Strengthening Evaluation Through Cultural Relevance and Cultural Competence

CDC | AMERICAN EVALUATION ASSOCIATION

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Introductions and Acknowledgements

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Kirkhart's Assumptions

> All evaluative understandings and judgments are grounded in culture.

> All aspects of the evaluation process take place in cultural contexts.

> Culture is a relevant concern irrespective of evaluation framework.

> Validity requires cultural competence. Failure to address culture threatens validity.

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Hopson's Assumptions

> Social location and lived experiences of evaluator matters.

> Evaluators play roles in furthering social change and justice.

> Embrace multiple cultural perspectives.

> Culture is central to the evaluation process.

> Culturally and ethnically diverse communities have contributions to make in evaluation.

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Learning Outcomes

You will . . .

> Understand why culture is relevant to good evaluation

> Examine each step of the evaluation process for cultural relevance

> Appreciate how culture impacts validity

> Raise questions about the role of culture in your own work

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Workshop Process

> Blends theory and practice

> Exercises designed to skill build evaluative assumptions, definitions, and practice elements

> Uses FAQs bring attention to important theoretical and practical questions

> Respects and documents your ideas, experiences

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(Brief) Participant Introductions

- In small groups, name and current affiliation
- Discipline(s) in which you've studied or hold degrees
- Cultural contexts in which you've worked or are working
- Years of experience working in diverse cultural contexts
- Years of experience in evaluation
- Reason for attending this workshop

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FAQs

- **FAQ** What definitions are foundational to (y)our understandings of (C)ulture in evaluation?
- **FAQ** How should we consider culture(s) in evaluation?
- **FAQ** What do we mean by cultural contexts/locations?
- **FAQ** Where do sites of cultural competence exist?
- **FAQ** Any more FAQs

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Culture

the way of life of a group of people, the complex of shared concepts and patterns of learned behavior that are handed down from one generation to the next through the means of language and imitation.

(Barnouw, 1985)

the ever-changing values, traditions, social and political relationships, and worldview created, shared and transformed by a group of people bound together by a combination of factors that include a common history, geographic location, language, social class, and religion… (Nieto, 1999)

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Complexities of Culture

> Multiple, simultaneous identifications
>> Cultures as plural, not singular (Kirkhart, 2010)
>> Cultural dimensions include race, ethnicity, language, gender, age , religion, sexual orientation, disability, social class (SenGupta, et al., 2004)

> Fluid, not fixed
>> Cultural identifications as fluid, dynamic, learned, created (Nieto, 1999)
>> Salience shifts in contexts and time (Kirkhart, 2010)

> Not neutral
>> Power attaches to cultural dimensions (Kirkhart, 2010)
>> Dominant cultural perspective inherent in societal power structures (SenGupta, et al., 2004)

Cultural Competence

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

(Orlandi, 1992)

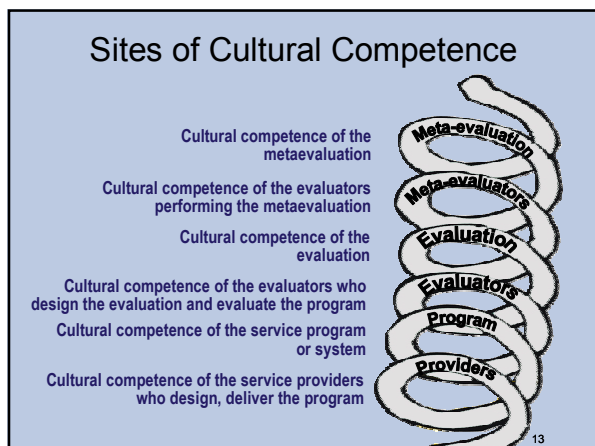11

Cultural Competence

Cultural competence is a stance taken toward culture. [It] is not a discrete status or simple mastery of particular knowledge and skills. A culturally competent evaluator is prepared to engage fully with communities to capture important cultural and contextual dimensions.

