EVALUATING FROM THE OUTSIDE

Conducting Cross-Cultural Evaluation Research on an American Indian Reservation

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There is limited guidance for conducting competent and responsive cross-cultural evaluation research with American Indian communities. The authors draw on Fisher and Ball's Tribal Participatory Research Model to highlight ways in which this project is attempting to be culturally appropriate and sensitive as they partner with an American Indian community to implement and evaluate a youth-based initiative. Challenges encountered during the evaluation are shared, as well as the authors' collective responses to such challenges. Implications for future cross-cultural evaluation researchers are also discussed in light of these experiences.

Keywords: *evaluation; American Indian; Native American; cross-cultural research*

In the United States, researchers from the majority culture have been conducting cross-cultural research with ethnic minority populations for years across a wide range of disciplines (e.g., anthropology, history, psychology, and ethnic studies). The challenges faced by cross-cultural researchers have been well documented in the literature and include such issues as gaining entrée into the population of interest, establishing trust and rapport with participants, and developing culturally competent research designs and measures (Barton 1998; Berk and Adams 1970). Although discussions of cross-cultural research have provided a rich understanding of the complexities of conducting such work, few researchers have provided sufficient guidance for

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conducting cross-cultural evaluation research generally or for conducting such work with specific groups in mind.

Without explicit evaluation guidelines, insensitive and inappropriate—and perhaps exploitative and harmful—evaluative research practices may result. It is not uncommon in evaluation research to implement outcome measures that have only been validated and normed on White, middle-class samples. Moreover, many national evaluations have focused solely on outcome rather than process and have paid little attention to within-group variation, opting instead to examine between-group differences (McLoyd and Randolph 1985). Such research practices not only ignore the variability and diversity within cultural groups but often rely on deficit-based perspectives where differences are conceptualized as "the genetic or the cultural inferiority of ethnic/racial groups relative to the White mainstream standard" (Garcia Coll et al. 1996, 1893). Much of the extant evaluation research assessing minority family outcomes continues to be guided by theoretical or conceptual models that do not place the interaction of social class, culture, ethnicity, and race at the core, thus minimizing the effects of social inequality and oppression on the functioning of children and families of color (Garcia Coll et al. 1996).

Although evaluators are beginning to address some of the limitations in the extant research with subpopulations of color (e.g., examining specific group phenomena within Puerto Rican or Mexican families, recognizing the class variations among African American communities), published evaluation research among American Indian populations remains sparse and too often fails to address the within-group differences among tribal nations. In recent decades, tribal nations have made significant gains toward reestablishing tribal sovereignty and reclaiming traditional practices (Fisher and Ball 2002). Currently there are 558 recognized tribes (Garrett 1999), each with its own unique history, spiritual beliefs, rituals, practices, and political structure (Guyette 1983). Tribal language may also differentiate nations as there are more than 250 different languages practiced (Garrett 1999) and each can differ linguistically as much as English does from Japanese (Allen 1998). In the state of Montana, for example, there exist seven reservations made up of Assiniboine, Blackfeet, Chippewa, Cree, Crow, Gros Ventre, Kootenai, Northern Cheyenne, Salish, and Sioux tribal nations. Although small in numbers (American Indians as a whole comprise approximately 6% of the total population in Montana; U.S. Census 2000), each tribe differs in significant ways, which should preclude evaluators from aggregating data on tribal nations or generalizing from one nation to another. Each tribe may have its own policies and protocols for conducting research on reservations, necessitating tribal-specific procedures.

Majority or "outsider" researchers interested in conducting cross-cultural evaluation research with tribal nations must also address the tenuous relationship that exists between university and tribal communities (Guyette 1983). Historically and continuing to present day, tribal nations have been exploited by academics who have ignored protocols, documented secret traditions without tribal permission, distorted facts, misrepresented the community, and failed to give back in meaningful ways (Mihesuah 1998). As a result of exploitative relationships, many native people mistrust and are suspicious of outside researchers. As Smith (1999, 1) notes, the word *research* is "probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world's vocabulary. When mentioned . . . it stirs up silence, it conjures up bad memories, it raises a smile that is knowing and distrustful."

