A Review and Synthesis of Current Research on Cross-Cultural Evaluation

Jill Anne Chouinard1 and J. Bradley Cousins1

Abstract
As a fairly new and emergent construct, there remain many gaps in our knowledge about how to integrate notions of culture and cultural context into evaluation theory and practice, as well as gaps in our knowledge about how to conduct and implement evaluations in immigrant and indigenous communities. In this article, the authors provide a comprehensive review of the empirical literature on evaluations conducted in cultural communities, with an emphasis on the relationship between evaluators and stakeholders in the cross-cultural program context. The analysis of the literature selected for review leads to the development of a theoretical framework describing the inter-related and multi-dimensional (relational, ecological, methodological, organizational and personal) that intersect throughout the evaluation, and that ultimately inform the relationship between evaluators and stakeholders in the cross-cultural program context. The article concludes with an agenda for future research.

Keywords
cross-cultural evaluation, research relationships, evaluator role, cultural context

Introduction
Program evaluation is concerned with understanding and improving social programs so that they are ultimately more responsive to program participant needs. At a very fundamental level, program evaluation is a sociopolitical process (Groner, 2009; Guba & Lincoln, 1989) intrinsically related to decisions about societal priorities and resource allocations, as declines are made concerning program worth and merit. Within this backdrop, there is increasing awareness that these social programs are embedded within specific social, cultural, and historical contexts, all of which profoundly affect program development, implementation, and outcomes. Evaluations are thus far from being value-free and culture-free (Schon, Hopper, & Thompson-Plowden, 2004), as culture and values permeate all facets of social programs and their evaluations. Whose voices get heard? Whose interests

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dominated? Who asks the questions? Whose knowledge is of most value? Within the context of an evaluation, these questions become paramount, not simply as methodological considerations, but as theoretical and normative constructs guiding evaluative practice.

While still a fairly new and emergent construct, evaluations that are responsive to contextual and cultural specificity are increasing in frequency, as growing disparities and increasingly multi-ethnic and multi-cultural contexts globally are creating a heightened awareness of and need for this type of evaluation. We can trace the early history of this type of evaluation to a small group of African American researchers and evaluators who, from the 1930s to 1950s, utilized evaluation methods that were responsive and sensitive to African American experiences during racial segregation (Hood, 2009). More recently, in the 1985 edition of New Directions for Program Evaluation (edited by Patton), evaluators for the first time explicitly questioned the impact of culture and cultural context on program evaluation (Hopson, 2001). Almost a decade later, Karen Kirkhart's presidential address at the 1994 American Evaluation Association conference challenged attendees to explore the multicultural influences on their work as evaluators. And in 1998, Stafford Hood presented a paper at the Robert Stake Retirement Symposium that further extended the core dimensions of responsive evaluation to include culture and cultural context (Ryan, Chandler, & Saunders, 2007). More recently, the American Evaluation Association formed a Task Force to review the Program Evaluation Standards of the Joint Committee from a culturally competent standpoint. After significant input, recommendations for future revisions to the Program Evaluation Standards (American Evaluation Association, Diversity Committee, 2004) along with these recent developments in evaluation, cross-cultural variations continue to benefit from the important work on cultural competence and cultural diversity in public and mental health and in social work (Lam, 2003; Sue & Sue, 1999).

Despite the fact that widespread attention to cross-cultural evaluation is relatively recent, there nonetheless exists a sufficient body of empirical research to warrant a systematic review. Several contributors have noted that empirical research is essential to the advancement of the field (Cousins, 2004; Mark, 2008; Smith, 1993), a point that is especially relevant in a relatively new, yet rapidly growing stream of inquiry such as evaluation in cross-cultural contexts. Such a review would thus help shape discourse in the area by clarifying relevant concepts and interrelations among them, identifying issues and research questions of concern, and revealing methodological gaps requiring further elucidation.

The purpose of this article is to provide a descriptive review of the empirical literature on culture in evaluation and to contribute to the development of a theoretical framework to facilitate future research and understanding concerning the complexity and multidimensionality of evaluation within cross-cultural settings. Our aim in providing this framework is to clarify and describe the multiple dimensions involved (e.g., relational, ecological, methodological, organizational, and personal) in the cross-cultural program and evaluation context so as to further our thinking about and guide research on cross-cultural approaches to evaluation. It is important to note at the outset that although our review was guided initially by specific theoretical constructions (upon which we will elaborate shortly), our theoretical framework was the result of our systematic review of the empirical literature. The following questions also provided an initial focus to guide our review:

1. How is culture conceptualized within the evaluative program setting?
2. How is culture thought to impact the evaluation, the program, and the context?
3. What rationale is given for the inclusion of culture in the evaluative strategy?
4. What methods/approaches are used to operationalize culture in the community program setting?
5. What challenges do evaluators face in conducting cross-cultural evaluation?

Theoretical and Conceptual Orientation

Before moving to a discussion of the theoretical underpinnings of this review, we first begin with a clarification of some of the key constructs in cross-cultural evaluation: program evaluation, culture, cross-cultural evaluation, and context.

Program Evaluation

The number of different definitions of evaluation and the lack of overall consensus illustrates the diversity of approaches to evaluation practice and theory. Some definitions of evaluation focus on function (e.g., making judgments), others look at purpose (e.g., providing information), others reflect method use (e.g., participatory evaluation), and still others include theoretical orientation (e.g., Generation Evaluation) (Mark, Greene, & Shaw, 2006). For the purposes of this article, we define evaluation as "systematic inquiry leading to judgments about program merit, worth and significance, and support for program decision making and knowledge production" (Cousins, 2003; Weaver & Cousins, 2004). This definition clearly situates evaluation as a systematic process guided by social science inquiry methods. It also establishes the essential judgmental nature of evaluation which, as a domain of inquiry, sets it apart from other forms of research. Evaluation is thus used to make what we call a "judgment" (comparing findings against established goals or some other standard) about program worth, to supply information for organizational or program decision making, and ultimately to create new knowledge that may or may not be useful beyond the local program context. Although necessarily broad, it is noteworthy that there is nothing explicit in this definition about the program or program context, including the program community and intended program beneficiaries. Thus, lurking behind this rather stark definition of evaluation are epistemological, ontological, and normative questions that ultimately guide methodological choices and method selection, as well as frame the role of the evaluator within the evaluative setting.

Culture

Culture is a contested concept and the subject of much theorizing and writing in numerous academic fields, including sociology, anthropology, education, management studies, and communications. Despite the volume of writing on the subject, there remains no agreed upon, universally accepted definition of culture, though certain ideas have endured for centuries. To provide a comprehensive description of culture and to impart a sense of its historical evolution, we will provide four characterizations of culture, ranging from the aesthetic, ethnographic, symbolic, and ecological, all of which should be borne in mind throughout this article.

The aesthetic definition, introduced around the 18th century, associates culture with the arts and is characterized by instances of "high" culture, sophistication, and refinement. The notion of high culture is distinctly class-based, with the implication that only the wealthy could be bearers of such elite qualities of heightened sensibility (Boecoc, 1992; Edles, 2002). The ethnographic or anthropologic definition includes shared meanings, knowledge, beliefs, morals, and customs (Boecoc, 1992; Edles, 2002), all of which is transmitted from one generation to the next (Guzmán, 2003; Hughes, Sedman, & Williams, 1993). These two characterizations, the aesthetic and ethnographic, both describe what culture is, understood as qualities in individuals, or collectively in terms of the contents of a culture (Boecoc, 1992). The symbolic definition is from social anthropology and characterizes culture as a system of shared meanings (Goertz, 1973) that are "historically linked to specific social groups at specific moments, intertwined in complex ways with other social dimensions" (Edles, 2002, p. 6). Culture is portrayed as a social practice linked to specific groups, fundamentally grounded in language and in the production of meaning (Boecoc, 1992). This definition focuses on what culture does, rather than what it is, and is associated with the Birmingham...
School of Cultural Studies, whose members sought to shift the conception of culture from a literary-moral definition to one based in sociology and the study of meaning (Durkheim, 1893; Seidman, 2004). The ecologic description embeds culture within a larger, fundamentally interconnected social system that is composed of a “hierarchy of social forces” (Guzman, 2003, p. 174). The ecologic definition that depicts the location of culture in the context in which it is to be understood. It provides, in essence, a conceptual bridge between culture and context, two terms that have significance in the cross-cultural literature.

Although these characterizations are illustrative of the varied meanings ascribed to culture, for our present purposes there are a number of characteristics worth noting and explicating from the above: all individuals develop within a culture (Hughes et al., 1993); cultures are passed down from one generation to the next (Guzman, 2003); cultures are learned (Rosaldo, 1989); cultures are socially constructed through historical and political processes (Rosaldo, 1989); cultures are not static but dynamic (Willing, Helsel, & Thompson, 2006); cultures are related to language and meaning and the production of knowledge (Gordon, Miller, & Rollock, 1990); and culture is implicated in the politics of power and privilege (Seidman, 2004). These descriptions help move culture beyond a more descriptive description of communities, to a socially, politically, and historically vibrant and embedded construct that is fundamentally constitutive of the values and norms that govern our society. At the same time, this characterization of culture underscores the fact that epistemological questions are bound up and implicated in social, political, and cultural assumptions that have symbolic and very real material expressions. Our goal is not to attempt to reconcile these four perspectives of culture but merely to highlight the multifaceted, evolving and dynamic nature of culture, and the varied lenses in which culture is understood across disciplines, as we carefully read through the studies we have selected for our review.

