



## CHAPTER TWELVE

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# CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE EVALUATION

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## Theory, Practice, and Future Implications\*,†

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In the last two decades, the evaluation literature reflects increasing attention to culture and cultural contexts in the field. A lion's share of this literature has focused on culturally responsive evaluation (CRE) concepts and frameworks.<sup>1</sup> Much less literature considers the practice, practical application, or ways in which those in the field maximize the use of such frameworks. As this chapter will reveal, most of the current CRE literature discusses either theory or practice; very few, if any, provide discussions of *both* theoretical and practical applications of CRE.

As the practice of evaluation by non-profits, consultants, academics, and the general public grows, the need to use CRE in evaluation practice has increased because evaluators work in diverse cultural, contextual, and complex communities in the United States and in many other parts of the world. In this fourth edition of the Handbook, this chapter provides a core resource on the history, theory, and application of CRE. This opportunity to bring CRE theory and practice to a wider audience is set within an increasing global demand for monitoring and evaluation of public programs and the requirements by

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\**Acknowledgements:* The authors thank Kathy Newcomer and two anonymous reviewers. Additionally, authors credit Elizabeth Kahl and Kelly D. Lane for their assistance with the technical and graphic design support of Figure 12.2.

†This chapter reflects a long-term collaboration among these authors, each of whom made unique contributions to the conversation; therefore, the order of authorship is purposely alphabetical.

governments and international organizations to use evaluation, especially in settings and communities that have traditionally been underserved, underrepresented, or marginalized.

The purpose of the chapter is threefold: to provide a historical record of the development of CRE, to describe the theory that guides CRE practice, and to demonstrate how practice applications inform and contribute to CRE theory. The chapter begins with a summary and history of CRE, from its inception in the evaluation literature to its current moment and use in training, professional development workshops, publications, and practice.

The second part of the chapter presents a framework used to distinguish application of CRE in several dimensions of evaluation practice. Specifically, this section describes how core theoretical components of CRE provide a framework to guide practice from the outset of an evaluation to its conclusion. By integrating culturally responsive practices and applications throughout the evaluation cycle, practitioners gain better practical knowledge in ways to use CRE and how to provide more robust CRE learning in diverse cultural settings.

The third part of the chapter illustrates what CRE theory looks like in practice through the illustration of three practice applications published in the last decade. These practice applications describe an increasingly complex world of evaluation and show how the details of implementing CRE also build CRE theory on the ground. This third section depicts distinct ways to think about evaluation practice through a CRE theoretical framework and suggests that the practical application of CRE in national and international settings is increasingly timely and useful.

The fourth and final section of the paper highlights ways in which CRE challenges the evaluation profession to revisit basic premises such as validity, rigor and responsibility. As such, the final section provides implications and considerations for future culturally responsive evaluators who intend to extend practice even further.

Ultimately, the chapter lays out an affirmative statement on the boundaries of CRE in practical evaluation contexts and offers ways in which culturally responsive evaluators in multiple settings can apply CRE practically and usefully. As demonstrated in the history of CRE, this chapter intends to serve both as a reference point and a benchmark for further discussion and development of CRE for years to come.

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## What Is CRE?

CRE is a holistic framework for centering evaluation in culture (Frierson, Hood, Hughes, and Thomas, 2010). It rejects culture-free evaluation and

recognizes that culturally defined values and beliefs lie at the heart of any evaluative effort. Evaluation must be designed and carried out in a way that is culturally responsive to these values and beliefs, many of which may be context-specific. CRE advocates for the inclusion of culture and cultural context in both evaluation theory and practice (Hood, 2014). Hopson (2009) expressed it as follows:

CRE is a theoretical, conceptual and inherently political position that includes the centrality of and [attunement] to culture in the theory and practice of evaluation. That is, CRE recognizes that demographic, sociopolitical, and contextual dimensions, locations, perspectives, and characteristics of culture matter fundamentally in evaluation. (p. 431)

In examining the component parts of CRE, *culture* is understood as “a cumulative body of learned and shared behavior, values, customs and beliefs common to a particular group or society” (Frierson, Hood, and Hughes, 2002, p. 63). *Responsive* “fundamentally means to attend substantively and politically to issues of culture and race in evaluation practice” (Hood, 2001, p. 32). *Evaluation* refers to the determination of merit, worth or value of a program, project or other evaluand (Scriven, 1991). Thus, “an evaluation is culturally responsive if it fully takes into account the culture of the program that is being evaluated” (Frierson, Hood, and Hughes, 2002, p. 63) as well as “the needs and cultural parameters of those who are being served relative to the implementation of a program and its outcomes” (Hood and Hall, 2004, cited in Hood, 2014, p. 114).

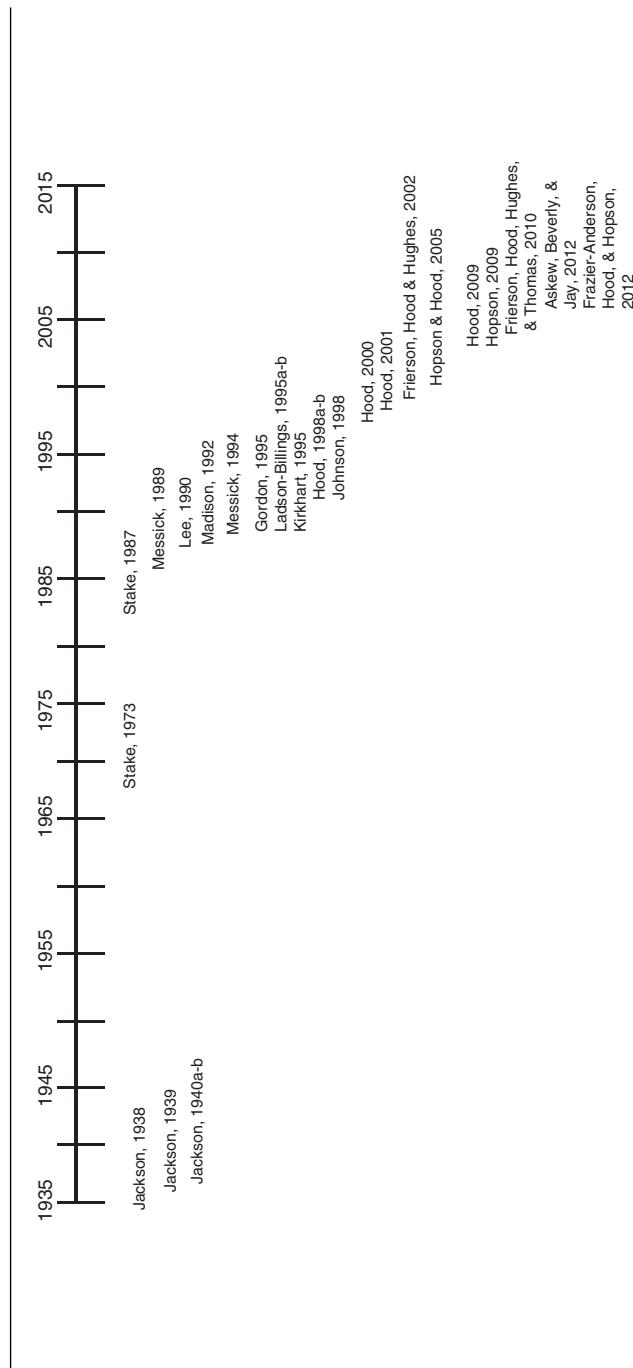
CRE gives particular attention to groups that have been historically marginalized, seeking to bring balance and equity into the evaluation process. Relevant theoretical roots include indigenous epistemologies, social advocacy theories, and critical race theory (Hopson, 2009). CRE marries theories of culturally responsive assessment and responsive evaluation to bring program evaluation into alignment with the lived experiences of stakeholders of color. As the following section recounts, the historical foundations of CRE marry theories of culturally responsive assessment and pedagogy with responsive evaluation. As reflected later in the chapter, the historical foundation of CRE sets the record straight concerning the pioneers and legacy of CRE.