Against this backdrop, researchers from the outside—especially researchers from the dominant majority culture—must consider their place and perspective when conducting cross-cultural evaluation research with tribal nations. However, there is little information available to guide such work (for exceptions, see Fisher and Ball 2002; Guyette 1983; Mihesuah 1998; Stubben 2001). Few researchers have written specifically on the processes of developing mutual partnerships between university and tribal communities; establishing explicit research protocols that engender equitable and fair evaluation practices; developing culturally sensitive, valid, and appropriate measures; and disseminating evaluation findings in ways that are useful and meaningful to the tribal nation. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to explore our place and perspective as "outsider" White female researchers conducting an evaluation with American Indian families on a northwestern reservation in the United States. We describe a new model—the Tribal Participatory Research Model (Fisher and Ball 2002)—that we are attempting to implement, and discuss challenges and successes that are emerging in our evaluation work to date. We conclude with a discussion of implications and future directions for cross-cultural evaluation research.

TRIBAL PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH MODEL

Although there are few resources on which to draw when conducting evaluation research with American Indian families, Fisher and Ball (2002) have recently introduced their Tribal Participatory Research (TPR) Model as a framework for building successful research programs with tribal communities. Based on participatory action research principles (Brydon-Miller 1997), Fisher and Ball's model has four mechanisms. The first TPR mechanism

refers to tribal oversight, and calls for tribal governmental authority (usually tribal council) at the initiation of the collaborative process and at other critical times and establishes a research code. The second TPR mechanism recognizes the importance of using a cultural facilitator to act as an intermediary between project staff and the oversight committee, and to establish a culturally appropriate process for meetings of community members and researchers. The third TPR mechanism, training and employing community members as project staff, recognizes that community members are especially well suited to roles as research staff because of their acceptance within the community, understanding of the community, and commitment to projects that may positively affect their community. And finally, the fourth TPR mechanism, culturally specific intervention and assessment, promotes the incorporation of traditional practices and concepts and creates the potential for testing unique and specific indigenous models. The TPR model has informed our work in numerous ways, which we discuss in detail below. First, however, we provide some background information about our evaluation project.

BACKGROUND

In 2002, we began implementation of a 5-year U.S. Department of Agriculture/Children, Youth and Families At-Risk (CYFAR) grant titled “Building Community Strengths” to improve the quality and quantity of comprehensive, community-based programs for children, youth, and families through the Extension Service at our land grant university. Early in the grant-planning stages, a team of Extension personnel (specialists, administrators, and agents) from across the state was assembled. Using a consensus approach, the team identified at-risk target audiences who were underserved and underrepresented in the state, invited key representatives from those targeted communities to discuss their interest and ability to carry out a project, and ultimately selected two communities to be funded. The targeted sites included a small, isolated rural community with growing concerns about the use of illicit drugs and an American Indian community that is among the poorest and most underresourced in the state. This article focuses specifically on our work with this American Indian community.

The reservation targeted for intervention is the newest and smallest reservation in the state and is home to about 2,600 tribal members. Residents who work on the reservation are employed by the schools, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Indian Health Service, and tribal government. There is also wheat

farming and ranching. Unemployment is high, with a rate of 17.6%, and 38% of residents are not in the labor force. The median household income is $22,474, with approximately 44% of families with children younger than 5 years living below the poverty level (U.S. Census 2000). The reservation is located in an isolated part of the state, with the nearest city offering a full range of grocery stores, retail shopping, and other services located approximately 100 miles away.

BUILDING COMMUNITY STRENGTHS PROJECT

The Building Community Strengths project was originally conceptualized as a "community-up" versus a "university-down" project, meaning that the major thrust and focus of the project would be developed by the community rather than being offered by the university partners. Following the Tribal Participatory Research model, the rationale for this community-up decision was to ensure that the project would be culturally tailored and specific and would meet the needs of the community as determined by the community (Fisher and Ball 2002). Once the project was conceptualized—preimplementation—the tribal extension agent (who is an enrolled member of the tribe) sought elder approval and garnered community support for the project. This initial step was consistent with the first TPR mechanism, tribal oversight.

During the 1st year, a White female evaluator was hired to conduct the process and outcome evaluation of the intervention project. Following the second TPR mechanism, the evaluator partnered with an American Indian faculty member at our university, who is also an enrolled member of the tribe participating in the project. The cultural facilitator agreed to serve as the liaison between the university and tribal communities, facilitating relationship building and cross-cultural communications to ensure that all project members were heard and understood.