Cross-Cultural Evaluation

Evaluations that endeavor to be responsive to culture and cultural context are referred to by practitioners as “culturally competent,” “culturally responsive,” “culturally consistent,” “transformational,” “culturally sensitive,” “cultural,” “values-based,” “multicultural,” or “cross-cultural.” For the purposes of this article, the term cross-cultural evaluation will be used as it highlights the social relations among stakeholders in evaluation (Abma, 2002) and self-observations that program evaluators do not always (or often) share cultural similarities (i.e., ethnicity, gender, social class) with program participants (Yarbrough, Shulha, & Carthaus, 2004), though they do work collaboratively toward common ends. More importantly, the term cross-cultural conveys the sense of interaction between two or more cultures (Merryfield, 1985), highlighting the fact that the evaluator him- or herself also has a culture that is itself worth exploring (Semple et al., 2004), perhaps in relation to some “other” (Hall, 1992), and thus requiring that we critically examine our own cultural values, assumptions, and biases (Nelson-Barber, LaFrance, Truuball, & Aburto, 2005; Semple et al., 2004), to more fully appreciate and apprehend the dynamic cultural context in which evaluation takes place.

Context

The conceptualization of context, the parameters and dimensions considered relevant within an evaluation setting, varies across types of evaluation and fundamentally differentiate evaluation approaches (Mathison, 2005). This point is particularly salient in the cross-cultural setting, as many of the methodologies and approaches adopted for use in this type of evaluation are specifically designed to attend to contextual factors (Johnson, 2005). The variation is theoretical and methodological approaches, as well as the diversity of programs and cultural settings, illustrates the complexity of context within evaluation. In the Evaluation Encyclopedia (Mathison, 2005), context is described as a multilayered and intertwined construct composed of demographic characteristics, marital status, and social context, sociopolitical and institutional dimensions of power and privilege, interpersonal and interactive components, and political dimensions, including power, influence, and privilege. This characterization of context provides a sense of the multidimensional and multifaceted nature of a program’s context, which in cross-cultural evaluation becomes all the more significant (Semple et al., 2004), as the context itself becomes the site of confluence where program, culture, and community connect. The dynamic interaction between diverse stakeholders in marginalized cultural communities thus becomes important as the contextual dimension of the larger society and the more local community, along with the challenges of diversity in terms of linguistic and cultural characteristics, has an impact on social relations and program outcomes (Clayson, Castronova, Sanchez, & Birndis, 2002).

Theoretical Orientation

It is our belief that the complexity of the cross-cultural evaluation context requires us to adopt a multidisciplinary perspective to enhance and broaden our understanding of what we see, how we see, and how we evaluate. As Symonette (2004) argues:

Attending to diversity and multicultural issues in evaluation invites and challenges the evaluation profession to expand its line of sight and the capacities of its practitioners in order more authentically perceive and receive the voices, vantage points, and experiences of the full spectrum of stakeholders.

(p. 98)

One of the principal theoretical constructs guiding this literature review is based on the conception of evaluation as a relational endeavor (Abma & Widenshine, 2008; Greene, 2002; Levin-Rozalski, 2003; Ryan & Desterano, 2001) that is fundamentally grounded in social relations (Symonette, 2004). Within this relationship, epistemologically, the evaluator and the diverse stakeholders are interconnected, influencing each, as together they co-construct evaluation findings (Roblin, 1990). Evaluators are thus not considered passive purveyors of methodology but active co-constructors working with diverse stakeholders amidst a rich cultural program and community context (Greene, 2005). At the same time, stakeholders are not considered “passive recipients of intervention, but active participants who possess information and strategies” (Long, 1992, p. 21). From a relational perspective, both evaluators and stakeholders are considered active social agents who together influence practice and the construction of the social and ethnographic text (Long, 1992). Long (1992) uses the concept of “interface” to convey a sense of a face-to-face encounter between people who possess different interests, resources, and power and to depict the emergent forms of strategies and interactions that take place between social actors as knowledge is created and co-create anew. The production and creation of knowledge is thus conceived as dynamic, unfolding, and ongoing, giving shape to the interface between evaluators and stakeholders, while at the same time being shaped by these same face-to-face encounters (Villareal, 1992). The significant point is that we co-create meaning, and in so doing we transform the very meanings that we seek to understand. Relationships thus play a dual role within the evaluative encounter, as they help shape the knowledge created and they impart important norms and values that guide the evaluation (Abma & Widenshine, 2008).

The other key construct guiding our review is based on the notion that evaluations are contextually embedded within a program setting, as well as intertwined and immersed in specific cultural, social, and institutional structures and practices (House & Howe, 2000), what we refer to as the ecological perspective. This perspective situates the cultural context of the program and its evaluation within a broader and more interactive historical, political, and social framework. Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) renowned ecological model, composed of concentric circles depicting differing layers of context, provides a sense of the interconnectivity and depth of the cultural milieu. Taking the ecological
theory a little further, Kelly’s (2006) ecological approach to community psychology, based on social constructionism and post-positivism, revealed both the relational and the ecological components of community development, with a special focus on the research relationship as a key consideration in community intervention and development (Espino & Trickett, 2008).

These two theoretical constructs, the relational and the ecological, thus become significantly intertwined and embedded in the cross-cultural evaluation setting, as evaluators and stakeholders engage in complex interactions within and across diverse cultural contexts. As such, they provide a sense of the relational nature of culture and of human interaction, where cultural processes are involved in complex and multidimensional relations among different aspects of a community’s functioning (Rogoff, 2003). The relational and ecological perspectives thus provide an overarching framework in which to understand culture, context, and social relations involved in the evaluative encounter, all particularly salient concepts within the cross-cultural setting. For us, they provide a starting point on which to build a more elaborated conceptual framework through a review and integration of extant empirical studies.

Method

Sample Selection

The purpose of this comprehensive literature review is to map the territory of cross-cultural program evaluation, to learn from experiences in the field and from the diverse communities of practice, and through our analysis, to provide a more elaborated theoretical framework to aid in further understanding the multiple dimensions involved in this context. While there remain many gaps in our knowledge about how to best integrate culture and cultural context in evaluation and program settings (Thompson-Robinson, Hopson, & Son Gupta, 2004), the many theoretical and empirical studies we located are encouraging, as they all further our attempt to make sense of the increasing complexity and diversity of program contexts.

We limited our search criteria to empirical studies of community-based program evaluations and evaluations that considered culture as a key variable to be included in methodological processes in multi-ethnic or multi-cultural contexts (including within-group contexts as well). We considered culture a key construct in studies that included a culturally specific rationale or evaluation focus, or in those that highlighted culturally-based findings or lessons learned. For our purposes, empirical research was understood to include not only traditional social sciences methods (e.g., case studies, mixed-method inquiry), but reflective narratives based on participant experiences with one or more program contexts. Search terms or key words for this study included “cross-cultural evaluation,” “culturally responsive evaluation,” “cultural context,” “culturally competent evaluation,” and “anthropological evaluation.” Because we intended the literature search to be broad and far-reaching, we searched a number of key databases, including Educational Resources Information Clearinghouse (ERIC), PsycINFO, Social Work Abstracts, Sociological Abstracts, and Medline. While we made every effort to extend our sample beyond the North American context, the vast majority of our articles (dating from 1991 to 2008) were nonetheless located in the following peer-reviewed journals: American Journal of Community Psychology, American Journal of Evaluation, American Journal of Preventive Medicine, Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation, Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, Evaluation, Evaluation and the Health Professions, Evaluation and Program Planning, Journal of Multidisciplinary Evaluation, the Journal of Primary Prevention, New Directions for Evaluation, and Studies in Educational Evaluation. As a measure of quality assurance, the majority of the articles came from peer-reviewed journals, although we also included a few book chapters and foundation reports that involved community-based program evaluations with a specific focus on culture and cultural context that we believed would expand our analysis further. We also followed up bibliographies of recently published work to locate otherwise undetected articles and studies. While we do not make the claim that our sample is exhaustive, we are satisfied that it is sufficiently extensive so as to capture the state of the art of empirical research in the area.

Sample Characteristics

Through our literature search, we located 52 empirical studies, taking the form of articles, book chapters, and foundation reports, written between 1991 and 2008. These studies are summarized in Table 1.

A majority of the studies were reflective narratives of single, multiple, or comparative case studies highlighting evaluator experiences, challenges, and lessons learned. A number of these case studies involved an analysis of a specific intervention or program across multiple communities, whereas others focused more specifically on the qualitative components of a single case in specific cultural contexts. Only a few of the studies involved single or collective reflections across a range of programs and contexts. Thirty-five of the articles were published in the last 5 years, between 2003 and 2008, eight were published between 2000 and 2002, and the remaining nine articles were published in the 1990s. Given the dearth of cross-cultural evaluation articles published in countries outside the North American context, 41 of the articles we located were based on evaluations in the United States; 4 in Canada; 3 in New Zealand; 1 in each of Brazil, Australia, India, and Papua New Guinea. The program practice contexts included in our sample of articles fall roughly into four primary categories, health (n = 16), education (n = 24), social services (n = 5), community (n = 6), and one national symposium. All the programs described in the articles were addressed toiel inequalities or to provide specific targeted assistance to improve educational, health, or social issues in the following program areas: violence prevention, HIV prevention, drug and substance abuse, improving possibilities for at-risk students, enhancing developmental outcomes, and increasing under-representation. Target populations for programs include Native American/First Nations and Inuit (n = 25), African American (n = 12), Hispanic/Latinx/Latina (n = 12), Cambodian, Brazillian, Maori, East Indian, Asian American, and Hmong, with some overlap in targeted populations. Most of the studies provided implications for research or evaluation practice and/or “lessons learned,” reported on challenges and strategies, provided guiding principles, and raised questions about evaluators’ experiences working in cross-cultural program and community settings.

Review Strategy and Analysis

After identifying the 52 articles, we read each closely to ascertain program and population context, focus, approach, theoretical orientation, rationale, and findings and challenges. Summarizing the studies in a matrix format as we have done in Table 1 enables a descriptive cross-case analysis to assist in identifying patterns, themes, and typological findings. Our analysis was further guided by our conception of evaluation as a relational endeavor, as well as an ecologically situated practice. The theoretical literature on culture and cultural context in evaluation further complemented our analysis. In the following section, we provide an overview and integration of the empirical literature we selected for our review.

