

WISE PRACTICES IN INDIGENOUS PROGRAM EVALUATION

LINDSEY KIRBY-MCGREGOR

Thesis submitted to the University of Ottawa
in partial Fulfillment of the requirements for the
Master of Arts in Education

Faculty of Education
University of Ottawa

Gratitude

Thank you so much to my partner, Dave, for your boundless intelligence, love, and for listening to me rant about evaluation. Thank you to Xavier, Vivi, and Ellie, for your affection, your fun, your support in every way, and for “keeping me occupied” while I wrote this thesis.

Chi miigwech to Anita Tenasco for being such an incredible resource for all of us, and a teacher to everyone. Chi miigwech to Wilfred Buck for welcoming me in ceremony, encouraging me in the journey to fund the Star Knowledge Project. Chi miigwech to Shawn Wilson for inspiring so many academics with your writing and teachings while still connecting individually to discuss, question, and reflect. Thank you all for taking the time for me.

Chi miigwech to Mac Saulis, Michelle Bomberry, Dr. Pierrot Ross-Tremblay, and Dr. Nawel Hamidi for encouraging me on this journey and for such important discussions that helped shape my thoughts and helped me understand much more than I did before we met.

At the University of Ottawa, thank you to Dr. Katherine Moreau and Dr. Sarah Heath for introducing me to program evaluation, and for making it accessible while highlighting how vast, interconnected, and fascinating it can be. Thank you to Dr. Trista Hollweck for dog sitting so I could attend Tipis and Telescopes in Manitoba. Thank you to Dr. Tim Stanley for advising me not to switch to a PhD program, and for putting me on the path to the Indigenous Star Knowledge Project. Thank you to Dr. David Pantalony and Dr. Ruth Kane for your endless kindness, supportive feedback, and guidance, over so many years.

Chi miigwech to my supervisor, Dr. Tricia McGuire-Adams, for your wisdom, generosity, and patience while I drafted this in a way that felt right, building necessary relationships while parenting and co-parenting three children, merging families, moving, dealing with family loss, and living through a global pandemic and two historic storms with multi-day power outages. Thank you for always helping me find a way, and for introducing me to Rachel.

Chi miigwech to Heather Norris, for constantly reminding me to center Indigenous rights.

Chi miigwech to Whitefish River First Nation, to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Canada Graduate Scholarship, and to the University of Ottawa’s Ontario Graduate Scholarship for contributing so significantly to my journey and helping ensure this research could be complete.

Miigwech to Grandpa Don for teaching me to say miigwech.

Abstract

This research project explores approaches and methodologies of program evaluation in the context of Indigenous programs that are operated by or funded by non-Indigenous organizations. It asks two research questions: a) What constitutes Indigenous program evaluation? and b) How can program evaluation successfully represent an Indigenous program like the Indigenous Star Knowledge Project, a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) funded project operated by Ingenium and the University of Ottawa? Through three one on one conversations with key contributors to the Indigenous Star Knowledge Project, it identifies three themes discussed by interviewees in connection to program evaluation for Indigenous programs: (a) Indigenous voices versus the voices of organizations, (b) role and positioning of the evaluator, and (c) Indigenous approaches and methodologies. Findings propose three “wise practices” for program evaluation of Indigenous programs: (1) center Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination through narrative sovereignty, (2), consider the relationship, role, and identity of the evaluator, and (3) apply Indigenous approaches, methodologies, and analysis.

Table of Contents

Gratitude.....	ii
Abstract	iii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
<i>Development of the thesis</i>	7
<i>Positioning myself in relation to the research topic</i>	10
<i>Wise Practices</i>	11
Chapter 2: Literature review	12
<i>Understanding the context of program evaluation</i>	12
<i>Program evaluation for Indigenous programs</i>	25
<i>Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination</i>	29
<i>Program evaluation methodologies</i>	34
<i>Indigenous program evaluation approaches and methodologies</i>	38
Chapter 3: Methods	45
<i>Research questions</i>	45
<i>Methodology and relationships</i>	45
<i>Data analysis</i>	50
<i>Ethical Considerations</i>	50
<i>Limitations</i>	53
Chapter 4: Conversations (Results).....	54
<i>Theme 1: Indigenous voices versus the voices of organizations</i>	54
<i>Theme 2: Role and positioning of the evaluator</i>	62
<i>Theme 3: Indigenous approaches and methodologies</i>	65
Chapter 5: Discussion.....	81
<i>Wise Practice 1: Center Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination through narrative sovereignty</i>	81
<i>Wise Practice 2: Consider the relationship, role, and identity of the evaluator</i>	85
<i>Wise Practice 3: Apply Indigenous approaches, methodologies, and analysis</i>	87
Chapter 6: Conclusion.....	92
References	97

Table of Figures

Figure 1: Linear Program Theory Model (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014, p. 158).....35
Figure 2: Nonlinear Program Theory Model (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014, p. 159)36
Figure 3: Researcher’s depiction of Shawn Wilson's description of the positionality of Western
and Indigenous Science.....68
Figure 4: Researcher’s depiction of Shawn Wilson's description of the positionality of
Mainstream and Indigenous evaluation.....70
Figure 5: Researcher's depiction, based on Shawn Wilson's view, of Indigenous experiences with
programs.....96

Wise Practices in Indigenous Program Evaluation

Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis came together through many experiences of attempting to conduct “program evaluation” for Indigenous programs that were offered by or funded by non-Indigenous organizations. Though it is possible to find models and frameworks of “Indigenous program evaluation”, these experiences all lead to one question: “is program evaluation compatible with Indigenous worldviews?”. In each experience, it became clearer and clearer that it was necessary to explore how Indigenous worldviews are affected by program evaluation practices, and whether it was possible to develop an Indigenous program evaluation methodology.

Indigenous worldviews have existed since time immemorial, sustained Nations prior to colonization, and as such do not need to be compared or contrasted to Western worldviews to find value, meaning, or use. However, when considering whether it is possible to “indigenize” a practice like program evaluation, it is useful to begin by understanding the history of program evaluation, as this context explicitly creates – or limits – space for Indigenous ways of knowing.

Program planning and program evaluation are sisters, two children of ever changing socio-political and economic contexts by which they are clearly and fundamentally influenced. We seldom consider how much of our life experiences are tied to wider socio-political contexts and particular worldviews, nor how much program evaluation and planning theory have influenced what activities, events, and experiences we take part in. Program evaluation plays a role in education, social and human services, arts, consumer products, human resources, city planning, real estate, engineering, healthcare and drug testing, manufacturing, science policy, international development and aid, agriculture, and environmental studies (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2021). Also influenced by academia and professionals who have made careers out of establishing approaches

and models for planning and evaluation, many activities we take for granted are a product of the balance between models applied to varying levels of success and political or social will to finance them.

Organizations and institutions typically follow program and project-based approaches to organizing their activities, often designing programs based on a blend of local needs, market pressures, interests and direction of staff and leadership, and available funding. Programs (sometimes offered as a shorter “project”) are any collection of activities pieced together for a stated purpose and/or audience. While many are painstakingly coordinated, and models of program planning used by trained program planners exist, programs are also designed with a level of artistry (Sork, 2010) that reflects the intent of the planners blended with the contextual constraints that put pressure on planning.

According to Daffron and Caffarella (2021), “for many people who develop and coordinate education and training programs, the progression seems to be more a mass of decisions, political maneuverings, negotiations, details, and deadlines than precise steps of what should be done, when, by whom, and how” (p. 12). To assist with this, hundreds of program planning models have been designed as tools or roadmaps to help work through the program design process. However, these are not always used and “consist primarily of someone’s ideas about how programs should be designed and what ingredients are necessary to ensure successful outcomes” (Daffron & Caffarella, 2021, p. 12). Although some proponents of certain models argue for their superiority over others, the reality is that programs and their evaluations represent a full spectrum, from meticulously crafted to hastily thrown together approaches with varying levels of supporting evidence.

Many more established models of program planning are rooted in what is known as a “conventional” approach (Sork, 2010), which centers around identifying a logical progression between needs, objectives, activities, and outcomes, in a way that is replicable (Daffron & Caffarella, 2021). Meanwhile, sustainability planning scholar John Friedmann’s body of work on program planning theory questions the purpose and place of planning in the public democratic domain, recognizing the complexities of program planning tied to “real-world constraints” (Friedmann, 2008). This is known as a “pragmatic” approach – which also incorporates various lenses such as gender studies and critical ethnography (Daffron & Caffarella, 2021). Program planning has developed equally deep roots in social activism, through “radical approaches” that design programs around intended social, economic, or political societal change that requires understanding (or is based on assumptions) about why certain societal problems exist and how to address them (Daffron & Caffarella, 2021).

This history has played a role in the colonization of Indigenous peoples. Indigenous communities have been the focus of externally mandated programs since the early decades of colonization, often with destructive results (Hare, 2011). Countless examples exist of horrific government created programs that have had lasting effects on Indigenous existence, and that Indigenous peoples continue to work to heal from. The Indian Act, with its “legacy of coercion that is incompatible with a social appetite for recognition and reconciliation” (Collis, 2022) is the most comprehensive of these, dictating First Nations land and physical space, cultural and spiritual practice, finance, property and taxation, resource use, and governance, and known as “the historic legal regime structuring settler colonialism in Canada” (Collis, 2022).

Since the Truth and Reconciliation Commission published its Final Report and Calls to Action (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015), it has become apparent to most

Canadians that residential schools had a horrific, lasting, intergenerational impact on many Indigenous peoples. What may be less apparent to most is the influence of program planning and program evaluation concepts and approaches in the federal government's response to this realization. The (Indian Residential Schools) Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established in June 2008, as a result of a class action settlement between Residential School Survivors, the Assembly of First Nations, Inuit representatives, and the federal government and churches responsible for residential schools (National Center for Truth and Reconciliation, 2023). This settlement, the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, was managed on the federal government's side by Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada (IRSRC) which became integrated into what was then called Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). As an administrative requirement, IRSRC tabled in Parliament its own "Departmental Performance Report for Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada" (Strahl, 2008). This report boasts that it follows Treasury Board Secretariat reporting requirements including its "approved Strategic Outcome(s) and Program Activity Architecture" (Strahl, 2008, p. 5) that does not include any input from Indigenous peoples or worldviews around how it defines and measures strategic outcomes. Although the TRC has had a significant impact on addressing the legacy of residential schools, it is important to recognize that much of the work on this report and Calls to Action remains tethered to the federal government's own policies around what constitutes appropriate strategic outcomes, and what financial and human resources are considered valid inputs to achieve these outcomes.

In addition to residential schools, child welfare practices and policies leading to the Sixties Scoop and Millennium Scoop (Manitoba Association of Friendship Centers, 2018), forced sterilization (Rutherford, 2022), forced starvation (Daschuk, 2019), and forced displacement and

relocation (Alberta Teachers' Association, 2020; Farrell et al., 2021), were all federal and provincial government sponsored programs designed to assimilate Indigenous peoples (Government of Canada, 2022). All these programs share roots in government policy and represent careful planning by policy makers and program planners. Undoubtedly, program evaluations played a role – for better or for worse – in many of these destructive social programs.

Today, Indigenous programs increasingly provide opportunities for reclaiming and revitalizing Indigenous knowledges and practices and improving community well-being and resilience. Although Indigenous peoples have never stopped providing this care, proceedings like the Truth and Reconciliation Commission have led to an increase in funding for Indigenous-focused programming and projects developed through Indigenous organizations as well as within non-Indigenous institutions like mainstream universities and museums. Indigenous programs are developed to be rooted in Indigenous ways of knowing, but often contend with limitations and constraints of the environment they operate within and meeting competing obligations. Funding agencies like the Tri-Councils of Canada, comprised of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), and Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), have provided significant funding to support the development of Indigenous-focused programming, but still maintain their own requirements aligned with their respective organizations' missions and purposes. This creates additional considerations for Indigenous programs operating within these environments, which in turn affects the results of any program evaluation that may be completed as a review of these programs. Often, these considerations are not aligned with Indigenous ways of knowing and being, including Indigenous-informed evaluation approaches. As funding has increased, so

have reporting requirements and, in turn, organizations' need to monitor and demonstrate their "achievements" in order to qualify for continued support.

Program evaluation can be a powerful tool to ensure a program is operating as intended, to learn from its delivery, and to make improvements for the future (Patton, 1997). In 2001, Stufflebeam identified 22 approaches to program evaluation —now updated to include 23 (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014) —each of which has a slightly different focus and ability to frame a program in a certain light, draw out particular types of information about the program, and provide insight into various ways forward. Of these approaches, practical participatory evaluation has been used in some Indigenous program contexts to ensure program participants are involved in the evaluation process, which ensures they can make use of the evaluation and its results. This has represented a useable "workaround" for evaluating Indigenous programs but may not be sufficient to adequately represent them. Meanwhile, Indigenous methodologies in program evaluation, such as Māori program evaluation (Cram, 2016), and program evaluation based on the medicine wheel do exist (Davis, n.d) and are being increasingly applied.

Depending on the parameters of the program, mainstream program evaluation approaches may be unable to adequately represent Indigenous programs and their particularities, and can even be detrimental, even with a participatory approach. Program planning and program evaluation is rooted in standardization, appropriate use of government funding, and enacting the will of government through programming. Given this history, this thesis aimed to identify ways in which program evaluation can adequately represent Indigenous programs in Canada. To do so, it focused on programs intended for Indigenous participants or that incorporate Indigenous approaches, but that are housed in or funded by non-Indigenous institutions or organizations. One such project that encapsulates this approach and informs the foundation for this study is the

Indigenous Star Knowledge Project (ISKP). The ISKP is a collaboration between a circle of Indigenous partners, Ingenium: Canada's Museum of Science and Innovation, and the University of Ottawa. The original intent of the research was to identify what made the Indigenous Star Knowledge Project a successful Indigenous program, what limitations there were to its success, and what a representative process for evaluating this program might look like. Over time, the study grew to use the context of this program to explore program evaluation in a broader Indigenous program context.

Development of the thesis

This thesis work began in January 2019 and is concluding in the spring of 2023. This extended period allowed for me to build experience and a relationship with program evaluation and with Indigenous methodologies in a way that would not have been possible in a shorter timeframe, and which allows me to feel comfortable sharing findings on this topic. Although I still feel that I am learning, this deepened connection to program evaluation developed not only through direct data collection activities but through research assistant work, contract work, and other life experiences, all of which help me feel comfortable interacting with the topic. Today, I can speak about program evaluation as I might speak about a friend, rather than just a subject area I have read about. I began this journey while participating in a program evaluation for an Inuit teacher education program offered by McGill University. Between January 2019 to today, as a Research Assistant, contractor, or learner, I have:

- Assisted with the planning and development of an evaluation of the Nunavik Teacher Education Program (Kane et al., 2019).

- Assisted with the planning of the University of Ottawa and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami's (ITK) Inuit Graduate Student Winter Institute and collaborative writing of its associated *Position Paper* (Baikie et al., 2019).
- Attended three weeks of a four-week program in Community Driven Development, hosted in Hyderabad, India by NGO SOPAR/Bala Vikasa, with the Registrar of the Indigenous Certification Board of Canada, to consider delivering a version of this program for Indigenous people in Canada.
- Attended Wilfred Buck's Tipis and Telescopes event in Manitoba.
- Assisted with securing funding for and following the progress of the Indigenous Star Knowledge Project, participated in planning meetings for the project, and published four articles on the project on the Ingenium website, Ingenium channel (*Star stories: The making of the Indigenous Star Knowledge Project* (Kirby-McGregor, 2021), *Under the same sky: Conversations from the Indigenous Star Knowledge Project* (Kirby-McGregor, 2021), *The Yuin Message Stick: A piece of the Yuin nation's continuing history* (Kirby-McGregor, 2021), and *Digging deeper: Regenerating Indigenous Star Knowledge* (Kirby-McGregor, 2021).
- Led an evaluation of the University of Prince Edward Island's Certificate in Educational Leadership for Nunavut (CELN) Program (unpublished).
- Supported the development of a successful SSHRC funding application with Dr. Pierrot Ross-Tremblay, Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Intellectual Traditions and Self-Determination, *Uetshit Takuaimatishun: developing a framework for Innu And Atikamekw self-determination*; and continued to work with Dr. Ross-Tremblay on other proposals for Indigenous knowledge revitalization and decolonization projects.

- Developed a framework for Indigenous Program Evaluation for Right to Play Canada's Indigenous Programs (unpublished).

Throughout this time and encouraged by a thesis supervisor who allowed me to engage with her research by assisting with referencing on two chapters of her book, *Indigenous Feminist Gikendaasowin (Knowledge): Decolonization through Physical Activity* (2020), I took the time to feel as healthy as possible while I considered this material by taking up running and (painfully) completing my first marathon in October 2020, with my dad cycling by my side. At the time, this felt like avoidance of the work I needed to put toward writing, but as I look back, I know that I was not prepared then to process what I was learning and hearing and could not afford a disconnect of my mind and body, especially during the extremely isolating COVID-19 pandemic. Inspired by McGuire-Adams' research, which explains that "running fosters decolonization", particularly for Anishinaabekweg – Anishinaabe women – by connecting to ceremony and to the history of Anishinaabeg message carrying through running (McGuire-Adams, 2020), I continued to run as much as I could. By the time I graduate, I will have run over 1000 km throughout the duration of this thesis work, and I am confident that this has helped me process the research and my related and unrelated lived experience, ensuring that as I learn I am able to embody the research and be a part of it as it becomes a part of me, rather than an external project I observe from a distance.

These and other experiences better prepared me to understand the data collected in support of this research. Although they are not formally considered in the data analysis, they have shaped my understanding, perspective, and relationship to the concept of program evaluation, its application, and implications for Indigenous programming, as well as my relationship to Indigenous knowledges, approaches, and methodologies.

Positioning myself in relation to the research topic

This relationship is also dependent on my identity and social position. As member of Whitefish River First Nation of mixed ancestry, raised away from this community in an urban center – and a “status” Indian within the meaning of the Indian Act, chapter 27, Statutes of Canada (1985)¹, I have chosen to explore a topic that intersects Indigenous experiences and non-Indigenous concepts, as this best reflects my experience and perspective. The way I interact with the topic is influenced by my lived experiences, languages, and lens, and the relationships I have with family, friends, colleagues, and mentors who I hope can all read this and connect with it as they do with me. Shawn Wilson describes similar experiences in his book, *Research is Ceremony* (2010):

My friend Peter related to me having the same problem in presenting his thesis. When talking with his Elders, often he would find that they would say things or describe events that would take him to a different place. In his thesis, he was not sure whether to talk about what the Elders were saying or about the place they took him. If I tell you about what they were talking about when I was doing this research, will you make the same intuitive leaps that I did? I cannot be sure of this. On the other hand, if I just tell you where I ended up with my ideas, will you be confused about how I got there? There is no real way for me to tell whether you are ready to receive this information (p. 69).

Given where I feel I am in my journey, I have chosen to share both the things I was told and where they took me – understanding that perhaps, someone who reads what I was told may develop a different relationship to the message. In many ways, when I describe “wise practices”, I am speaking to myself – reassuring myself against an ocean of literature speaking to the exact

¹ Language from Certificate of Indian Status Cards issued by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.

opposite of my argument, and I am concretizing a perspective that will carry me through approaching program evaluation differently from the mainstream. For this reason, I sat with this topic for four years, double the length of time of a typical “full time” master’s thesis, before I felt comfortable commenting on it at all. I recognize the immense privilege of being able to take this additional time and cost to reflect on a topic of interest, and hope that in recognition of this, I have adequately recorded and relayed what knowledge and perspectives were shared with me throughout this time. In this document, I tell the story of Indigenous program evaluation as I have heard it and understand it, and as I am able to retell it from my own lens.

