



AES 2012 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Evaluation in a changing world

27 - 31 August 2012 • Adelaide Convention Centre



Lessons about Evaluation Practice from Australian Indigenous Peoples

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Sharing Lessons taught by Australian Indigenous People about Evaluation to non-Indigenous Australians:

Implications for Evaluation in Australia
& for the AES Approach to Giving
Awards for Excellence in Evaluation

1. Many Caveats/Limits...quickly
(sorry)
2. Stories Taught (to me, for me to share)
3. → AES Recognition and Awards

Caveats/Limits

- I am speaking as a non-Indigenous person.
- I am responsible for what I learned (or failed to learn).
- I am reporting what I was taught and invited to share ...

Principle for Non-Indigenous Learning

Oral Advice to Eltham Reconciliation Circle

*As a non-Indigenous Australian, I study Australian Indigenous histories and practices **with** other Australian non-Indigenous people **before** we ask Indigenous people...*

As this will (hopefully) allow
Indigenous people to respond to us...

Knowing that we have **STARTED** to
learn about Australian Indigenous
experiences of land, community,
family, history, language, tradition
and practice.

Acknowledge...

- My Indigenous Teachers (“everywhen”)
- My Non-Indigenous Teachers
 - AES Members
 - Rhonda Parkyns (Common Ground)
 - @ Australian Chambers of Commerce & Industry
 - Many Conference / Workshop Participants
 - Eltham (Victoria) Reconciliation Circle

Are we coming to learn or only to teach?

How do those who are members of a dominant Australian culture share and apply what we learn about evaluation from Indigenous people?

And...

**Are there implications for
how the AES recognises and
gives awards for Australian
“Indigenous Evaluation”?**

And...

The next Australian Indigenous family/
group may have a different story or
meaning...

There are many more stories...

If I build a relationship, maybe I shall
be told something now...it's not for me
to decide...I give time...calm...wait...

Background Lessons

- Cultures are; cultures don't "make sense"
- I/Group/Country → Family/Clan/Group/Time
- Relationships: allow (even more) time; maybe then told/shown/hear/see/invited/etc
- Discover; accept which person tells what to me, when, after what, in which way
- Discover; accept how I am taught
- Allow time...to understand answers

Stories Taught to Me

- Tall Poppy: Johnny is praised...

Stories Taught to Me

- Johnny is praised by a teacher
- Late again for the meeting with government people?!? *AES Conference*

Stories Taught to Me

- Johnny is praised by a teacher
- Late again for the meeting with government people?!? *AES Conference*
- **Please** explain to me **why** they give me why so little time...to ensure no failure? (And what if...)

Stories Taught to Me

- Johnny is praised by a teacher
- Late again for the meeting with government people?!? *AES Conference*
- **Please** explain to me **why** they give me so little time...to ensure no failure? (And what if...)
- **Not all knowledge is public...
build relationship with Elders
over time...**

Evaluation Practice & AES Recognition?

- “We invited people to comment”
- Not all knowledge is intended to be made public by the person we ask
- How to show respect for Elders, gender, family...(silence?)
- Nominations/Awards that praise ...

Values and Ethics: Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research (2003)

...much remains to be done to ensure the genuine recognition of the fundamental values and principles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures within Australian society and its institutions.

NHMRC (Australia)

**Your comments, understanding,
stories, lessons...**