Review and Synthesis

Descriptive Analysis

Although all the studies we included in our review focus on the cultural context of the evaluation, we were nonetheless able to identify over 38 different designations reflecting the specific focus of each
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Content (program and population)</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Theoretical orientation</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
<th>Relevant findings/challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Alkon (1999)</td>
<td>United States: Substance abuse prevention program for African American families</td>
<td>Evaluation used to make the program more reflective of African American norms</td>
<td>Cultural consistency approach; mixed method; process and outcome (pre and post) done by independent consultants</td>
<td>Randomized experimental study; mixed method; surveys, interviews, observation</td>
<td>None specified</td>
<td>Cultural consistency</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Alkon et al. (2001)</td>
<td>United States: Violence prevention education program for African-American staff and Hispanic parents</td>
<td>To describe challenges encountered</td>
<td>Social cognitive theory (prospective planning and evaluation model); data collected through monthly focus groups (looking at both process and outcomes)</td>
<td>Participatory</td>
<td>None specified</td>
<td>Need to use culturally sensitive methods to evaluate programs that include ethnically diverse populations</td>
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<td>3. Anderson-Draucker (2006)</td>
<td>Canada: A family violence prevention program in an immigrant community</td>
<td>Guiding questions: what activities reflect culture competency? What lessons can be drawn that will contribute to knowledge base</td>
<td>Methodological stance so as to learn from participants and be more sensitive to deep cultural and social class difference</td>
<td>None specified</td>
<td>The role of culture at evaluation can shape how we view and understand an issue</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Baiermann and Compton (1992)</td>
<td>United States: State policies for at-risk high school students</td>
<td>To report of a policy evaluation used to create ongoing dialogue with community stakeholders</td>
<td>Evaluation as ethical and political</td>
<td>None specified</td>
<td>Moral obligation to hear the voices of the targeted population, sensitive to cultural and social differences</td>
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<td>5. Barnes (2000)</td>
<td>New Zealand: Alcohol-related road traffic prevention program for Maori</td>
<td>To examine the partnership between two indigenous communities and researchers</td>
<td>Collaborative; culturally sensitive; collaboration-focused</td>
<td>Participatory based on community action</td>
<td>None specified</td>
<td>Need to develop based on Maori social structures, delivery systems and cultural context, ownership and empowerment</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Barlow and Roberts (2003)</td>
<td>Australia: Twenty Indigenous alcohol and drug programs</td>
<td>To apply the AIS guidelines and the AAM guidelines to two or three indigenous evaluation challenges encountered and strategies used</td>
<td>Extensive consultation; mixed method; used in review committee</td>
<td>None specified</td>
<td>Historical and current status of Indigenous population requires careful consideration in designing evaluation and to include stakeholders</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Bavin-Brown (2001)</td>
<td>New Zealand: Two projects: Special education resources and best practices for Maori children with special needs and new special education policy</td>
<td></td>
<td>Culturally sensitive and mixed method</td>
<td>Evaluates as ethical and political</td>
<td>None specified</td>
<td>Evaluation of data; program effectiveness</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Buxy et al. (2004)</td>
<td>United States: CREP/PAR program Urban school-to-career intervention program for at-risk middle school students mostly of African American background</td>
<td>Explore the successes and challenges of using this approach with an emphasis on implementation rather than on findings</td>
<td>Culturally responsive approach; mixed method</td>
<td>Evaluation as ethical and political</td>
<td>None specified</td>
<td>To ensure evaluation validity (methodological, cultural, interpersonal, and consequential), ultimately leading to increased advocacy, social betterment, and justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Cattell et al. (2003)</td>
<td>United States: American Indian Research and Program Evaluation Methodology National Symposium</td>
<td>Collective experiences to provide base learned and guiding principles</td>
<td>Community-based; collaborative, PAR; “culturally anchored methodology”; responsiveness (norm cultural normal)</td>
<td>Empowerment; participatory, cross-cultural</td>
<td>None specified</td>
<td>Cultural respect and understanding of special circumstances; validity; empowerment</td>
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(continued)
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<tr>
<th>Study</th>
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<tr>
<td>10. Cervantes and Pena (1998)</td>
<td>United States: High-risk Hispanic/Latino youth and families (alcohol and drug treatment and prevention)</td>
<td>To provide guidelines for the development, and implementation of culturally competent evaluation practices</td>
<td>Culturally competent evaluation strategy, process and outcome evaluation, quantitative</td>
<td>Cultural competence</td>
<td>The need to understand the role culture plays in the development of drug and alcohol use, reuse, and abuse. Failure to do so may result in inappropriate conclusions about program effectiveness.</td>
<td>Need to hire qualified, bilingual/Latino evaluators or culturally competent evaluators; must exhaust cultural issues; community representativeness (social and demographic characteristics) recognize heterogeneity within population; assess cross-cultural characteristics; consider language; create community advisory group for communication purposes; develop scientific pre- and post-test rigor; involve evaluators in information dissemination. Delphi technique provided a means to successfully involve minority stakeholders and is eliminated power imbalances worked in developing consensus and in considering all stakeholders’ views and giving weight to all. Delphi technique thus succeeded in promoting social justice evaluations and increasing participation.</td>
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<td>11. Christen and Barha (2005)</td>
<td>United States: Students-centered outreach program to increase UCLA admissions of under-represented groups</td>
<td>To provide an example of the Delphi technique as a means to a more inclusive approach to evaluation</td>
<td>Delphi technique used to develop consensus</td>
<td>Social justice and empowerment</td>
<td>More accurate understanding of the social benefits of the program; stakeholders best placed to assess program; develop strength-based program model.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Clayson et al. (2002)</td>
<td>United States: Three low-income, Latino community initiatives aimed at building community, strengthening leadership, and enhancing civic engagement at the grassroots level</td>
<td>To discuss interactions between major stakeholder groups (i.e., community-based organization staff, community members, and evaluators)</td>
<td>Participatory; contextual-sensitivity lens</td>
<td>Critical theory; consensus engagement; theory of change; evaluation as political</td>
<td>Provides a more complex analysis; acknowledges the role of evaluation occurs within a particular context and within a larger political and economic environment.</td>
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<td>13. Conner (2004)</td>
<td>United States: HIV prevention program in two Latino communities</td>
<td>To describe five factors that fostered a culturally sensitive evaluation</td>
<td>Multicultural validity; culturally sensitive approach</td>
<td>Cultural sensitivity</td>
<td>To more meaningfully assess and engage program’s multi-cultural validity, program understanding</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Cooper and Christie (2005)</td>
<td>United States: University-sponsored parent education program for low-income Latino mothers</td>
<td>Use of social justice approach to enhance understanding and promote educational equity</td>
<td>Began with responsive evaluation approach and later switched to a social justice approach to emphasize unrepresented voices; qualitative case study</td>
<td>Social justice; empowerment, inclusive of least powerful; social justice; prevent stigmatizing bias</td>
<td>Recognized importance of addressing culture—class, gender issues related to evaluator flexibility, could not be objective nor value-free; theory as useful guide to practice but methodological choices made in a social and political context.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Copeland-Carson (2005)</td>
<td>United States: Community mobilization project for African American population</td>
<td>To explore how ethnography can contribute to evaluation design of community initiative</td>
<td>Collaborative, based on anthropological models of social change; Glenner and individual agency focus; Beveridge and Foucault on power and knowledge</td>
<td>Collaborative</td>
<td>To better address the complexity of community initiatives.</td>
<td>Bringing diverse stakeholders together, along with the realities of the economic and political environment resulted in a dynamic organizational culture for the project; led to the prioritizing of the community’s authority as a resource rather than a barrier, qualitative and quantitative data as cultural constructions; relied upon “community consultants” for knowledge and competence to test and reduce costs associated with using this type of evaluation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. Cooper et al. (2006)</td>
<td>United States: Cambodian youth dance program</td>
<td>To explore importance of clear communication, cultural awareness, tailoring evaluation, and meaningful participation</td>
<td>Collaborative, culturally sensitive; used multiple methods</td>
<td>Collaborative</td>
<td>To conduct culturally sensitive, community-based research and evaluation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Fetterman (2005)</td>
<td>United States: A project designed to bridge the digital divide between 18 American Indian tribes and 2 African American communities</td>
<td>To describe the basic perspectives through the use of stories</td>
<td>Combination of empowerment evaluation and ethnographic evaluation</td>
<td>Collaborative; empowerment</td>
<td>To better self-determination and improvement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Fisher and Ball (2002)</td>
<td>United States: Indian family wellness project</td>
<td>To describe the Tribal Participatory Process (TPP)</td>
<td>TPP model based on tribal, cultural and social values; evaluation was culturally specific and developed by a working group; used a multiple-case design; data collected at multiple intervals</td>
<td>Participatory; cross-cultural; empowerment</td>
<td>To meet the needs of the community and build on specific strengths, including historical context and use evaluation as an instrument of empowerment and social change.</td>
<td>In developing tribal-specific models of wellness—consider historical context in evaluation; multiple baseline designs, language, and geographic sites to reflect local norms and lived experience included participation in cultural events, connectedness with extended family, tribe, and community; use of storytelling; assessment emphasizes prosocial domains such as respectful behavior and social competence.</td>
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<td>Relevant findings/challenges</td>
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<td>19. Garraway (1994)</td>
<td>India: A literacy acquisition project</td>
<td>To describe the evaluation approach using two levels of analysis</td>
<td>Cross-cultural evaluation using a multiple case, replication design; mixed method</td>
<td>Cross-cultural; evaluation of political; limited participation</td>