One of the first conversations I had with Wilfred Buck at the start of this work shaped the direction it maintained. Buck (2019) explained that throughout the work on revitalizing Indigenous ways of knowing, there is no need to compare to non-Indigenous ways for validity. While this thesis could have further explored the application of some methodologies, like Cousins’ Practical-Participatory approach, given his work on applying program evaluation to Indigenous programs; driven by Wilfred’s comments, I decided not to extensively review non-Indigenous approaches. Instead, these are addressed for context, but the primary focus is on the perspectives of Indigenous evaluators, planners, and program contributors.

Wise Practices

Over time, the title of this thesis evolved. *Wise Practices in Indigenous Program Evaluation* is the most accurate title, but it cannot exist without acknowledging the origin of *wise practices* terminology. Calliou and Wesley-Esquimaux (2010) explained this by offering a critique of the “best practices” model, explaining that the term is often situated against a Western corporate standard; while “best” practices can be useful and help with benchmarking, “there is a growing skepticism about the universality of best practices” (p. 41). They acknowledge that many are

beginning to caution that what may work well in one situation, context, or culture may not work everywhere (Calliou and Wesley-Esquimaux, 2010). Thus, they define wise practices as “locally appropriate actions, tools, principles or decisions that contribute significantly to the development of sustainable and equitable conditions” (Calliou and Wesley-Esquimaux 2010, p. 19). Rather than modeled on case studies and standards upheld as the “best” approach for all to follow, wise practices are rooted in cultural identity and “recognize the wisdom in each Indigenous community and in the community’s own stories of achieving success” (p. 43).

This approach is aligned with the findings of this study, where there was no intent to review existing models, but rather a collaborative investigation of what could exist if Indigenous peoples have space to develop approaches that connect to their context. To arrive at *wise practices*, the following sections of this thesis review literature on the context of program evaluation, how it relates to Indigenous programs, and Indigenous approaches and methodologies. Then, the research methodology and questions are presented, followed by a results section that identifies three key themes from three important conversations, and completed by a discussion tying these to wise practices.

Chapter 2: Literature review

Understanding the context of program evaluation

Program evaluation is a surprisingly contentious field, with multitudes of approaches sometimes contested by its practitioners. Stufflebeam (2001) identified 22 methods of program evaluation that can be used in different contexts; and this list has since expanded even further. In recent years, Indigenous program evaluation approaches have begun to emerge. In its simplest form, program evaluation is a systematic process for collecting data about a program or project. It is sometimes undertaken for the purpose of continuous learning, seeking to improving the

program or project, but can have diverse focuses depending on what is being evaluated and why it is being evaluated. According to Stufflebeam and Coryn (2021), program evaluation is complex, necessary, and powerful:

Evaluation is perhaps society's most fundamental discipline; it is an essential characteristic of the human condition, and it is the single most important and sophisticated cognitive process in the repertoire of human reasoning and logic (Osgood, Suci, & Tannenbaum, 1957). It permeates all areas of human activity and has important implications for maintaining and improving services and protecting citizens in all areas of interest to society.

Program evaluation is generally understood to be distinct from auditing, which is an official, fully independent examination, often financial, more akin to an inspection, and seeking to verify adherence or compliance to applicable standards. It is also distinct from monitoring, which is the process of collecting data about a program (without posing judgement, other than to track participation levels, attendance, etc.), and reporting, which takes the information collected through monitoring and presents it to a particular audience, generally program funders, stakeholders, or the public.

Finally, program evaluation is distinct from research, although parallels can be drawn especially around methodology; and skills needed for research like collecting, organizing, analyzing, and synthesizing information are required for both (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014). Programs can be evaluated in a formative (interim, during program delivery) or summative (final, after a program's end) manner. Although program evaluation is not auditing, the results of an evaluation often influence whether a program continues as is, requires significant changes, or

is discontinued, creating important considerations around power, influence, ethics, social position, and responsibility of program evaluators.

Drawing from the field of education, where formal evaluation of students' performance in the Western world began in the 1700s (Hoskins, 1968), earliest program evaluations beginning in Great Britain linked educators' salary to students' performance, leading to educational reform (Hogan, 2007). In the United States, where educational reform continued through program evaluation and comparative studies across the 1800s, early evaluation also focused on developing standardized production processes for the United States Army in 1815 (Hogan, 2007). Later, evaluation began to focus on efficiency of the education system, through Taylor's "scientific management" approach for education administrators to determine the quality of instruction based on objective-based tests (Hogan, 2007).

Post World War II growth, optimism, departure from the great depression, and associated expansion of available programs led to a significant decrease in interest around accountability for national spending on educational programs between 1946 and 1957 (Madaus et al., 1984). This attitude quickly realigned toward government funded evaluations of new curriculum development projects when the National Defense Education Act (1958) set aside millions of dollars for after Russia's launch of Sputnik I (Hogan, 2007). This eventually led to the origin of contemporary program evaluation, rooted in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, which was the first to align evaluation with social programming for low-income children, sponsored by Senator Robert Kennedy who "wanted to authenticate that federal money was not going to support schools' exhausted practices, but rather would help disadvantaged students in new ways" (Hogan, 2007, p. 6). Since the 1960s, the field of evaluation has continued to expand, complexify, and develop approaches, methodologies, courses, and standards. The tension that

emerged between those who wish to standardize and measure achievement through criteria-reference testing and those who favor self-evaluation, “progressive” education with an emphasis on experiential learning and self-actualization over high stakes comparative metrics (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2021), has only complexified.

Evaluations are used primarily for improvement, accountability, dissemination, and enlightenment (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014, p. 21). A standard evaluation report will include a clear, fulsome description of the program, including its goals, funding, staffing, activities, or operations, and intended outcomes (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014). It will present the information gathered and pose evidence-based judgements on strengths, weaknesses, and recommended improvements to the program. To develop this report, it will typically consult with program “beneficiaries”, staff, subject matter experts, and documentation, to various extents. Stufflebeam and Coryn (2014) position the evaluator as a critical component of this process, where their informed judgement is the foundation of the evaluation.

Although many program evaluators develop a partiality a certain type of program evaluation, or specialize in a certain approach, Stufflebeam and Coryn (2014) admit that “faced with a growing number of program evaluation approaches, evaluators need competence to assess and choose wisely among available options and then confidently and effectively apply the selected approach” (p. xxix). Trained evaluators learn to apply different approaches, models, methodologies, and tools, and to determine which combination may best suit each situation. Scholars of evaluation also comment on the credibility of each approach; understanding that some models are considered to be more of an established standard while others are still in development.

Program evaluation has not always been widely accepted, nor seen as consistent. In 1973, Zuzman and Bissonnette published *The case against evaluation (with some suggestions for improvement)*, outlining the challenges of properly evaluating a human services type of program and how data can be misinterpreted or misjudged, an issue which remains unresolved today. Morris and Jacobs (2000) surveyed a sample of American Evaluation Association members about their thoughts on three case studies regarding ethics in evaluation and found what they called “significant disagreement” among the evaluators around what was ethical behavior or not. No matter the approach, evaluators play an important role that should not be underestimated in advancing or limiting growth and change of a program or service. Their own contribution as a professional, including any biases, worldviews, and skill variations that affect the final evaluation product, can have significant impacts on large numbers of people, sometimes entire societies.

Stufflebeam and Coryn (2014) define program evaluation as “assessments of any coordinated set of activities directed at achieving goals”; which they have classified based on “the extent to which they focus mainly, somewhat, or not at all on judging a program’s value” (p. 111). This classification leads to five categories from their perspective, each of which include a laundry list of approaches, of which none directly address Indigenous program evaluation:

- 1) Pseudoevaluations, which “promote invalid or incomplete findings” (6 approaches)
- 2) Quasi-evaluation (8 approaches)
- 3) Improvement and accountability-oriented evaluation (3 approaches)
- 4) Social agenda and advocacy (4 approaches)
- 5) Eclectic approaches (2 approaches)

The first category enables Stufflebeam and Coryn to describe certain types of evaluation as motivated by politics or profit, that may tend to prioritize “delivering a desired conclusion” (p. 122) over conducting an impartial assessment, or misuse of “empowerment evaluation”.

Empowerment evaluation is a form of “transformational evaluation” where program stakeholders are taught to develop their own evaluation, but Stufflebeam and Coryn (2014) believe this often occurs in a way that leads only to favorable evaluations that may not be warranted. From the perspective of Stufflebeam and Coryn (2014):

An evaluator must not give evaluatees power over an external evaluation message, even in the interest of reducing their fear of and antipathy toward evaluation. The often-predictable result of empowerment under the guise of evaluation is essentially a biased self-report that masquerades as an unbiased, independent evaluation. Moreover, this is modeling of bad evaluation work; accordingly, evaluatees are empowered not to conduct rigorous, creditable evaluations, but to make a game of what should be a sound evaluation enterprise (p. 128).

Thus, the purpose of the other four categories of evaluation is to provide “sound” evaluations that meet an established standard of “utility, feasibility, propriety, accuracy, evaluation accountability, and overall merit” (p. 111) as defined by the National Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation’s *Program Evaluation Standards* (2011, for the most recent update). The National Joint Committee thus defines evaluation as “the assessment of something’s worth or merit” (2011, p.111). While the concept of evaluating a program’s worth or merit makes historical sense given its origins in governmental oversight into how organizations are spending its money, this dynamic is complexified by the relationship of a colonial government to Indigenous Nations, especially in the 20th century

where these governments are simultaneously moving to recognizing Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination (Government of Canada, 2021). Where governments assert their commitment to a nation-to-nation relationship, what approaches are appropriate, if any, for evaluating programs that governments have funded but have affected Indigenous communities, and how can Indigenous voices be centered in the process?

Four mainstream evaluation approaches that have been used for evaluating Indigenous programs are collaborative, participatory, practical-participatory, and transformative-participatory evaluation. All four share significant similarities while showcasing select distinctions with multiple tools and approaches of debated use and value. In both program evaluation and research, collaborative and participatory approaches have been increasingly used as a means for evaluators and researchers to better include the voices of participants and stakeholders in their work. Stakeholder participation is viewed as an important step when working with marginalized groups, particularly Indigenous communities given the history of “over-researching” Indigenous peoples through “questionable research practices” (Goodman et al., 2018) and the tendency to prioritize the (often incorrect) voice of someone who has observed a community or group for a short period rather than the community itself. While this practice has been seen as an advance in program evaluation, many are now calling for the recognition that Indigenous peoples should not be referred to as stakeholders at all; where program evaluation understands stakeholders to be any individuals or groups affected by a program, Indigenous peoples are in reality “rights and title holders” as recognized in the Royal Proclamation of 1763, and while they may be referred to as “partners”, they also have the freedom and right to lobby governments to change an approach or project (Indigenous Corporate Training, 2017).

Collaborative evaluation involves a more invested partnership role for the “stakeholder” while participatory methods usually involve a form of engagement that shapes the project design and implementation but is still lead by the evaluator. In cases where stakeholders have similar levels of power and authority in organizations, or where there has been little to no negative impact on stakeholders by a program, participatory program evaluation can involve stakeholders in the decision-making process and even in problem solving (Cousins & Earl, 1995). Generally, though, the evaluator remains the “expert” in charge of the evaluation. This is important to consider when examining Indigenous programs being evaluated in contexts where they have had to fit into colonial structures and institutions, either for the program’s delivery or to fund it and report on those funds. These institutions typically have significant power over the Indigenous program developers or participants, as they are the ultimate decision makers around what programs can exist.

Practical-participatory program evaluation (P-PE) takes the approach a step further by insisting on developing an evaluation with stakeholders with the specific intent of it being useful and utilized by them. The hope is that stakeholders’ involvement in the design and implementation of the evaluation will contribute to its practical usage (Cousins & Whitmore, 1998). Sufficient time and resources are required to adequately implement P-PE and ensure the results of the evaluation are meaningful enough to stakeholders that they will actually make use of them. Because of this, Cousins and Whitmore (1998) admit that P-PE is best suited to situations where stakeholders already generally agree about the program goals, in cases where stakeholders have similar levels of power and authority in organizations, or where there has been little to no negative impact on stakeholders by a program (Cousins & Earl, 1995).

When participatory evaluation emerged, it was not necessarily viewed in the same way by everyone. Cousins and Whitmore (1998) identified that different people had very different understandings of what participatory evaluation was and endeavored to describe the distinctions between *Practical* Participatory Evaluation (P-PE) and what became known as *Transformative* Participatory Evaluation (T-PE). Both approaches were designed to center the stakeholders' interpretations of their experiences rather than empirical data collected by a disengaged third party. P-PE and T-PE have similarities in terms of contributing to developing the skills of stakeholders in evaluation and having practical value to stakeholders. However, Cousins and Whitmore (1998) argued that significant differences exist in their primary functions: while T-PE seeks to empower stakeholders, P-PE focuses on practical problem solving. In T-PE, there is an intent to make a social impact via engaging democratic principles in evaluation, which P-PE does not focus on (Cousins & Whitmore, 1998). Instead, P-PE looks to foster stakeholders' decision-making and problem solving as well as their use of evaluation findings and processes (Cousins & Earl, 1992). While T-PE has a focus on transformation and empowerment of stakeholders, the focus of P-PE is evaluation that is useful and meaningful to them.

Within the realm of transformative approaches, Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is an approach that advocates working with stakeholders to identify program and participant strengths and assets to work generate improvement. The strategy is borrowed from the field of organizational development and was developed to promote organizational change by identifying positive core strengths, presuming that "organizations move in the way of what they study" (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 2017). AI "inquires into, identifies, and further develops the best of what is in organizations in order to create a better future" (Coghlan et al., 2003). The parallels between program evaluation and program development work are strong and organizational development

has influenced a number of evaluators (Patton, 2003). Since AI is more of a perspective than a prescriptive strategy, evaluations could look similar in format to those utilizing practical-participatory approaches. In essence, AI is a form of participatory work that highlights strengths. The concept grew out of the realization that when a needs assessment or similar approach is applied, it generally moves groups from knowing they have a few problems to realizing they have a significant amount of them, with few solutions for any of them. Such participatory needs-based approaches also lead participants to focus on the problems and deficits, which tends to encourage feelings of overwhelming helplessness (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2000) making it difficult to make change. AI believes that when they instead focus on strengths, assets, and “what is working particularly well” (Coghlan et al., 2003), they can develop the inspiration, confidence, and motivation to work towards solutions.

Some of these principles have made their way into evaluation approaches focused on Indigenous programs. Still within the realm of participatory approaches, Chouinard and Cousins (2007) review what might make up “culturally competent evaluation for Aboriginal communities” (p. 40). While they provide examples of Indigenous program evaluations, their approach centers around developing a methodology for non-Indigenous evaluators that includes acknowledging the power imbalances between evaluators and community members, discussed further below. It also addresses participatory engagement with the broader community, using a strengths-based approach, and developing “culturally relevant outcome measurement”, which should be the result of a participatory evaluation process with any group.

In addition to types of program evaluation, the nature, impact, and place of program evaluation in society are also debated. For program evaluators, the field is considered a science (Shek et al., 2018), typically understood within a Western paradigm of scientific analysis. For

Stufflebeam and Coryn (2014), evaluation is essential to quality improvement and accountability; “no profession could excel without evaluation” (p.6), and “as a profession with important roles in society, evaluation has technical aspects requiring thorough and ongoing training” (p. 4). Although most programs are not evaluated with the rigor a credentialed evaluator might appreciate, this leads to enduring perspectives on approaches and methodologies to evaluation that are akin to physical sciences, a heavy focus on quantitative data, and alignment with standardized measurement tools. This is amplified by the historical use of program evaluation to justify or restrict spending on social programs (Hogan, 2007). Today, program evaluation remains used to examine whether a program should continue to receive funding, should continue to be operated by the same institution(s) in the same manner, or whether it should be dismantled and rethought. In such a context, the program evaluator arrives with a significant amount of power; similarly, program stakeholders may participate with discomfort as they acknowledge the potential impact of the evaluation on their livelihoods or, on occasion, on the results of their lifetime commitment to an idea or process.

Most program evaluation is not usually intended to be experienced as an audit, which does carry a requirement for measuring against a standard. However, the nuances of meaning, approach, purpose, and intent can only be experienced, and are often not apparent to those who are not familiar with what to expect in an evaluation – and the origins of evaluation in compliance to evolving standards in education and other industries do not increase the distinction. The ability of an evaluator to make a judgement on the program may be welcome for those who are displeased with areas of the program, or who trust that the evaluator will appropriately share their story or unwelcome for those who may feel threatened by a third party

speaking on their behalf. Given the amount of disingenuous, politically controlled, and pandering evaluations that take place (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014), this hesitancy is not unwarranted.

Complicating things further, in many situations, program evaluation is used in concurrence with, or even conflated with, monitoring and reporting. Many organizations end up calling “evaluation” a process where they identify metrics associated with a strategic or tactical plan action, and then report on achievement of these metrics at the end of a designated period. While this process can assist with evaluating a program, it is not necessarily what a full program evaluation would look like, and usually ends up focusing primarily on the “success” of the program, identifying a few improvements program administrators would like to see. Many program administrators seem to erroneously conflate evaluation with collecting responses to a feedback survey, where participants tell you what they feel they learned or how they perceive their lives to have changed, what they enjoyed, and what they would improve. In some cases, a report called an evaluation may exclusively be designed to celebrate successes, reporting what the program did well (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014). In larger organizations, staff may be asked to contribute to evaluation without formal training, tasked with identifying “indicators” that would measure the progress they made on the targets they set themselves for the year. While this information may be useful, it is also not quite program evaluation if it is missing key components like bases for comparison to verify the meaning of findings. Monitoring and reporting may also be primarily tied to compliance or requirements from various program funders, detailing how the program has met the objectives the funder agreed to contribute to, demonstrating that donated funds have had the impact the donor wishes to be associated with, while still indicating that more or continued funding is required to achieve greater reach or better meet objectives.

This connection to reporting and program funding amplifies the influence governments and other funding bodies or donors can have on the direction of social or educational programming as well as research. Stufflebeam and Coryn (2014) express that:

Evaluation is a process for giving attestations to such matters as reliability, effectiveness, cost-effectiveness, efficiency, safety, ease of use, and probity. Society and individual clients are at risk to the extent that services, products, and other objects of interest are of poor quality. Evaluation serves society by providing affirmations of worth, value, progress, accreditation, and accountability—and, when necessary, a credible, defensible, nonarbitrary basis for terminating bad programs or, conversely, expanding good programs (p.3).

Despite this profound endorsement, Stufflebeam and Coryn (2014) caution that evaluation is only one component, as acting on lessons identified in an evaluation is outside of the scope of evaluators work. What program administrators do with the results of an evaluation, if they are not compelled by external agencies to make changes, is up to them.

Complicating this, knowledge theorists – also referred to as epistemologists - would argue that a role is played in evaluation by epistemology, considering what methods can be used to create and validate knowledge – or what distinguishes between opinion from truth. Philosophising about what it is to know, how human understanding works, and how science, or evidence, validates what we are confident we know, has been ongoing in the Western world since the dawn of philosophy, being investigated by Plato, Locke, Kant, Russell, and many others (Steup and Neta, 2020). Although today, many believe the fields of science and mathematics to be absolute, their more advanced scholars are extremely aware of the limitations of our available approaches

to gathering and validating scientific knowledge, and new discoveries constantly challenge what we previously believed to be true. This does not mean there cannot be universally agreed upon methodologies to get as close as we possibly can to “truth” or “knowledge”, but that our worldview, lens, and available context plays a role in how we get there and what we end up with. Today, a variety of lenses are applied to social research and evaluation, like gender-based analysis (or the federal government’s official version, GBA +), economic analysis, or other lenses, to consider specific aspects of a situation. Even these lenses are in constant evolution, with researchers and policy analysts informing changes to the lens to better reflect updated social perspectives.