Following the third TPR mechanism, two tribal community members were hired as on-site staff to work with the reservation extension agent. This hiring strategy recognized that community members are particularly well positioned to carry out many project functions given their commitment to the community and understanding of explicit and implicit cultural norms and traditions.

Early on in the project, this new team—the principal investigator, evaluator, cultural facilitator, extension agent, and project staff members—met at the university to begin discussing areas of need within the community and framing the project's goals and objectives. Together, the team determined

that their focus would include families with youth aged 9 to 16 years. Consistent with the fourth TPR mechanism, the newly conceived, multifaceted, and culturally appropriate project included the following components: (a) expansion of 4-H programs, to focus on cultural traditions (e.g., beadwork and costume design, traditional food preparation, agricultural issues); (b) implementation of multiple “bridging the digital divide” computer classes, to provide computer training for youth and adults and foster entrepreneurial opportunities on the reservation; and (c) implementation of a Mending the Sacred Hoop (MSH) parenting program, based on the Positive Indian Parenting curriculum (National Indian Child Welfare Association 1986). Again, following the fourth TPR mechanism, the project staff adapted the MSH curriculum to fit the cultural ways of knowing of the tribe and translated sections of the curriculum into their native language.

Although the development and implementation phases of the current project have successfully followed the TPR model, the evaluation effort has been more challenging. Following is a discussion of our evaluation plan to date, a reflection on the hurdles we have faced (and continue to face), and our collective responses to those challenges.

EVALUATION PLAN

During the 1st year of the project, we employed a process evaluation, where we conducted in-depth interviews with staff to further refine project goals and objectives, develop a logic model to guide our work, define what staff considered to be project success, and discuss preferred evaluation methodologies. We also met with the project’s cultural facilitator to learn more about the history of the tribal community, some of the concerns of and challenges facing the community (e.g., drug and alcohol abuse, diabetes, housing shortages, unemployment, lack of transportation, lack of recreational facilities), and the local partnerships formed over time to address community needs. In addition, the evaluator conducted an extensive review of the literature to become more familiar with American Indian culture and practice generally, and made several site visits to the reservation to observe the program, meet with staff and tribal elders, and discuss the feasibility and appropriateness of various evaluation strategies.

Based on our preliminary work, we determined that the most favorable, feasible, and practical outcome evaluation design was a one-group pretest-posttest design, where we would conduct in-depth interviews with program youth at the beginning and end of the academic year. One-on-one interviews

with youth participants were considered more culturally appropriate by project staff than focus group or survey methods (among others) as some youth may shy away from group-based discussion of the youth initiatives or refuse to fill out self-report surveys truthfully or at all. In-depth interviews were also preferable to the staff over other methods because the interviews would show respect and concern for individual youth, decrease readability concerns that might arise with survey methods, increase the rate of youth participation in the evaluation, and ensure that all voices were heard in the process. The staff noted the importance of the evaluator's physical presence on the reservation during the evaluation effort to show commitment to the project and to build relationships with community members and tribal leaders. The importance of offering food during the interviews to honor the culture's spirit of giving and to share resources with the community was also noted by staff members.

Now in Year 2, this ongoing evaluation effort has raised many concerns and shed light on the myriad challenges facing majority researchers and American Indian communities engaged in cross-cultural evaluation research. Reflecting back over the process thus far, we have identified at least six challenges to our evaluation work as majority researchers: (a) our outsider position, (b) resistance to evaluation, (c) measurement considerations, (d) cross-cultural dynamics of difference, (e) confidentiality, and (f) logistical constraints. Clearly, there are other salient challenges to cross-cultural evaluations; however, this is an initial attempt to forge a dialogue among members of the evaluation community and to highlight some of the areas in need of further consideration.

EVALUATION CHALLENGES AND RESPONSES

EVALUATOR AS OUTSIDER

There have been many debates in the social sciences regarding the ability of researchers from the majority culture to conduct valid research and evaluation efforts with minority populations (de Anda 1997; Barton 1998; Bercerra 1997a, 1997b; Gross 1995; Mihesuah 1998; Mio and Iwamasa 1993; Swisher 1996). Regardless of one's stance in the debate, there appears to be a general consensus that the researcher's race—as well as his or her gender, class, and sexual orientation—matters and therefore should be a consideration when planning, carrying out, and disseminating evaluation research (Ward Hood and Cassaro 2002). Regarding evaluation research with native

populations, some assert that nonnative, White researchers should step aside in favor of native researchers (Bercerra 1997b; Swisher 1996). Others posit that the most productive research results from the collaboration of native and nonnative researchers (de Anda 1997; Mihesuah 1998). Although in theory one might argue the primacy of native researchers conducting evaluative research with native populations, in reality, such hiring decisions are often determined by the availability and location of trained evaluators. Especially when conducting local, within-state, or rural evaluative efforts, one does not typically have the luxury of choosing the race or ethnicity of the evaluator. In such cases where availability of trained evaluators takes precedence over racial/ethnic "match," Gross (1995) suggests that cross-cultural evaluators adopt a self-conscious and critical stance throughout the evaluation:

> There are guidelines that one can apply to one's own research or learning about practice with people of color. For example, Who is doing the analyzing and observing? What are their and my interests in pursuing the subject? Who will benefit from these writings and practices? How will the population at stake benefit? . . . What provisions are made for others to be heard? (P. 212)

As outsiders to the American Indian community, we have been challenged to consciously analyze power differentials and rethink approaches to our evaluation (Mertens 1999). Although it can be difficult to let go of our Western scientific assumptions and constructions of what is good research or what is of value, by partnering with our cultural facilitator and native colleagues throughout the evaluative process, we have given primacy to their definitions of what is meaningful, what is considered successful, and what should be measured. Upon reflection, we agree with de Anda (1997), who suggests that research partnerships between native and nonnative researchers can be advantageous, as long as the partnership seeks equal voice and input by all of its members, and the diverse expertise and knowledge shared by partners is given equal weight in the design and implementation of the research.

RESISTANCE TO EVALUATION

A second challenge we experienced early on in the project was resistance to the evaluation as project staff may not have seen the need for formal evaluation as required by the grantor. This struggle is not unique to this work as evaluators and practitioners generally have different ideas about what is working, how to measure success, and the usefulness of formal assessment (Myers-Walls 2000). When conducting evaluation work with tribal commu-

nities, one might ask, What way of knowing is right? How do we justify Western methodologies as right, when certainly other ways of knowing have equal merit (Mihesuah 1998)? Attempting to establish buy-in for one particular method—especially a method employed by the majority cultural group that has not always served tribal communities well—can be challenging, ineffective, and ultimately result in tribal resistance and cross-cultural conflict.

During the initial stages of the evaluation, and in keeping with a utilization focus (Patton 1997) and participatory (Greene 1988) evaluation approach, we invited project staff to help us identify what outcomes they anticipated, the process by which the evaluation should take place, and the instruments to be used in the evaluation. However, in our efforts to be open, share information, and get staff feedback, we appeared to inundate staff and overwhelm them in the process. As noted by Fisher and Ball (2002), on-site staff may lack formal training in research methods and require such methodological training by their university partners. Unfortunately, we did not include research methods training protocols at the beginning of the evaluation effort, which seemed to hinder our progress. We have since incorporated such training opportunities into our evaluation plan, facilitating project staff decision making with regard to their level of involvement during different phases of the evaluation effort and methods selection.

Resource limitations have also led to evaluation resistance. The on-site staff have reported feeling stretched too thin with demands of program implementation and are therefore reticent to engage in the evaluation process. It is not uncommon on reservations and in rural communities generally to be expected to collaborate with multiple professionals and agencies serving the community (Weigel and Baker 2002). For example, when the project staff implemented the MSH parenting program, they collaborated with as many as five different agencies on the reservation and felt strongly that they could not limit the program to targeted at-risk families only (based on grant funding objectives). As a result, approximately 150 people participated in the first session of the program. This community sharing process stretched the project's resources, exhausted project staff, and complicated the evaluation process. However, failure on behalf of project staff to engage in these collaborations has the potential of causing interagency conflicts, political reprisal, professional isolation, and alienation from others on the reservation—many of whom are extended family members. To better support the needs of the staff, we have relied more heavily on our cultural facilitator, found other trusted members of the tribal community to help guide our work, and removed some of the evaluation-based decision-making burdens experi-

enced by the staff (e.g., making final decisions on evaluation instruments and protocols).

MEASUREMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Another challenge in cross-cultural evaluation work generally resides in measurement considerations. In the sciences, the terms *accuracy*, *reliability*, and *validity* are used to make evaluative judgments of measurement instruments—yet, as Lomawaima and McCarty (2002) question, who determines what is accurate, reliable, and/or valid for native populations? Such questions arose as we developed a pilot interview measure for youth. The process was highly iterative, where the evaluator selected measures that had strong reliability among White and other nonnative minority populations and then met with the cultural facilitator to refine the measures and assess their validity for use with native youth. The facilitator checked the measures for language and cultural appropriateness and determined that—not surprisingly—many of the selected measures were not appropriate for this specific community. For example, there were several items that asked youth to rate what activities their friends participated in and how their friends felt about such activities. The cultural facilitator and project staff explained that such questions were inappropriate because many native youth might feel that providing such information would be seen as a betrayal among friends. Similar issues arose with proposed measures of parenting quality. Again, our native colleagues suggested that youth would not talk about their family members as this might be considered a betrayal within the relationship.

The limitations of employing self-esteem inventories were also raised by project members as tribal communities often socialize their children to consider the community and not the self. For example, we suggested using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Inventory (Rosenberg 1965) as one measure on the interview schedule. This measure includes items such as "I wish I could have more respect for self" and "I am a person of worth, at least equal to others." The project cultural facilitator explained that youth are taught to respect and esteem others, and not to consider themselves equal to elders or their guardians. Therefore, such items were considered inappropriate for native youth.

After much iteration, we collectively selected an open-ended interview guide with a limited set of Likert-type items. Sample open-ended questions included "What are three things you like best about school?" and "What have you learned from participating in the youth program?" In addition, recognizing that—regardless of how culturally competent a nonnative researcher may

be—American Indians prefer a native rather than a nonnative interviewer (Stubben 2001), we decided to hire native graduate and undergraduate students to assist with the in-depth interviews, other data collection efforts, and interpretation of findings (when appropriate).

Starting this year, we are also piloting a portfolio project conceptualized by our native colleagues, where youth participants take photographs using disposable cameras (provided by the project staff) to document their participation in various phases of the youth program. At the end of the year, the youth will compile their photographs into a meaningful portfolio and present their collected works to the larger community (e.g., project staff, evaluation team, family and extended kin, and tribal elders). Youth will be encouraged to examine their growth and development over the course of the year and reflect on the lessons they have learned. Throughout this evaluation effort, seeking feedback about methodological considerations and reaching consensus about the evaluative methods that are rigorous and comfortable to all partners has appeared to foster buy-in from the evaluator, cultural facilitator, and project staff, while at the same time increased measurement reliability and validity.

CROSS-CULTURAL DYNAMICS OF DIFFERENCE

Another challenge to our cross-cultural work is the dynamics of difference that we collectively experience throughout the evaluative process (Cross et al. 1989). We find that our ways of knowing differ from our native colleagues in terms of our communication styles, how we work to accomplish tasks or our task orientation, when such tasks are completed (also referred to as time orientation), and the primacy given to familial or community obligations. For example, our majority culture tends to support direct and assertive communication styles when completing tasks, whereas our native colleagues' cultural milieu supports an outwardly passive style of interaction, particularly among women. We have learned that if we make a mistake in our efforts (e.g., use an inappropriate word or make an incorrect assumption based on what we have read about native cultures generally), we may not learn about this mistake directly during formal, planned meetings. Rather, we may learn about our error from our cultural facilitator or via subtle interactions with our native colleagues. Although creating an evaluation that is culturally relevant and appropriate to the tribe is of primary importance in our collective work (Huff and Kline 1999; Saxton 2001), as outsiders, we undoubtedly miss many of the subtle nuances emanating from cultural differ-

ence. Indeed, our very interpretation of what our colleagues deem as culturally relevant and appropriate is influenced by our position and place as White women.

Perhaps because of one's outsider position, cross-cultural evaluation work demands allotting significant amounts of time up front to develop trusting relationships and feelings of safety regarding knowledge exchange. Such work also requires time to understand the dynamics of difference that emerge when the nonnative evaluator and native colleagues share different cultural ways of knowing, which can lead to miscommunications and misunderstandings. Moreover, outside evaluators must determine how to balance the different definitions of time operating across environments or cultural contexts. For example, the university and the grantor have rather rigid time schedules that must be followed to ensure successful administration of the grant, whereas the project staff and reservation community may experience time in a more fluid manner.