American Evaluation Association,
Culturally Competent Evaluation
(Review Draft, April 2010)

Sites of Cultural Competence

Cultural competence of the metaevaluation — **Meta-evaluation**

Cultural competence of the evaluators performing the metaevaluation — **Meta-evaluators**

Cultural competence of the evaluation — **Evaluation**

Cultural competence of the evaluators who design the evaluation and evaluate the program — **Evaluators**

Cultural competence of the service program or system — **Program**

Cultural competence of the service providers who design, deliver the program — **Providers**

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Scenario: First Impressions

> What elements of culture, at what levels, seem salient to this scenario at first glance?

> How do your own cultural positions/contexts relate to the cultural elements in the scenario?

> What elements of culture are you assuming will *not* be as salient, based upon your initial impressions?

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FAQ

FAQ How do we think about the relevance of culture in all stages of evaluation for those in public health, education, and other helping professions?
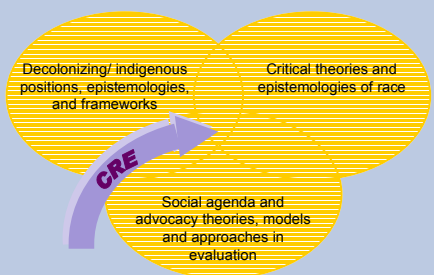
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Culturally Responsive Evaluation

- Emerging approach/model used to guide evaluation
- System and culmination of evaluation strategies
- Theoretically and politically positioned (as are all evaluations)
  - Demographic, sociopolitical, and contextual dimensions, locations, perspectives, and characteristics of culture matter
  - Privileging lived experiences, esp. communities and populations of color
  - Avoiding the phenomenon of "evaluating down"

Theoretical and Practical Intersection of CRE: Advocacy, Race, Power

Decolonizing/ indigenous positions, epistemologies, and frameworks

Critical theories and epistemologies of race

CRE

Social agenda and advocacy theories, models and approaches in evaluation
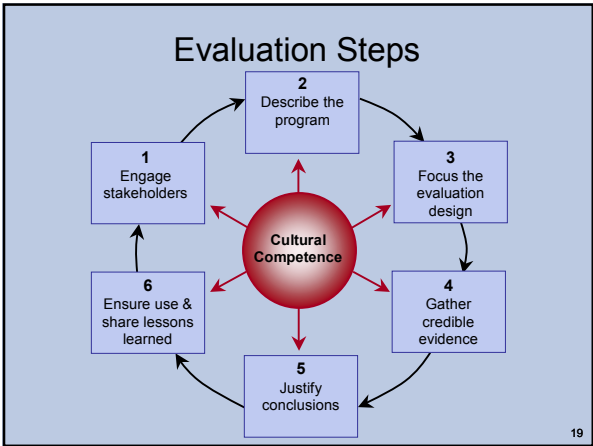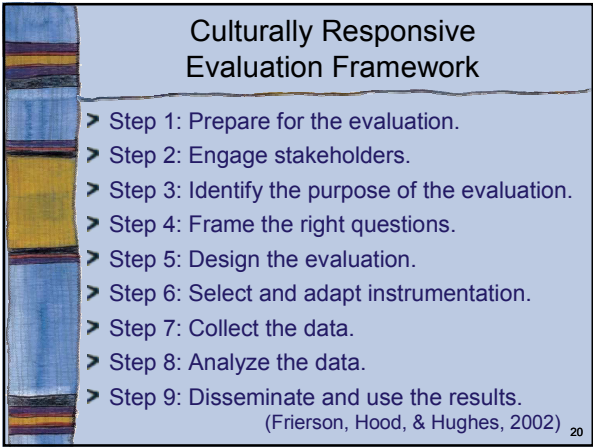
(Hopson, 2009)
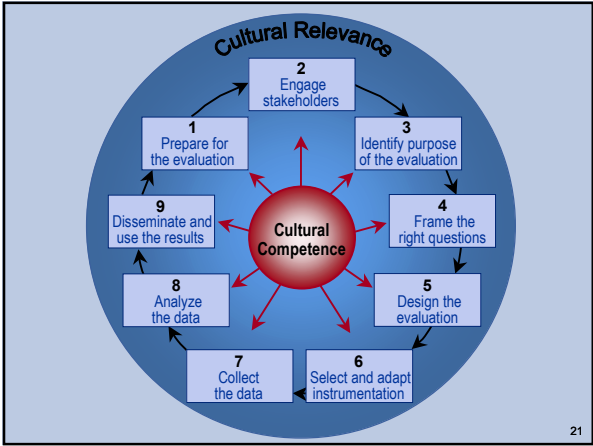
Public Health Evaluation Framework