Program evaluation for Indigenous programs

Given the roots of evaluation in maintaining government’s authority through programming decisions, and the history of harm these programming decisions have had on Indigenous communities, it is evident that program evaluation in its most “standard” forms may not be welcomed by Indigenous peoples. Cram (2016) speaks to this in the Māori context, explaining that evaluation practices have been “based on the stereotyped understandings of the evaluators, and the deficit-based views held of Indigenous peoples by the dominant culture” (p. 300). Cram (2016) further states that “evaluation practices with Māori have not always been able to represent their lived realities or endorse their right to be Māori” (p. 300). Complicating this further, even “mainstream” evaluators can struggle with the need to create an evaluation that balances perceived “objectivity” with their own views, analyses, and judgements in a world where many evaluators and their supporting scholars argue for increased standardization. Stufflebeam and Coryn (2014) caution that many “public relations studies” have taken place under the guise of providing “lessons learned” documents that end up being self-serving advertisements for specific

programs, requirements, or services (p. 119). While this may be true, it does not necessarily require evaluations to include absolute neutrality from the evaluator. It is no secret that program evaluation is rarely, if ever, unbiased or objective – the question lies in whether it needs to be, and if it is not, what is its purpose and how should it be approached?

Indigenous epistemologies – and Indigenous ways of knowing – refer to the things Indigenous peoples have traditionally considered to be knowledge creating, that may differ from Western/non-Indigenous concepts of knowledge creation. For example, knowledge can be created through ceremony (W. Buck, personal communication, March 3, 2019). According to Little Bear (2009), “in the Indigenous world, knowledge is about relationships” (p. 7). This includes relationships to people as well as spaces and places, as represented by language, songs, stories, and ceremonies (p. 9). Other common themes include research that is aligned with an Indigenous (Indigenist) paradigm, epistemology, ontology, and axiology (Wilson, 2009), involves core Indigenous research values like respect, relevancy, reciprocity, and responsibility (Kovach, 2009). According to McGregor, Restoule, and Johnston (2018), research should benefit Indigenous communities. Even further, accountability, transparency, protocol, and including marginalized voices (ex: properly citing Elders with no academic publications) are all increasingly centered in Indigenous research. Most scholars argue that it should be rooted in Indigenous (local and collective) protocols, values, knowledges, and ethics (Kovach, 2009).

Despite this, certain methods and frameworks have become commonplace in Indigenous research and program development. For example, the use of circle has been written about by Saulis (2015) in relation to education, Hart (2002) in relation to social work, and by Graveline (1998; 2000) in relation to transformative methodologies and Indigenous paradigms in research and professional practice. Kovach commented that “research-sharing circles have only recently

appeared as a formal data collection method” (2009, p. 128). Kovach also recounted a conversation with another scholar of Indigenous research methodologies, Kathy Absolon, who explained:

Well, we don't do interviews in Aboriginal culture. We have discussions and talks. I talked to my committee advisor and said, 'I think I am going to reword it to say this is what we are doing.' She said the committee might not get that, but I reworded it anyway. We don't have focus groups, we have circles. I am trying to rethink the methodology, but that's a real hard thing because none of us can say we know what is authentically Indigenous (Kovach, 2009, p. 152).

Hickey (2020) summarizes how many Indigenous authors, including Burrows (2007), Deloria and Wildcat (2001), Hart (2010), and Walter and Aitken (2019), all speak to the ways, in colonial/settler governments, that “Indigenous epistemological knowledge, theory, policy, and law are marginalized and disregarded (p. 14). Decolonization and reconciliation efforts have certainly brought Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing forward to a certain extent, where increasing funding is now set aside for Indigenous programs. This comes with its own set of new challenges, and is still widely considered insufficient, but begins the process of non-Indigenous institutions recognizing that Indigenous epistemologies have legitimacy in their own right. Through federal granting councils and funding of research, however, the federal government still retains the most agency in determining what is perceived as “valid” knowledge, what is considered appropriate innovation, and how and what we “know”. The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)’s own self-description, from the Honourable Francois-Philippe Champagne, Minister of Innovation, Science, and Industry (2022), speaks to this:

SSHRC supports postsecondary-based research and training in the social sciences and humanities, helping researchers *create new knowledge* [emphasis added] and innovative solutions to improve the present and future for Canadians, communities, and society (SSHRC, p. 1).

Thus, by retaining decision making authority around what research projects are funded, SSHRC, along with the other Tri-Council agencies; the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), play a significant role in determining what constitutes valid knowledge. Even the development of this thesis can be presumed to be in alignment with current societal and governmental comfort levels given that it was partly funded – and thus sanctioned – by SSHRC. It can be assumed that while it addresses Indigenous perspectives in program evaluation, these are neither radical nor divergent from current perspectives.

Ultimately, although evaluation professionals and scholars prioritize specific approaches and views of evaluation, those that are considered valid by governmental institutions take priority. This constitutes a redistribution of government power and authority into the bodies, minds, and reports of researchers and evaluators who align with government perspectives, where ultimately, evaluators often remain agents of government who determine whether or not a program is in alignment with the current leadership's beliefs on how the world should operate. Even much of the most recent research, which makes up the evidence base for supporting evaluation findings, will be profoundly rooted in the views of the government that has funded it.

The position of program evaluator inherently carries power and authority because of the evaluator's capacity to "have the last word" on what a program should be doing differently and

the possibility that evaluation can shut down a program, restrict funding, or impose other conditions. While some approaches to mainstream program evaluation have attempted to bridge the power gap between evaluators and program participants, evaluator bias remains a difficult component to manage. All the approaches that have been used in Indigenous program contexts have significant strengths but rely on the worldview, and potential stereotypes and bias, of the evaluator to categorize and understand the information provided to them by participants. Non-Indigenous evaluators seeking to understand an Indigenous program have the potential to misrepresent it in problematic ways. According to Moutsios (2010), when dominant discourses are already entrenched, people and groups can establish their own power simply by internalizing the discourse and adhering to dominant norms. When non-Indigenous evaluators approach Indigenous programs, simply not questioning the ways they have been taught to conduct evaluation can exacerbate the oppressive nature of the process. This makes it challenging for evaluators, to evaluate Indigenous programs using non-Indigenous approaches. The challenge remains even if the evaluator is Indigenous if the evaluation is informed by institutional power and authority.

Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination

Indigenous sovereignty, self-determination, and self-governance have cyclically made their way into political and organizational discourse around how non-Indigenous people and institutions should relate to Indigenous organizations, communities, and individuals. Although the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2007, its principles have only begun to trickle into governmental action plans at various levels. UNDRIP affirms Indigenous rights to self-determination, autonomy, and self-government, including distinct political, legal, economic, social and cultural

institutions, while retaining the right to participate “if they so choose, in the political, economic, social, and cultural life of the State” (United Nations, 2007, art. 6). The Government of Canada only provided Royal Assent and worked into law the UNDRIP Act (Bill C-15) in June 2021, and requested consultation to help develop an UNDRIP action plan by 2023 (Department of Justice, 2021).

The concept of self-determination, which can be exercised through education, justice, health, law, governance, representation, and daily life, broadly refers to “the fundamental right of people to shape their own lives” (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2019) has been explored by numerous Indigenous scholars (Ross-Tremblay 2020). It is not lost on these researchers how complex the practical application of self-determination, self-government, and sovereignty is in the context of colonial societies that not only enact colonial policies, but also are made up of populations that largely uphold their own perspectives of who Indigenous peoples are, and stereotypes that, whether positive or negative, are largely inaccurate.

In his book, *Thou Shalt Forget*, Ross-Tremblay (2020) speaks to the fictionalization of his Nation, the Essipiunnuat (Innu), by Quebec society. Research, media, literature, and advertising campaigns focus on fabricated similarities in values between Quebec and Innu society, “cult of personality” around leaders and praise of their leadership “as the cornerstone of the group’s ‘mastery of its own success’ (p. 5), or in many other ways uphold the Innu in a romanticized way. This simultaneously absolves (Euro)Quebec society of colonial guilt and separates it from English Canada’s contributions to colonial violence. Ross-Tremblay positions this narrative building around the Innu as a political strategy that the process of dismantling would upset people who have a stake in its outcomes. Ross-Tremblay introduces his book by citing Julie Burrelle, author of *Encounters on Contested Lands, Indigenous Performances of Sovereignty and*

Nationhood in Quebec (2019), whose view is that ‘settler-colonial societies have long depended on a rewriting of history to legitimise their existence’, which leads to a failure to ‘unsettle Québec’s settler-colonial past’ and contribute to perpetuating ‘settler-colonial domination in the present’” (Ross-Tremblay, 2020, p. 8).

The prevalence of imaginations of Indigenous realities by non-Indigenous people, spilling into literature, art, politics, and governance, and having real impacts on health, social, and economic outcomes, leads Ross-Tremblay’s research into the realm of narrative sovereignty; the act of telling one’s own story in one’s own terms. As with Buck’s (2021) rectification of the romanticized view non-Indigenous people often have of Indigenous stories, described further in this text, many Indigenous peoples spend significant time not only advocating for equitable resources and tackling negative stereotypes, but also dismantling idealized, inaccurate understandings non-Indigenous peoples have worked into their own narratives entangled within seemingly well-intentioned “reconciliation” efforts, perceptions of close relationships with Indigenous peoples, and feelings of belonging to Indigenous communities after being welcomed into events or ceremonies.

The ability to shape one’s own narrative is so important that it has vital applications in psychotherapy. Narrative therapy approaches, where clients are taught to retell their life stories after loss by creating new meanings, are used to process significant life challenges like grief and loss (Rafaely & Goldberg, 2020). Narrative therapy has applications for research – even viewing therapy itself as “co-research” between a therapist and client. Here, genuine inquiry is used to understand how a person sees themselves and their life, and the therapist assists the client in “re-storying” their experience by challenging the stories they take for granted in light of their own skills and increased knowledge and understanding. Indigenous researchers have begun to explore

this approach in relation to better understanding how Indigenous people's views of themselves are influenced by colonial, dominant narratives, then challenging these views (Denborough et al., 2004). Notably, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) deconstructs the ways in which "the term 'research' is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism" (p. 1) and explores ways in which Indigenous scholars "re-story" research by highlighting twenty-five Indigenous research projects conducted by Indigenous communities in their own ways, recognizing approaches and methodologies that are not necessarily considered valid by mainstream research bodies.

In this context, Indigenous program evaluators who are hired to tell the story of a program – or program, education, and cultural administrators, who are required to do the same through reporting to funders - carry an important responsibility around narrative sovereignty, where their framing of the program's story is linked to the framing of the entire community's narrative. In a world where thousands of false narratives collide with the community's narratives about themselves, contributing for better or for worse to the community or Nation's ability to enact self-governance and self-determination, these stories take on a new level of magnitude. For some, this means the only people who can truly undertake Indigenous evaluation are Indigenous people themselves, for their own Nations, that they know and understand. For instance, Cram (2016) situates Māori program evaluation within the context of decolonization, positing that evaluation practices have been harmful to Kaupapa Māori (meaning "a Māori way") programs by maintaining deficit-based views and developing "representations of Māori realities that reinforced notions of deficits from colonizer "norms" that were seen as problematic differences and in need of adjustment" (Cram, 2016, p. 300). In response, "Kaupapa Māori evaluation is, simply, evaluation undertaken by Māori, for Māori, with Māori" (Cram, 2016, p. 300).

These views are replicated across multitudes of engagements with Indigenous people across the world. Roberts et al. (2016) published a research study in which they conducted in depth interviews with 18 individuals (approximately half Indigenous and half non-Indigenous) working at Indigenous (American Indian and Alaska Native) organizations that were implementing physical activity programs funded by external parties. Through this research, the first theme that emerged from these interviews was that respondents mostly perceived Indigenous knowledge and Indigenous program evaluation as “narrative” and related to “being able to tell their story” (p. 47). For non-Indigenous professionals, the added layer of recognizing that you are telling someone else’s story, and how that interacts with law and Indigenous rights, is critical:

Researchers and evaluators must understand that when they conduct research within Tribal contexts, they are no longer under the jurisdiction of the state or federal government but rather that of the Tribal government. Thus, recognizing the tenets of Tribal sovereignty, self-governance, and self-determination, how these tenets intersect with state and federal laws and programs and their practical and logistical implications is critical to conducting culturally responsive, competent, and practical evaluations in Indian Country (Bowman et al., 2015, p. 340).

Sovereignty and self-determination can create challenges for existing programs and funders, in a way that may become easily identified in conducting a program evaluation with community members. These programs often have not been created by and with community, and rather have been conceptualized and driven by an outside institution that may or may not have sought input at various times in the program planning from community partners. In an Indigenous approach to evaluation that focuses on telling the community’s story, it may become apparent that they are a secondary character in a narrative that centers not the

Indigenous community, as applied sovereignty and self-determination would expect, but rather, an organization leading the programming and its opinion on what programming will work best for its own identified priorities. This tension can be difficult – even impossible - for a third-party evaluator to navigate.

Program evaluation methodologies

Within this theoretical and political context, there remains a practical question for program evaluators. Program evaluation methodologies range from experimental design to standardized testing to site visits to observation, and use tools like interviewing, focus groups, surveys, case studies, statistical or cost analysis, and rating scales. Evaluators build logic models and theories of change or assess them if already designed by the program planners. But the question emerges: do these tools and methods align with Indigenous ways of knowing?

Many third-party program evaluations follow a theory-based approach – which Stufflebeam and Coryn (2014) list under “quasi-evaluation studies” but that form the basis of the University of Ottawa’s Graduate Certificate and graduate courses in program evaluation; begin with designing (or reviewing) a program’s logic model. A standard logic model creates linkages between program inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes, visually demonstrating how they inform one another. Stufflebeam and Coryn (2014) caution that while this approach can be very useful for designing an evaluation, misuse can lead to biased confirmation of the theory or model or development of a misleading picture of the program (citing Donaldson, 2007; Coryn, Noakes, et al., 2011; and Morell, 2010). The logic model is one way to visualize the program theory, most simply defined as the theory of how desired changes will be obtained through the program (Stufflebeam and Coryn, 2014). While

original program logic models were developed in a linear fashion, there has been increasing argument that “nonlinear, ecological, open, adaptive, and complex theories of a program often are more appropriate approximations of true program theories and are more consistent with reality than linear theories” (Stufflebeam and Coryn, 2014, p. 158). Stufflebeam and Coryn (2014) share two examples demonstrating this distinction, replicated in Figure 1 and Figure 2:

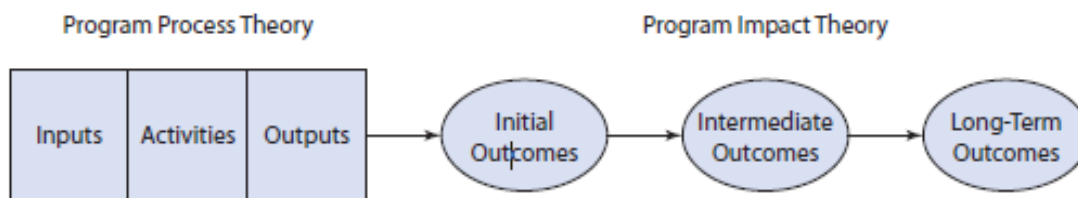


Figure 6.5 Linear Program Theory Model

Source: Donaldson, S. I. (2007). *Program theory—driven evaluation science*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 25.

Figure 1: Linear Program Theory Model (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014, p. 158)

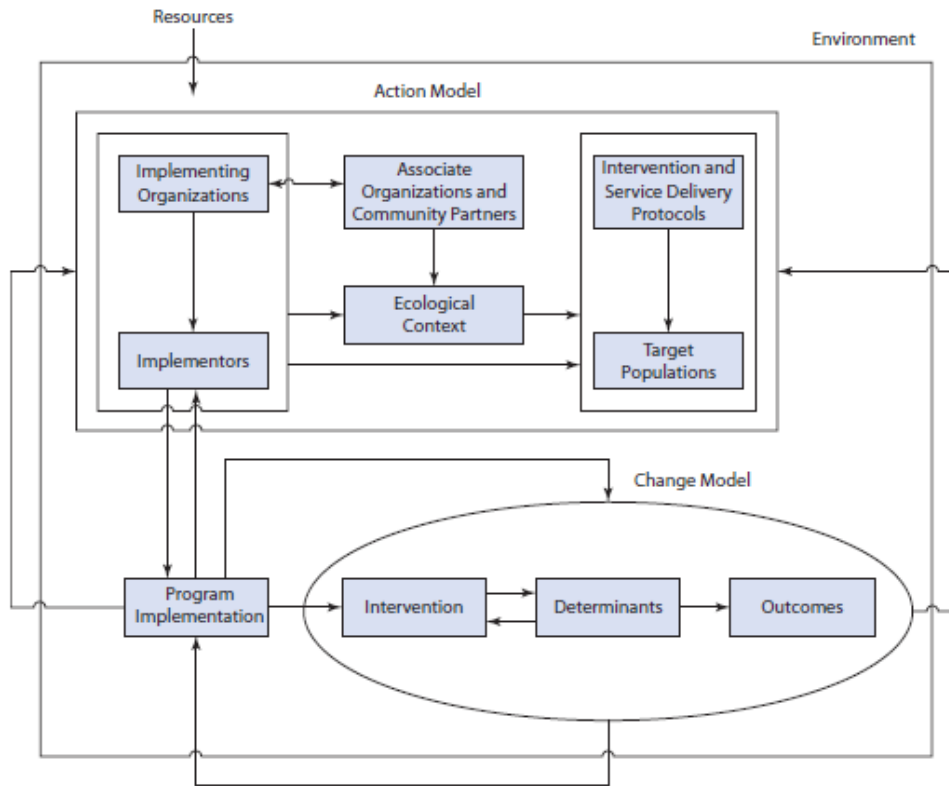


Figure 6.6 Nonlinear Program Theory Model

Source: Chen, H. T. (2005). *Practical program evaluation: Assessing and improving planning, implementation, and effectiveness*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 31.

Figure 2: Nonlinear Program Theory Model (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014, p. 159)

Program evaluators seeking to adapt logic models for Indigenous contexts have created versions of logic models that connect to Indigenous symbols, models, or frameworks (Davis, n.d.; Johnston, 2010). The challenge with all these models from a mainstream evaluation perspective is being able to demonstrate that the program, in isolation, is responsible for the expected change. In an Indigenous worldview, the program is not extricable from context and isolating it is not desirable or needed. The interaction between the program and its context is just as important. Embedding traditional knowledge in a framework is an approach that some have taken to provide some of that context around an Indigenous program.

According to Walter and Andersen (2013), Indigenous methodologies prioritize methods that privilege Indigenous voices, knowledges, understandings; do not take Western perspectives and

value systems as the norm, and do not start from a presumption of Indigenous deficit” (p. 86).

Thus, what makes a methodology Indigenous is not its methods (processes or procedures of data collection or analysis), but rather a theoretical lens rooted in Indigenous worldviews. As Blackstock (2009) argued, what makes a methodology Indigenous is not whether it is qualitative or quantitative, but rather how the information is interpreted and shared.

Nonetheless, there are Indigenous evaluators who speak to certain methods that seem to be preferred in Indigenous communities, or that at least address some of the discomfort with the general idea of an evaluation. A video developed by the Urban Indian Health Institute (UIHI, 2018) with members of the Lummi Nation working on program evaluation, identifies that face-to-face feedback, where community members are invited to directly share with program organizers from their perspective how the event went, asset or strengths-based surveys to self-identify where strengths are in a community, creative assessments using images or art that illustrates their experiences and transformation experienced through a program, are all approaches that have worked relatively well in their communities to gather necessary information. They also share examples of “running meetings a bit differently, but still getting the outcomes the grant wanted” – where they “speak two different languages” to translate community feedback to funders (UIHI, 2018).