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## Pioneers in the Foundations of CRE

The historical foundation of CRE is largely framed in scholarship by Stafford Hood, as well as the significant contributions of others in the evaluation field

**FIGURE 12.1. FOUNDATIONAL INFLUENCES OF CREE.**



in the last ten to fifteen years. This section, as reflected in Figure 12.1, summarizes Hood's influences in culturally relevant pedagogy and culturally responsive assessment, responsive evaluation, validity, and social justice as one initial reference point.

The early roots of CRE began in education, specifically in the work of Carol Lee (1990) and Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995a-b) on culturally responsive pedagogy in conjunction with the work of Edmund Gordon (1995) and Sylvia Johnson (1998) in educational assessment. Hood (1998a) extended this thinking from culturally responsive pedagogy to culturally responsive assessment, and subsequently to culturally responsive evaluation. Interestingly, the bridge from culturally responsive assessment to culturally responsive evaluation was built within validity theory. Kirkhart's (1995) conceptualization and articulation of the construct multicultural validity in evaluation contributed significantly to Hood (1998a), extending his logic of cultural responsiveness from pedagogy and educational assessment to evaluation. Hood's initial thinking on culturally responsive assessment had been influenced by Messick's (1989) definition of validity and particularly Messick's articulation of a consequential basis of validity which emphasized "the salient role of both positive and negative consequences" in validation (Messick, 1994, p. 13). When Kirkhart (1995) introduced the concept of multicultural validity, also building upon Messick's attention to consequences, Hood resonated with Kirkhart's emphasis on social justice and saw in it a bridge from culturally responsive assessment to culturally responsive evaluation. Hood's (2000) commentary on "deliberative democratic evaluation" reflects this transition, which was also supported by the work of authors such as Madison (1992), who challenged evaluation to address race and culture.

Hood first used the term "culturally responsive evaluation" in his presentation at a May 1998 festschrift honoring Robert Stake and Stake's initial work in responsive evaluation (Stake, 1973/1987).<sup>2</sup> Hood's (1998b) description of "responsive evaluation Amistad style" attached responsiveness explicitly to culture and cultural differences, emphasizing the importance of shared lived experience between the evaluators/observers and persons intended to be served and observed. Examples included culturally specific use of language and non-verbal expression.<sup>3</sup>

Development of CRE continued through dialogue in a number of ways, both through Hood's work as co-founder of Arizona State University's national conference on Relevance of Assessment and Culture in Evaluation (RACE) in 2000 and his membership and leadership in two American Evaluation Association (AEA) committees: the Diversity Committee and the Advisory Oversight Committee of Building Diversity Initiative (BDI). As Hood (2014) reports:

The interface between the RACE conference and AEA Building Diversity Initiative provided an “expanded space” for the conversations among researchers, scholars, and practitioners about the role of culture and cultural context in evaluation and assessment as well as the need to increase the number of trained evaluators and assessment specialists of color. (p. 113)

In the 2001 *New Directions for Evaluation* volume on Responsive Evaluation (Greene and Abma, 2001), Hood explicitly infused Stake’s model (1973/1987) with concerns for evaluation as a means of promoting equity and recognition of scholars of color as evaluation forefathers.<sup>4</sup> Equity and equality are focal issues in Hood (2001), bringing together concerns for racial equality with those of responsive evaluation. Hood demonstrates in his *Nobody Knows My Name* (2001) publication how four premises of responsive evaluation are visible in the work of early African American evaluators, whose contributions have not been duly recognized:

- Issues are the “advanced organizers” for evaluation study instead of objectives or hypotheses.
- Issues are the structure for continuing discussions and data gathering plan[s].
- Human observers are best instruments.
- Evaluators should get their information in sufficient amounts from numerous independent and credible sources so that it effectively represents the perceived status of the program, however, complex. (Stake, 1973/1987/1987, cited in Hood, 2001, p. 38)

The work of Reid E. Jackson (1935, 1936, 1939, 1940a-b) in the 1930’s and 1940’s would provide historical insight and clarity in the articulation of CRE. It is important to note that not only did Jackson receive his Ph.D. in 1938 but also that it was completed at Ohio State University, where Ralph Tyler marked the Eight Year Study as an historic marker in the evaluation history timeline. Hood (2001) had identified Reid E. Jackson as one of the earlier African American pioneers in educational evaluation. It was Hopson and Hood (2005) who connected the significance of Jackson’s work as providing “one of the earliest glimpses of culturally responsive evaluative judgments” (p. 96). Jackson’s evaluations of segregated schooling for African Americans in Kentucky (Jackson, 1935), Florida (Jackson, 1936), and particularly Alabama (Jackson, 1939, 1940a-b), provide concrete examples of an evaluator designing and implementing evaluations where culture was a central consideration.

Other significant publications further refined the theoretical and ideological roots of CRE. Table 12.1 summarizes the evolution of key points and principles of CRE as articulated by the authors of core publications. It is a cumulative list in the sense that characteristics introduced in earlier literature are not repeated. For example, the notion of shared lived experience is a foundational theme woven through all of the core literature on CRE; however, it appears in Table 12.1 only where it was first introduced in relation to CRE (Hood, 1998b).

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## From CRE Theory to CRE Practice

The theoretical parameters of CRE were translated into practice guidelines by Frierson, Hood, and Hughes (2002) and Frierson, Hood, Hughes, and Thomas (2010). These have been developed through workshop interactions (for example, Hopson, 2013; Hopson and Casillas, 2014; Hopson and Kirkhart, 2012; Kirkhart and Hopson, 2010) and practice applications (for example, Jay, Eatmon, and Frierson, 2005; King, Nielsen, and Colby, 2004; LaFrance and Nichols, 2010; Manswell Butty, Reid, and LaPoint, 2004; Thomas, 2004). While CRE does not consist of a unique series of steps set apart from other evaluation approaches, the details and distinction of CRE lie in how the stages of the evaluation are carried out. CRE is conducted in ways that create accurate, valid, and culturally-grounded understanding of the evaluand. The nine procedural stages outlined by Frierson, Hood, and Hughes (2002) and Frierson, Hood, Hughes, and Thomas (2010) illustrate the practice of CRE. See Figure 12.2, which depicts a guiding visual for incorporating the steps in the practice of CRE.<sup>5</sup>

### Preparing for the Evaluation

Evaluators must work hard in preparing to enter a community, neighborhood, or organization; they have a responsibility to educate themselves. CRE requires particular attention to the context in which an evaluation will be conducted. This includes the history of the location, the program, and the people. What are the stories of this community and its people, and who is telling them? CRE evaluators are observant regarding communication and relational styles. How does one respectfully enter this community? What dimensions of diversity are most salient within this community and how is power distributed, both formally and informally? What relationships are valued or privileged and what relationships are discouraged or forbidden?

