**Culturally-Appropriate, Rigorous Evaluation of Tribal Services: Mount Sanford Tribal Consortium Healthy Relationships Project Evaluation: Teaching Notes**

By

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**Learning Objectives:**

1. Learn about program evaluation components, design options, and methods
2. Understand the need for culturally appropriate research and evaluation designs
3. Recognize the difference between process and outcome evaluation
4. Explore various methods and tools for answering evaluation questions (e.g., document reviews, interviews, surveys, etc.)
5. Understand how cultural considerations might impact choice of evaluator and evaluation methodologies
6. Explore using evaluation data to make informed judgments regarding program success

**Audience:** This case is suitable for upper-level undergraduate students through those in graduate studies. This case is especially useful for study in social work, American Indian studies, sociology, psychology, anthropology, and public administration.

**Implementation:** The case can be taught over a single long class session or over multiple sessions. Whether taught in a single session or over multiple sessions, this case should be taught as an interrupted case, i.e. Part I should be followed by the discussion questions/group exercise for Part I before beginning Part II, etc. Encouraging students to do additional research, especially related to Alaskan history with regard to its Native peoples and the geography and population distribution in the state, is also recommended.

**Part I: Discussion Questions/Group Exercise**

Break students into small groups. Assign each group one set of themed questions below. (Depending on the number or groups, more than one group may have the same questions.) Someone in the group must agree to be a note taker. The groups should discuss their questions and record their conclusions. They should be prepared to report out to the larger group, sharing their questions and responses.

Be prepared to engage the larger group in a short dialogue after groups report (as needed).

*Theme A-* In your group, discuss options for how a tribal community could find an appropriate external evaluator for a tribal program. Consider and report on:

1. How might you locate someone appropriate?
2. What kind of questions would you ask them to assess their ability to conduct an appropriate evaluation?
3. What kinds of assurances do you think the community should require of the evaluator to ensure the tribe receives an evaluation that is both accurate and useful to the program staff?
4. Add an additional question you might use in this case with your students (optional).

*Theme B-* In your group, discuss the impacts a culturally inappropriate evaluation might have. What might the immediate ramifications be? The long term implications? Consider and report on the impacts such an evaluation would have immediately and over time:

1. On a program?
2. On program participants?
3. On the community?
4. On the funder of the program?

*Theme C-* In your group, discuss the issues that made MSTC consider the initial evaluator a poor fit. Consider and report on:

1. Why might the evaluator’s request for data and access to the MSTC community beyond the scope of the agreement have been troubling to MSTC?
2. Do you agree with MSTC that it was inappropriate for the evaluator to bill (charge the program) for time spent learning about Native culture? Why or why not?
3. What advice would you give to a program evaluator who had never worked with a Native community but just received a contract to do so?
4. Add an additional question or two you might use in this case with your students (optional).

**Part II: Discussion Questions/Group Exercise**

Break students into groups of 4 - 6 people. Ask each group to consider the questions below. Someone in the group must agree to be a note taker. The groups should discuss their questions and record their conclusions. They should be prepared to report out to the larger group, sharing the most salient points from their discussions.

Be prepared to engage students in a discussion about key issues raised after the groups have finished reporting (if appropriate).

*Questions-*

* Why conduct both an outcome evaluation and a process evaluation? Is one more important than the other? Why or why not?
* How might Native cultures and worldviews affect program development? How might they affect program evaluation?
* What specific aspects of the evaluation approach proposed by NICWA do you think were most important for community buy-in?
* What principles of culturally appropriate evaluation can you identify in this case study?
* Add an additional question or two you might use in this case with your students (optional).

**Part III: Discussion Questions/Group Exercise**

Break students into groups. Assign half of the groups to work on question *set 1* below, and the other half to work on question *set 2*. Someone in the group must agree to be a note taker. The groups should discuss their questions and record their conclusions. They should be prepared to report out to the larger group, sharing their responses.

Be prepared to facilitate dialogue among the larger group after the *set 1* group reports out as well as after *set 2* group’s report.

*Set 1*- Based on the results shared in the case study, how effective would you judge the Mount Sanford Tribal Consortium’s Healthy Relationships Initiative to be? What worked best? What could be improved? What data would you use to justify your conclusion?

*Set 2*-How can the tribes build upon the insights gleaned from the experience of doing this evaluation? Think in terms of the evaluation results, as well as the experience with the initial evaluator and in participating in the evaluation itself. What, if any, changes in practice are suggested by the evaluation results? How can the experience of doing this evaluation inform future contracts and partnerships? Are there any policy implications suggested by the experience? What processes need to be in place to ensure the lessons learned from this evaluation are remembered, even if the program staff move on to other jobs?