In this video, Rose James, UIHI’s Director of Evaluation and Research, summarizes what evaluation can look like in an Indigenous community, recommending that Indigenous program planners “figure out what outcomes are important for your program and for your community, and then measure the things that relate to that outcome. Use what you learn to improve your program and connect with the people” (UIHI, 2018). In many ways, this is less about a specific methodology and more about an approach that feeds relationship and connection, and that

enables community members to be part of the story told about them, and to tell it on their own terms. Heather Jefferson, Lummi Youth Leadership Manager for Lummi Nation and Ferndale Schools, explains, “I think that those true connections and that acknowledgement of making those connections is what we’ve learned as Native people as what we’re trying to maintain” (UIHI, 2018). Rose James also speaks to sovereignty and narrative sovereignty in this regard: “evaluation is something that we should own, as part of what we do in our everyday work, define for ourselves, and use as a tool that works for our communities (UIHI, 2018).

Finally, it is important to recognize that research and evaluation methodologies are not foreign to Indigenous communities. As Blackstock (2009) related, Indigenous applications of their own data collection and analysis methods created profound scientific knowledge thousands of years prior to them being proven by Western scientific methods. Roberts’ et al. (2016) study identified themes from interviews with staff at Indigenous organizations noted that “Indigenous knowledge is used (...) but sometimes is not acknowledged as evaluation” (p. 48). Part of establishing Indigenous evaluation methods is, rather than creating new tools or practices, recognizing that often research and evaluation already occurs in Indigenous communities without being named as such.

Indigenous program evaluation approaches and methodologies

The application of Indigenous ways of knowing to research continues to grow, led by Indigenous scholars and communities who apply their own ways to knowledge creation. Cindy Blackstock, in advocating for greater use of Indigenous-rooted quantitative methodologies in child health and welfare, explained that Indigenous methodologies are the source of complex knowledge that Western approaches have not been able to achieve:

Some researchers believe that qualitative methods are, almost inherently, more “indigenous” in nature than quantitative methods. Such assumptions are often based on a belief that Indigenous peoples were (and are) more concerned about storytelling and ceremony than scientific and numeric endeavor. However, as Nobel Prize nominee Dr. Ervin Laszlo (2007) posits, many of the most celebrated advances in western science are now just lapping at the shorelines of the complex knowledge held in trust by Indigenous peoples for millennia. For example, Laszlo (2007) describes how the Indigenous beliefs in an interconnected reality across time and space are now being confirmed by the most advanced theories in physics such as String Theory and the Theory of Everything (Blackstock, 2009, p. 135).

Indigenous program evaluators have begun to develop Indigenous program evaluation approaches and methodologies. For instance, Benson et al. (2000) developed an approach to program evaluation based around the concept of holism, indicating that evaluation methods should match the values of people utilizing the program. Their approach is also based on strength or success finding rather than focusing on deficits. Davis (n.d) presented a framework for program evaluation based on the medicine wheel, incorporating a number of Indigenous concepts and values into the methodology and emphasizing that the community’s ways of assessing success should guide the evaluation design. Davis (n.d.) also discussed the role of the evaluator in an Indigenous community, proposing that the evaluator is there to meet the needs of the organization or community and to tell their story, rather than to pose a judgement based on their own assessment.

A similar model, the Waawiyeyaa Evaluation Model (Johnston, 2010), also conceptualizes evaluation around the medicine wheel and is based on a tree of life model. Lafrance (2010)

described the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC)'s initiative to develop an Indigenous Framework for Evaluation, which is intended to synthesise Indigenous and western perspectives and practices. This framework also puts a lot of emphasis on the role of the evaluator, questioning who has the right to speak for a program and assess its worth. Ultimately, it provides a framework incorporating four core cultural values: being a people of a place, recognizing our gifts, honoring family and community, and respecting sovereignty. Finally, describing challenges of applying Indigenous evaluation practices in mainstream grant programs to Indigenous communities, Grover (2010) described how Indigenous values are not always understood nor shared by mainstream funders and academics (p. 35) and positions the evaluator as a cultural mediator between the two.

Gray et al. (1995) stay away from developing a model and instead propose broad guidelines, making the point that it is not possible to define a single evaluation model for all Indigenous peoples. They also make the argument that government standards for funding or reporting often require compartmentalization of concepts and elements of an evaluation that may be viewed more holistically from an Indigenous perspective. Similarly, Caldwell et al. (2005) list 20 principles for doing program evaluation in an Indigenous context, which brings forward similar concepts to those included in Indigenous research methodologies and ethical guides.

Similarly, the United States Government Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Tribal Evaluation Workgroup created a Roadmap for Collaborative and Effective Evaluation in Tribal Communities (2014) that grounds itself values, which resonates with the literature reviewed thus far: community engagement, Indigenous Ways of Knowing, Respect for Tribal Sovereignty, Strengths Focus, Cultural & Scientific Rigor, Knowledge Sharing, and Ethical Practices. This roadmap influences number of program evaluations conducted by ACF's Office

of Planning, Research, and Evaluation. This report also discusses the undervaluing of Indigenous worldviews, intergenerational trauma, distrust, invasive and imposed evaluation, judgemental evaluation, and fears related to being evaluated and conducting an evaluation:

As a result of this traumatic history, evaluation in Indian Country is typically considered invasive, with Federal and State funding resources requiring local programs and families to assume the evaluation burden and provide often intimate information to unknown outsiders, often without any benefit to Native families, programs, or communities in the process. Evaluation is often regarded as a requirement rather than as a tool for addressing local questions and priorities and providing information of local use and value. Evaluation information has often been filed away without an attempt to share the information or use it to improve program services (p. 16).

In the Urban Indian Health Institute video (2018) Rose James also explained that “when we talk about things like evaluation, it’s not about judging people, it’s the exact opposite of that; it’s about understanding people and what creates change. We’re trying to tell a story, and it’s something that as Native people we’ve always done” (2018). However, the Tribal Evaluation Working Group (2013) identifies that the practice of program evaluation is often seen as “something outsiders do”, and that especially when there is less knowledge and understanding of evaluation processes, evaluators are perceived “as individuals with power or knowledge and believe they must conform to these outsiders’ opinions, ideas, and suggestions” (p. 17). This is amplified when evaluation relies on increasingly technical and science-based language, especially when working with communities whose first language is not English. Concerns that funding will be pulled, or that programming will be judged harshly, and that it will focus on deficits, all contribute to a fear or distrust-based relationship to evaluation, versus a relationship

of trust and open collaboration (Tribal Evaluation Working Group, 2013) that is assumed in approaches like practical-participatory evaluation. Though efforts are made to teach communities about the benefits of a well conducted evaluation, in many cases these fears, concerns, and experiences of evaluation as “outside” of community practices are validated by repeated experiences of third-party evaluator entering communities for short periods, posing judgements and influencing programs and projects in the community with little consideration for Indigenous approaches and ways of knowing, as funders, donors, governments, and the public increasingly seek very specific forms of data that they feel validates program activities.

Other factors contribute to Indigenous experiences of program evaluation and evaluators. According to the National Collaborating Center for Aboriginal Health (NCCAHA, 2013), “Indigenous researchers are expected by the Aboriginal community to follow a code of conduct” (p. 6), in which they should develop close, long-term, reciprocal relationships, and “not flaunt their knowledge” (Smith, 1999). Non-local evaluators may not be aware of the expected conduct and exacerbate perceptions of the “outsider” quality of evaluation.

The Urban Indian Health Institute’s video (2018) participants describe feeling like it’s a burden to have to describe what they know about their communities to funders in words the funders recognize. Shasta Cano-Martin, a Lummi MAed graduate working in the Lummi Kwenangets Department, says: “We have strengths in our community, and we know what helps but translating that to funders is a challenge. Do they see the value in what we’re doing? Because we see those results directly through our kids”. Joshua Phair, a Lummi NACTEP Coordinator with Northwest Indian College, adds: “Between speaking with our youth, and speaking with our Elders, and with members of the outside community, it’s like speaking different languages”.

One tool that allows Indigenous people to speak about themselves in their own words, without a need to translate, is storytelling. The concept of using evaluation to tell a story rather than deconstruct a program into parts and pieces, is reflected in available evaluations of Indigenous programs, such as the narrative evaluation used to evaluate the Panyappi Indigenous Youth Mentoring Program (Stacy et al, 2004). A story, from an Indigenous perspective, typically doesn't refer to a myth or legend, but rather "methods for knowledge transference, i.e., geological records, historical accounts, mathematical ideas, etc." (Williams, J. social media, 2023). In a YouTube video entitled "Message to Teachers about Stories", Wilfred Buck (2021) explained that while a lot of people associate "stories" with images of fantasy and romanticism, a lot of his own people's teachings do not fit into that category of stories. He suggested that in his Nation's Cree language, the word people use for "stories" is *âcimowewin*, which means relating something. Another term in English Wilfred suggests could replace the word "stories" to provide a better understanding of what is meant by this is "tellings"; to Wilfred, this has a connotation of importance whereas stories are equated to fables and mythologies:

A lot of the knowledge that my people put forward are not mythologies, they're not legends, they're not quaint little stories. There's a depth of knowledge to these things, there's an understanding, and also the experience of thousands and thousands of years that are being brought forward, and this knowledge has been tried, tested, and true through thousands of years, so it's more than just that little word, story (Buck, 2021).

In the video, Buck also spoke to the importance of understanding these tellings within their cultural context, explaining that when they are removed from that context:

You are adding your own influence to whatever it is that is that is being said, and there will be misunderstandings there and misconnections, and confusion. A lot of times it's

looked at as being very simplistic when these things have a depth of knowledge and understanding that goes beyond the presentation of a fairy tale” (Buck, 2021).

With this context in mind, it becomes apparent why many Indigenous evaluations and research have begun to incorporate arts-based methods, where participants reflect their experiences by creating an arts-based product related to the program; whether it is a drawing, painting, photo, video, photovoice, digital storytelling, dance, theater, or written text like a poem or story (Boydell et al., 2012; Hammond et al, 2018). These approaches align with the concept of narrative sovereignty by allowing participants to tell their own stories about their own words – allowing an evaluator to act as a curator to shape the final product through the eyes of the participants.

The preceding literature review informs my research questions as it creates an understanding that program evaluation was not designed for Indigenous peoples and has played a key role in enacting colonial policies and programs. While many Indigenous models of program evaluation exist, few of these consider whether program evaluation *should* fit into Indigenous worldviews, and whether there is an alternative. This thesis project engages three extremely knowledgeable Indigenous researchers to better understand their views on what is missing from existing approaches to evaluating Indigenous programs, and what practical realities of program planning and evaluation they experience.

Chapter 3: Methods

Research questions

Given the increasingly technical nature of evaluation as it strives to defend its value and legitimacy, and the persistent challenge of actioning Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination, the purpose of this research was to better understand how the evaluation of Indigenous programs that operate within non-Indigenous institutions can be completed in a way that appropriately represents the program, from an Indigenous perspective. Thus, a key area of research was to learn from the specific processes of Indigenous informed evaluation. As demonstrated in the preceding section, while mainstream evaluation has attempted to mitigate the challenge by developing participatory evaluation methodologies, these are not entirely sufficient to adequately represent Indigenous programs (Cram, 2016). Meanwhile, Indigenous approaches to research have become more prominent; and it is becoming more pressing to consider how to apply them to evaluation. To better understand these areas, I considered the following research questions:

- What constitutes Indigenous program evaluation?
- How can program evaluation successfully represent an Indigenous program like the Indigenous Star Knowledge Project?

Methodology and relationships

As part of my methodology, I asked these questions and peripheral context questions directly to three individuals, Wilfred Buck, Dr. Shawn Wilson, and Anita Tenasco, who had a close relationship to the Indigenous Star Knowledge Project (ISKP) and would be able to speak to approaches to evaluation in relation to it.

The ISKP originated with the work of Wilfred Buck, known as “the Star Guy”, a member of Opaskwayak Cree Nation, who at the time was a science facilitator at the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Center, and learns and teaches about Indigenous scientific knowledge through study and storytelling about the stars and night sky, through ceremony, observation, and discussion. Wilfred Buck was a co-curator of Ingenium Canada’s Museum of Science and Technology’s exhibit “One Sky, Many Astronomies”. This exhibit led to discussion about bringing together Indigenous people from around the world who are connected to Indigenous and non-Indigenous star and sky knowledge and stories to share in ceremony together. As the idea for this project came together, I was engaged as a research assistant to help compile its vision and hopes into a funding application to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), as well as a few other funding sources. I was encouraged to join Wilfred Buck in person as part of this process at his event, *Tipis and Telescopes*, in East Selkirk Manitoba, to better understand what this funding needed to accomplish. This process led to the development of the Indigenous Star Knowledge Project, which originally focused on a 3-day event including ceremony, networking for Indigenous star knowledge keepers and scholars, discussions about the stars and night sky, planetarium exercises, and a handful of public events.

Throughout the process, Ingenium built relationships with the Anishinabe Algonquin Nation, upon whose territory the Museum of Science and Technology is hosted and determined the importance of ensuring the Algonquin Nation’s participation in the work. Once funding for this work was secured, the COVID-19 pandemic forced significant changes to the approach, requiring gathering in person to be put on hold. Ultimately, as the pandemic endured, to ensure funding could be utilized, the project shifted from an in person gathering to a series of online

workshops timed with the solstices and equinox, in September 2020, December 2020, March 2021, and in June 2021. Each of these sessions was recorded.

One of the primary keynote speakers of this virtual series was Cree scholar Shawn Wilson, author of *Research is Ceremony*, also from Opaskwayak Cree Nation. Shawn Wilson had been approached by Wilfred Buck with the question, “How do you create new star knowledge?” which he reflected on in his presentation. Wilson spoke with his colleague Stuart Barlo, from the Yuin nation from the far south coast of New South Wales, Australia. Other speakers included many of the participants meant to gather in ceremony in the original plan; Annette S. Lee, Nancy Maryboy, David Begay, Anita Tenasco, Joan Tenasco, Chris Cannon, Yasmin Catricheo, and others.

Meanwhile, the Education Department of Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg, with the direction of Anita Tenasco, lead a parallel process around what became known as the Algonquin Star Knowledge Project, where they explored star stories and hired a community member to document Algonquin language words for star and night sky knowledge. These three key contributors to the Indigenous Star Knowledge Project, Wilfred Buck, Anita Tenasco, and Shawn Wilson, ultimately agreed to be interviewed as part of this thesis work, after the end of the project.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, these interviews occurred virtually in approximately one-hour individual sessions. These semi structured interviews were intended to capture the perspectives of Indigenous peoples who were knowledgeable about Indigenous programs and/or evaluation and who were connected to the Indigenous Star Knowledge Symposium. High level interview questions were developed; however, the intent was for interviews to be as fluid and

conversational as possible, allowing the topic to be explored from any lens the interviewee brought forward. Pre-determined questions included:

- How do you know that an Indigenous program is successful?
- What barriers do you see to the success of Indigenous programs?
- If you were to conduct an evaluation of the Indigenous Star Knowledge Project, how would you do this?
 - Who should conduct the evaluation?
 - What steps would you want them to take? How would they gather information?
 - What information would you want to collect and represent?
 - How would you want the results to be presented?

The interviewees are all leaders in their fields, and all the information they provided helped construct an understanding of how a program like the Indigenous Star Knowledge Program should be evaluated from their perspective. Along with the literature review, this formed the basis for the “wise practices” this thesis aimed to identify.

As the Indigenous Star Knowledge project progressed and while I attended virtual sessions, I developed most of the literature review around Indigenous program evaluation, adding critical components as they became apparent to me through learning in other areas. The intent of this review was to help situate commentary from interviews and survey data in the broader context of literature on Indigenous knowledge, program development and delivery, program evaluation, and existing methodologies and approaches for evaluating Indigenous programs.

In keeping with Wilson’s (2008) approach to Indigenous research methodologies, the project was intended to be approached as ceremony and involve appropriate protocols and development of relationships. This informed my approach to selecting interview participants with whom I had

established a certain level of relationship. As the research required developing a relationship with the knowledge itself as well, it was not possible to predetermine what precise steps would need to be taken. Rather, the research unfolded as it could, following what Shawn Wilson describes in an online discussion about how to undertake Indigenous research where he discusses digital formats for ceremony (2022), as an important journey to prepare physically, mentally, and spiritually to enter the space where you are able to participate in ceremony (2022).

Throughout this process, it was important to me to continue engaging with Indigenous programs and program evaluation outside of the context of this research and associated graduate courses. This led to participation in several other projects as a research assistant which grew my understanding of several of the concepts described here. Working with Pierrot Ross-Tremblay, Innu Essipit and Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Intellectual Traditions and Self-Determination, I learned about applying the concepts of narrative sovereignty, sovereignty, and self-determination to Indigenous knowledge revitalization, while simultaneously practicing writing about these topics in a manner that would appeal to large research funders. With the University of PEI, I helped design the beginning of a program evaluation for the Certificate in Educational Leadership for Nunavut program, where I grappled with application of mainstream program evaluation approaches and methods to ensure I appeared “professional” and met UPEI standards, in a context where Inuit knowledge and worldviews should be centralized.

Finally, I was hired by Right to Play Indigenous Programs along with Indigenous Researcher and Six Nations Elected Council Member, Michelle Bomberry, to develop a high-level Indigenous evaluation approach for Right to Play. This project taught me more about how Indigenous worldviews can take space in non-profit organizations, and about the interplay of sovereignty, self-determination, and Indigenous methodologies with program development and

evaluation. None of these experiences are directly addressed in this research, but they are part of the collectivity of experiences that influence how I interpret, contextualize, and relate information in articles and heard in interviews.

Data analysis

This thesis ultimately describes three “wise practices” that emerged from considering three conversations in the context of literature on program evaluation and Indigenous methodologies. To establish these, I transcribed each interview manually several months after the original conversation, re-acquainting myself with the discussion with an evolved understanding of the context. I read through each conversation until the key messages were apparent to me, letting them tell their own story rather than trying to fit them within a box of what program evaluation meant to me. I organized these messages to bring together points from each conversation that aligned with one another, establishing key themes. It was important to me to keep as much as possible of the messages from each conversation intact, without manipulating the content too much from my own lens. As such, the results section shares large portions of transcribed interviews, preserving as much as possible of Shawn, Wilfred, and Anita’s voices.

Ethical Considerations

In keeping with Wilson’s assertion that “research is ceremony” (2008), the same physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual processes used in ceremony to enter into relationship intentionally with others and with spirit were applied to this research. The ethical dimensions of this thesis have been primarily rooted Indigenous protocol: I must actively determine what knowledge I am able to collect, analyze, and share, what stories I can hear and retell, who I can speak to, and what is the process by which I can do so with respect and accountability. The

construction of the entire research project must be ceremony, with the understanding of protocols intended to help it begin, progress, and end, as well as to appropriately engage everyone involved. In addition, as Elder Mac Saulis explained to me when he visited my former classrooms to present to my students (2018), whoever happens to be in circle, is meant to be in circle. With this as a foundational perspective, I wanted to ensure my research was guided by “who is meant to be in circle” rather than primarily by my own design. The participants in the conversation needed to become apparent at the right time, rather than by force through my own direction.

Throughout my learning of social/helping work and education, several traditional teachings were important ethical foundations. Primarily, the Seven Grandfather Teachings, honesty, truth, respect, bravery, love, humility, and wisdom have shaped my practice and approach to research, choice of methods, and overall perspective. These teachings have also been utilized in several contexts and documents to provide ethical guidance. One such document, developed by Noojmowin Teg Health Center (2003) on Manitoulin Island, provides guidance for “ethical and culturally appropriate community-based research within the First Nations communities in the Manitoulin area” (p. 5). These guidelines are supported by similar literature, including “*A Regional Model for Ethical Engagement: The First Nations Research Ethics Committee on Manitoulin Island*” (Marr et al., 2007). As a member of Whitefish River First Nation on Manitoulin Island, I consider this guidance to be important to me even if I am not conducting research on the island, nor truly conducting community-based research. Noojmowin Teg, through engaging with community and establishing a working committee of six Indigenous health organizations in the area, established a detailed approach to “work within the spirit of the seven grandfather teachings in all aspects of the research process” (p.10).

