within the social organization of the school among the teachers and all staff organized to fulfill the instructional mission of the school. But when up to 40% of the staff at American Indian schools leave each and every year, the school’s organization for learning is severely compromised, as is its capacity to improve.

A significant aspect of our strategy must be to focus not only on the improvement of the knowledge and experience that exists within the schools and school systems that are responsible for the education of American Indian students, but to also focus on its retention within the organization of the school over time. An endogenous evaluation system connected to schools with predominantly American Indian student populations holds very significant promise for improving American Indian schools while mitigating somewhat the effects of high staff turnover. Identifying the master teachers and education professionals within a region or who are nationally connected to schools educating predominantly American Indian student populations and involving them in a systematic evaluation program provides a significant opportunity to grow new knowledge and retain it system wide. There is also an opportunity to begin to shift educational leadership toward those teachers who stay within their schools or within the system. The potential to shift leadership toward master teachers who stay in their school communities may also lessen the impact of administrative leadership changes upon school improvement.

An evaluation system directly connected to the schools, that may also bring together programs that train local American Indian people to be teachers and administrators and that maintains long-term relationships with these individuals and the schools in which they work, is a significant strategy. All aspects of such a system must significantly shorten the “distance” between the development of new knowledge and its application.

We must stabilize staffing within schools by lessening the turnover rates through focusing on the development of local community members to become teachers and administrators, and we must increase the effectiveness of induction and mentoring activities for new staff. We must conceive of other models for school governance and management that focuses on school improvement so that the effect of administrator turnover and vacancy is minimized. The current administrative and management models, in light of the impact of the turnover of education leadership, may not be the best long-term approach.

We must also develop and maintain an endogenous peer-based regional and/or national system of evaluation related to American Indian schools that focuses on the creation and identification of new knowledge, innovative practices and models for school-wide improvement among the schools that educate predominantly American Indian student populations. Aside from its obvious

effect on improvement, such a system provides the necessary places where new knowledge can be retained. The National Indian School Board Association (NISBA) is currently modeling such an effort through its Creating Sacred Places for Children initiative.

### Conclusions

In considering the guiding questions for this session, I suggest the following points.

*What mechanisms are available to identify the current population of Native American evaluators?*

There exists a significant pool of American Indian evaluators within the educational personnel at those schools educating American Indians, as well as a diverse group of individuals who have been involved and/or are currently involved in school evaluation and monitoring work.

In my view, it is not only easier, but also far more effective to train evaluators who are already intimately familiar with the local community culture and school context about evaluation than it is to train those familiar with evaluation about the local community culture and school context. Consequently, the current population of American Indian evaluators can be readily described and identified.

Similarly, it is also easier and more effective to train individuals who know the local culture and nature of the children and certify them as teachers than to train certified teachers about the local culture and children if the goal of schools is to create appropriate and effective teaching and learning strategies and education environments for the children within the schools.

In either case, the translation process is an intimate and negotiated process that can be taught particularly if connected to an ongoing improvement effort. A pool of American Indian teachers, administrators and education paraprofessionals can readily be identified. There also exist 22 American Indian teacher-training projects and approximately 11 Indian Administrator Training programs, including a program focused on the in-service needs of BIA school administrators.

*Does this population have specific education needs? If so, how do we meet them and how should we build capacity for Native American evaluators within the education community?*

Any effective training program for evaluators, in my view, must be connected to school and system-wide improvement. The content for the training must emerge from the system based upon the assessed needs of the school and the improvement desired. The training process should be embedded within the evaluation process.

Because it is the nature of effective evaluation to provide significant information about children's learning and schools that is critical to the improvement process, the training of evaluators should incorporate how evaluation plays a role in improvement and how incorporating local context is critical to the improvement process of schools educating American Indian children.

A program to train evaluators who are familiar with the local community culture and the school would necessarily focus on a number of aspects of evaluation.

1. First, there is a need to provide training in the available evaluation strategies and processes of all and/or particular aspects of the educational processes of the school.