Relationships among family members may also take precedence over project deadlines. For example, when the budget was due for the next grant funding cycle, the project staff did not meet the federal deadline due to familial and community obligations. The principal investigator of the grant had to complete the budget for the staff with little collective input. In response to time challenges and unexpected family/community demands, we have had to allot more time and flexibility into the evaluation plan and have worked closely with project advisers and our cultural facilitator to increase cross-cultural understanding. In addition, we now recognize that staff roles and responsibilities may shift in light of familial or community demands that may take precedence over project task completion on the reservation.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Another challenge we face is the threat to confidentiality on the reservation. Maintaining participant privacy is very difficult in small rural towns and on reservations where most activities are visible to extended family and community members. Unfortunately, few recommendations regarding confidentiality in rural communities have been identified in the literature (Weigel and Baker 2002). To increase the sense of confidentiality among community members during our in-depth interview process with youth, we opted to hire American Indian interviewers who live off the reservation and were therefore unknown to the community at large. This can be disadvantageous, as outsider interviewers—in this case, native interviewers from other tribal nations—

may have less success at establishing trust and rapport with youth than native, enrolled members of the specific tribe of interest; however, the benefits of ensuring confidentiality appear to outweigh such potential limitations.

LOGISTICAL CONSTRAINTS

Finally, our evaluative work has been challenged by logistical constraints. The reservation is located approximately 300 miles away from the university, and site visits require overnight stays. The threat of heavy snowfalls and dangerous driving conditions year-round must also be factored into the evaluation. Communicating with project staff via e-mail and telephone has helped bridge the distance but has not necessarily aided our efforts to build trust or ease the burden of engaging in evaluative research. Consulting directly (in person) with tribal leadership and project staff is integral to establishing connections and demonstrating commitment to project success. However, on the reservation, there also is a need to develop personal relationships above and beyond professional relationships—and such relationship building is hindered by distance and time. Although we have visited the reservation and met with the cultural facilitator and our native colleagues several times over the past year, we have a long road ahead of us to form the trusted and collaborative partnerships we desire.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE EVALUATIVE WORK

There are a number of lessons learned from our work, and a number of recommendations for future cross-cultural evaluative efforts with tribal communities. Perhaps one of the more salient lessons learned has been the importance of relationship building and the need to reaffirm such relationships often. The historical injustices experienced by tribal communities and the misuse of tribal knowledge requires constant dialogue and frequent meetings to ensure cross-cultural understanding and appropriateness (e.g., "What is the culturally appropriate way to greet an elder?" "Is the wording of this item acceptable on the interview schedule?"). Such dialogue can be time-consuming and is not often valued by academic culture. Yet to be effective as outside evaluators, this time spent on relationship building is critically important and may determine the success or failure of a project.

Second, cross-cultural evaluations with tribal communities require unique approaches that do not always conform to standard Western scientific methodology taught in most academic institutions. Such evaluative work conducted by cultural outsiders requires careful attention to one's place and perspective. White, majority-cultured evaluators must recognize the unjust and perhaps unethical research practices implemented in the past and forge new relationships based on trust and equitable partnerships (de Anda 1997). Cross-cultural evaluators must also consider how research on reservations will specifically benefit the tribal community and must establish dissemination practices that are useful and meaningful (Fisher and Ball 2002; Guyette 1983; Mihesuah 1998). Currently, there is little discussion of the processes outside evaluators might utilize to accomplish successful, appropriate, and responsible cross-cultural evaluations with tribal communities. Continued discussion of the challenges faced by cross-cultural evaluation efforts (from the vantage point of the evaluator, cultural facilitators, tribal partners, and program participants) and responses to such challenges may shed much-needed light on these issues.

Finally, the TPR Model offered by Fisher and Ball (2002) can serve as an integral framework for planning and implementing research practices and protocols with tribal nations. It is critical—particularly in cross-cultural research and evaluation—to jointly determine a research protocol or set of standards to be followed throughout the course of the evaluation. Determining who the stakeholders are, how data will be used, and to what end should be a collaborative process where the tribal community has the final say (Fisher and Ball 2002). Again, from an academic perspective, this lack of control over data can make analysis and dissemination of data challenging, and does not always fit well with academe's "publish or perish" cultural norm. Nonetheless, partnering with tribal nations to conduct research and evaluation can be an advantageous endeavor, as the cross-fertilization of two or more cultures—blending ways of knowing and assessments of success—can produce synergistic, creative, and mutually rewarding projects that advance our understanding of the strengths and needs of diverse communities.

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