These teachings also permeate more recently developed institutional ethical frameworks such as the Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS 2, 2018) - Chapter 9: Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples of Canada. This document is also referenced in the Noojmowin Teg (2001) document as well as by McGregor et al. (2018) in their anthology on Indigenous Research as a critical document to utilize when conducting Indigenous-focused research. However, as the document itself states, the TCPS 2, Chapter 9, “is not intended to override or replace ethical guidance offered by Indigenous peoples themselves”. As the ISKP had an international focus (as many of the ISKP co-creators and webinar participants are in international Indigenous locations), it addressed high level concepts shared among international participants in the ISKP. As such, there is no formal requirement to obtain widespread engagement from a single community its leadership, nor for multiple members of one community to be involved.

The TCPS 2 (2018) states that:

First Nations, Inuit, and Métis persons, whether or not they identify as members of an Indigenous community, enjoy freedom of expression, as does any citizen. They are free to consent and to participate in research projects that they consider to be of personal or social benefit. If the project is unlikely to affect the welfare of the individuals’ communities, local community engagement is not required under this Policy (Chapter 9, Article 9.2.5)

However, it is important to ensure that statements made by participants are not analysed as if they were a reflection of their community’s voice in the context of this project. When sharing their opinions, most Indigenous peoples are very clear that it reflects their perspective, not that of all their community members nor their nation, and certainly not the perspective of all Indigenous peoples. In addition, it is important that communities named in this thesis are made aware of it and have an opportunity to provide feedback, in this case, through the three interviewees.

Finally, it will be important to consider the time and contribution of those involved in the process, and to compensate it appropriately. While this may include the offering of tobacco and

gifts and may also include an honorarium, my commitment to the time others have offered me is that I share their messages accurately and in a good way. Ultimately, the best summary of my ethical guidance came from Elder Mac Saulis, who I consider a mentor; when I produce something like this, I want to be certain that my family, community, loved ones, and ancestors are proud of the work and approve of the content. This is what guides my approach throughout.

Limitations

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Indigenous Star Knowledge Symposium was delayed, then moved to a virtual format. The conversations about the program occurred in this context, where the original intent of the program was unable to move forward. COVID-19 created a context for Indigenous programs that was different from the norm and made key elements of Indigenous programs, like ceremony, difficult to maintain. This created a gap in what information and experiences I was able to collect. In addition, COVID-19 and family commitments prevented me from attending ceremony after the first Tipis and Telescopes event in 2019.

When I contacted Wilfred to request an interview with him, he agreed, but also sent me a list of Indigenous methodologies for research, that included dreams, travel, observation/prior knowledge, storytelling/sharing circles, visiting/personal reflection, ceremony (formal and informal), art creation/dance/song/music, etc. (Buck, 2022) – these methods did not include Zoom interviews. Although I have become confident in the key messages of this thesis, I still imagine this as the start of a journey in which, as taught by Wilfred, Shawn, and Anita, I am not an expert in any way – and ceremony will be part of the experience of learning more on program evaluation moving forward. During the pandemic, Shawn Wilson began to speak to whether it

was possible to “digitize” ceremony (2021), a conversation which will likely continue. This conversation may continue, and shape approaches differently in the future, but for now, I consider that I will need to continue to attend ceremony in person.

Chapter 4: Conversations (Results)

This section shares key messages from conversations with Anita Tenasco, Shawn Wilson, and Wilfred Buck. My approach to sharing this content is intentionally narrative, focusing on telling the story as it was told to me, rather than piecing apart content into deconstructed, disconnected ideas. Although organized into broad themes, it was important to keep as much context as possible around each statement. Additionally, while comments are grouped for “analysis”, many of them touch upon all aspects of evaluation wholistically in one section. I have selected where to relate them, but in most cases, they also fit within the other “wise practices”, as they are all interconnected. As such, most statements are shared in full, to ensure that my interpretation remains only one perspective, and that their commentary is not dissected to the point where others cannot see the full picture as they intended to share it. Each conversation brought forward important themes aligned with literature. These themes include Indigenous voices in relation to the voices of organizations, the role and positioning of the evaluator, and the application of Indigenous approaches and methodologies.

Theme 1: Indigenous voices versus the voices of organizations

Much of the discussion with Anita and Wilfred included reflection on the relationships between Indigenous people and non-Indigenous organizations, highlighting ways in which Indigenous community voices are often erased within these relationships. Indigenous community members and Elders are extremely aware that when projects begin and are planned without them,

the labor necessary to redirect in the right way is significant. Anita shared that her Nation carefully weighs the choice to become involved:

When a project starts without us at the beginning, the Anishinabe Algonquin, there are many questions, and then Elders and knowledge keepers will ask, do we even bother getting involved now? This has started without us, and there's already something on the wall, there's already something online, it's like "okay this didn't get off on the right foot, do we get involved now midway?"

Anita spoke to an event that occurred where a non-Indigenous researcher presented a session discussing the Algonquins of Barriere Lake. Anita attended the event hoping that there would be someone from the Algonquins of Barriere Lake present, but there wasn't. Anita then had to carry the burden of speaking out on behalf of her Nation in the virtual meeting chat box, asking "Why isn't someone from the Barriere Lake community present? Why can't their voice be a part of this presentation?" She explained:

We prefer not to have researchers, writers, speak about us without us present. If they ask and no one in the Nation can participate, no worries – if the community agrees, but – make that step of reaching out to us and trying to have our voices in the presentation. I think it's important that when research takes place in our communities or when it's about us, the process has to be guided by our people. And they'll establish what that means: going out on the land, having a feast together, the researcher working in our community schools or in the heart of our community, reaching out to our peoples who live away from community to get differing perspectives, all of that, like it's a real balance.

Wilfred shared his own experience with this phenomenon any time he has worked with a non-Indigenous organization:

It's the same thing right across the board, doesn't matter what it is, government or organizations, they have an idea, and they have the money for it, and then they decide to go and speak with the grassroots people that are involved when everything is in place. I think people are coming from totally different perspectives. For myself, I always wanted to do things like, you have to start with ceremony, that's the first thing you've got to do, it doesn't matter what it is, you start with ceremony and inform your ancestors what it is that you want to do, what it is that you're hoping to do, and then you follow through as best you can. With [organizations] it's more of sitting in a boardroom and okay this and that and go for funding. Initially when grassroots people have an idea and they want to go through with it, they don't worry about funding. Start it, initialize it, and then, the Elders always told us that if you want something, do it, and if it's meant to be, it will happen. Once you get organizations involved then you have to start jumping through all kinds of hoops.

Anita echoed the experience Wilfred shared, where organizations or institutions reach out to her and her community when they have already set out a path for the program or project, sometimes having completed several critical steps before reaching out. Disregarding sovereignty and self-determination by removing agency from her community, this affects their desire to be involved, as shared by Anita:

I think if the project is open to making some serious changes where the voices and perspectives of the Nation will be present in the design or the final product or the outcome, I think that's where the decision is to participate. But if it's sort of like, we're done this aspect, the visible part of it, the display, the exhibit, the text or whatever, and we can offer this, often the Elders will say oh, well never mind, the portion that we really care about is done. It's like the decision has already been designed, and it's in process, but you can

come and speak at a conference. No. It's important to get to the Nation in which the project is situated, acknowledge those Nations, the knowledge keepers of the territory, get to them early, really early. Don't even put more than 10 words on a paper, have a conversation, build the project with them. Sit down in community and talk about the project, funding, and what those outcomes are going to look like, and then the people will say, we want the meetings, the majority of them held in our community as much as possible; we want our people hired to write, to draw, to create design, to create websites, to cater, to give our peoples opportunity in that way, we also want to travel to the location of the exhibit or the project or whatever the activity is, we want to engage with others in our Nation, we don't want to work with our community alone. We're a Nation here; help us build that unity, help us work as a Nation, so help us invite others, to have differing perspectives and to have differences present, and ensuring that there is a good mix of Elders, fluent speakers, women, men, and youth, post-secondary students, that's important too. And then have these review sessions, right? So, you build the project, communicate where it's at in terms of what funding was attained or maybe funding wasn't attained and you have to try again, because that's happened too, and then as the work is moving along, don't just run off with the funding and then work with two or three people and not come back to the group as a whole to inform them how things are unfolding with the project.

Speaking about challenges in aligning worldviews throughout the Indigenous Star Knowledge Project, Wilfred Buck described how lack of early, consistent, open, and collaborative engagement and a focus on organizational goals can create an unresolvable divergence in approach:

It seems like for the people that were connected to any type of organization, it's much different from the people who aren't connected to the organizations. There are two distinct streams there. As time went on (in the ISKP) we came to realize those two, each stream had their own ideas and they wanted to go their own separate ways. So, at the end we said, fine, you can do whatever you want to do, and we'll just continue what we're doing.

Wilfred also described that without experiencing something directly, you cannot understand it enough to write about it:

You have to be there to experience it. You have to be present, because we're talking about wholism, and if you're sitting in some office in the city somewhere writing about an idea somebody had on the land, the two don't meet. You have to be on the land, you have to be with those people. One good example would be all these land-based education processes that are going on right now, that have been initiated since the pandemic, and how they're going about funding. They have to invite organizations, especially governmental organizations, in the educational process, to come and see what it is they're doing. But the people have to go there, and they have to see, and they have to partake in whatever is happening there to understand.

Conversations also included thoughts on the ways in which funding reporting requirements affect the ability to reflect on the program from an Indigenous lens. Anita Tenasco, as the director of Education for Kitigan Zibi Anishinabek, is frequently required to report on programs that her department has received funding for. These requirements are time consuming and typically don't correlate to what Anita and community members would want to know about their programming. Another example of the ways in which the narratives are focused on, and selected by, organizations and institutions and their viewpoints was shown when Anita shared:

In my 28-year career so far, there has never been a tool or a way for me as a leader to communicate with my people efficiently, respectfully, in a user-friendly way, as projects are moving along, as work is moving along. And I've told government this, there are many databases, tools that I need to complete to show what did we do, how many participated, what were the outcomes, what did I spend, but they are not user friendly, I cannot share the tools easily and they don't make sense and oftentimes they're collecting data that I don't care about, this is not what I care about. I've said, can we build these tools together? I'll even bring community members together to ask them what they want to know about the initiative, the project, the use of the funds. We want to be transparent; we want to be accountable, but we also want to give people information that's valuable to them, and that's meaningful, and that builds conversations in our homes and in our communities. But to date, in 28 years, that's never happened. I would like to be a part of a project where let's say 4 months in I could use a tool – where I can openly share the progress in the project, and keep informing people, we're in this project, and the work is ongoing, and here's what's happening to date, join us in this work if possible, and here's the outcomes, but throughout, because often, I'll announce something in the beginning and I'll say please come and participate, and then meetings happen and only much later I'll say okay here's kind of what we did in this period and people are like "what? I don't even remember this." The timing is too long but I don't have a tool to actively keep them informed as we go along. I am willing to share what we spend or to report on the activities but to date there hasn't been an organized way to do this, that was all on me. It's "you communicate with your people about your project" and it's like wow, I have multiple projects on the go, I'd be steady just writing about projects. Let's say when we work with

the Ottawa Art Gallery, I'm now asking them to find someone to develop a newsletter or a tool, or a one-pager on what we just did or what's ongoing in relation to Indigenous peoples and send it to me. I will read it. I can recommend changes and whatnot, but I'm not going to do your work as an institution to communicate with my people to share what you're doing. I have a few projects or institutions doing that right now. But you see, they've never done it. They're like, well, we're speaking to our project partners, and it's like – no! “Well, we're speaking to the people at the center, or the project” and it's like no, it's more than just the partners who are on paper. You are working with a community and a Nation, and you have to report back to the people. So, they're slowly learning that and they're like well we'll work on it on our end.

Similarly, rather than support local, individual investigations, Wilfred has experienced that organizations are looking for replicable, scalable models where they are not necessarily appropriate:

Any governmental structure, they're looking for a formula that you can apply anywhere and everything. It's just like with that concept of the 7 teachings. The education system got hold of it and they're trying to apply it everywhere across the board. It doesn't fit everywhere across the board. Everybody has their own ideas.

Shawn Wilson agreed with the points Anita and Wilfred made about the ways in which organizations and their processes interfere with Indigenous knowledge and Indigenous research and evaluation methodologies. Shawn suggested that following the existing process may be necessary to achieve shorter sighted, but necessary goals of providing resources to community members through funding, noting that this does not, however, speak to the true experience the community has of a program or project:

The tick box type of things are usually the easiest, that's why people use them. Even though they don't actually measure anything useful, the reason they get used is because they're easy because it is really easy to just count attendees. I suppose it depends on what you want to evaluate and what is the purpose of your audience for your evaluation. I think if your audience for your evaluation is funding bodies, then yeah just go ahead and do the simplest thing because it saves time. But if the purpose of your evaluation is more for "what was the community benefit of doing this?" then those things don't really work. Or if your evaluation is more for what knowledge was allowed to emerge through this process then you have to then create an evaluation process that is itself emergent so you can't pre-plan because you don't know. If what you're doing is creating a space for knowledge to emerge, then if you presuppose what that knowledge is going to be then it is going to preclude you from seeing anything new. That's the problem with the program logic model. It is useful to a certain degree if you know exactly what you want to do, or if you know exactly what you want to get, but if you don't know exactly what you want to get, then the program logic doesn't work because you will only get then what linear logic dictates will come out of it.

Anita Tenasco described how she has taken on the responsibility of trying to work with funders to understand how reporting requirements impact their ability to do work that is meaningful to the community. This work requires her to actively maintain relationships with changing staff in leadership positions:

A few years ago, I was having these conversations with SSHRC around all the requirements for SSHRC funding. The director changed and I don't have that same relationship yet with the new head at SSHRC, but I want to continue those conversations

about who takes the lead of projects, how we design projects, how we will account for the funding, and account for the outcomes. Some of my previous conversations with SSHRC were kind of building an understanding about this. Elder Peter Decontie, a sacred fire keeper from our community works with SSRHC regularly, he participates in their meetings and he's a part of – I don't know if he evaluates projects but when they do, he's a part of the conversation. I need to get back in with SSHRC and keep pushing that area.

Anita's work around influencing "how (organizations and institutions) think about working with us and reporting back, and being accountable" is not only useful, but also necessary for her and her community. Anita explained that many organizations tend to argue that they have communicated well with the communities because they've reached out to her and given her information or sent her emails, working through who they see as authorities or staff they can coordinate with. Anita disagrees, explaining, "I'm not Kitigan Zibi, and there are a lot of people here who want to know what's happening". In Indigenous communities, the whole community is often affected by a project or program, and being involved fully and treated as a full partner is enacting sovereignty and self-determination.

Theme 2: Role and positioning of the evaluator

All three conversations included discussion on the role of evaluators, how they relate to the wider power dynamics around program planning, voice, and agency, and how they position themselves in the stories they tell about programs. Anita Tenasco discussed her understanding of expertise in the realm of research and evaluation:

Are you an expert after you've carried out your research and published your work, and you're studying, and you have other publications? In the Indigenous world, you're not, you're still learning. And maybe you have even more questions after you've finished. You

think you've gathered all this knowledge; you've put it on paper, you've published it, and now you're like "woah, I don't know so much in many more areas than I even thought." And even the idea of an expert, I will say, in First Nations culture, it's not used widely right, "she's the expert" because everyone has their gifts, everyone has their talents in a few areas, and someone who is an Elder or an expert or a knowledge keeper in one area for one person may be someone else – you may reach out to another person.

This resonated with Wilfred's experience. He stated:

It's the whole concept of that power structure. Even the concept of who is in charge, it's not a big deal for grassroots people, who is in charge, just as long as the process keeps moving. That's what spirit tells us.

Shawn Wilson spoke about the evaluator's individual skills and perspectives and the simple recognition of the differences this will bring to their approach, rather than determining which approach is better than another:

I don't know if there's a specific should or should not, but just a recognition that different people who evaluate something are going to get different outcomes, because *you* are the evaluation tool, and different tools are useful for different things, so don't expect to get the same outcomes from two different people doing an evaluation. That's not saying one is going to be better than the other, they're just going to be different. That's a different stance on it, I don't care who does it but when you do it, it's going to be different than when I do it, and none of it is going to be exactly the same. If I'm telling you a story, I need to shape the story to be, or judge what story you are at the point where you are ready to listen to, or where it's going to have some impact on you or even stick in your imagination so you can find out what it means for you in 5 or 10 years, but that's going

to be different if I'm telling you a story than if I'm telling my son a story, or if I'm telling my dad a story. The audience of your evaluation story is going to be totally different, I think. If you want to tell an evaluation story to Wilfred and say, "this is what I think came out of this project", you're going to shape that totally differently than if you are talking to SSHRC. And that's fine and it might be that you tell two different stories that say the same thing but in totally different ways.

Shawn also discussed the role of the evaluator in an Indigenous context, where telling the program story is the priority, and the evaluator becomes the artist who weaves the story together, rather than someone who simply sorts and organizes:

I think even if you're thinking of a story as a tapestry and you're getting strands of the story from all these different people, then your job as an evaluator is to weave it all into a tapestry that has all the strands in it and it's taking it into something that someone else can look at. (For a non-Indigenous evaluator), what they would do is collect all those threads of story and they would say here are all the yellow threads, here are all the brown threads, here are all the green threads.

In Shawn's understanding of research and program evaluation, there is not necessarily a single valid approach to any study; rather, any lens can be applied to any question and provide value. More important is the recognition that you are applying that lens and clarity around how you are applying it, as he further describes:

It's important to recognize that that is themselves as an evaluation tool, their passions, and their abilities. Sometimes you can apply a gender analysis to anything that happens in the world if that's what's important to you at the moment. Someone else might apply a power lens to something because that's what's important to them at the moment. Someone

else might apply something that's like an economic analysis around socio-economic status and it's the same thing so you can apply those anywhere and yeah, they're all valid and they're all good. Just because you applied a gender analysis on something doesn't mean you can't also put an economic analysis on it.

Theme 3: Indigenous approaches and methodologies

A question that arose in conversation with all three interviewees was whether program evaluation was even appropriate in an Indigenous context. In each conversation, we explored the purpose and use of program evaluation, as well as perspectives various people may have. Anita brought forward important commentary on the term evaluation and how triggering and uncomfortable it can be for Indigenous people:

You know, my mom is a Residential School survivor, Indian Day School survivor, and my dad too. He's an Indian Day School Survivor, was sent to Montreal, and they spoke to me about the word evaluation, and how scary that is for our people, often, even that term, program evaluation. We're going to evaluate our work, we're going to evaluate how this unfolded, and they're like "you know, we failed so many evaluations according to school officials, government, health, in the past, that people hear the term evaluation and they're like 'oh, I'm not going to that meeting, I don't want to do that'.

Anita spoke to the ways in which Elders in her community sometimes connect with the work she does because there isn't additional pressure to speak on a particular topic:

Some Elders were like, I joined this circle because I want to see others, I'm willing to learn, I want to come and have a tea and some snacks, and maybe I won't even contribute actively in the discussion or the work at hand, but they are present, like you said.

Rather than feeling under accomplished when this occurs, evaluators should understand that a participant can be someone who is simply present, in person or in a supporting or spiritual role, rather than someone who is producing a tangible output. Anita also reflected the same observation related by Roberts, Butler, and Green (2016) that often, Indigenous knowledge is already used in Indigenous communities in an evaluation and research manner, but that community members don't perceive their ways of doing things to be "evaluation":

A lot of our people will say, I don't evaluate, I don't reflect on a project in terms of only how much – how many meetings did we have and what did we produce. How did I feel? How did the project make me feel? And that's hard to put on paper or document or to blend into a report, in terms of "my pride has increased", "I connected with others", "I built knowledge", "I shared knowledge", "I crafted something", "I designed something", a lot of it is based on feeling; how the project made you feel.