2. Secondly, and directly connected to the first, there is a need to provide training in strategies for how to incorporate the local context into any particular evaluation instrument, strategy or process. The art of translation of existing criteria, evaluation instruments and the like are critical skills and must necessarily be taught and learned by doing.
3. The utilization of such modified instruments and criteria in an evaluation process produces information and knowledge that needs to be identified and recognized. This can also be taught and learned by doing. This latter point regarding recognition and interpretation of critical new information, through dependent upon the other points, is in my view among the most critical aspects of the evaluation effort. The ability to identify, recognize and interpret information produced through evaluation is an important skill for evaluators. Many evaluators look for and see only the patterns that fit preconceived notions and perspectives rather than interpreting the information within the context of the school's mission and its local situation.
4. There are aspects of protocol and how to conduct evaluations of schools, internal group processes and other strategies for improving evaluation and its uses that are important to learn. Though there have been national and regional evaluation efforts related to schools with predominantly Indian populations in the past, there is a need to understand what the strengths and weaknesses of these efforts are in terms of how they are conducted and how school staff and board members perceive the process.
5. All evaluators, whether teachers or not, should be very familiar with assessment strategies for evaluating the educational progress of children and be able to interpret results, not only to determine how well the school is doing, but what the results indicate for improving instructional practice and responding to the needs of students.
6. Local teachers and educators have increasingly developed ready access to a growing body of information related to school improvement and evaluation. Evaluators must become familiar with the latest research and professional development materials available in a wide area of specialties while avoiding the tendency of becoming pitchmen for the latest ideas or fads. In many ways this material simply represents frameworks for what might be possible. Being able to modify and adapt even the latest of ideas no matter how innovative they may seem is a critical skill and disposition for evaluators.

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**Discussion Highlights***Craig Love*

Evaluations in Indian country are very complex. Modern knowledge and technology change at an ever-increasing rate, but they may or may not be effectuated in Native American communities. For this reason, and because of other specific cultural factors, there are many things that may need to be done differently in evaluations with Native Americans. We need techniques that accommodate these factors and create more appropriate evaluations for Native American communities.

There is an abundance of unique issues in Native American education. A large proportion of Indian children are school dropouts. One result is that a large segment of Indian youth are not getting the most basic education needed to survive economically in this country. This influences our evaluations because it results in a reduced number of educated Native Americans who have the potential to enter the pool of evaluators. This appears to be the common theme with our presenters, both of whom have suggested rather intriguing approaches to enhancing educational evaluation with a limited number of Native evaluators. Both have talked about teacher training in evaluation and about participant evaluations. They have proposed that teachers become part of the evaluation process. They provide examples of different kinds of training and the use of existing resources to conduct evaluations. Their ideas have offered a great start to enhancing evaluations in Native American education.

The two papers stimulated my thinking about the realities of implementing an evaluation in Native American educational settings. Dr. Beaulieu indicated that there is a pool of educated individuals living in Indian country, if you can just find them. They are sitting out there on reservations doing other things. I have seen this myself in many different Native American communities. Identifying them is not always easy nor are they always available. Nonetheless, they are a potential source of evaluators.

Ms. Chee has suggested the option of tapping the many Native teachers in Indian country and providing them with training to conduct evaluations. I think that using teachers offers a couple of distinct advantages. First, the Native teachers can offer insights into some of the cultural issues that influence the processes and outcomes addressed in evaluations. They can help identify some of the important issues facing teachers, the very consumer group for which the education evaluators are working. The teaching community is the primary consumer of educational evaluation. The teachers/consumers can help operationalize the most appropriate questions and implement techniques that will work in the community. Why not have them help design their own evaluations? Even though they are not necessarily trained in evaluation, they are able to help select and develop the most feasible evaluation methodology.

The second major advantage of using teachers in the evaluation process is that it creates a way for them to have ownership of the evaluation. Their input assures a greater probability that the evaluation results will be useful to teachers to improve instruction and the education process. This ideal evaluation strategy addresses a common question I hear evaluators ask, "What happens to the results after I've finished the evaluation?" The professionally trained evaluator in this model serves as a technical assistant, helping the teacher/consumer with the technical details required to get the evaluation done, conduct analyses and interpret the results.

This approach also allows the evaluation process and design to be responsive to the environment in which it is created. As an experienced evaluator, I advocate an ongoing, systematic and routine evaluation process that can provide trend data and monitor the indicators of progress toward the

school's goals. This is a routine part of the management process and, since it is created by the teachers, it has the capacity to guide individual teachers in achieving their own goals. The teachers can use the information because they have designed the questions. Because they are involved in the design and management of the evaluation, they are more invested in the results and understand better the implications of the information provided.