**TABLE 12.1. KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE EVALUATION (CRE) FROM CORE LITERATURE.**

Citation	Core Characteristics of CRE
Hood, S. (1998)	Importance of shared lived experience between observers and observed Emphasis on understanding a program as it functions in the context of culturally diverse groups Need for a greater number of trained African American evaluators Both language and cultural nuance may require interpretation Importance of bridging understanding between cultures
Hood, S. (2001)	Recognizes the early work of African American scholars Explicit attention to culture and race, "substantively and politically" Increased participation of African Americans and other evaluators of color as a pragmatic necessity and moral obligation Broadens evidence to include qualitative as well as quantitative data Understanding as "vicarious experience" Inclusion of multiple stakeholder perspectives Social responsibility to address unequal opportunities and resources
Frierson, H. T., Hood, S., and Hughes, G. B. (2002)	Considers culture of the project or program as well as culture of participants Rejects "culture free" evaluation Proposes evaluation strategies consonant with cultural context Racial/ethnic congruence of evaluators with setting does <i>not</i> equate to cultural congruence or competence. Addresses the epistemology of what will be accepted as evidence Evaluators must recognize their own cultural preferences Represents all voices through a democratic process
Hood, S. (2009)	Attention to power differentials among people and systems Importance of historical and cultural antecedents Social justice agenda Evaluator understands own cultural values Requires long-term investment of time to acquire necessary skills and shared lived experiences Use of a cultural liaison/language translator Importance of how one enters relationships Explicitly links CRE to validity

*(Continued)*

**TABLE 12.1. KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE EVALUATION (CRE) FROM CORE LITERATURE.**  
*(Continued)*

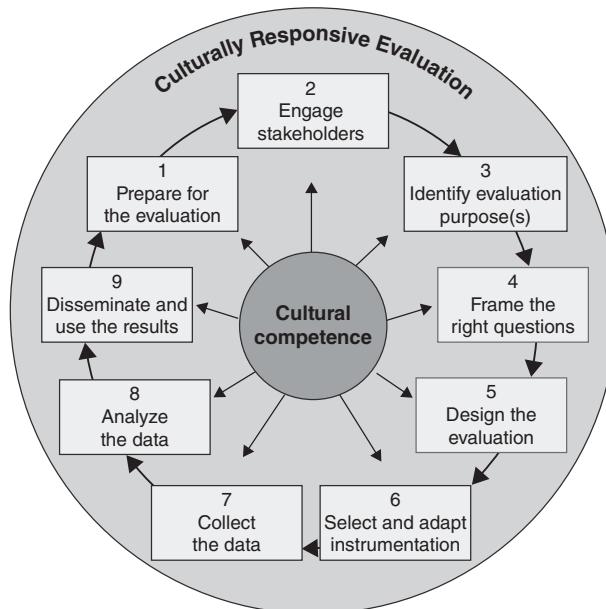
Citation	Core Characteristics of CRE
Hopson, R. K. (2009)	Explicitly names white privilege Challenges knowledge claims that delegitimize the lives, values and abilities of people of color Positions CRE as multidimensional, recognizing demographic, sociopolitical and contextual characteristics of culture Warns against taking deficit perspectives that “evaluate down” Knowledge as situational and context-bound Important to think multiculturally rather than monoculturally Recognizes intergenerational and fictive kin relationships Theoretical support from Indigenous frameworks and critical race theory (CRT)
Frierson, H. T., Hood, S., Hughes, G. B., and Thomas, V. G. (2010)	Positions CRE as a holistic framework, guiding the manner in which an evaluation is planned and executed Legitimizes culturally -specific knowledge and ways of knowing Links validity of evaluation and service to the public good Expands context as totality of environment—geographic, social, political, historical, economic and chronological Recognizes both formal and informal positions of power or authority Understand and respects varying communication and relational styles Employ best practices of linguistic translation Importance of establishing trust and ownership of evaluation Mixed-method designs as more fully addressing complexities of cultural diversity Links procedural ethics and relational ethics to cultural responsiveness, including risks to both individuals and communities Evaluator self-reflection and reflective adaptation
Askew, K., Beverly, M. G., and Jay, M. (2012)	Careful attention to assembling the evaluation team. Draws theoretical support from collaborative evaluation Enumerates CRE techniques (in comparison with collaborative techniques) Intentionally creates space and obtains permission to bring up and respond to issues of race, power and privilege Bidirectional exchange of cultural content and knowledge between evaluator and stakeholder

*(Continued)*

**TABLE 12.1. KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE EVALUATION (CRE) FROM CORE LITERATURE.**  
*(Continued)*

Citation	Core Characteristics of CRE
Frazier-Anderson, P., Hood, S., and Hopson, R. K. (2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides a culturally specific example of CRE for work with and benefit of African American communities, taking an Afrocentric perspective</li> <li>Differentiates culture from race</li> <li>Comprehensive contextual analysis, including social capital and civic capacity</li> <li>Warns against perceiving one's own culture as the only one of value (cultural egoism)</li> <li>Underscores importance of history (of oppression and resilience)</li> <li>Need to establish competence and credibility of evaluation team in communities of color</li> <li>Protect or prevent the exploitation of cultural minority and economically disadvantaged stakeholders</li> <li>Uses sankofa bird to frame an Afrocentric logic model</li> <li>Inclusion of a CRE panel review of findings as a system of checks and balances</li> </ul>

**FIGURE 12.2. CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE EVALUATION FRAMEWORK.**



As they inventory resources available to support evaluation, CRE evaluators are mindful of ways in which culture offers rich opportunities in the evaluation process and challenges traditional evaluation that omits attention to culture. CRE evaluators are aware of their own cultural locations vis-à-vis the community, including prior experiences, assumptions, and biases. These understandings support the formation of an appropriate evaluation team. The collective life experiences of CRE team members should promote genuine connection with the local context. While this may include demographic similarities among evaluators and community members, team composition does not reduce to a simplistic “matching” exercise. Evaluation team members are required to have an array of skills, competencies, and sensibilities, consistent with the *Guiding Principles* of the evaluation profession (American Evaluation Association, 2004).

## Engaging Stakeholders

Stakeholders are persons who are invested in a program or its evaluation by virtue of their roles, values, or perceived gains or losses. Not all stakeholders share the same investment; one person’s benefit may come at another person’s expense. CRE evaluators seek to develop a diverse stakeholder group, inclusive of persons both directly and indirectly impacted by a program, representative of the community and/or population of persons served by the program. To create opportunities for conversations about equity and fairness, CRE evaluators seek to include stakeholders of different status or with differing types of power and resources.

CRE evaluators must work to model and cultivate a climate of trust and respect among stakeholders. Toward this end, it is important that there be meaningful roles and activities for stakeholder engagement; token representation is insufficient and disingenuous (Mathie and Greene, 1997). CRE evaluators are guided in their interactions with stakeholders by the third edition of *The Program Evaluation Standards* (Yarbrough, Shulha, Hopson, and Caruthers, 2011). Standards U2 (Attention to Stakeholders) and P1 (Responsive and Inclusive Orientation) both speak to the importance of stakeholder relationships in evaluation.<sup>6</sup> Stakeholders can educate evaluators on important history and background, help define the parameters of what is to be evaluated (the evaluand), identify priority questions to be addressed by the evaluation, serve as sources of information, and offer advice on other sources of evidence as well as on strategies of information-gathering appropriate to context. Stakeholders

can also aid in the interpretation of data and the skillful, clear communication of findings.

### **Identifying the Purpose and Intent of the Evaluation**

Both the preparation of the evaluators and the engagement of stakeholders help refine the understanding of the evaluand, including the boundaries of what will and will not be examined. But appreciating the purpose(s) of CRE goes beyond specifying the evaluand. Is this evaluation required by funders to demonstrate accountability? Is it called for by a local citizens' group? Is it part of routine oversight or is it intended to clarify and troubleshoot an apparent problem? Is continuation, expansion, or reduction of program funding contingent upon conducting this evaluation or upon the content of the results? Is it intended to stimulate change and promote social justice? Because a given evaluation may have more than one purpose and not all purposes are overtly stated, evaluators must take time to understand different aspirations for the evaluation and how it could benefit the program and community. CRE evaluators in particular must be attuned to how the avowed purposes of the evaluation maintain or challenge current (im)balances of power and how social justice is served by the envisioned evaluation.

### **Framing the Right Questions**

A pivotal point in the evaluation is coming to agreement on what questions are to be answered and how they should be prioritized. For contexts in which direct questions are culturally inappropriate, this stage identifies what it is that stakeholders seek to learn about the program or community (LaFrance and Nichols, 2009). Both the focus and the wording of questions or statements of intention are critical here in order to set the evaluation on the right path. Will the evaluation focus on community needs and strengths, on the daily operation of the program, on appropriate and equitable use of resources, on progress toward intended outcomes, or on overall effectiveness? CRE is particularly attentive to the perspectives of program recipients and community in framing the questions (for example, Is the program operating in ways that respect local culture? How well is the program connecting with the values, lifestyles, and worldviews of its intended consumers? How are the burdens and benefits of the program distributed?)