<td>To provide for the broader perspective within the complex linguistic and cultural milieu of India and to promote fairness</td>
<td>The approach provided overarching cross-cancer awareness while maintaining sensitivity to each specific cultural setting; cross-cultural evaluations in developing countries present unique challenges in terms of uncontrollable-for variables; cross-cultural evaluations are particularly complex politically.</td>
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<tr>
<td>20. Harkaw and Nonnewood (2005)</td>
<td>United States: A summer college readiness program for African Americans, Asian Americans, and Anglo youth</td>
<td>To look at the researcher role and reflexivity</td>
<td>Ethnographic evaluation, participatory</td>
<td>Participatory, participatory</td>
<td>To illuminate the role of evaluators (looking at power dynamics and subjectivities)</td>
<td>Ethnographic methods provide a dynamic, flexible, and iterative process for evaluating the development of the intervention and ensuring cultural relevance; researchers are that they built the evaluation into the program plan phase; developed a systematic strategy throughout; evaluation team and implementation team worked closely together. Limitations include the sheer volumes of data generated created time issues; difficult to collect information in natural setting; and could not collect data on comparison group due to time and resource constraints.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Hong et al. (2005)</td>
<td>United States: HIV prevention program targeting African American injection drug users</td>
<td>To look at a process evaluation during the pilot stage using ethnographic methods</td>
<td>Ethnographic process evaluation; observation; interviews</td>
<td>Critically informed evaluation; limited participation</td>
<td>Cultural relevance to understand behavior in context.</td>
<td>Cultural responsiveness played a key role in all phases; provides additional measures for assessing program worth beyond the success of implementation and achievement of program goals.</td>
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<tr>
<td>22. Jey et al. (2005)</td>
<td>United States: Summer PhD graduates Research Experience Program involving African Americans, Native Americans, Mexican Americans, and Puerto Rican populations</td>
<td>To look at the significance of cultural context and cultural influences on the experiences of program participants</td>
<td>Culturally responsive evaluation; qualitative</td>
<td>Cultural responsiveness</td>
<td>To protect the evaluation from being seriously flawed or skewed</td>
<td>Cultural responsiveness played a key role in all phases; provides additional measures for assessing program worth beyond the success of implementation and achievement of program goals.</td>
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<tr>
<td>23. Johnson (2005)</td>
<td>United States: Program designed to increase participation of minorities in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education</td>
<td>To address how to develop evaluation strategies that are culturally responsive</td>
<td>Culturally relevant evaluation; participatory, purposeful sample of eight experienced evaluators</td>
<td>Participatory, cultural sensitivity</td>
<td>Need to include contextual factors in evaluation</td>
<td>Challenges in conducting culturally and contextually relevant evaluations include social pressures and psychological/design concerns; political unsavvy and feasibility of policy, research, and practice are not yet fully understood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. King et al. (2004)</td>
<td>United States: Four multicultural education initiatives addressing curriculum and individual needs</td>
<td>To recast critical issues as dilemmas and to highlight challenges</td>
<td>Participatory evaluation, culturally competent evaluation; use of multiple methods</td>
<td>Participatory evaluation; multicultural education and cultural competence frame for study</td>
<td>Participatory approach recognizes complexity and varied worldviews</td>
<td>Differences suggest limitations (a) evaluation framing issue; (b) role of evaluation in supporting implementation; (c) evaluation use points to need to explicitly identify stakeholder values and interests; conflict between property issues and feasibility and utility concerns; tension between social equity and isolation; and feasibility concerns. Importance of formative evaluation and the need to be evaluated within context; value of building conceptual models with stakeholders; importance of participatory practices and evaluation capacity; challenges in using comparative research; evaluation as knowledge creation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>25. Lafriere (2004)</td>
<td>United States: Experiences conducting evaluations in Indian country</td>
<td>To provide indigenous epistemology as a cultural foundation and to discuss methodological practices</td>
<td>Culturally responsive evaluation; participatory, formative evaluation</td>
<td>Indigenous epistemology; participatory</td>
<td>To establish new evaluation processes that are broad enough to accommodate and value different ways of knowing, built ownership and sense of community, and contribute to high quality programs; - validity and reliability</td>
<td>Context imposed limits to predictability making evaluation more difficult within a Western-based scientific framework; challenges included translating evaluator's intentions in a way that made sense to participants; participation necessary; cultural variations of unpredictability; noted reactions of institutionalized influences and field information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Laportree (2006)</td>
<td>Brazil HIV prevention program for sex workers</td>
<td>To illustrate challenges involved in conducting evaluations in cross-cultural and highly unpredictable environments</td>
<td>Ethnographic and community-based approach with participation of local actors; goal-free; evaluation; qualitative research framework</td>
<td>Participatory</td>
<td>Creating an evaluation relationship as a means of learning</td>
<td>Context imposed limits to predictability making evaluation more difficult within a Western-based scientific framework; challenges included translating evaluator's intentions in a way that made sense to participants; participation necessary; cultural variations of unpredictability; noted reactions of institutionalized influences and field information.</td>
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### Table 1. (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Context (program and population)</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Theoretical orientation</th>
<th>Evidence base</th>
<th>Relevant findings/stage(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27. LaPlante and Jackson (2004)</td>
<td>United States: Family, school, and community partnership program for Black students in a low-income urban high school</td>
<td>To discuss challenges working with community members that are marginalized by institutional barriers</td>
<td>Practical participatory research; co-construction and evidence-based practice; PAR; followed the PAR development evaluation strategy; participant observation of a case study</td>
<td>Participatory; empowerment</td>
<td>To validate strengths or transgressiveness of findings; responsibilities; cultural and conceptual relevance</td>
<td>Significance of program activities from perspective of disenfranchised participants; tried to build on similarities between evaluators and participants in terms of race/ethnicity, experiences with social group, personal family background; evaluators need to obtain experience in training and professional development programs for working with marginalized groups; convincing and culturally responsive evaluation follows asset-based approach. Challenges: power differentially; resistance to evaluation and buy-in; measurement considerations; what is valid, reliable, and accurate; ways of knowing institutionally legitimate knowledge; lessons learned included the need to focus on relationships, evaluation approaches do not always fit with Western scientific methodology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Leesman and Bailey (2004)</td>
<td>United States: American Indian youth-based initiative to improve the quality and quantity of comprehensive, community-based programs for children, youth, and families</td>
<td>To conduct a culturally sensitive and appropriate cross-cultural evaluation and explore “outsider” perspective</td>
<td>TPRI models (Fisher &amp; Bull, 2002)</td>
<td>Social class, culture, ethnicity, and race based perspective; cross-cultural</td>
<td>Need to put intersection of social class, culture, ethnicity, and race at the core to minimize the effects of social inequality and oppression; outsiders must consider their place and perspective; Strengthen the ability of communities to address health concerns</td>
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<tr>
<td>29. Muskite et al. (1999)</td>
<td>United States: Partnership to prevent intimate violence against Latina women</td>
<td>To address the need for greater understanding of the formative stages of locally based partnerships</td>
<td>Community-Based Participatory Research; formative approach</td>
<td>Collaborative; empowerment; ecological perspective</td>
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<td>30. McKeon (1997)</td>
<td>Canada: Child and family services programs in eight First Nations communities</td>
<td>To develop culturally appropriate child and family service standards in First Nations communities and to define and assess the evaluation process</td>
<td>Community-Based Participatory Research; focus groups followed by feedback and consultation</td>
<td>Participatory; empowerment; evaluation as catalyst for change; cross-cultural</td>
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<tr>
<td>31. Menter and Hopen (2001)</td>
<td>United States: Increased participation of underrepresented groups at multiple levels in science and engineering fields</td>
<td>To examine implications of using transformative and cultural competency to improve outcomes</td>
<td>Culturally responsive evaluation and cultural competency approach</td>
<td>Transformative (rooted in diversity, privilege and power)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>32. Nagli (2001)</td>
<td>Papua New Guinea: Curriculum project in an elementary school in a Melanesian community</td>
<td>To examine the experiences of an experience attempting to share the ownership of the research and to develop community ownership</td>
<td>Participatory Action research (PAR); ethnography</td>
<td>Collaborative</td>
<td>To help the community return to cultural identity</td>
<td></td>
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<td>33. Nelson-Barter et al. (2005)</td>
<td>United States: Community-based programs in indigenous communities and educational programs in multicultural/neighborhood urban settings</td>
<td>To explore how cultural competence contributes to the reliability and validity of program evaluation</td>
<td>Culturally competent evaluation</td>
<td>Cross-cultural participatory</td>
<td>Validity, ethical</td>
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<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<th>Theoretical orientation</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
<th>Relevance: findings/challenges</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>34. Navicq et al. (2004)</td>
<td>United States: Mental health services program for American Indian/ Alaska Natives</td>
<td>To create culturally appropriate outcome measurement plans</td>
<td>Participatory, cross-cultural</td>
<td>Participatory, cross-cultural</td>
<td>Minimum appropriate inappropriate need to develop culturally and programmatically relevant approaches to measuring outcomes</td>
<td>Need to focus on strengths need to select own outcomes; the more funders specify the use of specific outcome measures, the less creative and programmatic we need to be; it is important to assess whether funders can support research that looks at substance abuse, drug treatment, etc.</td>
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<td>25. Peters et al. (2002)</td>
<td>United States: Preschool Health Services Program for the Oroville Nation of Oklahomas</td>