In discussing specific techniques, a question often raised is whether to use qualitative or quantitative methods in evaluating the Native American education processes. I have always found a blend of the two techniques to be the most effective approach in any evaluation. It is always valuable to have two parallel evaluations so that one can be used to inform the other. It helps to have descriptions of the program and circumstances that may help interpret the results of a given analysis. For example, in one plains Indian group, there was a situation in which 90-95% of their youth were completing school through the 8<sup>th</sup> grade but started dropping out at high rates during the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. By the 12<sup>th</sup> grade, only 15% of the students from the Indian community were graduating. Since one of the criteria in the evaluation of the program was high school graduation rates, this was a disturbing finding. All of my objective data did a fine job in showing the dropout rates. But it was hard to interpret because all indications suggested that these students thrived until the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. So I did the obvious thing and sat down with some of the students in the school system. We just chatted in a relaxed environment. This is a form of qualitative data that I was gathering.

It turned out that the tribal school went only to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Through the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, all of the students were Native Americans. Although not many of the teachers were Native American, the students were surrounded by elders and other tribal members throughout their first 8 years of school. The Native American students were leaders, experienced in sports and social activities, and successful academically. They received a lot of positive feedback and assurances about being Native American. Then the students started the 9<sup>th</sup> grade in a school located off the reservation. In that school, they were treated like misfits and outcasts. They were given messages about their perceived inferiority from their fellow students and teachers. The high school teachers told me that they set lower expectations for their Native American students.

Many students who had done well in earlier grades suddenly found themselves in special classes in high school. No wonder they dropped out! The Native American students' perception of the school was, "I just don't belong." These social variables were important to the evaluation because I was better able to discern what the data were saying. Without the qualitative data, I would not have had that understanding.

This leads me to another thought. Evaluators need to address the context in which the information is collected. The tribal context and its associated customs are important in most reservation settings. The evaluation should also consider the composition of urban Native American communities. The tribal environment of the community is important in understanding many dimensions of the context of the educational program. Many of these communities have yet to come to terms with fundamental issues that have been floating around Indian country for a hundred years. For example, how do you deal with mainstream society while remaining true to your family/tribe/community? Do you accommodate the modern society and adjust your life and beliefs to suit that situation? Yet another approach is to totally reject the mainstream society and try to hang onto the past and be consistent with the traditional Indian ways. This issue is constantly impinging on Indian societies and is one that each Indian youth has to face.

The question of defining one's Native identity is relevant to our topic because education is a potential key to resolving this issue. I encountered Native students at Brown University who were at the top of their class. However smart they were, few of them had dealt with the question of how they were going to reconcile their Western/European education with the beliefs and knowledge from their Native background. This is a question that their community members raised when the students returned to their home communities and a question with which they grapple throughout their academic career. Many of these students have faced derision when returning home from school and have seen their predecessors rejected by the very community that sent them to college because the community members believe "the Indian is educated out of them." In my opinion, the reality is that we have to deal with mainstream society. They won, you know, and they don't plan to ever go away. We have to find ways to survive as Native Americans in the midst of this pressure. My own bias is that we should develop ways of being true to our Native heritage and beliefs while consciously addressing the demands of the modern world. I think that our Native societies need to take responsibility for educating our children on how to deal with mainstream society.

I have a few suggestions based on these thoughts. Dr. Beaulieu's paper identified a major problem of teacher quality among Native American teachers. I have had a different experience with Native teachers. There are too few Native teachers working with Native students. In fact, I have been in many sites in which the teachers and school staff were nearly all non-Native. Many teachers are not from the community and do not know the culture, even after teaching in an Indian school for several years. I once observed a class that was supposed to be conducting a talking circle. The curriculum was based on a program developed on another reservation. The talking circle was not conducted in a circle, but in a regular classroom setup. No talking stick (a feather, etc.) was used. Instead, the teacher called on various students to talk about problems in their families. While Dr. Beaulieu did identify the need for proper training, I would go a bit further and suggest that we need to develop more Native teachers in all disciplines.

Dr. Beaulieu reported a 40% turnover rate among Native American teachers. One of the participants noted that that could mean that 60% didn't turnover. That is, it could be that 60% of the teacher corps is stable. Or it could mean that turnover is 20% per year and that there is no stability in the teaching staff. Or, according to the commentator, that figure could mean that there is a stable population of "ne'er do wells that hog the resources and upper positions."

According to the commentator, a high turnover rate would suggest that there are management and recruitment issues and that the problems lie in school supervision. Effective recruitment requires the development of good teachers from among the Native teacher pool. Good supervision allows teachers to be monitored on their own terms. A good way to develop a positive management strategy is to interview teachers who leave to ascertain why they leave. The findings could be used to enhance the selection process for new teachers and to identify administrative issues.