The process of revising and refining evaluation questions establishes critical dialogue among stakeholders in CRE. CRE evaluators work with stakeholders to reflect on nuances of meaning and how different expressions of

intent may limit or expand what can be learned from an evaluation. Translation of ideas or terms may require the assistance of linguistic or language orthography experts (LaFrance, Kirkhart, and Nichols, 2015). This stage may appear tedious, but it is critical in establishing clear understandings and insuring that the evaluation will address the concerns of diverse stakeholders, authentically expressed. This includes reaching agreement on the most important questions to be answered with the available resources.

Closely related to the framing of questions or statements of desired learning is the matter of what will be accepted as trustworthy evidence in formulating answers. Conversations among stakeholders may reveal different perspectives on what “counts” as credible evidence. This is important information as CRE evaluators seek to maintain balance among stakeholder perspectives, moving into the design stage.

## **Designing the Evaluation**

The design of a CRE evaluation is responsive to context; it is not dictated by the CRE approach itself. CRE designs are congruent with the questions to be answered/learnings desired, the evidence that is valued by stakeholders, and the cultural values represented in the setting. These often include an extended time frame in order to build the relationships necessary to establish trust.

An evaluation design typically maps out the sources of information that will be accessed to gather information (including people, documents or other archival sources, and databases), the time frames in which data will be collected, and the means by which data will be collected and analyzed. Frierson, Hood, and Hughes (2002) and Frierson, Hood, Hughes, and Thomas (2010) discuss instrumentation separately in the next stage, but the design stage explicitly frames the parameters of the evaluation. In CRE, mixed methods are now recommended (Frierson, Hood, Hughes and Thomas, 2010; LaFrance and Nichols, 2009); however, in early formulations of CRE, qualitative data were privileged over quantitative to restore balance to a historically quantitative enterprise (Hood, 2001). The descriptor, mixed methods refers not only to the nature of the information and its collection but also to the underlying epistemologies as well as the processes through which qualitative and quantitative data are combined (Greene, Benjamin, and Goodyear, 2001).

A final design consideration of particular relevance to CRE is the types of understandings sought. Are these holistic understandings? Are comparisons required among persons receiving services and those not yet connected to services? In order to answer the priority questions, will it be important to disaggregate the data by culturally relevant categories? These considerations

have implications for both selection and assignment of participants in the evaluation.

### Selecting and Adapting Instrumentation

A major concern in multicultural contexts is the validity of assessment tools and instruments. Working in the field of counseling psychology, Ridley, Tracy, Pruitt-Stephens, Wimsatt, and Beard (2008) argue that “much of the conduct of psychological assessment is culturally invalid and therefore an ethical problem” (p. 23). Similar concerns hold true for educational testing (Johnson, Kirkhart, Madison, Noley, and Solano-Flores, 2008). When selecting instruments for use in CRE, existing tools must be closely scrutinized for cultural bias in both language and content. Norms based on other populations and locations may be of little value in interpreting local scores. Instruments must be validated for use in culturally-specific contexts. When translation is used, it should follow best practices, addressing both semantic and content equivalence. For example, Frierson, Hood, Hughes, and Thomas (2010) suggest a combination of forward/backward translation (FBT), multiple forward translation (MFT) or translation by a committee (TBC). Single (forward) translation alone is never sufficient.

When appropriate existing instruments are not available or they cannot be satisfactorily adapted, original instruments must be developed specifically for CRE. Such instrument development will need to be reflected in both the timeline and the expertise of the CRE team.

### Collecting the Data

Beyond the tools or instruments themselves, the procedures surrounding their use must also be responsive to cultural context. This applies equally to the collection of qualitative and quantitative data. Similar to when entering the community context as a whole, cultural protocols often dictate who the evaluator speaks to first and who has authority to grant access to other sources of information. Likewise, introducing oneself to individuals or groups holding valuable information must follow a respectful, culturally appropriate protocol. Time is required to establish trust and to ensure that participation is voluntary and information freely shared.

CRE evaluators appreciate how their own experiences and cultural locations affect what they can see or hear. Additionally, they recognize the importance of self as instrument (Hood, 2001; Manswell Butty, Reid, and LaPoint, 2004). Data collectors must be trained not only in correct use of

observation tools, interview schedules, and questionnaire administration, but in cultural context and expression (written, oral, and nonverbal). Shared lived experience between the evaluator/observer and the persons providing information in CRE can anchor trustworthy communication and support valid understandings.

## Analyzing the Data

Data do not speak for themselves; they are given voice by those who interpret them. Here again, understanding cultural context is necessary for accurate interpretation. To achieve this, CRE evaluators go beyond members of their own team. A cultural interpreter(s) may be needed to capture nuances of meaning. Stakeholders can be involved as reviewers to assist in interpretation, respond to drafts, and suggest alternate explanations.

CRE evaluators take an investigative approach to data analysis that goes beyond simple description or calculation of main effects. Diversity within groups can be examined by disaggregating data to explore, for example, how programs may affect some community members more or differently than others. Outliers can be studied to shed light on complexities or to challenge simple explanations with disconfirming information. Positive outliers—those who succeed without programmatic interference/assistance, for example—may be particularly helpful in appreciating resilience within a community. Data can be scrutinized for evidence of unintended outcomes—positive or negative. The existence of positive unintended outcomes can expand one's understanding of program benefits, while negative unintended outcomes suggest important caveats or cautions that must be considered to prevent harm.

## Disseminating and Using the Results

This final stage closes the circle of the CRE evaluation framework illustrated in Figure 12.2 (Hopson and Kirkhart, 2014), often raising new questions that begin another evaluation cycle. For CRE evaluators, this stage holds potential for social betterment and positive change; therefore, it is extremely important. Cultural responsiveness increases both the credibility and utility of evaluation results. Benefit to community can be supported by inviting community review and comment on findings before wider dissemination. Community review also requires that the communication mechanisms themselves are culturally appropriate and respectful of cultural values and protocols. Knowledge gained from the evaluation must be effectively communicated to a wide range of diverse stakeholders; therefore, multiple, sometimes audience-specific,

communication formats and procedures will be needed. This stage promotes use consistent with the purposes of CRE, emphasizing community benefit, positive change, and social justice.

Taken together, the steps or components form the guiding theoretical framework of CRE that centers evaluation in culture. Still, the core premise of the chapter suggests that CRE theory informs practice *and* CRE practice builds theory. The next section provides practice examples that illustrate how theory is elaborated in local application.

## Case Applications of CRE Theory and Practice

Applications and practices of CRE are emerging from the seminal practice guidelines articulated by Frierson, Hood, and Hughes (2002) and Frierson, Hood, Hughes, and Thomas (2010). This section describes three recent applications of CRE in evaluation literature and illustrates how CRE practice contributes to and informs theoretical understandings of evaluation. The works cited below (Bowen and Tillman, 2014; Manswell Butty, Reid, and LaPoint, 2004; and Ryan, Chandler, and Samuels, 2007) are not the only references that define CRE in the last ten years (see, for example, Askew, Beverly, and Jay, 2012; Chouinard, 2013, 2014; Greene, 2006; Samuels and Ryan, 2011), but they are selected for their specific focus on CRE practice. In this section, we focus on how practice fleshes out the operational details of CRE theory, specific to the context of the evaluation.

### Lessons Learned from Evaluating the Struggle of Brazil's Quilombos (Bowen and Tillman, 2014).

Bowen and Tillman (2014) explore an under-examined area of CRE practice by presenting lessons learned from the development, implementation, and analysis of surveys used to evaluate the struggle of Brazil's *quilombos* (former fugitive slave communities) for land rights and livelihood. With a purpose of producing "useful and culturally valid data on *quilombos*" (p. 4), the authors employ a mixed method CRE approach to inform land-based research projects in Brazil.