- Step 1: Engage stakeholders.
- Step 2: Describe the program.
- Step 3: Focus the evaluation design.
- Step 4: Gather credible evidence.
- Step 5: Justify conclusions.
- Step 6: Ensure use and share lessons learned.

(CDC, 1999)

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Evaluation Steps

1 Engage stakeholders

2 Describe the program

3 Focus the evaluation design

4 Gather credible evidence

5 Justify conclusions

6 Ensure use & share lessons learned

Cultural Competence

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Culturally Responsive Evaluation Framework

> Step 1: Prepare for the evaluation.
> Step 2: Engage stakeholders.
> Step 3: Identify the purpose of the evaluation.
> Step 4: Frame the right questions.
> Step 5: Design the evaluation.
> Step 6: Select and adapt instrumentation.
> Step 7: Collect the data.
> Step 8: Analyze the data.
> Step 9: Disseminate and use the results.
> (Frierson, Hood, & Hughes, 2002) 20

Cultural Relevance

1 Prepare for the evaluation

2 Engage stakeholders

3 Identify purpose of the evaluation

4 Frame the right questions

5 Design the evaluation

6 Select and adapt instrumentation

7 Collect the data

8 Analyze the data

9 Disseminate and use the results

Cultural Competence

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Large Group/Small Group Exercise

> Review implications of cultural competence for each evaluation stage (based on Frierson, Hood, & Hughes, 2002)
> Apply to scenario
> Three segments of group interaction
>> Stages 1-3
>> Stages 4-6
>> Stages 7-9

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1 Prepare for the Evaluation

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

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2 Engage Stakeholders

> Develop a stakeholder group representative of the population served by program.
> Seek to include direct and indirect consumers.
> Pay attention to distributions of power.
> Include multiple voices in meaningful preparation process and activities.

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3 ▷ Identify Purpose of Evaluation

> How well is the program connecting with its intended consumers?

> Is the program operating in ways that are respectful of cultural context?

> Are program resources equitably distributed?

> Who is benefiting from the program, and are these benefits equitably distributed? Who is burdened by the program?

> What conceptual models are culturally relevant with program?

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Applying Stages 1-3
(LaFrance, 2004; LaFrance & Nichols, 2010)

> Reflections on embedding culturally competent evaluation in Indian Country

>> Build understanding of values that underlie programs and projects and create value-added evaluative contribution

>> Engage stakeholders in participatory manner

>>> Build ethic of participation and capacity building that values community, *relationships*, *respect*

>> Frame purpose by building conceptual picture/model

>> Careful of "too sequential and narrative driven" logic model

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Scenario: Stages 1-3

> What elements of background and context are important here? What more would you want to know?

> Who was included on the evaluation team and what presumed skills, traits do they bring to the evaluation process?

> Based on the stated purpose of this evaluation, who do you understand to be the major stakeholders?