In the same mindset, Wilfred Buck and Shawn Wilson illustrated the relationship between program evaluation and science, understood through the connection between Indigenous science and Western science. As when Shawn discussed evaluators with different approaches to weaving together or organizing and sorting strands of a narrative, Wilfred described the Western approach's preference for compartmentalization, where Indigenous science perceives things as connected and holistic:

I've been doing a lot of Zooms with people from all over the place and through that whole process I'm always struck by the vast chasm there is between our way of doing things and the academia, and the whole process they have about assessing and evaluating and things like that. I always try to equate it to the scientific method, with its various steps, and then how do we go about coming to finding knowledge with our methodologies. The

thing with that is that, just like you mentioned, it's always holistic, it has to be holistic all the time. The reason it has to be holistic all the time is because we're talking about *ahcâhk*, we're talking about spirit. And then, we have to emphasize the fact that when we say *ahcâhk* and it translates to English as "spirit", it doesn't mean that. It's only a portion of what it means. It means energy, it means light, and it means something aesthetic, because when you mention spirit in English right away the image comes up of, they're talking about ghosts. When we speak of spirit, we don't mean ghost. The very basic understanding about that is energy, energy and light. That's the very basis of everything that we do. It includes spirit, it includes energy, it includes light. All those things can't become compartmentalized, because they're everywhere, and we're surrounded by it, and we have to include it in everything that we do because there's repercussions, there's responsibilities that will reverberate not only through our reality but throughout time.

Wilfred then spoke to how this worldview influences Indigenous methodologies that apply to sciences, including to program evaluation:

Just use the basic understanding of the scientific method. Observation. Everybody goes through that process of observation. From there, you're able to formulate some type of hypothesis, some type of predictor of whatever it is you're observing, and also use prior knowledge. And the thing I try to include, because everybody does this, is dream. Everybody dreams. For our people that's very, very important. Because it incorporates that energy, that light, that spirit world, and that's our connection to that. Even Einstein dreamt. Every scientist on the face of this Earth dreams. Whether we acknowledge it or not, those dreams give us ideas, they give them direction, they give them hope, they give them guidance.

Shawn Wilson explained that in considering what makes up Indigenous worldviews, there isn't necessarily a dichotomy of Indigenous and non-Indigenous approaches, but rather that Indigenous science simply expands beyond what Western science believes and does:

I always tell people; I think that science is just a system behind your knowledge. There is Indigenous science, and it just has a different system than western knowledge systems. But I always tell Indigenous people, I think that Indigenous science is like this (a big circle), and western science is like this (a small circle inside the larger circle), it's just a subset of Indigenous science.

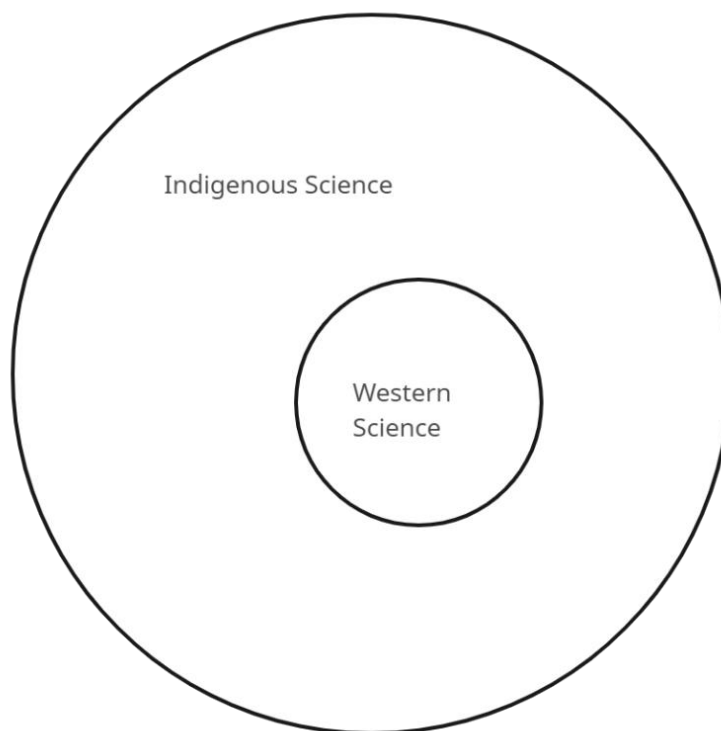


Figure 3: Researcher's depiction of Shawn Wilson's description of the positionality of Western and Indigenous Science

Shawn explained further how this understanding of Western and Indigenous methodologies applies to evaluation, in which all tools available are useful for different purposes:

We still use western science and all their methods and methodologies, but we're not limited by them, because those are very limited, and we can see the big picture. So, I say yes, western science methods are incredibly good and incredibly powerful for what they're designed to do. So maybe it's also a way of thinking of evaluation, it's like "this is Indigenous evaluation (large circle)", here's western evaluation (small circle). Sure, we can use it, and yes this is incredibly useful, like program logic models are incredibly useful for certain projects that you want to get a specific outcome out of. And your outcome can be providing food for a family for two weeks. But we have to look at the big picture, so we might need to use different systems of thinking and different systems of logic, different systems of what we're going to try to achieve. Trying to see more of those connections in the big picture sense of the word. All those relationships and interrelationships between things is the goal. So, it might help you then to think of it that way, that yeah, western evaluation models are fine, they do the job that they need to do, but I'm looking at something that's a whole lot bigger and that's just one subset. And western people don't like thinking of themselves as a subset of Indigenous knowledge.

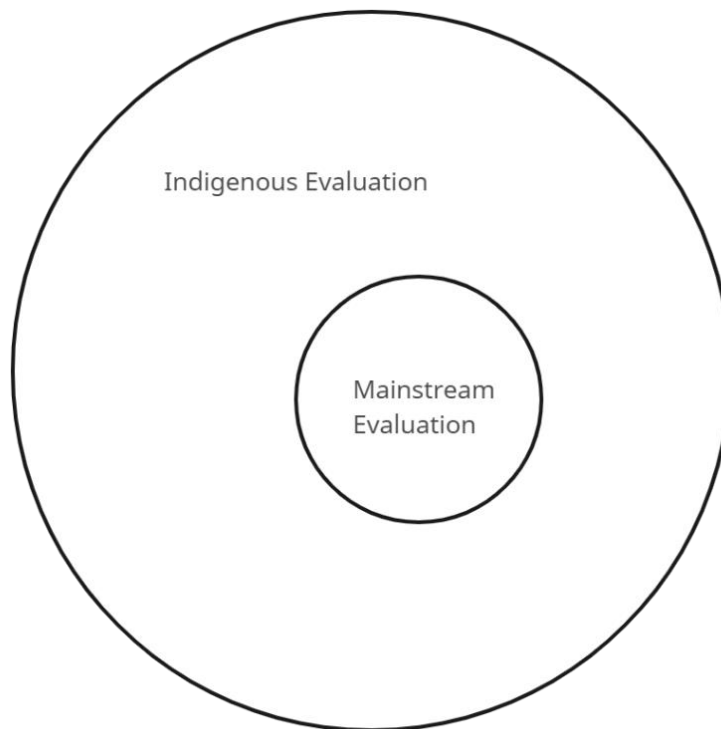


Figure 4: Researcher's depiction of Shawn Wilson's description of the positionality of Mainstream and Indigenous evaluation

Anita described her experience of conducting Indigenous-based research, outside of any Western institution, in her community, and the challenges of having these approaches recognized by institutions that only acknowledge specific methodologies:

In every project that I've been a part of, the same issues always present themselves. And I know for myself, I'm not working on a PhD in an institution but I'm working on a PhD in my family, in my community, in my Nation, and I'm guiding myself in terms of knowing that the research I carry out means sitting down with a knowledge keeper and not just hammering out questions at them but having that dialogue. You know, what are you willing to share with me today, and I may ask a few questions but I'm not going to be so direct about it and with a book and a pen and whatnot. It's a different approach. How do we merge these approaches when it comes to post secondary education and researchers? But that's always the challenge, institutions in this country – well, in the

world – are very slow to take in these Indigenous methodologies. Even though they reach out to partners, they have Indigenous partners, the partners say the same things quite often, the change is very slow. The colonial structure, top down, and it has to be interviews, and you have to record. We obviously need more publications and published studies to say that this needs to change, because if I were to google it right now, I'll find very little online about it. (...) Obviously for us it's not "go and read 100 books", it's get your hands right in it, if it's making foods or crafting, or like it's really going to be integrating yourself in the culture, in the community, rather than just reading, and being off at an institution, and then attending conferences and speaking.

When asked about methodologies, Anita also described tools she would use to connect with her community:

People love in person, in circle. They want that. But then, to get to more people obviously I need something, because we have a weekly newsletter in our community that goes out to like, 560 homes, and then it goes on our website. If it's about our Nation as a whole, then I send it to our Tribal Council, and they get it out to our communities. So, it could reach 9000 people in our Nation.

For Wilfred, traditional approaches should be embedded in the project planning as well as its evaluation, and these approaches already exist within Indigenous paradigms:

There's got to be some way that you can go about initializing a project but it has to be, you have to begin with spirit, that's the first thing you've got to do is you've got to begin with ceremony and then at points throughout you just refocus on ceremony again, just make sure everybody is, this is what we're here for, this is what we're doing. We're not out here chasing money and we're not out here chasing glory, we're trying to move

knowledge forward. And like you said, it's a good idea to end with ceremony also. I think that was one of the ideas about giveaway, that's your evaluation.

Wilfred's suggestion of a traditional giveaway functioning as an evaluation also points to the centrality of relationships in the evaluation process. Wilson's (2010) work focusing on Indigenous research methodologies also highlights the importance of developing relationships, and establishing appropriate protocols before interacting with (collecting, creating, disseminating) knowledge. Wilfred's comments echo this sentiment:

I think just trying to encourage people to make the connection with the people you're working with at the grassroots level and have them attend a ceremony or two. And that way they have a little more idea what you're talking about when you're talking about spirit and looking at things in a holistic sense.

Anita also described how her approach to selecting projects to move forward or not is tied to existing relationships, and the extent to which a relationship is needed for the work at hand, compared to the extent to which the proponent has built a relationship with communities:

I am working with Carleton University and we're developing a tool for me for my sector, to evaluate projects. Many times my emails are flooded with [emails like] "Hi, we're from Montreal, we're making a small exhibit on Mont Royal and we need translations and we need a small text about your Nation". I had this meeting yesterday, I was like "oh wait a minute, I do not just send you my language by email, I do not just send you a text that I have in my hard drive." We have to know: who are you? What are you doing? So, I have that conversation with them, and they're like "oh, we have a deadline, it's the end of March for this and May for this" and I'm like "what?" the end of March and you're

reaching out to me the end of February? I can't do that to the federal government. And they're like "oh no, we need to reach out for an extension", and I said yes. Because, with COVID we haven't been able to meet face-to-face in a circle, but now that things are opening, we are starting to slowly invite projects to come and meet with the people, come and see, let's have a talk about your project, let's look at what's possible with your timelines. I'm developing a tool where projects or researchers will have to fill out this form that includes my name, here's who I am, what I'm working on, here's my experience, here's how I've worked with Indigenous peoples, and then I can review this form. Sometimes it is quite simple: I'll have a community health center in Ottawa say, "we're naming a garden or we're naming a room and we already acknowledged that our community health center is on your territory, we've reached out to your health center in the past, and they're trying to name one" – like translate something. Something small like that, I'll generally reach out to one or two Elders, can we move forward with this translation, I don't see a problem with it. And if they say yes, I don't call the health center up and we have this big (conversation), I will get it translated. But I will say, once you get your plaque up, or the paintings done with the translation, I want our Elders to go visit. And they're like, oh – yes, yes, yes, we'll feed you and we'll pay the transportation. So, there's some smaller projects that I can get there quickly without many meetings and many weeks, as long as it's reciprocal, like they invite us there, they welcome our people there, and we get to see the outcome.

Part of the discussion in the interviews addressed the use of logic models, the primary tool used in theory-based program evaluations to visualize the logical connections between resources (inputs), activities, outputs, and outcomes of the program. Shawn Wilson

explained that the Star Knowledge project and the conversations and experiences he had with Wilfred Buck and Stuart Barlo in that context lead him to want to think further about the “rules” or protocols we want to set up around creating new Indigenous knowledge, and this was what he would likely focus the rest of his career on. Not only was this an important unexpected (and untracked) outcome of the Star Knowledge Project, but it also led to Shawn providing context on development of protocols for developing knowledge:

It was more about making links between what Wilfred asked me to do, how to create new star knowledge. That made me think it’s not going to be any single observation that we make. One single bit of information isn’t going to matter. We need to think about the process by which we created this knowledge to begin with and how do we expand that knowledge moving forward. Another Elder, Don Adams, asked me to think about *how do we get the land online?* How do we get land-based knowledge to be transmitted in a digital environment which again is a thing around well, it’s going to have protocols again. Because the internet is designed on protocols for how computers communicate with each other, which basically dumbs down to a binary language at the bottom of it. That doesn’t necessarily work with land-based knowledge that requires intuitive thinking, it requires more than linear logic. It is at its fundamental ontological level incompatible with digital, working on the computer. How can we make those things sort of approximately close to each other? Again, it becomes looking at the protocols, so it’s looking at computer protocols rather than looking at human protocols, but we need to understand our human protocols of engaging with knowledge so that we can say the computer protocols are different, but we have to really understand our own protocols first in order to see where the differences are and really be strong in our protocols. I was already thinking about that,

and then how to manage this link between physical space and digital space and spiritual space. That also got me thinking, when the star knowledge project came along – actually star knowledge is exactly the same thing as we’re looking at, these protocols, but it’s like adding in this whole extra layer of looking out at the stars and from that realizing that most of the star stories for most people are really guides for how to behave. They’re interesting stories, they’re more like parables from the Bible that should guide people how to behave. So really, they are setting out our protocols. If we’re clear on the protocols that star stories teach us, then we can apply that to the protocol on the internet. We can apply that to how we do evaluation because it’s all about the protocols. It really helped to clarify in my brain about the protocols and the underlying protocols behind things are really more important than the things themselves.

When asked about applying models such as the medicine wheel, Shawn explained the difficulty of achieving a model that truly captures Indigenous worldviews, and how all frameworks, including funding structures for programs, create restrictions:

I think it is because it’s still going to be a binary choice of does this fit here or there. I think as soon as you put a structure on something it limits what knowledge can emerge from it because knowledge can only emerge within that structure so it leaves out all this other knowledge that’s out there that could have emerged. It’s not necessarily a bad thing, but then it’s more a question of “this structure is closest to what’s going to achieve our ends for the short term”. There’s nothing wrong with short-term thinking I suppose, if your short term thinking is “I want to get funding again”, because I see the long term potential of this so we’ve got to get funding next funding cycle. And sometimes you sacrifice, you have this 1000 plan in mind, but you say, well this is just going to measure

the first step, and that step may be a step backwards so we can switch paths. Maybe it doesn't achieve everything we want, but it might step backward so we can get around something.

When asked the same question, Wilfred agreed that medicine wheels and other similar tools can be used if necessary: "All of those things can be used, all of them are pretty much metaphoric tools for whatever you want to fit in there. (Buck, W., personal interview, March 14, 2022). However, he made it clear that none of these tools are universally transferable to all situations and cautioned against approaches that create a standard replicable model for all.

Shawn spoke about what this environment looks like in practice and how it relates to his perspective on Indigenous program evaluation:

I guess with institutions it's that they always want to measure short-term impact and a lot of the communities don't really care about short-term impact. When you're talking about creating new star knowledge, that's not something short term – that star knowledge took thousands of generations probably to evolve. I tend to say to people now, "what's your thousand-year plan"? Institutions aren't built on thousand-year plans. And then, if everything you're doing is taking a step in the right direction toward achieving that, it takes some of the pressure off having to achieve everything in six months, or three years, or even your own lifetime. But if you know that you've taken steps in the right direction so that your children can carry on or your grandchildren, then that's a good thing. I think then, because of the way Indigenous knowledge is situated, because it's relational, I think then your evaluations need to be more process oriented than outcome oriented, because of that. If you have a thousand-year plan, incremental steps are going to be so small that

they're not going to be measurable in a meaningful way. What you then do is you create, I think it would be more effective to create evaluation tools that say, "Is this heading in the right direction? Are our processes set up so that this can achieve change over 1000 years?" Because if you create a thousand-year plan, you can't say materially what's going to be happening in 1000 years, all you can say is in 1000 years I want to have people in a healthy community that are living in harmony with their environment and we're living on a planet that's self sustaining and sustainable. So that's what for me was really cool and that Star Knowledge Project made me think about, was alright if we're then thinking about creating new knowledge, what rules do we want to set up around knowledge creation so that it's used in a good way.

Shawn also spoke to the outcomes of programs or projects that may not be captured in a logic model and may not be measured by pre-determined metrics. He shared that another of his students is working on a project where stress management techniques are taught to a community, and this student eventually heard an Elder in the community discussing how she practices these techniques. When asked how she learned them, the Elder explained that her granddaughter had watched the researcher's program through the window and taught her grandmother. Shawn suggested that this type of outcome would not be captured in any standard format of evaluation, but if you open the door to asking people in the community questions like "what did you notice?", you may then be able to tell a more fulsome story. Shawn described similar distant, unintended, but clearly interconnected outcomes for the Indigenous Star Knowledge Project, noting that it had an enormous unintended impact on restoration of cultural practices in Australia:

One of the outcomes was in (Stuart Barlo's) Nation they started doing Elder initiations again which they hadn't done for a long time. So, he was one of the first Elders to get initiated in his Nation for a long time. And then when we talked to the local people in the Bundjalung community about it, then we found out the stories about how their initiations stopped, they want to restart their initiation ceremonies for young men because the young men have to be initiated before they can hear the star stories. So, it's like restarting initiation ceremonies for Elders and for teenage boys to become young men. It's like a totally, you would think, unrelated outcome from this, but it has had a massive impact on cultural revitalization amongst the Aboriginal people of East Coast Australia. That's not directly related to star knowledge, but it comes from just asking about star knowledge and asking about "what do you know?".

Anita Tenasco spoke to this experience as well, explaining that practical experiences don't necessarily translate to immediately measurable outcomes, and participation may not look the same in an Indigenous community as institutions expect:

When we see concrete changes on the ground for people in some way, where they access an opportunity, a new resource, an activity on the land, these are concrete things where people say "this was meaningful, I went on the land, my child has a different curriculum that he's accessed at school, or they went to this event" and often the outcomes of a project are not really visible to the majority of our people. It's this project in the sky – Indigenous Star Knowledge – "ooh, I don't know, really, what that is and maybe I won't even get involved because I'm not an expert". They don't believe they have teachings or knowledge in that area. So, it's to break down that barrier. Yes, you are a knowledge keeper. If you hold one story, wow – that's a lot.

For Anita, the tangible differences between institutional expectations and reality came to light clearly when she invited an Elder from her community, Solomon Wawatie, to speak with her in a virtual training session for the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa:

I had Elder Solomon Wawatie who spoke about the pike head teaching about how the Anishinabe Algonquin culture, worldview is present in the bones and cartilage of a pike. So, he shared, and he showed the bones and cartilage and he said you know, ishkode – fire – is present here, so there's some little cartilage that looks like a fire. Butterfly, hope, memengwaa. Through these presentations I think they've increased our understanding of our nation and built our understanding of how university projects or any project for that matter may not obviously be our priority when, Sol, the elder, it was online our sessions, he was in a small cabin in the bush presenting this to us, you know? He's not even in a house, he's in a cabin and he doesn't have running water, he doesn't have a washroom like the rest of us do. So it's like, some basic needs are not met within our Nation especially in certain communities in terms of running water, washrooms, adequately/properly built homes. When we talk about these research projects about the metaphysical, we think "wait a minute, I don't even have running water; I think about other priorities". And I'm not complaining about where he lives, I don't judge, and neither is he, but it's important for people in universities to see.