In the development of the surveys, the authors describe ways in which they lived and researched in *quilombo* communities previously, jointly participated in everyday activities at the local level in the land-based economy of the area, and conducted focus groups with locally elected associations in order to heighten their sensitivity and responsiveness to the culture and context of the *quilombo* communities. The authors also recount how *quilombo* feedback was sought through the

entire planning stage of the survey development process, from electronic mail and telephone conversations to reframing questions and reducing the length of the survey to providing input on selection of communities for the study, remuneration for survey enumerators, and suggested ways of disseminating results.

In the implementation of the surveys, the authors describe the use of teams of enumerators to orally administer household and agriculture surveys, one team of a multi-racial and gendered group of university students who had research experience in rural communities but lived in cities and one team of *quilombola* students who were raised and resided in various communities in the study. Still, despite language issues that were addressed, authors and team members had challenges with survey implementation in regard to rephrasing or adding survey questions in the field to allow for greater understanding of the local household and cultural context and more comprehension among respondents as illustrated below:

Some survey questions were rephrased in the field because neither the enumerators nor the respondents easily understood them. For example, one of the shortcomings of the household survey had to do with the definition and boundaries of the “household.” According to the LSMS<sup>7</sup> household survey, which informed our work, a residential definition of the household includes members who have eaten and slept in the house at the time of interviewing for the last six to twelve months or “normally.” But the respondents did not easily comprehend this definition because there were household members who did not reside (or only sporadically) in the main residence but who contributed significantly to the expenses of the household and dependents from their income sources. (p. 9)

The authors illustrate where data analysis adjustments were made to attend to cultural nuances of the *quilombo* communities surveyed. They offer three examples from their study in the areas of analysis of land measurement, crop yields and marketed production, and wage labor versus self-employment, showing how they contextualized results sensitive to the local conditions of the community. Occupations considered as self-employment in the communities carry different meanings to international labor experts than they do to enumerators and respondents of the survey administered, illustrative of larger challenges in rural labor survey design.

### **Case Study of Culturally Responsive School-Based Evaluation in Southwestern U.S. (Ryan, Chandler, and Samuels, 2007)**

Ryan, Chandler, and Samuels (2007) report on an instrumental, mixed-method case study evaluation of a culturally responsive school-based federally funded initiative involving three urban public schools and one Navajo reservation school in

the southwestern United States that were not making “adequate yearly progress,” the measurement defined by the No Child Left Behind Act (2002) to determine how public schools and school districts perform on standardized tests in the United States. By having teachers and principals participate in professional development workshops designed to assist them with skills needed to conduct and design culturally responsive and school-based evaluation for their respective schools, the funded project was designed to develop an empirically-based model for operationalizing culture in evaluation and to teach schools how to develop evaluation capacity.

The authors describe data collection methods designed to provide triangulation of interviews, focus groups with project team members, school and team leaders, and a national consultant. Additionally, the authors were informed by document analysis of evaluation plans and other relevant project information, including video of school team forums.

Several findings inform the case study. First, as reported by Ryan, Chandler, and Samuels (2007), the initial struggle with the meanings of culture by key school team leaders resulted in developing data-based decision-making influenced by nuanced notions of culture. Moving beyond initial recognition of ethnic and racial diversity (only), changes in understanding culture and contextual factors led to reconsidering their role in re-defining solutions to address their cultural realities. The authors write:

Where schools may have initially balked at the concept of culture and evaluation, progress was made as one school later began to disaggregate school accountability data to target an underserved group of students and to provide additional support to that subgroup to address areas of shortfall. According to one participant, “teachers are starting to challenge the data. When teachers begin their grade level meetings, they start by reviewing the data . . . even individual student [data].” This level of understanding was not apparent across all participating schools, yet this kind of progress holds promise for schools doing culturally responsive evaluation by being more inclusive in their discussions about the meaning of data among key stakeholder groups. (p. 205)

As teachers began to think evaluatively, they began to have a better understanding of achievement and culture at their respective schools. Data collected and analyzed indicate they showed adequate understanding about explaining the context of the program, engaging stakeholders, determining the purpose of the evaluation and designing a culturally oriented evaluation, but challenges were evident in instrument design and dissemination and utilization of results.

The authors suggest that structural and theoretical issues play an important role in understanding the practical and logistical challenges with introducing the notion of culture in school-based evaluation. For instance, the authors indicate

that values discussions and orientations are inevitable in applications and understandings of culture in school-based evaluation settings that tend to emphasize top-down, bureaucratic structures and processes. Being inclusive is one thing, but CRE evaluators must recognize the theoretical tensions in being inclusive and in shifting power dynamics in schools.

Additionally, the authors raise questions about what should be expected from novice, school-based evaluators who attempt to infuse culture in evaluation. Should standards and expectations for internal school evaluation teams be the same as standards and expectations for those who conduct external evaluations? The authors also note that open discussions about culture can raise tensions and that such conversations did not necessarily fit the bureaucratic, hierarchical structures and practices that existed among the four participating schools.

**Successes and Challenges Evaluating an Urban School Talent Development Intervention Program in the U.S.  
(Manswell Butty, Reid, and LaPoint, 2004)**

Manswell Butty, Reid, and LaPoint (2004) describe and analyze a Talent Development (TD) school program in partnership with Howard University's Center for Research on Education of Students Placed at Risk (CRESPAR). The authors describe a School-to-Career Transitions intervention that took place at a junior high school in an urban northeastern part of the United States. It was designed to improve the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of junior high school students related to school-to-career opportunities in their transition from elementary to middle school, middle to high school, and high school to post-secondary options through a variety of learning activities. Specifically, the intervention was a Breakfast Club (including interactive discussion groups and activities) that took place for one hour prior to the start of the formal school day. Participants were seventeen ninth-grade students who were expected to graduate during the academic year. Session evaluations, self-assessments, and pre- and post-tests were collected during the eight workshops that took place.

These authors provide a clear example of how the practice of CRE builds theory on the ground by operationalizing general principles of the CRE framework at each of the nine stages. Their work also illustrates how the stages overlap and repeat; they are not distinctly separate, linear activities as illustrated below:

*Stage 1. Preparing for the Evaluation.* The TD evaluation was interwoven with the TD intervention in the school, so evaluators met on multiple occasions with stakeholders to understand the sociocultural context of that particular school. Evaluators listened carefully to the perspectives of the principal, counselor, liaison, teachers, and students and also reviewed student profiles to determine program goals and aspirations. In a two-way exchange of information, evaluators brought relevant

findings from prior research to inform program development. Student, family, and community factors were kept clearly in view as both the program and the evaluation were tailored to fit the specific context of application.

*Stage 2. Engaging Stakeholders.* Stage 1 preparation included stakeholder engagement, but in Stage 2, the authors gave particular attention to building solid relationships with the school principal, liaison, and counselor, who were identified as key stakeholders. The school liaison, was selected as the key point of contact for evaluators, and the authors were explicit in identifying the personal characteristics that made her ideal for this role. Her academic training, extensive experience of over thirty years in public education, and perhaps most significantly, her genuine commitment to the welfare of the students aligned her with the principles of CRE. This created an atmosphere in which ideas and suggestions could be freely exchanged and debated.

*Stage 3. Identifying the Purpose and Intent of the Evaluation.* This evaluation was intended to serve both formative and summative purposes, and the evaluation team laid these dual functions out clearly for the mutual understanding of all stakeholders. The formative purpose was to document and describe program operations, providing ongoing feedback to inform program staff so that they could continue to develop and improve the program. Feedback from the students participating in Breakfast Club “was used to fine-tune subsequent sessions to make them more valuable and enjoyable” (Manswell Butty, Reid, and LaPoint, 2004, p. 42). The summative purpose was to determine whether the Breakfast Club achieved its objectives, focusing on the direct effects on participants.

