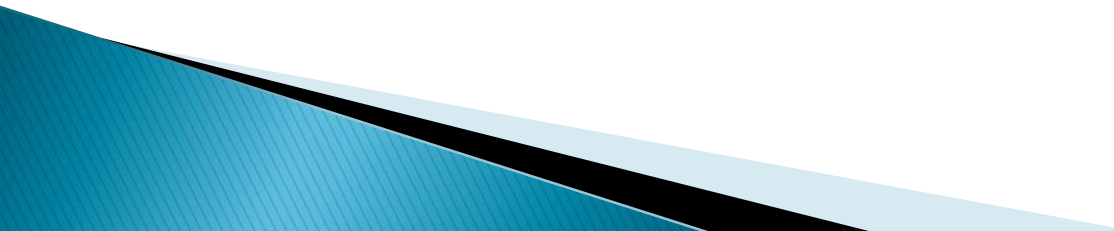


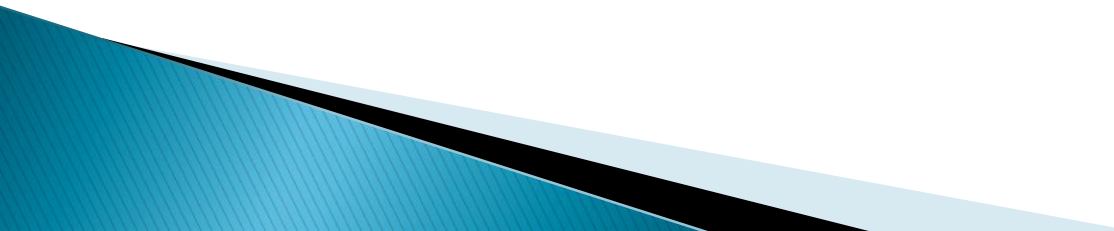
# The Value of Voice:

## Gaining Access to Marginalized Populations

Dr. Karen Vocke  
Dr. Brooks Applegate  
Western Michigan University



- ▶ This demonstration focuses on issues related to evaluating marginalized populations
    - Migrant families and their school aged children
    - Special needs children
    - Other minority groups
- 

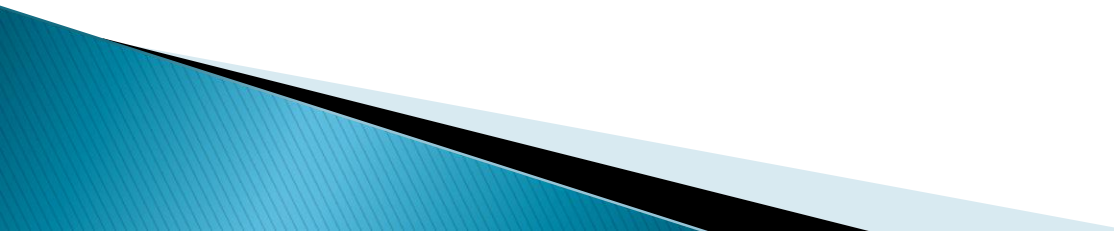
- ▶ Because the needs of marginalized populations are nuanced and diverse, evaluators must carefully consider the procedures and analyses involving the evaluation participants, especially the need for authentic, and not token, participation.
  - ▶ Whenever the evaluation process includes members of marginalized populations, results are more tangible, valid, and generalizable.
- 

# What constitutes marginalized populations?

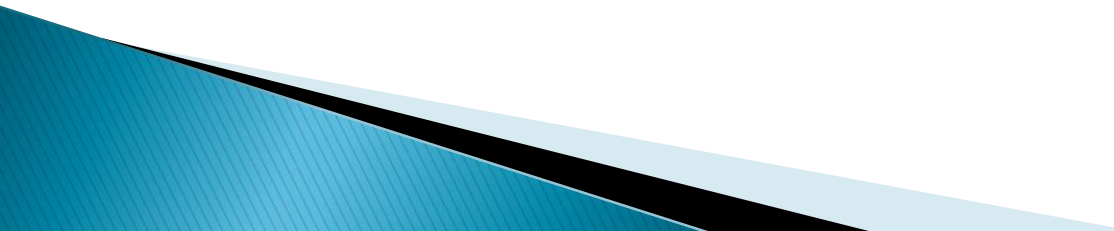
- ▶ Fluidity is one characteristic. Often, groups are small, hard to access, suspicious, not engaged in dominant discourse, and possibly transitory.