<td>To develop a culturally responsive evaluation of a preschool language program</td>
<td>Culturally responsive evaluation; combination of fourth generation evaluation and empowerment evaluation</td>
<td>Critical theory, naturalistic inquiry, constructivism; participatory and empowerment; cross-cultural</td>
<td>To be more responsive to the clients, concerns, and needs of the stakeholders; more appropriate because more respectful and relevant for full participation, partnership, and control</td>
<td>To help marginalized people experience personal and political empowerment; build knowledge to develop commitment to use values; foster community development; and showcase unique strengths of each partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. Richardon et al. (2008)</td>
<td>United States: Promoting healthy living for American Indian Youth</td>
<td>To describe how evaluation plan changed and factors influencing this change</td>
<td>Participatory, cross-cultural empowerment</td>
<td>Participatory, cross-cultural empowerment</td>
<td>Important to know the cultural context and recognize unique strengths of each partner</td>
<td>Partnership established between university researchers and community helped facilitate the evaluation; taken-based methodology enabled the various partners to contribute different strengths to the project, so one party held absolute power to decide values and principles</td>
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<td>38. Robertson et al. (2004)</td>
<td>United States: Community-based law enforcement program for the Ogalala Lakota Nation</td>
<td>To describe the evaluation process as a means to mirror Lakota approach to evaluation and research</td>
<td>PRE; empowerment evaluation; local researchers designed, and implemented evaluation</td>
<td>Cross-cultural attempt to mirror Lakota approach to research and evaluation</td>
<td>To make the evaluation as useful as possible to the Lakota and to their approach to research and evaluation (Lakota methodologies)</td>
<td>Showing evaluation in community builds cultural relevance and creates possibility of new data generation process enabled community members to design and understand work collectively for change; used variety of approaches to share findings; challenges included not overusing limited capacity of community; not building funding dependency; difficulty measuring these broad outcomes; raised possibility of social and institutional change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. Runion Wolf et al. (2003)</td>
<td>United States: Community mental health for American Indian/Alaska Natives children and their families in eight tribal communities</td>
<td>To describe challenges and successes of tribal community in research and evaluation and the influence of historical, cultural, and other factors on evaluation findings</td>
<td>Four primary components: system level assessment; description of children served by program, assessment of service experience and longitudinal outcomes, assessment of services instrumental mixed methods case study; interventions, focus groups, and quantitative document and video analysis</td>
<td>Not cross-cultural; historical and cultural influences</td>
<td>More in-line with value structure and worldviews of participants; more culturally appropriate</td>
<td>Need to understand extended family system; &quot;emotional process&quot; all communities need to help build community; focus on strengths; empower community; support community empowerment in evaluation, used community-based advocacy relationship and established collaborative skill-building relationship with evaluation team; challenge perceptions of community learning experience with all partners bring different skills and areas of expertise; evaluator plays dual role—sometimes conflicting and ambiguous</td>
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<tr>
<td>40. Ryan et al. (2007)</td>
<td>United States: Culturally responsive school-based initiatives involving four schools considered &quot;at risk&quot; with Native American, Latino, or African American populations</td>
<td>Identify and examine challenges with culturally responsive school-based evaluation</td>
<td>Culturally responsive; values-based, grounded theory</td>
<td>Heter cultural context in which program takes place; values diversity needs and interests and social justice; ensure power imbalances do not impact evaluation</td>
<td>More in-line with value structure and worldviews of participants; more culturally appropriate</td>
<td>Schools moved from a more superficial understanding of culture to a more nuanced understanding, a task that resulted in their looking at data differently, strong on capacity building for both evaluation and culture; constraints included time and difficulties in understanding culture</td>
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| 41. Vareani (2005) | United States: Driv" Wellbeing Centers Bilingual/Scholarly Lifelong learning program at Little Singe School | To raise questions about the relationship between evaluation and research and questions of race, culture, and social class | Participatory, cross-cultural | Participatory, cross-cultural | To create the educational experience and more culturally competent | Cultural awareness necessary but not sufficient; relationship between cultural relevance and values in evaluation culture cannot be separated from the cultural context; in the case of institutional capitalism, \\textit{yes}, it is contradictory, conflicts around \textit{nature} of culture as applied to traditional ways of knowing and being, and affects after a history of state-directed dispossession | (continued)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
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<tr>
<td>41.</td>
<td>United States; Hawaiian language immersion program</td>
<td>To demonstrate the need to include cultural members on the evaluation team</td>
<td>Qualitative, ethnographic</td>
<td>Cultural sensitivity</td>
<td>To ensure validity, credibility, and fairness</td>
<td>The inclusion of cultural informants can strengthen an evaluation that attends to power differences between perspectives, and groups a researcher from a similar cultural background to the program. Establishing credibility and recognizing the unique knowledge of the evaluator, whether cultural or not, is essential.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43.</td>
<td>United States; Community partnership with Asian families to enhance development outcomes</td>
<td>To explore the dynamics and challenges that non-Anglo academic evaluations experienced in cross-cultural contexts</td>
<td>Collaborative/evaluation subcommittee; mixed methods</td>
<td>Collaborative</td>
<td>To be culturally respectful, collaborative, open-minded, and flexible</td>
<td>In writing articles about how their privilege may lead to power differences, they were collaborating with their experience on specific interventions for the Asian community. The study highlights the importance of communicating clearly with the evaluator, ensuring they understand cultural contexts, and maintaining open and flexible communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44.</td>
<td>United States; Multicultural, community-based education program called Supporting Diversity in Schools</td>
<td>To share lessons learned about involving communities of color in evaluation</td>
<td>Developmental approach</td>
<td>Culturally and contextually sensitive</td>
<td>For one of the evaluators, the rational was that evaluations of multicultural programs should model diversity for itself.</td>
<td>Lessons learned included the importance of involving communities of color in evaluation and the need for a more culturally sensitive approach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45.</td>
<td>United States; Talent development evaluation model of school reform for students who are most often placed at risk for academic failure: low-income, minority students in urban public schools</td>
<td>To discuss themes and conceptual framework of talent development evaluation model</td>
<td>Incorporated major tenets of participatory, responsive, deliberative, culturally competent, and inclusive</td>
<td>Social justice and critical perspectives</td>
<td>Responsiveness to context</td>
<td>Central and overlapping themes: engaging stakeholders—complex and long-term but also meaningful, programmatic improvements—dominate. The study highlights the importance of understanding the context and incorporating meaningful feedback into evaluation processes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>46.</td>
<td>Canada; Mental health service model for Aboriginal people who were in residential schools</td>
<td>To report on findings of evaluation that used aboriginal methodology</td>
<td>Aboriginal methodology; grounded theory; cross-cultural qualitative interviews; and focus groups to assess aboriginal healing circle and psychotherapy technique of “talking”</td>
<td>Cross-cultural approach to Aboriginal and Inuit communities based on their own experiences and cultural sensitivity</td>
<td>Cross-cultural approach to Aboriginal and Inuit communities based on their own experiences and cultural sensitivity</td>
<td>Communities to decide research priorities. Mental health considered within wider context of health and well-being. Healing and wisdom must draw on the culture for inspiration. Work must reflect a commitment to social justice, a critical pedagogy of decolonization and a strength-based philosophy of personal, community, and cultural capacity building. Recognizes disparity between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal approaches to evaluation and research methodologies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>47.</td>
<td>United States; Mental health service model for American Indian/Alaskan natives children and their families</td>
<td>To report on evaluation process and lessons learned</td>
<td>Participatory evaluation; created two individual assistance teams to enable mutual learning</td>
<td>Cultural relevance</td>
<td>Lot of diversity in each community, so need to adapt intervention models specific to local needs that are culturally relevant</td>
<td>Tribes were able to put evaluation methods into more culturally relevant contexts (e.g., healing circles rather than focus groups). They engaged patients and built upon their own understanding of differences. Evaluation must be understood within a broader framework.</td>
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<td>48.</td>
<td>United States; HIV prevention intervention program for African American women</td>
<td>To describe challenges and benefits of involving the community in the evaluation</td>
<td>Collaborative process drawing from empowerment evaluation and utilization-focused evaluation; randomized controlled trial</td>
<td>Tastes from community psychology and ecological perspectives; collaborative</td>
<td>Increase relevance and appropriateness of evaluations; respect, community, and local context; increase cultural sensitivity; community awareness, and relevance of project</td>
<td>Challenges to involving the community included time and resources. Benefits include the fact that it improved the quality of the study and the value of the intervention and the evaluation. Key was to help build community capacity, improve participant recruitment and retention; more resources led to the implementation of more community suggestions.</td>
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evaluation and the role of the evaluator (e.g., cultural consistency approach, culturally sensitive approach, culturally responsive approach, culturally competent approach). At the same time, over 43 different rationales for the use of the cross-cultural approach were identified (e.g., moral and ethical obligations, validity, empowerment, utility), with many studies citing numerous, overlapping rationalities. Theoretical orientations reflected the need to adopt methodologically diverse approaches (e.g., naturalistic, emancipatory, social justice, critical theory, constructivist, anthropological, and ethnographic) to better understand the community context or to satisfy external requirements. Despite the lack of consistent terminology or evaluative approach, studies are predominantly qualitative or mixed-method, and many are what might be termed collective case narratives of evaluator and/or stakeholder experiences with cross-cultural evaluation.