*Stage 4. Framing the Right Questions.* Following the CRE framework, the evaluation included questions of concern to key stakeholders—school principal, liaison, and counselor. Questions from the broader TD project level were adapted and tailored to local context. To confirm that the right questions were being posed, evaluators constructed a “data map” or visual matrix so that everyone was clear how the evaluation questions related both to the Breakfast Club intervention and to the evidence that was needed to answer each question.

*Stage 5. Designing the Evaluation.* This evaluation used mixed methods to promote both conceptual and methodological triangulation. Qualitative data included interviews and written assessments and quantitative data included surveys and self-assessments. Evaluators paid particular attention to both the preferred schedule and method of data collection, noting that “many students preferred discussions and other interactive activities rather than filling out surveys and self-assessments” (Manswell Butty, Reid, and LaPoint, 2004, p. 43). The career self-assessment survey was administered to all ninth graders in the school, so the Breakfast Club participants were not singled out and comparisons could be made.

*Stage 6. Selecting and Adapting Instrumentation.* Many of the evaluation tools were developed or adapted specifically for use with the Breakfast Club audiences. Instruments were carefully selected with attention to their cultural sensitivity in

form, language, and content. The authors report that one of the standardized tools was normed on majority populations, calling into question the validity of score interpretation for students of color. The authors countered this by augmenting that score with other outcome data that were more responsive to context.

*Stage 7. Collecting Data.* Overlapping instrumentation and data collection in CRE is the recognition of self-as-instrument. Those who are collecting the data must be attuned to the nuances of expression and communication specific to the contexts of this program, school, and community. TD evaluators shared a racial background with the stakeholders, entering the school with “an increased level of sensitivity and awareness to the plight and lived experiences of the various stakeholder groups” (Manswell Butty, Reid, and LaPoint, 2004, p. 44). The authors credited the (Stage 1) multiple meetings with stakeholders and participation in or observation of school-related functions with helping evaluators be responsive to context and culture.

*Stage 8. Analyzing Data.* The stakeholder conversations previously cited extended into data interpretation. Stakeholders advised on how best to analyze and interpret data to derive valid, contextualized meaning. Whole group data were disaggregated to examine differences by gender and age. The age disaggregation was especially relevant to this context, in which ninth-graders ranged in age from fourteen to sixteen and were therefore at considerably different developmental stages.

*Stage 9. Disseminating and Using the Results.* Evaluation findings were reported to stakeholders in formats tailored to communicating effectively with each audience. Feedback to participants was delivered “in a student-friendly manner” (p. 45). Results were explained to the principal, counselor, and liaison within the context of the Breakfast Club program, so that practice implications were clear. Successes as well as challenges were highlighted. Findings were also disseminated to funders and other project staff outside of the immediate context of application.

This study is unique in enumerating practice contributions to CRE theory at each stage of the framework. Overall, the authors also suggest that the culturally responsive evaluation approach is labor-intensive but effective. In ensuring a team, collaborative approach, responsive to aspects of culture and context at all stages of the evaluation, and flexible enough to combine evaluation approaches for different situations appropriate to the evaluand, the authors affirm that the approach “led to an intervention and evaluation that benefited stakeholders and participants, as evidenced by student and staff evaluations and positive student outcomes” (p. 45).

The three practice applications presented in this section illustrate the varied integration of the CRE theoretical framework and, even more importantly, how practice applications take a general framework and fill in context-specific details on the ground. Similarly, the three cases provide examples of practice in indigenous communities or communities of color and offer an opportunity

to dig deeper into matters that pertain to cultural context in evaluation and ways in which culture is centered in evaluation practice.

The cases furthermore provide a clearer picture of the way theory informs practice and practice informs theory. Ultimately, the articles show over a decade how CRE practice happens in three distinct ways in international, indigenous, and minoritized school and community contexts and how CRE theory is deepened through practice in three different contexts.

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## Implications for the Profession

Whereas the previous sections examined how CRE theory is understood in its historical context, provided an overarching framework for evaluation practice, and described the ways in which CRE practice develops strategies that operationalize theory, this final section addresses how CRE presses the field itself to revisit basic premises. In short, this final section examines ways in which CRE challenges the evaluation profession to expand its thinking and examine the cultural location of core ideas such as validity, rigor, and the responsibilities of the evaluator role.

### Validity, Rigor, and CRE

One of the benefits of centering evaluation in culture is that it pushes the profession to examine and reflect on respected standards of inquiry and to see these in a new light. Consider three points regarding validity and rigor congruent with CRE: (1) validity must be multicultural; (2) rigor should not be equated with precision; and (3) rigor (and in turn, validity) is supported by conceptual tools such as the Key Evaluation Checklist (Scriven, 2013) or A Culture Checklist (Kirkhart, 2013a-b).

Concerns for validity have accompanied the development of CRE from its earliest appearance as culturally responsive assessment (see, for example, Boodoo, 1998; Hood, 1998a; Qualls, 1998). In broad brush, validity marks the correctness or trustworthiness of evidence-based understandings and actions. But how should validity be understood in the context of CRE? Like other theories, validity theory needs to be congruent with evaluation context, so in the case of CRE, the concept of validity itself must be expanded and repositioned to address the core characteristics of CRE listed in Table 12.1. Validity must be understood as truly multicultural, open to perspectives previously marginalized (Kirkhart, 1995), and it must be repositioned to

center it in culture (Kirkhart, 2013a) so that *all* definitions of validity are understood as culturally located.<sup>8</sup>

Kirkhart (1995; 2005) has argued for a vision of validity that reflects multiple cultural intersections. She uses the term multicultural validity *not* to specify a new type of validity but to suggest that validity is an expansive construct that can be understood from multiple perspectives, including those historically marginalized. In repositioning validity in culture, Kirkhart (2013a) has examined the perspectives from which validity is argued in feminist theory, CRT, Indigenous epistemology, queer theory, disability studies, and aging studies, as well as measurement theory and research design. Justifications have been identified in five categories at this writing; however, these understandings continue to evolve (LaFrance, Kirkhart, and Nichols, 2015). Each of the five justifications—methodological, relational, theoretical, experiential, and consequential—is congruent with CRE (see Table 12.2). These justifications may stand alone or be used in combination to argue the validity of CRE. Conversely, when a justificatory perspective is ignored or violated, it may weaken support for (threaten) validity (Kirkhart, 2011).

Rigor typically refers to compliance with strict standards of research methodology (Johnson, Kirkhart, Madison, Noley, and Solano-Flores, 2008). It is valued primarily because it supports methodological justifications of validity, but like validity, it requires an expanded conceptualization to make it useful to CRE. While scientific rigor can serve several purposes that “advance understanding and ultimately advantage communities of color and other under-represented groups” (Johnson, Kirkhart, Madison, Noley, and Solano-Flores, 2008, p. 200), narrow definitions of scientific rigor undermine validity. What then does it mean to do rigorous evaluation that is culturally responsive? What are the hallmarks of rigor for CRE? Are these specific to CRE or are they, simply “good evaluation”?<sup>9</sup>

Nearly three decades after Lincoln and Guba (1986) cautioned that traditional criteria of rigor grounded in post-positivism were inadequate to the task of evaluating the quality of *all* evaluation, we have a better sense of alternate definitions of rigor and of criteria to achieve it. But whether one is working from a post-positivist or alternate paradigm such as CRE, rigorous inquiry has been historically rule-driven, with strict standards to be met or bars to be cleared. This understanding presents two challenges for rigor in CRE: equating rigor with precision and with fixed, preordinate criteria.