Dr. Beaulieu stated that, in fact, many teachers stay a couple of years and then leave. There is, indeed, a high turnover rate. A large number of teachers in Native schools turn over in any 5-year period. Dr. Beaulieu suggested that a significant number of teachers have little seniority. Very few teachers stay through retirement. However, that seems to be changing. Not counting Rosebud, the reservations are beginning to graduate 10-15 Native teachers every year. On reservations, the U.S. government is an important source of consistent employment. This may help keep more teachers for longer periods of time because teaching can provide a rare source of reliable income

for Natives in those communities. It goes beyond that though. Dr. Beaulieu expressed the feeling of being increasingly impressed by the impact teachers have on committee work in the schools. They help establish cultural activities, recreational functions and other things to help the students and community. The newer Native teachers seem to be more invested in providing services and being active in the school and community. They think about policies and procedures and work on committees to develop them. Although some teachers live separately from the community and don't participate in community activities, that number is decreasing. Living in segregated communities begins to break down with new Native teachers on the scene.

But this transformation is a long process. At this juncture, Dr. Beaulieu is interested in how teachers face the challenges of the system because the system changes slowly. There is a lot of professional socialization of Native teachers who come into the system. It is a question of how the Native teachers bring what they know about the students, culture and community into the professional teaching environment. The interesting question is how do they reconcile these competing perspectives in the community? This is similar to the identity question that was raised earlier in the session regarding student adaptation. The tough issue is how the Indian teacher balances the competing perspectives in the school setting.

Another participant commented that there was an issue about which the group hadn't talked much—the issue of culture itself. “Someone came up to me at one of our regional forums. He tugged my sleeve and asked, ‘Do you want to know what is wrong with our educational system?’ I replied, ‘Yes, tell me.’ ‘The problem is Hollywood. We are different from our grandmothers. They were together, talking the language. Now if they are working they are ‘gone.’ The only model we have now is from Hollywood. That’s how children learn about being Native American.” One issue in school and education is congruence of the school system and curriculum with the culture. The education system is not necessarily in tune with the culture. In fact, there is a growing discontinuity in some places between young people and their parents—a significant discontinuity reflected in loss of language in the younger generation. The children have different perspectives about what they wish for their lives. Education and the media have instilled mainstream American values in identifying what is important. It defines what they want. We needn't think so much about having more Native American evaluators, but rather more Native American evaluation as Dr. Beaulieu proposes.

Modern evaluation requires sophisticated knowledge of statistics and research design. Developing capacity is a task that is quite varied from site to site. This suggests that the model of a team approach is optimal. In this approach, evaluation specialists can work with teachers and others to serve as consultants to the Native American communities and the teachers. This is a compromise to allow the teachers to have their own evaluation, but with the professional expertise offered by an evaluation consultant. That is, there may be an alternative to just turning out more Native American evaluators.

Another participant commented that evaluation can be conducted in a “co-equals” model. In one study that used this model, an assembled team of people conducted the evaluation. One person was good at drawing up surveys, another getting into the schools and another at getting access to data, one of the hardest things to do. The combined model worked.

However, it is important to note that effective evaluation hinges on respect. The presenter of the information must be respected by the recipient of the information. The concern is about the credibility of the presenter of the data. There is a sort of elitism in the community of evaluators.

Scientists see themselves as different from science educators. This is a real problem. Is a Ph.D. evaluator better able to present evaluation data than an evaluator who has a Master's? Better able to present than a teacher? And who gathers this information and writes the report? Who is going to say that these data are good?

Where do you draw evaluators from, and what do the qualifications have to be so that they respect the evaluation information that they are given? We haven't even talked about how high up on the credential ladder a person has to be. An elitist scientist may not approve of the qualifications of an evaluator and thus dismiss his or her findings. We need to think about that too. There may be teachers out there who can become evaluators, but what kind of credibility will they have? Will their findings be accepted? Will they get the respect that is needed? How do you use the teacher/evaluator who has the cultural competence yet not the evaluation credentials? They can come to an evaluation team that includes both credentialed individuals and Native American teachers. That is, they can use the "co-equal model."

Another participant commented that there is some concern that an individual can be trained out of his or her culture and lose his or her value as a Native American evaluator. The teachers themselves may not have the requisite knowledge to provide the cultural competence that is assumed in Dr. Beaulieu's model. Just being a Native teacher is not enough. How can you ensure that the teachers are not overly assimilated? We have made the assumption that evaluators from the community will conduct a culturally competent evaluation. This is an unresolved issue that needs to be studied.