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4 Frame the Right Questions

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

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5 Design the Evaluation

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

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6 Select & Adapt Instrumentation

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

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Applying Stages 4-6
(Jay, Eatmon, & Frierson, 2005)

> Evaluation of undergraduate STEM research program designed for students of color
> > Deliberate design of evaluation team intimately connected with program of study and background of program, including similar lived experiences of participants
> > Questions were sensitive to lived experiences of participants and focused on substance of participant experiences
> > > Beyond attention to traditional issues of success but exploring issues of persistence as students of color
> > > Attempt to address nuances and subtleties relative to experiences and impact of program

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Scenario: Stages 4-6

> What/whose perspectives are represented in the evaluation questions, and what other questions might have been posed?
> Whose perspectives are accepted as credible evidence? Credible to whom?
> How well does the time frame in this study match the needs and rhythms of this context?

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7 Collect the Data

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

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8 Analyze the Data

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

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9 Disseminate & Use the Results

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

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Applying Stages 7-9
(Manswell Butty, Reid, & LaPoint, 2004)

> Discussion of urban school-to-career intervention program using culturally responsive evaluation approach
> > Input derived from school stakeholders on how best to analyze and interpret data in ways that provided meaning in particular contexts
> > Findings disaggregated by gender and age to get breakdown of career attitudes and beliefs for participants
> > Findings provided to numerous stakeholders in particular ways (e.g. student findings presented in student-friendly manner)

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Scenario: Stages 7-9

> What additional data collection procedures might have been useful to consider in designing a culturally responsive evaluation?

> Given the findings briefly summarized, what aspects of cultural context might add meaning to guide recommendations?

> Were results shared in culturally congruent ways?

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FAQs

FAQ How do you think about validity in your work?

FAQ How do you know that your study would be multiculturally valid?

FAQ How can multicultural validity be applied to the DDSC example?

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Multicultural Validity

the accuracy or trustworthiness of understandings and judgments, actions and consequences, across dimensions of cultural diversity
(Kirkhart, 1995)

Multicultural validity…extends the issues evaluators need to be attentive to if they are to draw valid conclusions, set out well-grounded implications, and make accurate recommendations.
(Conner, 2004)

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Half Empty or Half Full?

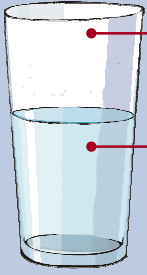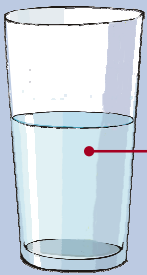What *threatens*, undermines, or compromises multicultural validity in this case?

What *supports*, justifies confidence in the accuracy, trustworthiness of understandings and actions?

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Half Full: Justifications
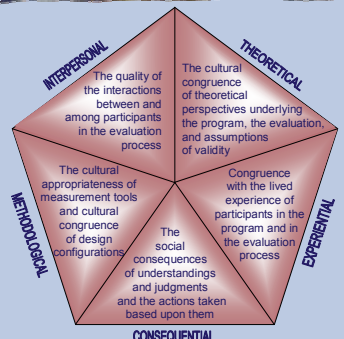
What *supports*, justifies confidence in the accuracy, trustworthiness of under-standings and actions?

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Justifications
(Kirkhart, 2005)

INTERPERSONAL
The quality of the interactions between and among participants in the evaluation process

THEORETICAL
The cultural congruence of theoretical perspectives underlying the program, the evaluation, and assumptions of validity

METHODOLOGICAL
The cultural appropriateness of measurement tools and cultural congruence of design configurations

EXPERIENTIAL
Congruence with the lived experience of participants in the program and in the evaluation process

CONSEQUENTIAL
The social consequences of understandings and judgments and the actions taken based upon them

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Methodological Justifications

DDSC Examples:

> Evaluation questions represent both internal (Director) and external (funder) perspectives.
> Participants were included as a key source of information.
> Multiple methods were used to collect data from participants.
> Time frame of evaluation was flexible, extended to permit additional data collection.
> Field notes from program meetings informed questions asked in surveys, focus groups, and interviews.