The first challenge emerges from implicitly associating rigor with precision. Precision values fixed, often narrowly defined, boundaries that reflect positivist yearning for singular truths. Sharp definitions and exact specifications are viewed as accurate and correct, while loose, holistic understandings

**TABLE 12.2. JUSTIFICATIONS OF VALIDITY UNDER CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE EVALUATION (CRE)<sup>a</sup>.**

Justification <sup>b</sup>	Description	Applications in CRE
Methodological	Validity is supported by the cultural appropriateness of epistemology and method—measurement tools, design configurations, and procedures of information gathering, analysis and interpretation	Epistemology of persons indigenous to the community grounds the evaluation. Measurement tools have been developed for a particular ethnic group and/or validated for a context-specific use. The sampling frame insures inclusion of diverse cultural perspectives appropriate to the program being evaluated and its context. The study design employs a time frame appropriate to the cultural context. Evaluation questions represent a range of perspectives, values and interest.
Relational	Validity is supported by the quality of the relationships that surround and infuse the evaluation process	Evaluators respect local norms and authority in entering the community to undertake evaluation. Evaluators understand the historical and spiritual significance of the land and the geographic location of their work. Evaluators take time to build relationships and understandings as part of the early process of planning and design development. Evaluators reflect on their own cultural positions and positions of authority with respect to other participants in the evaluation process. Meaningful roles are established for stakeholder participation, and barriers to full participation are addressed.

*(Continued)*

**TABLE 12.2. JUSTIFICATIONS OF VALIDITY UNDER CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE EVALUATION (CRE)<sup>a</sup>. (*Continued*)**

Justification <sup>b</sup>	Description	Applications in CRE
Theoretical	Validity is supported by invoking culturally congruent theoretical perspectives.	Evaluators frame their work in CRE principles and practices, which in turn are drawn from culturally grounded social science theories. When social science research is used to develop program theory, it is first examined with respect to its multicultural validity and fit with context. Program theory is grounded in the cultural traditions and beliefs of program participants. Validity theory itself is examined for culturally-bound biases and limitations.
Experiential	Validity is supported by the life experience of participants.	Local citizens and program consumers contribute their wisdom to the evaluation process. Evaluators reflect on their own history and cultural positions, seeking assumptions and "blind spots." Evaluators employ a cultural guide to increase their understanding and appreciation of local culture. Evaluative data are understood and interpreted in terms of the realities of the people they represent.
Consequential	Validity is supported by the social consequences of understandings and determinations of value, and the actions taken based upon them.	History of evaluation in this community is acknowledged and addressed, especially if that history is oppressive, exploitative. Mechanisms are identified and negotiated by which evaluation and evaluators will give back to the community. Evaluation improves the ability of the community to advance its goals and meet the needs of its members. Evaluation promotes social justice.

<sup>a</sup>Table 2 is adapted from Hopson and Kirkhart (2012).

<sup>b</sup>Justifications of multicultural validity developed by Kirkhart (2005, 2013a-b).

are denigrated as imprecise or incorrect. Such a narrow perspective on rigor does not serve CRE well, however. To be responsive to culture and context, evaluation must include a broad vision, taking meaning not only from the minute and precise, but also from the holistic and expansive, for example, the history and worldview of the people who are stakeholders in the evaluation. Restricting the range of vision of evaluation methodology in the name of rigor undermines, rather than supports, valid understandings.

The second challenge is that preordain criteria of rigor—those that are specified at the outset—often do not match the world of practice. CRE is often emergent in its design, grounded in its relationship with community, and fluid in its response to changing circumstances or resources. Rigor is not abandoned, but it may be more appropriately cast as criteria that guide evaluation practice rather than as fixed bars to be cleared.

The context-specific nature of CRE demands an understanding of rigor that is also fitted to context, providing guidance but not blocking the holistic vantage point or the emergence of new understandings. A CRE-compatible strategy is a non-linear, iterative, conceptual checklist such as Scriven's (1991; 2013) Key Evaluation Checklist (KEC), which can guide rigorous CRE and support the validity of resulting understandings. Drawing on multicultural validity theory, Kirkhart (2013a-b) proposed "A Culture Checklist" of nine conceptual elements that can serve as hallmarks of rigor in CRE and beyond: history, location, power, voice, relationship,<sup>10</sup> time, return, plasticity, and reflexivity (see Table 12.3). Each concept links back to and supports one or more justifications of multicultural validity; hence the elements are intertwined, not independent of one another. These represent concepts to be considered iteratively while planning and implementing CRE. Used reflexively, checklists such as these can be used to keep the CRE evaluation on course and flag considerations and activities that cannot be compromised. For any particular CRE application, it may also be necessary to create a contextually-specific list of core considerations that draws upon ideas and values central to that community (Kirkhart, 2013a).

## Responsibility as a Core Principle of CRE

Central to the core principles of CRE (Table 12.1) as well as in the identity of the CRE evaluator are responsibility and responsiveness. CRE evaluators recognize the sense of "social responsibility" that requires the work to be responsive to the community that is served. Hood (2001) asserted that African American evaluators from the pre-Brown vs. Board of Education<sup>11</sup> era acted

**TABLE 12.3. A CULTURE CHECKLIST (ADAPTED FROM KIRKHART, 2013b, PP. 151–152).**

Element	Content Description	Questions Raised
History	History of place, people, program (or other evaluand), and evaluation's role. Knowledge of cultural heritages and traditions, including their evolution over time.	What is the story of this community? What is the story of how this program came to be in this place? How has what is here today been shaped by what came before it? What is the history of evaluation in this community or with this program?
Location	Cultural contexts and affiliations of evaluators and evaluand, including theories, values, meaning-making, and worldviews. Recognizes multiple cultural intersections at individual, organizational, and systems levels. Geographic anchors of culture in place.	What are the cultural identifications of persons in this community and how do these compare to those of the program staff and of the evaluators? What is valued here? How do people understand their lives? What is the geography of this place? How do people relate to the land?
Power	Understanding how privilege is attached to some cultural signifiers; prejudice to others. Attention to address equity and social justice, avoid perpetuating condescension, discrimination or disparity.	Who holds power in various ways, and what are the impacts of how power is exercised? What are the formal, legal, political, social and economic sources of power? What are the informal sources of power?
Connection	Connections among the evaluation, evaluand and community. Relating evaluation to place, time and Universe. Maintaining accountability to community with respect and responsibility. Establishing trust in interpersonal relationships.	How do members of the community relate to one another, to the program and its personnel, and to the evaluators? How do the evaluators relate to persons in the program and in the community? How does the evaluation relate to the core values of the cultures, community and context?

(Continued)

**TABLE 12.3. A CULTURE CHECKLIST (ADAPTED FROM KIRKHART, 2013b, PP. 151–152). (Continued)**

Element	Content Description	Questions Raised
Voice	Addresses whose perspectives are magnified and whose are silenced. Maps inclusion and exclusion or marginalization. Includes use of language, jargon, and communicative strategies.	Who participates in the planning, design, and implementation of the evaluation? Whose messages are heard and heeded? Whose methods of communication are reflected in the languages and expressions that are used to discuss the evaluation process, raise questions, interpret findings, and communicate results?
Time	Calls attention to rhythm, pace and scheduling and to the wide vision of past and future. Encourages evaluation to consider longer impacts and implications—positive or negative.	How does the rhythm of this evaluation fit the context? Is it moving too fast? Too slowly? Has it considered important outcomes at various points in time? Will it have the patience to watch carefully for small changes? For long-term consequences?
Return	Supports reciprocity by focusing attention on how the evaluation and/or the persons who conduct it return benefit to the evaluand and the surrounding community. Addresses returns both during and after the evaluation process. Positions the evaluation as non-exploitive.	How does evaluation advance the goals of this community or serve the needs of its people? Has the benefit returned to community compensated them fairly for their time and attention and for any disruption created by this evaluation? In what ways are persons better off? Have any been harmed or disadvantaged?
Plasticity	The ability to be molded, to receive new information, reorganize and change in response to new experiences, and evolve new ideas and forms. Applies both to the persons who do evaluation and to their designs, process and products. Because culture is fluid, not static, evaluation must be responsive.	How is this evaluation changing in response to local context? Are we evaluators staying open to new ideas or are we overly committed to following a fixed plan or timeline? What has surprised us here that changes how we think about evaluation? What have we learned here that is new and/or changes our understanding of good evaluation?