**Research Synthesis**

Through our analysis and synthesis of the empirical literature and guided by our initial questions, we were able to identify seven broad themes or categories that capture strategies, consequences, and organizing conditions and influences. Having identified emerging categories, we used the constant-comparative method (Creswell, 1998) to further refine our initial categories and validate our preliminary findings. Our seven broad categories are (a) use of participatory and collaborative approaches, (b) developing culturally specific measures, (c) emergent cultural conceptualizations, (d) focus on evaluator-stakeholder relationships, (e) evaluator positionality and roles, (f) facilitating cultural understanding, and (g) methodological dissonance. Although there is some overlap across categories, we believe these themes to be sufficiently unique so as to merit specific attention. We now turn to a description of them.

**Use of participatory and collaborative approaches.** Despite myriad rationales and motivations for collaboration cited in the literature (e.g., empowerment, moral obligation, reliability and validity concerns, mutual learning, and meeting community needs), we note significant variations in practices across cultural contexts. In terms of collaboration and participation, studies can be distinguished by the level and nature of stakeholder involvement, from inclusion primarily as data sources, to a deeper form of participation in all aspects of the program evaluation. A number of studies (e.g., Fisher & Ball, 2002; LaFrance, 2004; LaPoint & Jackson, 2004; Peter et al., 2003) describe community consultation prior to the start of the evaluation as a way to build trusting relationships, discuss evaluation planning and goals, develop evaluation teams, identify community needs, verify program understanding (theory of change), and establish community "buy-in." Other studies (e.g., Baizerman & Conrort, 1992; Iversen & Roberts, 2003) define collaboration as a consultative process as a way to confirm program and community understanding throughout the evaluation. Still others involved stakeholders more actively in framing questions (Butty, Reid, & LaPoint, 2004); defining the issues to be evaluated; establishing performance benchmarks and developing conclusions (Copeland-Carson, 2005); deciding on reporting, planning, and sharing of results (Peter et al., 2003); and designing evaluation instruments, collecting data, analyzing and disseminating results (Pizzitelli, Nelson, & Valadez, 2000; Thurman, Allen, & Deters, 2004).

A number of studies developed culturally specific collaborative methodologies to better meet community needs and build on community strengths within historically situated contexts. For example, Fisher and Ball (2002) developed what they termed Tribal Participatory Research (TPR) designed specifically for American Indian communities. Based on the principles of Community-Based Participatory Research, TPR is focused on tribal culture and social values and on developing a collaborative process between researchers and community members. The four principles involved in TPR—establishing tribal oversight of the project, the use of a cultural facilitator, training, and hiring community members as project staff, and using a culturally specific intervention and
Emergent cultural conceptualizations. As a contested concept and the subject of much theorizing in a variety of academic disciplines, the cross-cultural literature is replete with significant conceptualization; culture as a specific concept, all did describe culture from the emic perspective, drawing upon the findings (e.g., Jay, Eskin, & Friesen, 2005; LaFrance, 2004; Robertson, Jorgensen, & Garraway, 2004). Many of these studies illustrate how the description of culture to the program community, with evaluative efforts focused on involving the community in asset-based approaches to building community. As such, there was considerable discussion about the program and the program context within the cultural milieu, all of which enabled a vibrant description of the culture and cultural context of the program and the evaluation.

Over half of the studies considered culture from a much broader social and political perspective, requiring that evaluators develop increased awareness of both internal and external factors that potentially impact program goals (e.g., Cervantes & Pena, 1998; Thomas & Bellefleur, 2006; Williams et al., 2006). Within these studies, the cultural context of the program is conceptualized as the "totality of the environment in which a program takes place" (Butty et al., 2004, p. 38), an environment that includes geographic location, timing, political and social climate, and economic conditions. Other studies, particularly those conducted within Aboriginal communities, require an understanding of the specific community as well as an appreciation of the historical interconnectedness with the broader community, specifically in terms of the history of exploitation and colonization between Aboriginal communities and the dominant culture (Chouinard & Cousins, 2007). As Letoeq and Bailey (2004) note, outside researchers "must consider their place and perspective when conducting cross-cultural evaluation research with tribal nations" (p. 344), a point that is particularly salient in communities where the historical, social, and political factors that created the original conditions persist.

Over half of the studies also considered culture as something that evaluators themselves possess and that is worth exploring, both in terms of their own cultural and social predispositions, and in terms of the biases of their research and the evaluative methodologies that they use in the field (e.g., Copeland-Carson, 2003; Harklus & Norwood, 2005; Mertens & Hopson, 2006; Nagai, 2001; Thomas, 2004; Boyle & Simmons, 1999). Many thus explicitly recognize that as social researchers, we come to the table with specific biases that operate "as both windows and blinders, giving us different perspectives, while simultaneously obscuring our ability to perceive in terms of 'otherness in our own'" (Caldwell et al., 2005, p. 2). In one of the studies, it was the process of writing the research paper itself that made the authors aware of their own privileged status and led them to a better understanding of how these differences played out in the field (Small et al., 2006).

Slightly more than half of the studies also noted that culture informs the traditional processes and practices of academic knowledge, as it typically emerges from a White, Western, and male worldview (Small et al., 2006), what others have referred to as the "master's tools" (White & Hermes, 2005). As Mertens and Hopson (2006) ask, "what is hidden in the mandate of scientifically-based research and use of "reliable" and "valid" standardized tests" (p. 457)? While many of these studies were specifically concerned with the application of culturally appropriate measurement instruments (e.g., Cervantes & Pena, 1998; Fisher & Bailey, 2002; Robertson et al., 2004), others, noting House (1993), understood evaluation as a form of cultural authority itself, with its own agenda and associated values (Garraway, 1996). The literature thus provides a significant range and breadth of perspectives about the concepts of culture and cultural context, from those that limit culture to an understanding of the program and participants, to others that situates the program and its context within a broad cultural, political, and social framework that informs the evaluator and the methodological choices.

Focus on evaluator-stakeholder relationships. The majority of the studies included in our review discussed the need to spend time building relationships and authentic partnerships with community members as a way to build trust and mutual understanding (Alkon et al., 2001; Caldwell et al., 2005), to be more responsive to cultural context (Jay et al., 2005), and attend to the multifacted challenges of diversity (Thomas, 2004). A participatory approach, with evaluators working jointly with diverse stakeholders, was thus seen as a way to address these issues and give everyone a voice (King, Nielsen, & Colby, 2004), encourage dialogue (Nagai, 2001), mitigate power differences (Thomas, 2004), and ultimately address fundamental differences among participants (Johnson, 2005). While acknowledging the difficulty in such an endeavor, researchers felt that their
position as outside researchers necessitated spending the time to build relationships, as it could determine the success or failure of the evaluation (Letiecq & Bailey, 2004; Prilleltensky et al., 2000). Others felt that active relationships among evaluators and stakeholders would promote skill-building (Running Wolf et al., 2002) and mutual learning (Anderson-Draper, 2006; McKenzie, 1997; Richmond et al., 2008). Others observed that partnerships would facilitate the evaluation and enable the various partners to contribute different strengths, thus ensuring that no one person would hold the absolute power to dictate values and principles (Prilleltensky et al., 2000). Some researchers thus felt that inclusion could help mitigate the challenges associated with unequal distributions of power and privilege (Nelson-Barber et al., 2005; Small et al., 2006; Voyée & Simmonds, 1999).

One of the more common challenges cited in building relationships within a cross-cultural setting was the labor-intensive and time-consuming nature of the task, as epistemological, communication, cultural, and power differences continued to surface (Alton et al., 2001; Ryan et al., 2007; Thomas, 2004). As Letiecq and Bailey (2004) further explain:

Perhaps because of one’s outsider position, cross-cultural evaluation work demands affording significant amounts of time up front to developing trust, relationships and feelings of safety regarding knowledge exchange. Such work also requires time to understand the dynamics of difference that emerge when the non-native evaluator and native colleagues share different cultural ways of knowing, which can lead to miscommunication and misunderstanding. (p. 333)

To mitigate misunderstandings and to become more familiar with the cultural context of the community, a number of studies (Running Wolf et al., 2002; Thomas, 2004) noted the need to spend informal time in the community, attending events, and getting involved in the life of the community. A number of studies also discussed the difficulty of building trusting relationships between people who do not share similar positions of power, status, and privilege (e.g., Baizeman & Conron, 1992; Harkins & Norwood, 2005; Novins, King, & Son Stone, 2004; Ryan et al., 2007; Voyée & Simmonds, 1999), a fact that becomes particularly significant in diverse communities or communities with a history of exploitation and disempowerment. As Small et al. (2006) explain, “it may not be comfortable or easy for indigenous staff to assume a relational style that requires them to be assertive and act as equals with people they perceive to be of higher social status” (p. 362). A number of studies also noted further challenges balancing the needs of program funders and the program community (Novins et al., 2004; Richmond et al., 2008).

Evaluator positionality and roles. The vast majority of the studies that discussed relationships between evaluators and stakeholders also discussed the role of the evaluator in the cross-cultural encounter. The characterization of role in the literature, beyond a general descriptions of activities and process functions (such as facilitator, coach, educator, and critical friend), involves a more contextualized and relational approach to the “performance” of evaluation. Some noted that their roles as evaluators were shaped within the parameters of a particular historical and cultural context (Clayson et al., 2002), whereas others noted how their roles as evaluators were intertwined with relations of power involving societal and political discourses (Harkins & Norwood, 2005). A number of studies further described the need to find a balance between more than one role (Anderson-Draper, 2006), a feat requiring negotiation (Barnes, 2000; Harkins & Norwood, 2005) and flexibility (Batty et al., 2004; Cooper & Christie, 2005), as roles are constantly being reshaped and transformed throughout the evaluative process (Clayson et al., 2002; Harkins & Norwood, 2005).

Facilitating cultural understanding. More than half of all studies included in our review created boundary spanning roles to provide a “bridge” between external evaluators and the community to facilitate cultural and contextual understanding. Although roles differed significantly across contexts, we observed in the boundary spanning any person or group who plays an intermediary bridging function, including cultural facilitators, trained research assistants from the community, evaluators who share similar ethnicity with program participants, and advisory committees. Boundary spanning processes were used as a way to increase cultural sensitivity (Prilleltensky et al., 2000), provide access to the community (Fisher & Ball, 2002), and strengthen the relationship between external evaluators and community-based stakeholders (Running Wolf et al., 2002). A number of studies (e.g. Letiecq & Bailey, 2004; Richmond et al., 2008; Slaughter, 1991) hired “cultural facilitators” or “community consultants” to play an intermediary function between external evaluators and the community to ensure more complete social and historical knowledge of the context and of the program. As Slaughter (1991) explains, “the inclusion of cultural informants on the evaluation team strengthens an evaluation that must mediate concerns and power between various cultural perspectives and groups” (p. 149). Slaughter (1991) further argues that the use of a cultural informant helps guard against ethnocentrism and increases the validity and credibility of the evaluation. Copeland-Carson (2005) likened the use of cultural facilitators to the adoption of key informants in anthropology who provide field workers with valuable information about the local context.

