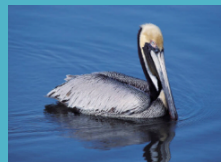


Power and inclusion: Cultural accountability in evaluating Aboriginal initiatives and programs

Australasian Evaluation Society Conference
September 2018

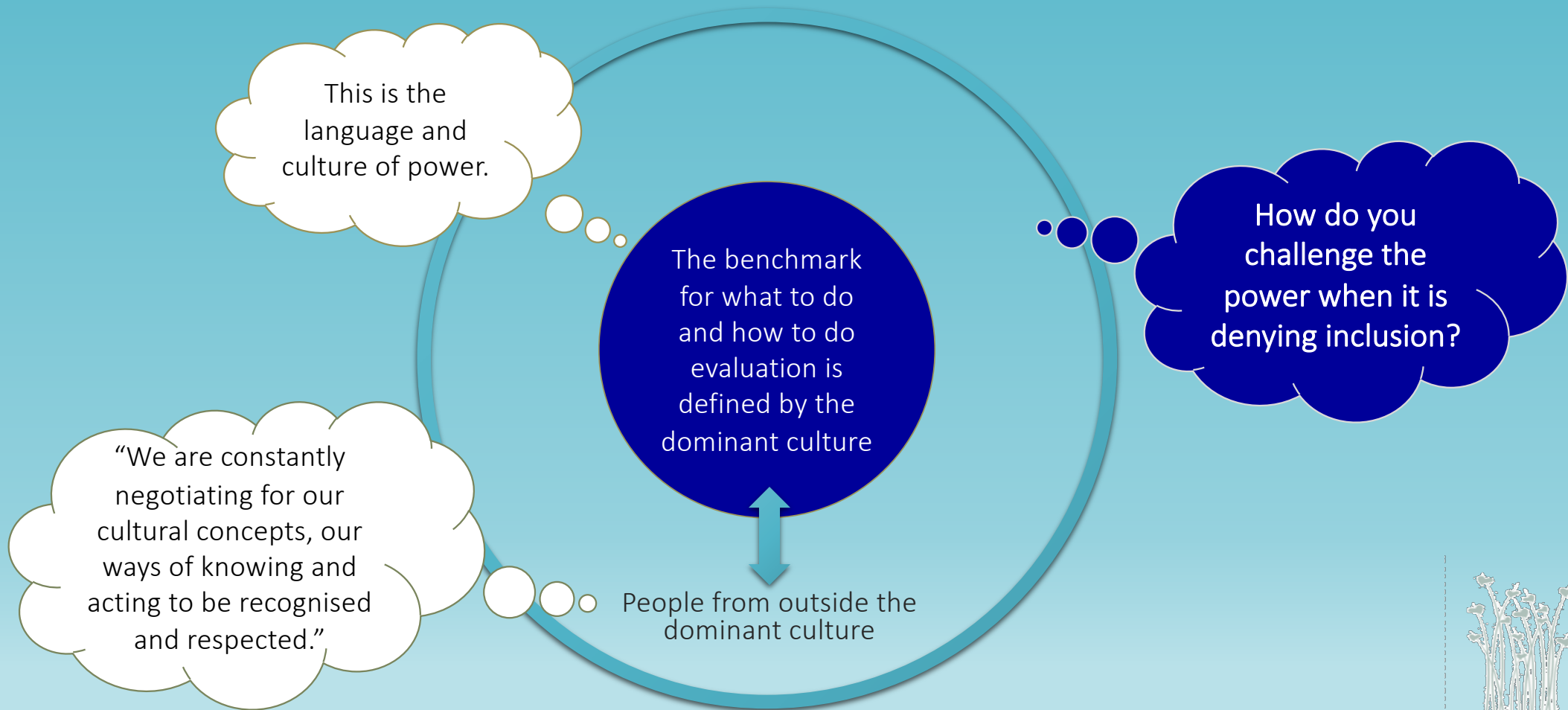


Sharon Gollan & Associates
Consulting and Training



Cultural Respect Training
and Consultancy

Language and culture of power in evaluation



How did the evaluation occur?