# Statement of the Problem

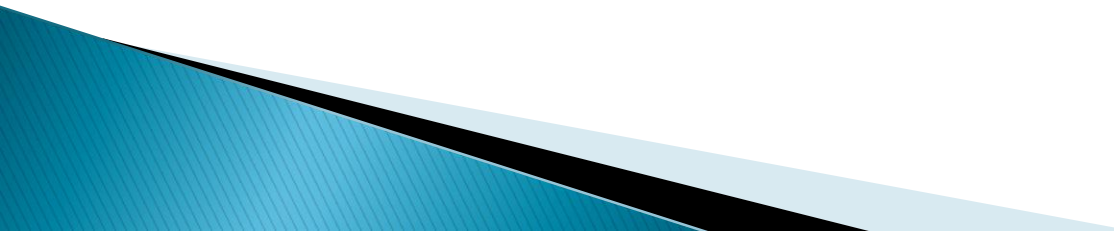
Successful research programs and subsequent evaluations which focus on marginalized groups/populations requires sensitivity on the part of the external (non-marginalized) party and trust from the internal (marginalized) party.



# Issues

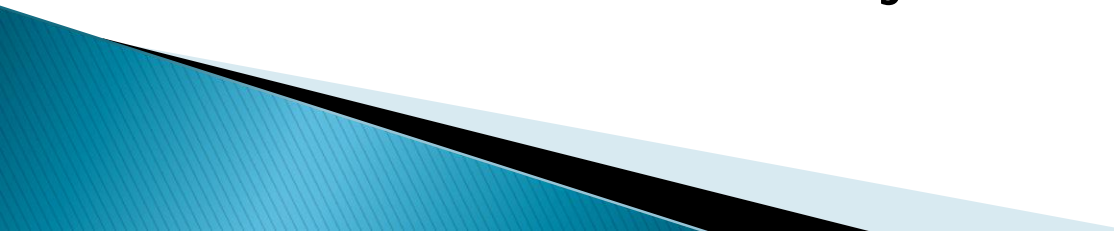
- ▶ Abuse of Power, with “we–they” perspective
  - ▶ Identification & Misidentification
  - ▶ Gaining Access & Keeping Access
- 

# Power

- ▶ “...as views of reality are socially constructed and culturally embedded, those views dominant at any time and place will serve the interests and perspectives of those who exercise the most power in a particular culture. By exercising control over the very categories of reality that are opened to consciousness, those in power are served.”  
(Patton, 2002, p. 100)
- 


# Power

## Identification, Misidentification

- ▶ Social and culturally constructed labels and participant inclusion in multiple groups
    - Formal (legal) classifications
    - Informal (social) classifications often conflict
  - ▶ Identification by whom? Labels can be and often are socially constructed to serve institutional needs.
  - ▶ Misuse of labels can serve to advance dominant culture values and objectives
- 



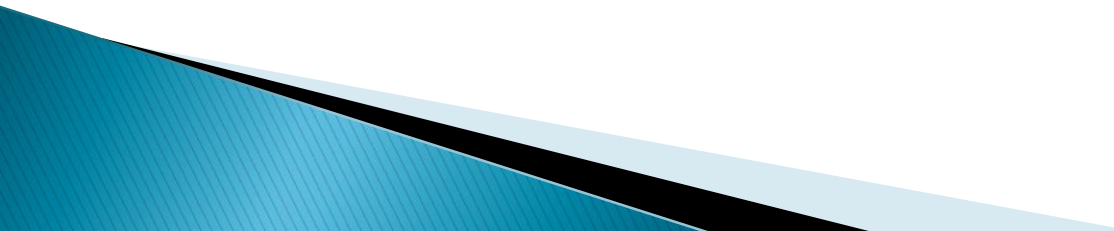
# Gaining & Keeping Access

- ▶ Gaining access requires commitment and time.
  - ▶ Gaining access & keeping access is complicated, given a myriad of barriers including language, culture, and trust.
  - ▶ Often, key gatekeepers control access to the group.
  - ▶ Confidence in the researcher/evaluator, e.g. language skills.
  - ▶ The researcher/evaluator's own role in the study needs to be clear.
  - ▶ Learning before examining—it is important to understand the dimensions of the group before undertaking research or evaluation.
  - ▶ Continued sharing of data and interpretation with key informants is vital.
- 

# Authentic & Inclusive Evaluation and Research

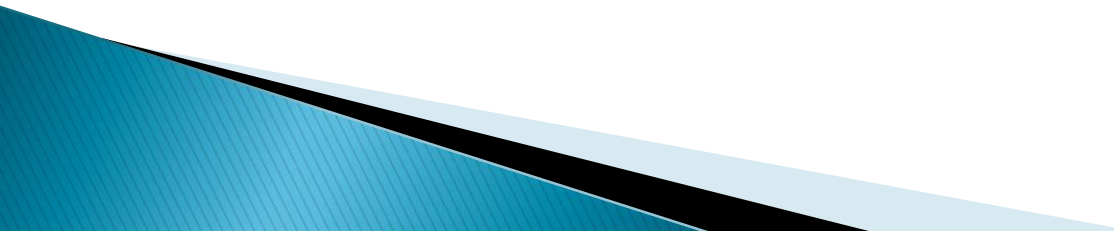
- ▶ Authentic participation refers to “deep and continuous involvement in administrative processes with the potential for all involved to have an effect on the situation.” (King, Feltey & Susel, 1998, p. 320)