A number of other studies argued that “culturally competent” evaluation is best done by evaluators who share the same ethnic and cultural identity as community members (e.g., Bevan-Brown, 2001; Zulli & Frierson, 2004). As Prilleltensky et al. (2000) explain:

The matching of the background of the investigator and the participants meant that they shared a common language and some common cultural experiences and values. A person from outside of this community would need to go through a much more prolonged period of entry to gain the trust of this community . . . [such as the principle investigator was able to serve a “bridging function.”] (p. 110)

Other studies have argued that hiring evaluators from similar ethnic groups lessens the possibility of misinterpretation and misinformation (Bevan-Brown, 2001), provides increased sensitivity and awareness to the reality of community members (Butty et al., 2004), ensures cultural competency, enables greater understanding between stakeholders (Zulli & Frierson, 2004), and ensures that evaluators would “truly hear and understand what [is] being said” (Jay et al., 2005, p. 206). It was noted, however, that ethnic group membership aside, their roles as university researchers compromised their insider status (Nagai, 2001; White & Henriksen, 2005).

We observed in some studies (e.g., Alton et al., 2001; Caldwell et al., 2005; Prilleltensky et al., 2000; Uhl, Robinson, Vestover, Bocking, & Cherry-Porter, 2004) that evaluators hired and trained local community members in evaluation and data gathering techniques, as they believed it would increase the acceptance of evaluation findings, improve the quality and practical value of the research, build community capacity and development, and help with understanding cultural norms. Still others (e.g., Fisher & Ball, 2002; King et al., 2004; Maciak, Gunman, Santiago, Villalobos, & Isinel, 1999; McKenzie, 1997) created advisory or steering committees composed of diverse stakeholder groups to build an active partnership based on joint construction of findings and to increase cultural relevancy.

Methodological dissonance. A number of the studies in our sample discussed the difficulty of using predetermined or standardized measures, outcome indicators and instruments to evaluate programs in culturally diverse communities, as they can conflict with localized community and culturally specific practices. The 21 studies located in Aboriginal/Indigenous communities, for example, all underscored the need to build culturally specific and locally meaningful constructs (Caldwell et al., 2005) that are based on indigenous epistemology and methodologies and that are firmly grounded in the community. Although localized cultural specificity is a hallmark of cross-cultural evaluation,
it can nonetheless fundamentally challenge Western-based notions about what is accurate, valid, and reliable evaluation research (Leitze & Bailey, 2004).

A number of studies (e.g., Claryon et al., 2002; Coppens et al., 2006; Novins et al., 2004; Small et al., 2006) that describe the challenges they experienced in developing culturally and contextually appropriate approaches and strategies to accommodate diverse stakeholders' values and practices. As Claryon et al. (2002) explain, "often funders were locked into particular concepts that they regarded as relevant for all contexts and communities" and it was difficult to convince them otherwise" (p. 39). Small et al. (2006) also describe a similar challenge, where they were required to adopt the use of a culturally inappropriate evaluation instrument. Although negotiations with the federal funder ultimately led to the modification of a few questions, the instrument nonetheless failed to meet the standards of multicultural validity (Kirkhart, 1995). Other studies noted the need to find a balance between science-based methodological perspectives and more politicized language that the funder could understand (Copeland-Carson, 2005). Still others (White & Hermes, 2000) "out of concern for approaching evaluation with the "master's tools" and the words of a "fisher's tongue," for example. approached evaluation with a more holistic and creative stance and created a space between Western and indigenous ways of knowing.

Discussion

Summary of Research Synthesis

The primary purpose of this article is to provide a comprehensive review of the empirical literature on evaluations conducted in multi-ethnic and multi-cultural contexts and to provide an overarching framework for thinking about and guiding future research on cross-cultural approaches to evaluation. Our analysis and integration of findings enabled us to reconsider and re-envision our theoretical and practical understanding of evaluation within cross-cultural settings, as context-specific experiences provided a necessary bridge between theory and practice (Smith, 1993). Our findings suggest that culture and cultural diversity influence every dimension of the evaluation, including methodological and methods selection, intergroup relational dynamics, cross-cultural understanding, and evaluator positionality and roles. In particular, understanding of cultural diversity influenced the way we think about evaluation (i.e., use of participatory or collaborative approaches, developing culturally specific measures, emerging cultural conceptualizations, focus on evaluator-stakeholder relationships, evaluator positionality and roles, facilitating cultural understanding, and methodological dissonance) enabled a cross-case analysis and a comprehensive rendering of the 52 articles that we located for our review.

Our review of the literature suggests that in an effort to conduct culturally competent and responsive evaluation in culturally distinct communities, the majority of the studies described evaluation as a relational construct, as a form of collaboration and partnership between evaluators and community members designed to understand unique sociocultural characteristics, processes, and perspectives and incorporate strategies that acknowledge diverse ways of knowing. Despite the widespread use of collaborative approaches to evaluation, we nonetheless documented significant variation in practice, from low participation to high stakeholder input, across multiple cultural contexts. Our findings suggest that the adoption of participatory approaches should not obscure the complexity of the collaboration between evaluators, program managers, and community members, as significant, yet often inconsistent and persistent challenges remain. Although some of the challenges we noted result from community and community member voice), other challenges related to the political and social history of the community vis-a-vis the dominant society and sociopolitical contexts. We also noted dissonance between the use of standardized methods and instruments and a community's culture and between the resources and time provided to conduct a culturally competent evaluation, and the resources and time needed to build an inclusive and collaborative approach.

Despite the multiple challenges and dilemmas evaluators encountered in conducting evaluations in cross-cultural contexts, including implementing participatory methodologies amid significant power imbalances, organizational constraints, and funding requirements, we found little in the literature to suggest any tension between localized conceptions (i.e., indigenous ways of knowing) and conceptions of evaluation as a Western, American construct (Connor, 1985). The use of collaborative methodologies and culturally relevant methods should mask evaluation's inherent cultural authority (House, 1993) or obscure its power to define the parameters of what constitutes legitimate discourse and knowledge in the social sciences (Reagan, 1990). The current gold standard of evaluation, defined as impartial, objective, and evidence-based (Greene, 2005), provides further illustration of potential dissonance between culturally and contextually based evaluation approaches (as we have described) and accountability-driven models that prevail.

Our findings also suggest that culture influences us at numerous points in the evaluation process, with definitions of culture ranging from those that considered culture primarily as a demographic marker of a specific community requiring cultural awareness and "situation-specific" responses to others that moved beyond the localized program context to include the broader social, political, and historical contexts that continue to define social and cultural inequalities in our society. Others considered culture as something that they too possessed (Rogoff, 2003), and as something that circumscribes understanding and limits what we see and how we see it (Calder et al., 2005), what Gordon et al. (1990) refer to as "communacentric bias." Other studies considered the influence of culture on the research methodologies applied in the field, noting that social inquiry is not culture-free and the production of knowledge is not neutral (Hermans, 1999) but is historically, culturally, economically, and politically mediated and bounded.

The range of definitions and views of culture that we found in our 52 studies illustrates the continued contestability of culture as a concept within our society, as well as the immense difficulty in defining what remains a stubbornly ambiguous, contradictory, and elastically term (Barth, 1994; Williams, 1981). We noted that characteristics of culture in the literature, from more narrow to broader constructions, played out in the relationships created and sustained between evaluators and stakeholders, and in the evaluation process itself. Specifically, we found that narrow categorizations of culture tend to rely on cultural traits by oversimplifying the factors that create identity (Siek, 2002), while assuming homogeneity within specific cultural groups. The search for the right cultural informants and the use of evaluators from similar ethnic backgrounds as program participants may be problematic, as it does not account for the heterogeneity among cultural members nor intracultural variables, while confusing issues of power, knowledge, and exclusion with finding the right informants (Siek, 2002). The use of boundary spanners and the interactions and inter-relationships between evaluators and stakeholders thus raises important questions about the construction of identity and about the multiplicity of often overlapping and intersecting identities (tied to concepts of gender, race, or class) that abound in the cross-cultural program context. Globalization eradicates that cultures are no longer insular (Bachura, 2002), as they are constantly being constructed and remade through the processes of migration and acculturation (Gonzalez & Rodriguez, 1996). Identity is thus created discursively, constructed in specific historical and political contexts (Hall, 1996), in relation to others (McRobbie, 1992), and through continuous struggle, as they are constructed and reconstituted over time. While the complexity of culture and the formation of identity, it thus becomes necessary to challenge the epistemological status of our definitions of what constitutes a cultural category and the terms of inclusion (Rogoff, 2003; Siek, 2002), making decisions concerning who is in and who is out, as a way of bridging the cultural chasm.
### Table 2: Dimensions of Cultural Context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relational</th>
<th>Ecological</th>
<th>Methodological</th>
<th>Organizational</th>
<th>Personal (Evaluator)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identity ( insider/ outsider)</td>
<td>Social, historical, and political climate</td>
<td>Evaluation theory</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Self-awareness and reflexivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roles</td>
<td>Program activities</td>
<td>Program theory</td>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Evaluator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boundary spanning</td>
<td>Program and community context</td>
<td>Research methods and instruments</td>
<td>Policies</td>
<td>Cultural and social location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power</td>
<td>Community and program history</td>
<td>Epistemological and methodological assumptions</td>
<td>Professional norms</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding and listening</td>
<td>State policies and global discourses</td>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td>Power and ideology</td>
<td>Structural constraints/ support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td></td>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Strategic location</td>
<td>Viewpoints and assumptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of engagement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Political and social agenda</td>
<td>Values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiating entry</td>
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</table>

We also found that the more multifaceted and broader the characterization of culture, the more engaged the evaluator was likely to be in the evaluative process and the more reflective concerning possible roles and role variations. For example, the awareness of self as a cultural being and an evaluator led significantly to an internal dialogue about identity and about the social categories we assume throughout the research encounter. Identities that are not fixed but mutable and transformed through our inter-relationships with others. As such, relationships between evaluators and stakeholders, between notions of personal identity and the identity of others, influence the opportunities and limitations within the evaluative context, circumscribing the program and the construction of knowledge as the evaluation unfolds (Attra, 2006). Conceptualizing the process of evaluation from a relational and ecological perspective thus brings the complexity of the cross-cultural context into sharper focus, enabling insight into the research relationships and the shape of evaluation process and outcomes. The relational view also helps us understand the connections and relations through which evaluators and stakeholders together actively influence practice and the construction of social and ethnographic knowledge.