This experience highlights the privilege of being able to sit down and reflect on, analyse, and deconstruct the epistemology and ontology of daily experiences and teachings, but it also represents the challenge of staff in organizations outside Indigenous communities designing program, funding, and evaluation criteria without having a complete understanding of the communities they will influence.

Finally, Shawn added nuance to this challenge by relating the ways in which Indigenous ways of knowing affect what is seen as a program or project, and what the scope of an evaluation should be. For Shawn, an evaluation, like a traditional story, may not be a finite, enclosed entity, but rather may fit into a broader context and continuity. When asked whether he had answers to the two research questions for this thesis, Shawn Wilson responded:

I don't know. That's a problem that we always have with English because it shapes how we think. I guess for me the "successful Indigenous Program Evaluation" is kind of where we started, it's "how does this connect with everything else", but it's also maybe then creating a story, this is the story of what happened and this is the story of where it might go from here, but it leaves it like a story that's... I'm trying to think most of the Cree stories, you don't have a clear beginning and a clear ending, it's like "here's what happened now, what's going to happen next?" Actually, the only story that I can think of that has an ending is a star story about the end of the universe, so that's the only ending. And it is about when this constellation meets this constellation, that will be the end of time. I don't know if it's talking about the big crunch or whatever, who knows what's going to happen, but it's talking about the end of time. That's the only story I can think of that has an ending. Some of the other stories might but that's the only one I can think of at the top of my brain. Maybe what you're doing is creating a story that tells what happened, tells some of the links that were made and leaves space for those links to carry forward or continue.

Each of these key elements aligns with multiple key findings from literature, which are addressed in the following discussion section.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Wise practices represent locally defined wisdom as it relates to a certain area of focus. Differing from “best” practices, an attempt at defining the one and only best way to do something, these are intended to offer considerations that are meaningful and relevant to those who define them (Calliou & Wesley-Esquimaux, 2010). The conversations with Shawn Wilson, Anita Tenasco, and Wilfred Buck brought forward their own wisdom and expertise based on experiences with program planning and evaluation in their communities and communities of research and practice. Each theme that was discussed in the three conversations correlates to a recommended approach supported by their experiences and knowledge as well as key messages from the literature, leading to three clear wise practices for Indigenous program evaluation that this discussion section describes:

- 1) Center Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination through narrative sovereignty
- 2) Consider the relationship, role, and identity of the evaluator, and
- 3) Apply Indigenous approaches, methodologies, and analysis.

Wise Practice 1: Center Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination through narrative sovereignty

Narrative sovereignty is at the core of enacting sovereignty and self-determination. Who is in control of someone’s narrative – the stories we tell about them – is ultimately in control of them and their outcomes. One’s personal stories about themselves, and how they “narrate” their experiences, plays an important role in wellbeing (Denborough et al, 2004; Rafaely and Goldberg, 2020). For Indigenous peoples, taking back the narrative about themselves is an important step in decolonization (Smith, 1999). As long as most narratives about Indigenous peoples are produced outside their communities and Nations, they will undoubtedly include

biases and inaccuracies, each one pulling a strand of sovereignty away and leaving power and authority in the hands of organizations, institutions, and governments (Ross-Tremblay 2020).

Anita and Wilfred both expressed that projects and programs are frequently developed by institutions and organizations without much direct input from the communities they impact. In rare circumstances, this may work well; if there is a history of the organization and its staff (without frequent staff turnover) have built longstanding reciprocal relationships with the public they serve, it is possible that these community members have influenced the perspectives of the staff to the extent that program design would take into consideration an appropriate history of engagement, even if no direct engagement is conducted for the purpose of program design. For most Indigenous communities, the relationship with organizations is neither longstanding nor reciprocal enough for it to be possible to genuinely center community perspectives without direct, frequent conversation and collaboration. As Anita explained, this must occur with the entire community, or at least with representatives chosen by the community for this purpose, as each individual, even those working in professional roles, do not speak for the entire community when they interact with organizations and institutions.

As long as a program is planned and evaluated by external parties, an Indigenous community's experience of it will be primarily influenced by the (dominant) narrative of the organization; how it views itself and its role in "providing" services to Indigenous communities, and what goals and values it has set for itself. Program planning in most organizations and institutions involves staff (or volunteers), especially those in leadership positions, determining what programs or projects will exist, and overseeing what activities occur under their organization. Often, the success of these organizations is tied to how closely their activities follow a pre-determined strategic plan, with little space for input – especially from stakeholders

or community members - after it is designed. Organizations and funders influence what makes up an Indigenous program because they hold the purse strings and, as Wilfred described, because they have their own perspectives on what needs to be achieved and how that achievement should be represented. When developing programs with community partners, as discussed with Anita and Wilfred, they often seek input after the program has already been designed, and even after it has been funded and become operational.

For Indigenous peoples engaged in projects or programs housed in non-Indigenous organizations, their own voices can get lost within that organization's narrative, even when supporting staff are well meaning. Organizational culture is designed to create unity of focus and feel, where belonging to an organization leads staff to operate in similar ways to one another, ultimately sustaining the organization's approach, vision, mission, and goals. When non-Indigenous organizations set out to support or design Indigenous programs, it can be extremely confronting to divert from this vision, even when doing so would be necessary to center Indigenous worldviews. Even staff who genuinely wish to act as allies can find it exceptionally challenging to stray from their organization's expectations of what constitutes an activity, process, or approach that aligns with their perceived "best practices".

Ultimately, this organizational culture is designed to create alignment and buy-in across all staff and sustains an intentional bias in perspective in favor of the organization's vision and mission. The narrative the organization has about itself influences the narrative the staff will have about its programs, and staff may find it difficult to step outside this narrative to understand how change is possible, and how Indigenous approaches might tell an entirely different story. When the focus of an evaluation is on how the program meets the organization's goals, which happens both when an organization hosts a project or program or when it funds it, the focus

remains on the organization and its narrative rather than on the narrative, told in its own words, of the Indigenous community or Nation involved.

Evaluating programs is heavily connected to the planning of the program. For Indigenous communities, this means both processes are dependent on how closely the community was engaged throughout, and how closely the evaluator was connected to the project. Where mainstream organizations would prefer a third-party, disconnected evaluator (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2021), this may not be the top choice for an Indigenous community that prefers working with an evaluator who has a strong relationship with them and the program and knows it, and them, well. Additionally, if the planning and funding are rooted in another organization's worldviews, no evaluation process will be able to supersede this influence.

Even if planners, evaluators, and researchers have spent time in communities, speaking on their behalf is not considered appropriate – both as a cultural expectation and from the standpoint of ensuring the message shared is accurate. Without direct experience, it is extremely difficult to speak on behalf of something, to imagine how it operates and how it should operate, and what outcomes it could and should have. Non-Indigenous organizations, institutions, and staff - as well as many professional evaluators - may consider that a handful of engagements with a community may constitute enough direct experience to speak on behalf of a program or project, but from the perspectives of community members, this sporadic engagement is insufficient, as highlighted by Anita Tenasco.

Like the participants in Urban Indian Health Institute (2018)'s video, Anita and the Elders and leaders in her community shoulder the weight of translating her community's experiences and needs to authorities and institutions. This is not always welcomed by these authorities: when organizations "hide" behind their processes, referencing their established ways of connecting

with outside agencies, or with specific spokespeople on behalf of an organization or group, it enables them not to change structures that maintain their own leverage in the relationship, rather than building new systems that center Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination. For an Indigenous evaluator or researcher, it may be more important to relate to community members that what they already do can be considered research and evaluation, rather than trying to align them with Western paradigms. Meanwhile, organizations and institutions should ponder Shawn's recommendation that even Indigenous evaluators should sometimes "do the easiest thing because it saves time" when the primary purpose is to respond to a reporting requirement. Organizations that strive to support innovation, Indigenous knowledge, and Indigenous revitalization, should consider, as Shawn described, that their structures – any structure they design and impose – creates limitations to the development of new knowledge; these organizations should make an informed choice when they determine how to relate to Indigenous programs.

Wise Practice 2: Consider the relationship, role, and identity of the evaluator.

Who should evaluate a program, what level of knowledge about the program area they should have, and to what extent they should hold power in their ability to pose a judgement on various components of the program are all debated issues within the field of program evaluation (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014). Given the importance of narrative sovereignty, the discussion on who should evaluate a program focuses less, in an Indigenous context, on their formal or professional background (e.g. should someone conducting a health program evaluation have a background in health?) but rather, on their relationship to community and to its knowledge and worldview. It is less about someone's expertise and what they know, and more about how they are qualified to speak on behalf of the community or Nation – something only the community or Nation can decide. It is also less important what role they play in an organization, as roles tend to

be more protective of an organization's processes and their own agency than of supporting Indigenous methodologies.

In many situations, there is an expectation that an evaluator will be able to demonstrate their own credibility, through their experience, approach, and methodology, as they are posing judgements often tied to the ability of a program to continue receiving funding. For organizations that receive funding for evaluation, the credibility of the report is intrinsically tied to that of the evaluator – this becomes especially important when evaluations are mandated by a government seeking accountability around its spending. This approach may not be meaningful in an Indigenous context, where the evaluator's voice and judgement are not inherently more important than the voices of all community members. Today, more Indigenous peoples feel confident that their approaches, that differ from the mainstream, are adequate and valuable, but they still struggle to have them valued by non-Indigenous organizations, and to find time to apply them. Although Stufflebeam and Coryn (2014) argued that evaluators should not be moved by reporting requirements, in many First Nations, limited amounts of staff, usually those in leadership positions, often end up responsible for reporting on any program that is funded in the community. With limited time and resources, meeting these reporting requirements is the closest to evaluation many communities will be able to get; a reminder of the privilege to be able to analyse, reflect, learn, and grow.

When so many organizations are prepared to state that they have engaged with a community and been granted permission to move forward without truly being open to adapt or change their program in ways Elders and community members recommend, it is not a simple decision to take time and energy to engage with something that may inaccurately reflect their perspectives. In addition, having a profound understanding of Indigenous worldviews, context, and

methodologies is critical to ensure Indigenous narratives remain their own – untarnished by incorrect outside views that often fill in knowledge or relationship gaps with fantasy (Ross-Tremblay, 2020). It can be nearly impossible for non-Indigenous program planners to accurately represent Indigenous voices in their own narratives; as they interpret data based on stereotypes and deficit-based views of Indigenous peoples (Cram, 2016; Walter & Andersen, 2013).

As Shawn described, from an Indigenous perspective, it is less important to determine whether someone’s approach is the “best” approach. Rather, it is most important to simply recognize that the evaluator themselves is an evaluation tool, and that their lens is an important component of the evaluation. Even Stufflebeam and Coryn (2014) agreed there are strengths and weaknesses to different evaluation types, and that “evaluation’s contradictory persuasions are not resolvable in any single, overall theory” (p. 58). Like in politics, the most critical aspect is that everyone conducting the evaluation be aware of their position and straightforward about how it impacts the evaluation; including acknowledging the ways in which it could impact program stakeholders, participants, and the community.

Wise Practice 3: Apply Indigenous approaches, methodologies, and analysis.

Within institutions, especially academic institutions, it can be easy to become overly attached to specific academic ideas, which focus on philosophical explorations of epistemology and ontology over practical, lived experience. This can sometimes create a gap between what academics, researchers, and evaluators view as important over what is needed or valued by those outside of that environment. For instance, while “decolonization” is necessary, as Anita described, it might look quite different on the ground than it does from an ideological standpoint, and while researchers studying it is important, lived experiences of being Indigenous don’t or can’t prioritize this type of thought exercise.

The term evaluation is chosen intentionally to give what is perceived in a Western context to be the appropriate level of weight and importance to the process, with the intent for evaluators to function in a “technically” sound manner as described by Stufflebeam and Coryn (2014). The same term that is chosen to carry authority and professionalism, ensuring that the practice of evaluation is respected. This intent to “prove” worth in the profession also drives it to seek alignment with “recognized” standards for collecting and analyzing data, which even in practical-participatory evaluation, which focuses on the program participants and stakeholders’ voices, can lead to a sense that evaluators have not adequately collected data when participants feel comfortable to join in without speaking. Anita described her parents’ discomfort with the term evaluation. One might think this is *only* due to their own experiences of evaluation as Indigenous people affected by residential schools. The reality runs even deeper as the first program evaluations relied on such discomfort to uphold government authority and power (Hogan, 2007), embedding power dynamics into the process itself.

The challenge surrounding evaluation terminology affects not only the fact of evaluation and its process, but also the way in which information is analyzed and presented, where Indigenous approaches differ significantly from Western/non-Indigenous approaches (Walter & Andersen, 2013). When Lummi staff at the UIHI discussed the need to “translate” their communities’ perspectives to funders, they were not speaking about actual language translation, but rather a form of cultural interpretation. There is a broader discussion warranted, also tied to narrative sovereignty, about whose voice you memorialize in literature when you are required to “translate” communities’ real perspectives into language that government agencies and other funders will hear from their lens. If stories are written in their words, whose stories do they

become? Even if an Indigenous approach is used to gather data, it often must be presented in a particular way that dilutes or changes that message.

This cultural interpretation is also tied to linguistic differences that create enduring worldview distinctions even when a community speaks mostly English. In a YouTube video entitled “Research is Ceremony”, Wilson (2022) shares that part of the impact of colonization is that he does not speak Cree fluently, a situation reflected in every colonized territory. This means that for Wilson, English is his first language, and this changes the way that he prays:

I can say prayers in Cree, but I’m not fluent enough that it’s a first language word that just emerges from me, it’s a translation process, still. So, I’m very conscious of the way that translation process changes the way that I pray. The ceremonies have boundaries and limitations that are imposed upon them by the English language (Wilson, 2022).

There are two components to Wilson’s realization; the first is shared by many in the field of decolonization, which is that language is an important component of Indigenous knowledge; and the second, that the most important element in ceremony, relationships, research – and evaluation - is to acknowledge our own positionality and how it influences our perspective and approach. Discussion with Wilson solidified the argument that an evaluator must be aware of their own self, their relationship to the community and evaluation or research work in question, and how their own lens and biases influence an evaluation, rather than trying to focus on objectivity.

Western approaches tend to be in direct opposition to this view, seeking to develop processes by which any two people conducting the same process would achieve the same results and tell the story in the same way. From a Western perspective, this attempt to create objectivity or “impartiality” tends to be associated with correctness and validity (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2021).

From an Indigenous perspective, as Shawn described, this objectivity is neither necessary nor desired, and it is not required that there be only a single version of the story. It is only important that it be clear who told the story to whom, and whose voices were included. This recalls the interest in arts-based approaches to evaluation; when program participants create their own expressions of their experiences, some of the “boxes” of evaluation and reporting are necessarily removed, participants gain more control over their own narrative, and the evaluator must work to connect and “weave” these creations together as Shawn described, rather than pulling them apart for data analysis. While employing arts-based approaches may seem, to some evaluators, like a simplistic way of approaching evaluation, they present a profoundly meaningful opportunity to uphold narrative sovereignty for both individuals and communities.

Another component of program evaluation where Indigenous knowledge is applied is methodology and methods. Designing a framework that embeds Indigenous worldviews is one tool that has been leveraged by Indigenous researchers (Cram 2016). Many models propose a framework for Indigenous focused evaluations that are designed around Indigenous models like the medicine wheel (Davis, n.d.; Johnston, 2010; Lafrance, 2010). I have often referred to and used elements of medicine wheel teachings shared by Lillian Pitawanakwat-baa (2006) because she was from the same community that I am a member of, to illustrate my conceptualization of an idea, and have used it as an evaluation tool. In cases like this, the tool represents teachings that have meaning for the researcher, that shape their own worldview, and help them articulate their own lens. However, in his book *Research is Ceremony*, Shawn Wilson (2010) describes his disappointment when Indigenous ceremonies and symbols become a dogma; identifying the medicine wheel as one element that has become dogmatized:

People compartmentalize the circle into four quadrants, say that the east stands for this and this color goes there, and so on. Now this is okay, but some people argue that only their understanding of the medicine wheel is the “right” one. This dogmatic approach to the understanding of the modern medicine wheel undermines the work of those who use the circle as a theoretical paradigm (p. 70).

In discussion with Shawn and Wilfred, they both identified that many such tools and frameworks have been co-opted, simplified, or generalized to a point where they have lost meaning. For both, the priority is to center research and evaluation, knowledge creation of any kind, in ceremony. Rather than focus on developing a replicable tool based on traditional knowledge, to develop an evaluation for the Indigenous Star Knowledge Project, an evaluator would need to weave together the stories of all the key participants in a way that captures the full context and scope of the project, relationships it was built upon, and relationships it created. The evaluator should be someone who understands the program well and has developed a relationship with many of the participants, who can be trusted by them to tell their story in a way that reflects their true perspectives.

Finally, the entire process of evaluation must be re-examined in the context of Indigenous programs. Many programs that are dependent on funding are required to attempt to demonstrate that their program is having an important transformational impact and that its outcomes are the best value for the investment made by the funder. Additionally, they may be tied to specific outcomes pre-determined by the funder that they must demonstrate that they’ve achieved. Often with few resources to put toward evaluation, program administrators put any available time and energy into reporting on these requirements, without being able to thoroughly evaluate from their own perspectives. Meanwhile, as Shawn argued, an Indigenous evaluation may be better focused

on considering process-oriented questions with a long-term goal in mind, asking “are we taking good steps?”. Additionally, it may prefer to consider inputs from participants and community members in their own words, through artistic creations that reflect their own stories, in their own ways of expressing them, rather than restricting what is considered “data” to the narrow view of the program funder or supporting organization. As the ISKP, in theory, is limited to the activities described in a few funding applications, a true evaluation would explore, without trying to fit things in a table or box, all the interconnected outcomes linked to the project coming together and the relationships it created. While the project reached many members of the public who may have been affected by the project, it also had a profound impact on those closest to it, which should be centralized in an evaluation. Its evaluation would not simply match outcomes to those listed for SSHRC grant reporting, but rather would paint, through stories, a clear picture of what took place, including elements of spirit, ceremony, intellectual learning and sharing, interactions between participants and with the public, and interaction with the digital world.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

In closing, I reference the two comments Wilfred Buck made to me when I asked him about how to craft the message on the Star Knowledge project and how to ensure funders saw the value in the project; that we don’t need to compare ways of knowing because Indigenous ways are valuable in their own right, and that if Indigenous knowledge was created originally through ceremony, it will be recreated now through ceremony. These two concepts stayed with me as I developed this thesis and as I attempted to explain what I was witnessing occur with Indigenous programs hosted or funded by non-Indigenous organizations or institutions.

This research represents my understanding, from my own lens, of three conversations I had with three important contributors to the Indigenous Star Knowledge Project. To me, these

conversations illustrated that narrative sovereignty, central to enacting sovereignty and self-determination, must be a core component of Indigenous program evaluation. They clarified that an evaluator should be someone who is trusted to uphold narrative sovereignty, and who is aware of the way their own lens influences their perspective, and that they themselves are a tool. They clarified what Indigenous methodologies might look like for evaluation, and that they are grounded in spirit, ceremony, and relationships before outputs, outcomes, and indicators. Finally, they made it clear that evaluation is already happening in Indigenous ways in many Indigenous communities, and that recognizing how it is happening is more important than designing new frameworks. The legacy of upholding government rule that is felt in any standard design program evaluation for Indigenous programs can be dismantled by recognizing Indigenous approaches, but this remains largely dependent on the willingness of program funders to recognize these approaches as valid ways of reporting.

