



New Book Information

Continuing the Journey to Reposition Culture and Cultural Context in Evaluation Theory and Practice

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A volume in **Evaluation and Society**

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Cultural, racial, and ethnic diversity has become of global importance in places where many of us would never have imagined. The racial and ethnic diversity currently being found in places all across the U.S., Europe, Africa, New Zealand, and Asia strongly suggests that a homogeneity-based focus is rapidly becoming an artifact of history. Therefore, culturally responsive evaluation (CRE) is no longer a luxury or an option in our work as evaluators. The continually increasing racial, ethnic, language, and cultural diversity in the U.S. and other western nations demands social science researchers and evaluators who anchor their work in cultural respect and responsiveness. It is now unacceptable for mainstream university evaluation programs, philanthropic organizations, federally-sponsored training institutes, professional associations, or any other entity promoting professional evaluation practices not to substantively address CRE. Nor should they fail to address how evaluation as a social practice engages with culture and diversity.

Informing policymaking and decision making so that they are consequentially accountable in meeting the needs of persons who have been traditionally disenfranchised is imperative yet extremely complex. Fortunately, our methods, instruments, and statistical techniques are evolving as mixed methodological paradigms/designs that can more effectively inform policymaking and decision making. Culturally responsive evaluation is positioned to be one such model.

The recent establishment of the Center for Culturally Responsive Evaluation and Assessment (CREA) in the College of Education at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 2011, with its sibling CREA-Dublin (School of Education Studies, Dublin City University, Dublin Ireland), represents an important benchmark in our evolution as a community since the first IAP volume on CRE. As an international and interdisciplinary center, CREA was spawned from the collective work and commitments of a broad community of scholars and practitioners, some of whom have contributed chapters to this edited volume. CREA's purpose is grounded in the contemporary imperative for evaluations and assessments that embody cognitive, cultural, and interdisciplinary diversity in ways affirmatively responsive to culturally diverse communities and their educational, economic, and socio-political performance goals. CREA is addressing questions, issues, theories, and practices related to CRE and culturally responsive assessment, while also serving as a vehicle for our continuing discourse on culture and cultural context in evaluation, now and into the future.

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