### Dimensions of Cultural Context

The five-dimensional framework that we present in Table 2 is derived from our theoretical and practical understanding of the cross-cultural program evaluation context and through our review and synthesis of the literature. It provides the implications of our findings for how evaluators and program managers think about dimensions that inform the relationship between evaluators and stakeholders in the cross-cultural evaluation context and that influence the evaluation process from planning through to dissemination. The dimensions of cross-cultural context (relational, ecological, methodological, organizational, and personal) identified in our framework can be visualized as multidimensional, intersecting, and overlapping circles that intervene throughout the evaluation and that are constantly at work (and in flux), creating boundaries, positions, and possibilities within the cross-cultural evaluation context. Our purpose is to provide an organizing framework in which to illustrate the multiple dimensions and variables involved in the cross-cultural context as a way to further a cross-cultural approach to evaluation. In what follows, we provide a brief overview of each dimension of the cross-cultural context, including related criteria associated with each dimension.
between what are often conflicting needs and priorities of community stakeholders and agency funders (Treichel & Espino, 2004).

The personal dimension refers to the need for evaluators to take note that their subjectivity as researchers is always with them during the research process (Pothwaith, 1988), requiring them to develop a more heightened "critical subjectivity" (Reason, 1991), not only of themselves and their subject positions but also of the epistemological and ontological assumptions and biases that guide their work. As Rogoff (2003) explains:

To learn from and about communities other than our own, we need to go beyond the ethnocentric assumptions from which we each begin. Often, the first and most difficult step is to recognize that our original views are generally a function of our own cultural experience, rather than the only right or possible way. (p. 24)

Symonette (2004) describes the need to cultivate multilateral self-awareness, understanding self within a particular context and self as a pivotal instrument. Self-knowledge is thus understood, not merely in terms of understanding ourselves as cultural beings within a specific cultural context but of understanding ourselves as researchers positioned within a dominant Western and privileged paradigms. Reflexivity requires that we look inward and self-critically examine our own beliefs, potential biases, and assumptions (Schwandt, 2002), enabling us to better engage the ethical complexities involved in our relationships with stakeholders within the cross-cultural program context.

Conclusion and Agenda for Further Research

Our review of the 52 empirical articles, book chapters, and foundation reports, while not intended to be exhaustive, provides us with significant variation in case examples across multiple cultural contexts to better understand and make sense of the complexities and the dynamics of evaluations in cross-cultural contexts. The focus on relationships within the evaluative encounter enabled us to reconceptualize the relationship between evaluators and diverse stakeholders as dynamic and interconnected and to appreciate that the knowledge we create is constituted in the interactions we have and in the relationships that we build (Greene, 2005), all of which is further mediated and influenced by cultural context. The ecological construct thus helped us further situate the program setting and its cultural context within a broad, encompassing, and interactive framework that informs the relationships between the evaluator and stakeholders, the program, and its implementation. Our subsequent development of a unified framework provides five interconnected dimensions (organizational, relational, professional, methodological, and ecological) that we theorize influences and interactively informs the relationship between the evaluator and stakeholders as the evaluation unfolds. Although our framework is intended to be informative and to draw attention to the multiple dimensions involved in the cross-cultural relationship, it is also intended to guide future research in cross-cultural evaluation, focused specifically on the relational component of cross-cultural evaluation. Although we have posited five culturally contextual dimensions that dynamically inform the relationship between evaluator and diverse stakeholders, we still do not know how these dimensions are inter-related or how they influence the development of relationships. There are also many different relationships within the evaluative setting that need to be sorted out among community stakeholders themselves, between community stakeholders and external stakeholders (such as funders), and between all of these diverse stakeholders and the evaluators themselves. The complexity of the cross-cultural setting and of the multiple relationships within the cultural context requires innovative and creative ways in which to explore what it means to conduct evaluations in these settings. In what follows, we have identified priority issues and questions for further study, some of which are based on our five-dimensional framework and others that push our current methods of inquiry in the field and that we believe have the potential to help further our understanding of evaluation in cross-cultural contexts.

1. Despite the diverse cultural contexts described in our review of the literature, we found that the five dimensions were nonetheless identifiable as specific influencing variables in the cross-cultural relational context. Of interest would be to explore the relative strength and influence of the dynamic and inter-related dimensions in informing evaluator and stakeholder relationships. How do specific aspects of the framework inform the relationship between the evaluator and the diverse stakeholders? Are there any aspects of the framework that have greater potency under specific contextual circumstances?

2. What are the implications of various manifestations of cross-cultural context for evaluation practice? How might knowledge production and preference terms affect the evaluation outcomes? For example, social justice, use of findings, use of process? While our focus has been primarily on cross-cultural contexts and evaluator-stakeholder dynamics, it will be important to understand evaluation consequences in such settings at deeper levels than is presently the case.

3. The widespread use of participatory approaches to evaluations in cross-cultural contexts underscores the complexity of the relationship between evaluators and stakeholders, as well as the difficulty involved in conducting collaborative evaluations in contexts where power and privilege are unequally distributed among the evaluator and other stakeholder groups. We need to understand what participates (e.g., a Western concept) means in such diverse cultural contexts, and how we can meaningfully and respectfully interact with diverse stakeholders in a setting that often lacks the resources or the time needed to work collaboratively. Given power, privilege, and status differences among evaluators and stakeholders (and among stakeholders themselves), what does it mean to conduct participatory evaluation in these contexts? What does participation look like? What role do relationships play in mitigating power and privilege issues within the evaluative setting?

4. We would also suggest an alternative methodological research agenda to broaden the knowledge base beyond the reflective case study, one that would encourage a deeper understanding of cross-cultural evaluation and of the relationships that play a key role in influencing the evaluation process and outcomes. How do we include the voices of others (and other ways of knowing) into our evaluation practice? Reflective case narratives, for example, might be usefully expanded to more consistently include the voices of both the evaluator and other cultural community members as narrators of the story, thus providing for a more nuanced sense of the interconnectedness and cross-cultural dynamics of knowledge creation as the evaluation unfolds. An alternative approach such as "photovoice," where community members are asked to take photographs of what is meaningful to them in terms of evaluation processes and outcomes, has the potential to engage community members who have traditionally been left out and may provide us with a deeper understanding of the effects (intended and unintended) of our evaluative endeavors.

5. In our review, we noted strong arguments in support of qualitative approaches as means of giving primacy to the local context, as well as equally persuasive arguments in favor of methodological pluralism to ensure a more thorough rendering of the program and its context. In cross-cultural program and evaluation settings, is one methodological approach preferable over another? Is there a significant added value in mixing multiple methods? Can quantitative approaches help evaluators better engage culture? If so, which of (any) approaches would be consistent with cross-cultural evaluation (e.g., comparative studies)? Which approaches would further cross-cultural understanding?

6. Apart from methodological considerations for conducting cross-cultural evaluation, we suggest methodological implications for doing research on cross-cultural evaluation. The narrative case
study approach, for example, might benefit from the inclusion of a methods section, including a description of how data were gathered, and data display to lay out the data in ways that go beyond the narrative and the telling of stories. Retrospective narratives (perhaps of a longer term) also have the potential to provide a different perspective in which to understand the consequences (intended and unintended) of evaluation in culturally diverse communities and would provide the opportunity to re-assess initial findings and analysis. Interviews or focus groups with evaluation practitioners and with community-based programmers also have the potential to expand our understanding of what it means to conduct evaluation in cross-cultural contexts and to broaden the empirical knowledge base.

In the end, it is our hope that our current review of the empirical literature and our five-dimensional framework helps expand our range of thinking about evaluations in cross-cultural contexts while stimulating debate and ongoing inquiry.

Notes

1. The term "boundary spanning" is used in organizational psychology and organizational sociology to refer to the process of engagement between two or more cultural settings, with people filling intermediary roles between two cultural groups, across cultural boundaries, to bridge cultural or language differences between diverse settings (Hoskin & Hoffman, 1987; Kelly, Arends, Burzette, & Mock, 1996).

2. This dimension is intended as distinct from the relationship between evaluator and stakeholders, as it is intended to describe the characteristics that are created within the relationship itself, which in turn informs the interaction between evaluators and stakeholders.

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Finding the Impact in a Messy Intervention: Using an Integrated Design to Evaluate a Comprehensive Citywide Health Initiative

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Abstract
This article uses the evaluation of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s (RWJF) Urban Health Initiative (UHI), a 10-year effort to improve health and safety outcomes in distressed cities, to demonstrate the strengths of an evaluation design that integrates theory of change and quasi-experimental approaches, including the use of comparison cities. This paper focuses on the later stages of implementation and, especially, our methods for estimating program impacts. While the theory of change was used to make preliminary identification of intended outcomes, we used the sites’ plans and early implementation to refine this list and revisit our strategy for estimating impacts. Using our integrated design, differences between program and comparison cities are considered impacts only if they were predicted by program theory, local plans for action, and early implementation. We find small, measurable changes in areas of greatest programmatic effort. We discuss the importance of the integrated design in identifying impacts.

Keywords
theory of change, comprehensive community initiatives, quasi-experimental designs, child health, urban health

Introduction
The growing complexity of governmental and philanthropic efforts to address the health and social problems affecting poor communities challenges evaluators to identify better approaches for measuring program effectiveness. This is especially true for evaluations of efforts intended to leverage...