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Interpersonal Justifications

DDSC Examples:

> Evaluators went through the DDSC program as participants to build rapport and communicate respect for the process.
> Evaluators engaged in continued dialogue with participants, attending follow-up meetings.
> "Community" was not viewed as a single entity. Many urban communities were conceptualized, and evaluators stood in different relationships to each—e.g., middle & lower class, heterosexual & homosexual, men & women, student & professional.

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Theoretical Justifications

DDSC Examples:

> Evaluators grounded their epistemology, methods and procedures in theory
>> Culturally Responsive Evaluation (Hopson, 2009)
>> Utilization-focused Evaluation (Patton, 2008)
>> Prilleltensky, social change in community systems (Prilleltensky & Nelson, 1997)
> Multicultural validity considered in reflecting on overall validity of this evaluation

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Experiential Justifications

DDSC Examples:

> The experiences of both participants and facilitator were included in the evaluation.
> Evaluators reflected on their own cultural identifications throughout the evaluation process.
> Ethnographic interview data were checked/ verified with participants.
> Evaluators reflected on their location, and issues of power associated therewith (e.g., University affiliation).

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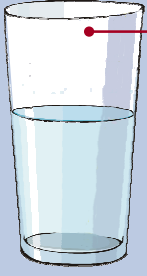
Consequential Justifications

DDSC Examples:

> Evaluation was designed to be congruent with the program itself, creating conversations about conversations.
> Members of the evaluation team volunteered at a community shelter, attended community events to give back to the community.
> Evaluators reflected on their own learning, renewed their personal commitments to community.
> Evaluation sought to engage issues of social justice.

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Half Empty: Threats

What *threatens*, undermines, or compromises multicultural validity in this context?

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Threats

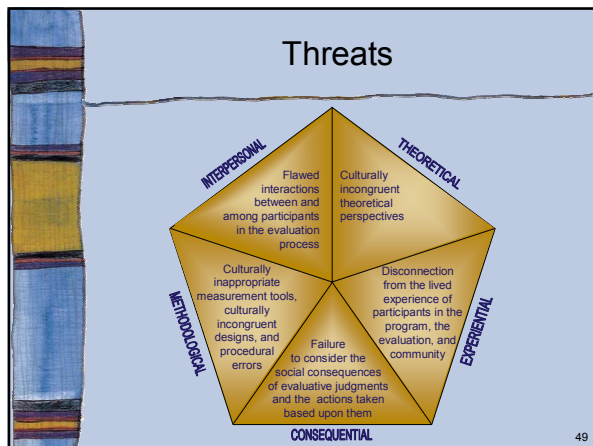Flawed interactions between and among participants in the evaluation process

INTERPERSONAL

Culturally incongruent theoretical perspectives

THEORETICAL

Culturally inappropriate measurement tools, culturally incongruent designs, and procedural errors

METHODOLOGICAL

Disconnection from the lived experience of participants in the program, the evaluation, and community

EXPERIENTIAL

Failure to consider the social consequences of evaluative judgments and the actions taken based upon them

CONSEQUENTIAL

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Limitations on Validity

> Participant perspective not explicitly included in framing evaluation questions (Methodological)
> Limited triangulation of information sources beyond participants (Methodological)
> Low response rates, small *N*s, limit diversity of input (Methodological)
> No subgroup analysis by race or age (Methodological)
> No explicit program theory (Theoretical)
> Limited participant involvement in data interpretation (Experiential)

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Conclusion and Take Away

> All evaluative understandings and judgments are grounded in culture.
> Cultural competence is relevant to all aspects of the evaluation process.
> Evaluators must reflect on their own cultural positions.
> Culture must be addressed in standards and guidelines that form criteria for metaevaluation.
> All evaluation should strive to maximize multicultural validity.

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The Journey

Cultural competence is not a state at which one arrives; rather, it is a process of learning, unlearning and relearning. It is a sensibility cultivated throughout a lifetime.

American Evaluation Association,
Culturally Competent Evaluation
(Review Draft, April 2010)

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