Share one thing
you learned from
this reflection

ω As the evaluation got started:

- *who was consulted with - who was consulted first?*
- *who was involved with the evaluation plan development and decision-making?*
- *was sufficient time allowed for the involvement and deliberation of all relevant people?*
- *who had leadership (individual or joint) and why were they chosen?*
- *who took responsibility for what – was this negotiated and believed to be fair?*

ω Was **culture** a central reference point for the evaluation process?

ω Were the people involved conscious of their **identity** and responsibility, including who else they needed to involve?

ω What happened with **power** – whose values drove the process?



Partnership and cultural accountability: Core principles

Partnership and cultural accountability in Aboriginal contexts describe relationships between dominant culture and Aboriginal cultural groups that are based on principles of:

- ω accountability of the dominant culture group to Aboriginal cultural groups
- ω elevation of the voices of Aboriginal cultural groups
- ω restorative action by the dominant culture group
- ω support for Aboriginal cultural groups to take action on their own behalf that makes a constructive difference to their lives
- ω working toward cultural respect and safety.



Intersecting themes for maintaining a focus on cultural accountability

Culture

Keep culture as the central reference point – always consider how culture is present in what you are doing and how you are doing it.

Identity

Maintain consciousness of self – this means who you represent as either an Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal person, and what responsibility you have in that identity.

Power

Pay attention to power relations and the impact of dominant culture values on the priorities, content and process of what you are doing.



A partnership and cultural accountability self-check: Reflect on the **IDEA** to evaluate

ω Do I know:

- *where the idea to evaluate came from?*
- *who has the energy for the evaluation?*
- *why he/she is enthusiastic?*
- *what difference he/she thinks the evaluation will make?*

ω Is **culture** a central reference point for the evaluation?

ω Are the people involved conscious of their **identity** and responsibility?

ω What is happening with **power** – whose values are driving the decision to pursue the evaluation?



A partnership and cultural accountability self-check: Reflect on my **PROCESS**

- ω Before and as I get started in undertaking the evaluation, have I considered:
 - *who I need to consult with and who I should consult first?*
 - *who is involved with the development and decision-making?*
 - *allowing sufficient time for the involvement and deliberation of all relevant people?*
 - *who has leadership (individual or joint) and why he/she has been chosen?*
 - *who is taking responsibility for what – is this negotiated and believed to be fair?*
- ω Is **culture** a central reference point for the evaluation process?
- ω Are the people involved conscious of their **identity** and responsibility, including who else they need to involve?
- ω What is happening with **power** – whose values are driving the process?



A partnership and cultural accountability self-check: Reflect on my **ROLE**

ω How am I going with:

- *hearing what others think, even if it is difficult to hear?*
- *acknowledging mistakes and addressing them?*
- *being flexible and changing direction?*
- *building relationships based on trust, respect and commitment?*
- *recognising that I don't always need to know/understand the reasons, but I do need to believe what Aboriginal people tell me can and can't happen?*
- *accepting that an idea should not be pursued or not at this time?*
- *discussing my experience with other people, including non-Aboriginal people?*

ω Is **culture** a central reference point for thinking about my role?

ω How am I maintaining consciousness of my **identity** and responsibility as a non-Aboriginal person?

ω What is happening with **power** – am I imposing dominant culture values or creating meaning only based on dominant culture values? Whose realities do these meanings represent?



Signs that partnership and cultural accountability is present and shared power and inclusion is genuine

- ω Dialogue occurs between non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal people involved in the evaluation where non-Aboriginal people are transparent about what they are doing, why and what knowledge and information they are drawing on in making their decisions.
- ω Non-Aboriginal people are willing to hear Aboriginal peoples' experiences, knowledge and opinions, and change their ideas or plans to respect and reflect them – in other words, they are being flexible and following Aboriginal people's leadership.
- ω Aboriginal people feel excited about being involved the evaluation because of what it can mean in our community - this feeling stays with us throughout the process and remains there at the end.
- ω Evaluation results in genuine change that reflects the experiences, opinions and recommendations of Aboriginal people.



Language and culture of power in evaluation