# Evaluation Models/Strategies that Show Promise in the Evaluation of Marginalized Groups

- ▶ Empowerment evaluation “aims to foster ‘self-determination’ in those who participate in the inquiry process” resulting in “ ‘empowering partnerships’ between researchers and participants,” often with the participants doing research themselves. (Patton, p. 183)
  - ▶ Participatory evaluation “encourages joint collaboration within a mutually acceptable ethical framework to understand and/or solve organizational or community problems.” (Patton, p. 183)
  - ▶ Collaborative evaluation involves the sharing of power between researchers and participants.
- 

# Authentic Assessment

Authentic assessment is assessment  
FOR learning, not assessment OF  
learning.



# Principles of Authentic Participation

We see these principles as being foundational to accessing and evaluating marginalized groups, and we have adapted them as follows:

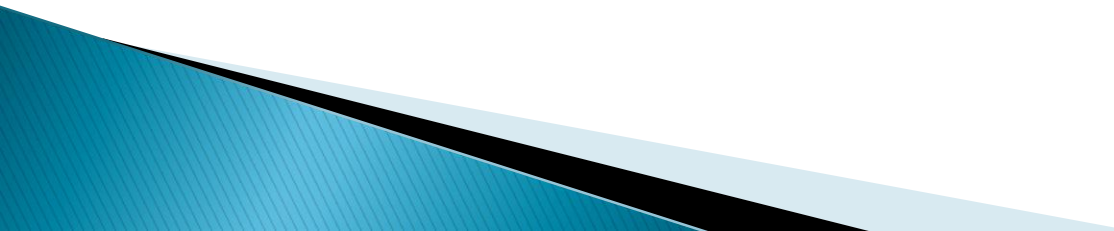
- ▶ A community of subjects/participants committed to improvement of their situation
- ▶ Relationships of trust between subjects/participants and researchers
- ▶ Development of subject/participant participation and leadership skills
- ▶ Subject/participant opportunity to influence the process and outcomes of an issue
- ▶ Subject/participant participation in a deliberation process where all involved are on an equal footing
- ▶ New roles for researchers and evaluators as partners who listen to subject/participant concerns, work with them on issues, and engage them in open dialogue
- ▶ Changes in local administrative systems to support authentic participation

Adapted from the Harvard Family Research Project

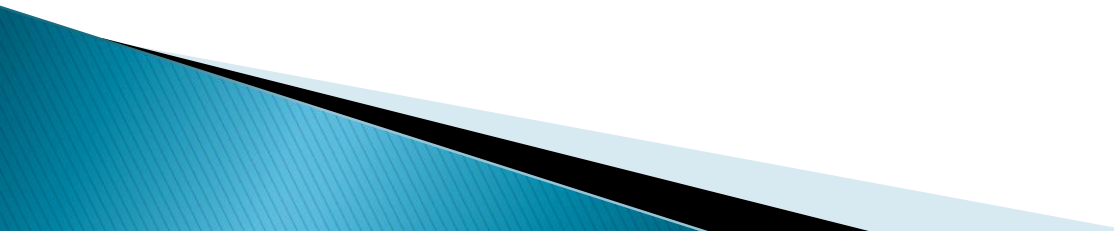
<http://www.hfrp.org/evaluation/the-evaluation-exchange/issue-archive/evaluating-education-reform/beyond-input-achieving-authentic-participation-in-school-reform>



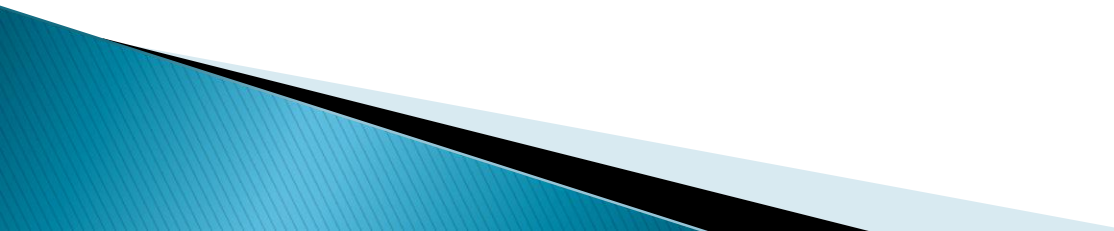
# Our Experience

- ▶ Access to migrant farm worker families—migrant directors, growers, recruiters
  - ▶ Considerations in data collection
    - Assuring informed consent
    - Including participants in the selection of data
    - Language considerations
    - Program and service differences
  - ▶ Interpretation and analysis issues
    - The researchers' positionality
    - Differences in service and education availability
    - Consistent communication and meeting challenges
- 