(Continued)

**TABLE 12.3. A CULTURE CHECKLIST (ADAPTED FROM KIRKHART, 2013b, PP. 151–152). (Continued)**

Element	Content Description	Questions Raised
Reflexivity	Applies the principles of evaluation to one's own person and work, from self-scrutiny to metaevaluation. Supports reflective practice. Underscores the importance of metaevaluation.	What do I think I know in this context and why? What do I know that I don't understand? What areas of new learning must I watch for and reflect upon? What do I need to let go of or relearn, and how can I work on that? What are the strengths and limitations of this evaluation and how it has addressed culture? How strong are the arguments supporting validity? What counterarguments challenge validity?

on their “social responsibility” to address the inequities of segregated schooling by using their research, evaluation, and scholarly skills in the evaluation of education systems in the South. The work of Reid E. Jackson was most notable in this regard (Hopson and Hood, 2005).

Hood and Hall (2004), in their implementation of their NSF funded Relevance of Culture in Evaluation Institute, along with the project’s advisory board, devoted considerable thought to the characteristics of the “culturally responsible evaluator.” First they made the distinction between being responsive and being responsible. Being “responsible” is viewed as an active behavior manifested in advocacy of social justice for those who had been traditionally disenfranchised. To act on this responsibility requires one to be responsive by being aware and recognizing the centrality of culture and cultural context in our evaluative work and identifying the appropriate methods and tools that will best serve the community. Culturally *responsible* evaluators are characterized as those who:

- Prioritize and are responsive to the needs and cultural parameters of those who are being served relative to the implementation of a program and its outcomes,
- Involve self in learning, engaging and appreciating the role of culture(s) within the context of the evaluation,
- Learn to recognize dissonance within the evaluation context, for example, between school and community groups being served, and
- Are committed to educating themselves, continuing to acquire training and experience in working in diverse settings.

The centrality of responsibility and responsiveness to our conceptualization of CRE is congruent with the work reported by the Māori and other indigenous members of our CRE family. It is particularly captured in the culturally specific evaluation of *Kaupapa Māori* (that is, a Māori way). Cram, Kennedy, Paipa, Pipi, and Wehipeihana (2015) inform us that *Kaupapa Māori* evaluation is grounded in the discovery of the true Māori *Kaupapa* to guide evaluators in their determination of not only the right methods but also the right people to undertake the evaluation. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of Māori to advance a Māori way of evaluation. This culturally specific/responsive approach is concretely illustrated by Paipa, Cram, Kennedy, and Pipi (2015) as these Māori evaluators utilize culturally responsive methods in a “family centered evaluation” approach. In this case the Māori evaluators act upon their responsibility and accountability “to identify culturally relevant ways of working that make sense to *whānau* [family] and align with *whānau* values with regard to kinship and relational connections” (p. 329).

The work of the pre-Brown African American evaluators in the 1930s to 1954 (Hood, 2001) and work that is currently being reported by indigenous evaluators such as the Māori (Paipa, Cram, Kennedy, and Pipi, 2015) may suggest a historical foundation connecting evaluators of color. This connection is possibly found in their mutual recognition and use of culturally responsive methods as they act upon their social responsibility to their communities (Hood, 2001). Just as pre-Brown African American evaluators took responsibility for being responsive in their own communities, there is a growing body of work in indigenous communities to address these same matters of responsiveness; that is, to find ways to use evaluations toward social and community responsibility.

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## Conclusion

Culturally responsive evaluation marks a significant advance in the ability of the evaluation profession to address culture. It not only provides a valuable framework for evaluation practice, but it challenges evaluators to reflect on power dynamics and sharpen their attention to social justice. This section summarizes key points elaborated in the chapter.

CRE has a defined theory base and conceptual framework to guide practice. The theory base incorporates existing evaluation approaches and is influenced by other culturally responsive notions in assessment and education. It builds on a framework developed by Frierson, Hood, and Hughes (2002) and

Frierson, Hood, Hughes, and Thomas (2010), where cultural context is integrated into evaluation practice and evaluation practice is centered in culture.

While there are many contributors to the development of CRE, its historical development was influenced by Stafford Hood's funded research, professional collaboration, and written work. From his Amistad paper to collaborative work, he has encouraged and hopefully inspired others to further refine the conceptualization of CRE as well as its applications.

CRE practice represents the fruits of this earlier conceptual work and it contributes to local CRE theory. To understand and appreciate CRE practice fully means understanding how it informs CRE and how CRE theory is ultimately fleshed out in the nuances and details of local context.

Future implications of CRE suggest that new approaches to core concepts such as validity deserve more exploration. Additionally, CRE requires understanding and recognizing the importance of our responsibility as evaluators and translating responsiveness in our practice. As illustrated in the chapter, the future of CRE will be advanced through well documented practice examples with rich detail (for example, Greene, 2015), combined with further reflection on and articulation of alignments between CRE and other evaluation approaches (for example, Askew, Beverly, and Jay, 2012). These advances coincide with the need to develop increasingly sophisticated ways to center evaluation in culture, both domestically and internationally. CRE stands poised to contribute and we as members of the CRE community are collectively compelled to use it as we act upon our responsibility to make a difference.

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## Notes

1. We carefully distinguish culturally responsive evaluation from other similar approaches such as culturally competent evaluation or cross-cultural evaluation (Chouinard, 2013; Chouinard, 2014; Chouinard and Cousins, 2009) which attend to matters of culture in local and international settings but have distinct histories and foci in evaluation.
2. Stake's more recent work also addresses cultural pluralism as part of responsive evaluation (Stake, 2004).
3. The title of this work references the historic Amistad trial, in which James Covey's role as "the portal between two conflicting cultures" (Hood, 1998b, p. 108) was the vehicle that made the defense of the Mende survivors culturally responsive. Hood describes how Covey had been born and raised Mende but was subsequently captured and held as a slave. After being freed from a slave ship by a British naval vessel, he learned to read and write in English and served as a sailor on a British brig of war. Covey's lived experience in both worlds made him essential to the understandings in the trial. Similarly, Hood argues, African American evaluators play a key role

- in the evaluation of educational programs that serve African American students by deepening the understanding of a program, its value for participants, and potential improvements needed to increase benefits to culturally diverse groups.
4. The Nobody Knows My Name project takes its title from the 1961 collection of essays by James Baldwin, *Nobody Knows My Name; More Notes of a Native Son*. It initially focused on men of color who laid significant intellectual groundwork in evaluation. Scholarly contributions of women of color are a more recent addition. See, for example, Frazier-Anderson and Bertrand Jones (2015).
  5. Note that Figure 12.2 is referenced in Bledsoe and Donaldson (2015), but was developed earlier in the presentation by Kirkhart and Hopson (2010).
  6. *U2 Attention to Stakeholders*. Evaluations should devote attention to the full range of individuals and groups invested in the program and affected by its evaluation. *P1 Responsive and Inclusive Orientation*. Evaluations should be responsive to stakeholders and their communities.
  7. This refers to the World Bank's Living Standards Measurement Survey (World Bank, 2011, cited in Bowen and Tillman, 2014).
  8. While there may be no direct linguistic translation for the Western, English-language construct of validity, concerns for goodness, trustworthiness, and authenticity emerge in different cultural contexts (LaFrance, Kirkhart, and Nichols, 2015).
  9. Interestingly, similar questions were raised when Ladson-Billings proposed culturally responsive pedagogy—isn't that just good teaching? (Ladson-Billings, 1995a).
  10. Colleagues at the Aotearoa New Zealand Evaluation Association Conference in Wellington (July 2014) suggested that *relationship* be retitled *connection*. This change is reflected in Table 12.3.
  11. *Brown v. Board of Education* was the landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision that found separate public schools for blacks and whites to be unconstitutional. Handed down in 1954, it was considered a major victory of the civil rights movement and led to the integration of American educational and public facilities in the South.

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