# Our Work


- ▶ Addressing the needs of migrant children and their families at a variety of levels--social, linguistic, economic, and educational--is the focus of migrant education programs across the country. These students' transiency results in inconsistent educational opportunity as they travel across states.
  - ▶ Summer migrant programs provide supplemental and enrichment programming, but curriculum and service fragmentation continue to undermine the academic achievement of migrant students.
- 

# Our Work

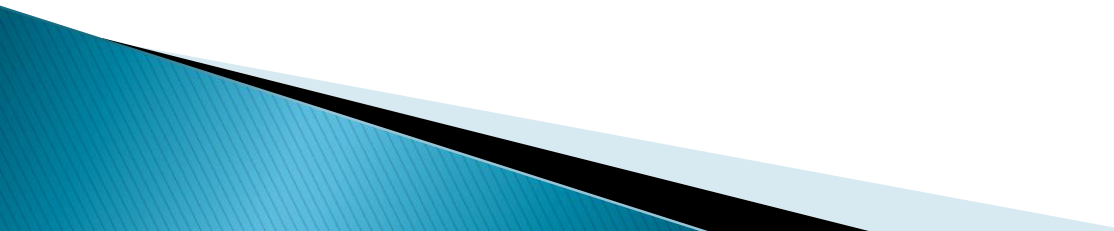
- ▶ We have worked extensively at the state and district level with key personnel involved in migrant education to try to solve this fragmentation.
  - ▶ This provides the foundation for our work. Our research stems from ongoing work with summer migrant education programming in the state of Michigan. As we collaborated with program directors across the state, we heard firsthand their concerns about the inconsistency of evaluating program effectiveness and the distribution of resources.
- 




# Multiple Stakeholders

- ▶ The social framework required for the education of migrant children involves interaction among multiple stakeholders, including but not limited to migrant education directors and school administrators, teachers, parents, community leaders and businesses, and the growers who employ these families.
  - ▶ The degree to which these stakeholders contribute to migrant students' success in summer migrant programs has not been consistently evaluated. Our goal has been to understand the factors that impact summer migrant programs in Michigan so that a consistent and appropriate evaluation model can emerge.
- 

# The Study Itself

- ▶ For our study of Michigan's summer migrant programs, a two-step protocol was implemented: an initial comprehensive survey of state summer program directors, followed by a purposeful sample of director interviews. This cross-sectional, descriptive study was conducted using a non-experimental, mixed-method research design on a convenience sample of participants. Following the typology of Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), we employed a QUAN->QUAL mixed-method design.
- 

# The Study Itself

- ▶ The first stage included the administration of a survey of migrant program directors in the state of Michigan. Literature reviews and personal experience guided the development of the survey instrument, which included a mix of quantitative and qualitative items.
  - ▶ Follow-up interviews were then conducted with a purposeful sample of directors who were chosen to represent a cross section of program types identified within the director survey.
  - ▶ The findings of this study provide important baseline data about the status of summer migrant education program administration and resources in the state of Michigan. Moreover, these findings provide a template for evaluation that informs further program development, relevant pedagogy, language development, and service delivery.
- 

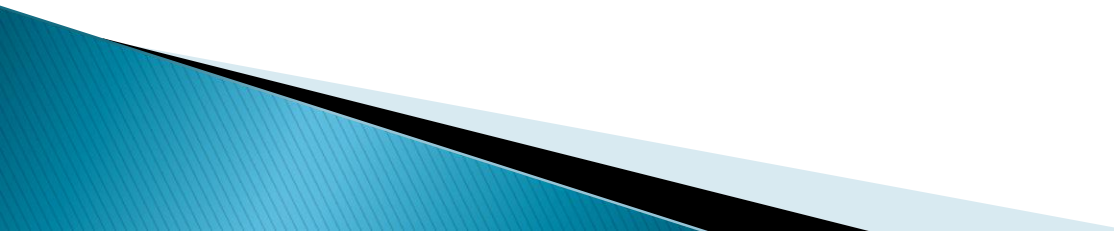
# The Challenge

- ▶ Because of the multi-faceted nature of the state, we desire to create an evaluation model that is both accountability driven and provides the necessary local context inclusive of marginalized groups.



# Key Question

Can the elements embedded in empowerment, participatory, and collaborative evaluation be combined with authentic assessment to create local formative evaluations that have impact where it is needed?



# Questions and Answers