When I began this research, I was uncertain whether I would find tools, methodologies, approaches, or frameworks that truly captured Indigenous perspectives on program evaluation. Eventually, I imagined that I would perhaps construct a template or model that could be replicated and that I could use to evaluate programs developed for Indigenous communities and funded or hosted by non-Indigenous organizations. As I continued to engage with the topic, reflected on how I might evaluate the Indigenous Star Knowledge Project, and finally had conversations about program evaluation with Shawn Wilson, Anita Tenasco, and Wilfred Buck, I realized that I did not feel compelled, nor comfortable, to design a one size fits all model. Instead, the concept of wise practices as defined by Calliou and Wesley Esquimaux (2010) became a more obvious way to think about how I could connect what I have learned about program evaluation with what I understand, feel, and live in Indigenous programs.

Indigenous program evaluation means telling the story of a program from the perspective of those involved, centering the worldview and experience of Indigenous communities the program touches. Understanding that the evaluator themselves is the central tool, as the storyteller, it can be done by anyone who has a reciprocal relationship with the communities or Nations involved, but this needs to be approved of by the community or Nation who can authorize the evaluator to speak on their behalf. For some communities, this can only be an Indigenous person, perhaps even a member of their own Nation or community. The evaluator can choose to use a model or framework that is culturally meaningful to them to express their worldview and how they interpret or arrange the elements of the story, but they are not required to apply a specific lens. An Indigenous program evaluation can use any Indigenous methodologies – which are inclusive of non-Indigenous methodologies, as appropriate for the local context. The most important responsibility the evaluator carries is neither “objectivity” nor technical expertise, rather, it is the upholding of the community or Nation’s sovereignty and self-determination through storytelling that is appropriate, truthful, without embellishments or imagination, and in which the community or Nation recognizes themselves and their voices. An Indigenous program evaluation does not focus on finality – even if the program has ended – rather, it connects the program within its full context, allows for continuity and interconnectedness, and avoids putting things in boxes.

For program evaluators and program evaluation theorists, program evaluation can be one of the most influential professions, in terms of how many people it can affect, what knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors they carry into new generations, how significant amounts of government dollars are spent, and ultimately, shape how we experience the world. While evaluation bodies want to ensure the practice and profession of program evaluation can be taken seriously by ensuring certain standards exist – simultaneously recognizing that no singular theory

or approach is appropriate in every context. This document has shown that there is flexibility for determining what makes up an evaluation, what it can be called, and how it can be undertaken; but that this flexibility comes with great responsibility. It has also shown that this flexibility should be leveraged to ensure narrative sovereignty and self-determination are upheld given the significant impact of narrative on one's place in society.

It is possible to think about program evaluation in an Indigenous way, but this is complicated by the identity and power relationships of the evaluator, and by the requirements of the program to report to a funder or other agency in a specific manner, and by socio-political contexts where narratives about a group strongly impact the group's ability to enact sovereignty and self-determination. Program evaluation can be a powerful tool to highlight the strengths of a program, the challenges it has overcome, and its way forward, but this can easily be marred by an inappropriate or biased approach, even if it is applied in good faith. Ultimately, if Indigenous peoples are not at the forefront of planning, determining how funding is distributed to them, for what purpose, and how it should be reported on, Indigenous approaches to program evaluation will have little influence on changes to programming. It is my hope, as I promised to Anita Tenasco, that these reflections help encourage organizations and funding bodies to hear Indigenous peoples tell their stories, without constraining what should fit into a very large circle, into an uncomfortably small one.



Figure 5: Researcher's depiction, based on Shawn Wilson's view, of Indigenous experiences with programs.

References

- Alberta Teachers' Association. (2020). Forced relocation of Indigenous peoples in Canada. *Stepping Stones*. (5).
- Australian Human Rights Commission. (2019). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice: Self-determination. Retrieved from <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-social-justice/self-determination>
- Baikie, C., Bishop, M., Broomfield, J., D'Souza, P., Davis, G., Dicker, J., Francey, D., Igloliorte, H., Kimmaliardjuk, D.M., Kane, R., Kirby-McGregor, L., Kreps, P., Lane, J., Lennie, C., Lyall, J., Makkik, R., Marquand, N., Mautaritnaaq, S., Minich, K., Ochalski, H., Pottle, C., Sudlovenick, E., Sylvestre, J., Tagoona, K., Uviluq, B., Winters, E., & Zarpa, E. (2019) Inuit Graduate Students Winter Institute Position Paper, presented to SSHRC as part of the National day of Dialogue with Indigenous Peoples, March 2019, Ottawa
- Benson, A., Sloan, R., & Laboucane, P. (2000). Aboriginal healing program evaluation: Success through negotiation. Retrieved from <http://justiciarestaurativa.org/mount/www.restorativejustice.org/articlesdb/articles/2286>
- Blackstock, C. (2009). *First Nations Children Count: Enveloping quantitative research in an Indigenous envelope*. *First Peoples Child and Family Review*. 4(2). Pp. 135-143.
- Bowman, N. R., Francis, C. D., and Tyndall, M. (2015). Culturally Responsive Indigenous Evaluation: A Practical Approach for Evaluating Indigenous Projects in Tribal Reservation Contexts. *Continuing the Journey to Reposition: Culture and Cultural Context in Evaluation Theory and Practice*, pp. 335-339.

- Boydell, K.M., Gladstone, B.M., Volpe, T., Allemang, B. and Stasiulis, E. (2012). The production and dissemination of knowledge: A scoping review of arts-based health research. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research*. 13(1), Art. 32.
- Burrows, J. (2007). *Recovering Canada: The Resurgence of Indigenous Law*. Toronto: Toronto University Press.
- Buck, W. (2021). Message to Teachers about Stories. Honoring our Bundles. [video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y-XFEFiw2ws>
- Buck, W. (2022). What are Indigenous Research methods? [unpublished].
- Burrelle, J. (2019). *Encounters on Contested Lands: Indigenous performances of sovereignty and nationhood in Quebec*. Northern University Press.
- Calliou, B., & Wesley-Esquimaux, C. (2010). A Wise Practices Approach to Indigenous Community Development in Canada. Unpublished report, the Banff Center, Indigenous Leadership and Management. https://www.banffcentre.ca/sites/default/files/Lougheed%20Leadership/Research/Indigenous/2_Chapter_1.pdf
- Calliou, B., & Wesley-Esquimaux, C. (2010). "Best Practices in Aboriginal Community Development: A Wise Practices Approach." Unpublished report, the Banff Centre, Indigenous Leadership and Management. http://www.banffcentre.ca/indigenous-leadership/library/pdf/best_practices_in_aboriginal_community_development.pdf.
- Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. (2018). Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans.

- Caldwell, J. Y., Davis, J. D., Du Bois, B., Echo-Hawk, H., Shephard Erickson, J., Turner Goins, R., Hill, C., Hillabrant, W., Johnson, S. R., Kendall, E., Keemer, K., Manson, S. M., Marshall, C. A., Running Wolf, P., Santiago, R. L., Schacht, R., Stone, J. B. (2005). Culturally competent research with American Indians and Alaska Natives: Findings and recommendations of the first symposium of the Work Group on American Indian Research and Program Evaluation. *American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health Research*, 12(1), 1-122.
- Chouinard, J. A., & Cousins J. B. (2007). Culturally competent evaluation for Aboriginal communities: A review of the empirical literature. *Journal of MultiDisciplinary Evaluation*, 4(8), 40-57.
- Coghlan, A. T., Preskill, H., & Catsambas, T. T. (2003). An overview of appreciative inquiry in evaluation. *New Directions for Evaluation*, 100, 5-22.
- Collis, S. (2022). W(h)ither the Indian Act? How statutory law is rewriting Canada's settler colonial formation. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*. 112(1). pp. 167-183.
- Cooperrider, D. L., & Whitney, D. (2003). A positive revolution in change: Appreciative inquiry. In D. Cooperrider, P. F. Sorensen, D. Whitney, and T. F. Yaeger (Eds.), *Appreciative inquiry: Rethinking human organization toward positive theory of change*. Stipes Publishing: Illinois.
- Cooperrider, D. L., Whitney, D., & Stavros, J. M. (2003). *Appreciative inquiry handbook*. Lakeshore Publishers: Ohio.
- Cooperrider, D., and Srivastva, S. (2017). The gift of new eyes: Personal reflections after 30 years of appreciative inquiry in organizational life, research in organizational change and development. *Research in Organizational Change and Development*, 25, 81-142.

Cousins, J. B. and Earl, L. (1995). The case for participatory evaluation: Theory, research, practice. In J. B. Cousins & L. Earl (Eds.), *Participatory evaluation in education: Studies in evaluation use and organizational learning* (pp. 3-18). London: Falmer.

Cousins, J. B. and Whitmore, E. (1998), Framing participatory evaluation. *New Directions for Evaluation*, 80, pp. 5-23.

Cram, F. (2016). Lessons on decolonizing evaluation from Kaupapa Maori evaluation. *Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation*, 30 (3), 296-312.

Daffron, S. R., Caffarella, R. S. (2021). *Planning Programs for Adult Learners: A Practical Guide*. United Kingdom: Wiley.

Daschuk, J. (2019). *Clearing the Plains: Disease, politics of starvation, and the loss of Indigenous life*. Regina: University of Regina Press.

Davis, C. (n.d.) Program evaluation: North Dakota EPSCoR. Retrieved from http://www.aihec.org/programs/documents/NSF-TCUP/9_Davis_ProgramEvaluationNov2012.pdf

Deloria, V., & Wildcat, D. (2001). *Power and Place: Indian Education in America*. Golden: Fulcrum Publishing.

Denborough, D., O'Neill, M., Russel, S., Akinyela, M., Gremillion, H., Epston, D., Jackson, V., and White, M. (2004). Narrative therapy and research. (2004). *The International Journal of Narrative Therapy and Community Work*, (2), 1-8.

Department of Justice. (2021). Government of Canada advances implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act. Retrieved from Government of Canada: <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-justice/news/2021/12/government-of-canada->

[advances-implementation-of-the-united-nations-declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples-act.html](#)

Farrell, J., Burow, P. B., McConnell, K., Bayham, J., Whyte, K., and Koss, G., (2021). Effects of land dispossession and forced migration on Indigenous peoples in North America. *Science*, 374, DOI:10.1126/science.abe4943

Friedmann, J. (2008). The Uses of Planning Theory: A Bibliographic Essay. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 28(2), 247–257. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0739456X08325220>

Goodman, A., Morgan, R., Kuehlke, R., Kastor, S., Fleming, K., Boyd, J., Aboriginal Harm Reduction Society, W. (2018). “We’ve been researched to death”: Exploring the research experiences of urban Indigenous Peoples in Vancouver, Canada. *The International Indigenous Policy Journal*, 9(2), 1-20.

Government of Canada. (2021). Principles respecting the Government of Canada’s relationship with Indigenous peoples. <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/csj-sjc/principles-principes.html>

Government of Canada. (2022). Residential schools in Canada.

<https://parks.canada.ca/culture/designation/pensionnat-residential>

Graveline, F.J. (1998). *Circleworks: Transforming Eurocentric Consciousness*. Fernwood: Halifax.

Graveline, F.J. (2000). Circle as methodology: Enacting an Aboriginal paradigm. *Qualitative Studies in Education* 13(4): 361-70.

Gray, D., Sagers, S., Dandrich, M., Walam, D. & Plowright, P. (1995). Evaluating government health and substance abuse programs for Indigenous peoples: A comparative review. *Australian Journal of Public Health*, 19(5), 567-573.

- Grover, J., (2010). Challenges in applying Indigenous evaluation practices in mainstream grant programs to Indigenous communities. *The Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation*, 23(2) 33-50.
- Hammond, C., Gifford, W., Thomas, R., Rabaa, S., Thomas, O., & Domecq, M.-C. (2018). Arts-based research methods with indigenous peoples: an international scoping review. *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, 14(3), 260–276.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1177180118796870>
- Hare, J. (2011). “They tell a story and there’s meaning behind that story”: Indigenous knowledge and young indigenous children’s literacy learning. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, 12(4), 389-414.
- Hart, M. (2010). Indigenous Worldviews, Knowledge, and Research: The Development of an Indigenous Research Paradigm. *Journal of Indigenous Voices in Social Work*, 1(1), 1–16.
https://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/bitstream/10125/15117/v1i1_04hart.pdf
- Hickey, D. (2020). Indigenous Epistemologies, Worldviews and Theories of Power. *Turtle Island Journal of Indigenous Health*, 1(1). 14-25.
- Hogan, R. L. (2007). The historical development of program evaluation: Exploring past and present. *Online Journal for Workforce Education and Development*, 4(2), 1-14.
- Hoskins, K. (1968). The examination, disciplinary power and rational schooling. *History of Education*, 8(1), 135-146.
- Indigenous Corporate Training. (2017). 9 Terms to avoid in communications with Indigenous peoples. Retrieved from: <https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/9-terms-to-avoid-in-communications-with-indigenous-peoples>

Johnston, A. (2010). The Waawiyeyaa Evaluation Tool. <https://aea365.org/blog/andrea-johnston-on-the-waawiyeyaa-evaluation-tool/>

Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation. (2011). The program evaluation standards: A guide for evaluators and evaluation users (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kane, R.G., Moreau, K., Heath, S., & Kirby-McGregor, L. (2019). Evaluation of the Nunavik Teacher Education program: Evaluation Strategies Scoping Review Report. Submitted to Kativik Ilisarniliriniq, the school board of Nunavik, February 2019.

Kane, R.G., Moreau, K., Heath, S., & Kirby-McGregor, L. (2019). Evaluation of the Nunavik Teacher Education program: Preliminary Evaluation. Submitted to Kativik Ilisarniliriniq, the school board of Nunavik, February 2019.

Kirby-McGregor, L. (2021, June 15). Star stories: The making of the Indigenous Star Knowledge Project. Ingenium Channel. <https://ingeniumcanada.org/channel/articles/star-stories-the-making-of-the-indigenous-star-knowledge-project>

Kirby-McGregor, L. (2021, June 21). Under the same sky: Conversations from the Indigenous Star Knowledge Project. Ingenium Channel. <https://ingeniumcanada.org/channel/articles/under-the-same-sky-conversations-from-the-indigenous-star-knowledge-project>

Kirby-McGregor, L. (2021, June 30). The Yuin Message Stick: A piece of the Yuin nation's continuing history. Ingenium Channel. <https://ingeniumcanada.org/channel/articles/the-yuin-message-stick-a-piece-of-the-yuin-nations-continuing-history>

Kirby-McGregor, L. (2021, July 22). Digging deeper: Regenerating Indigenous star knowledge. Ingenium Channel. <https://ingeniumcanada.org/channel/articles/digging-deeper-regenerating-indigenous-star-knowledge>

- Kirmayer, L. J., Sedhev, M., Whitley, R., Dandeneau, S., & Isaac, C. (2009). Community resilience: Models, metaphors and measures. *Journal of Aboriginal Health*, 7(1), 62-117.
- Kovach, M. (2009). *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts*. Toronto. University of Toronto Press.
- Lafrance, J., and Nichols, R. (2010). Reframing evaluation: defining an Indigenous evaluation framework. *The Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation*, 23(2), 13-31.
- Little Bear, L., (2009). Naturalizing Indigenous Knowledge, Synthesis Paper. University of Saskatchewan, Aboriginal Education Research Centre, Saskatoon, Sask. and First Nations and Adult Higher Education Consortium, Calgary, Alta.
- Madaus, G.F., Scriven, M., & Stufflebeam, D.L. (1984). Educational evaluation and accountability: A review of quality assurance efforts. *The American*, 27(5).
- Manitoba Association of Friendship Centers. (2018). The Sixties Scoop: A literary review. Retrieved from: <http://www.friendshipcentres.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/The-Sixties-Scoop-Literature-Review.pdf>
- Marr, M. A., Sutherland, M., and McGregor, L. (2007). A regional model for ethical engagement: The First Nations Research Ethics Committee on Manitoulin Island. APRCi. 112. <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/aprci/112>
- McGregor, D., Restoule, J. P., and Johnston, R. [Eds] (2018). *Indigenous research: Theories, practices, and relationships*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press.
- McGuire-Adams, T. (2020). *Indigenous Feminist Gikandaasowin (Knowledge): Decolonization through physical activity*. Springer International Publishing.
- Moutsios, S. (2010). Power, politics, and transnational policymaking in education. *Globalisation, Societies, and Education*, 8(1). Pp. 121-141.

National Collaborating Center for Aboriginal Health. (2013). *Indigenous Approaches to Program Evaluation*. Prince George: University of Northern British Columbia.

Noojmowin Teg Health Center. (2003). *Guidelines for Ethical Aboriginal Research in the Manitoulin Area*. Little Current: Noonjmowin Teg Health Centre.

Patton, M. Q. (1997). *Utilization-focused evaluation: The new century text* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Patton, M. Q. (2003). Inquiry into appreciative evaluation. *New Directions for Evaluation*, 100, 85-98.

Pitawanakwat, L. (2006). Ojibwe/Potawatomi (Anishinabe) Teaching.

<https://fourdirectionsteachings.com/transcripts/ojibwe.pdf>

Rafaely, M., and Goldberg, R. M. (2020) Grief Snow Globe: A Creative Approach to Restorying Grief and Loss through Narrative Therapy. *Journal of Creativity in Mental Health*, 15(4), 482-493, DOI: 10.1080/15401383.2020.1725704

Roberts. E. B., Butler, J. III, and Green, K. M. (2016). Identifying and understanding Indigenous ways of knowing in physical activity programs. *American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health Research*. 23(5). pp. 35-57.

Ross-Tremblay, P. (2020). *Thou Shalt Forget: Indigenous Sovereignty, Resistance, and the Production of Cultural Oblivion in Canada*. University of London Press. 284 p.

Rutherford, G. (2022). Reproductive control of Indigenous women continues around the world, say survivors and researchers. Retrieved from

<https://www.ualberta.ca/folio/2022/06/reproductive-control-of-indigenous-women-continues-around-the-world.html>

Saulis, M. (2015). Indigegogy as an expression of our Traditional education approach.

[Presentation]. Chiefs of Ontario Education Gathering Toronto.

Shek, D., Lin, L., & Liang, J., Frey (2018). *Program Evaluation: The SAGE Encyclopedia of Educational Research, Measurement, and Evaluation*. (Frey, B. B., Eds.) SAGE Publications, Inc. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781506326139>

Smith, L. T. (1999). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and Indigenous peoples*. London: Zed Books Ltd.

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. (2022). 2021-2022 Departmental Results Report. Retrieved from: https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/about-au_sujet/publications/drr/2021-2022/pdf/2021-22__SSHRC__DRR-eng.pdf.

Sork, T.J. (2010). *Planning and delivery of adult learning experiences*. (C. Kasworm, A.D. Rose, & J. Ross-Gordon, Eds.). Jossey Bass.

Steup, M. and Ram, N., "Epistemology", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2020 Edition), Edward N. Zalta, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2020/entries/epistemology/>

Strahl, C. (Honorable, P.C., M.P.). (2008). Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada: 2007-2008 Departmental Performance Report. Retrieved from: <https://www.tbs-sct.canada.ca/dpr-rmr/2007-2008/inst/ira/ira-eng.pdf>

Stufflebeam, D. (2001). Evaluation Models. *New Directions for Evaluation*, 7-98.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/ev.3>

Stufflebeam, D., and Coryn, C.L.S. (2014). *Evaluation Theory, Models, and applications*; Jossey-Bass. 766 p.

Tribal Evaluation Workgroup. (2013). "A Roadmap for Collaborative and Effective Evaluation in Tribal Communities." Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). Calls to Action. Retrieved from:
https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

United Nations (General Assembly). (2007). *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People*.

Urban Indian Health Institute. (2018). *A Conversation with members of the Lummi Nation* [video]. Vimeo. <https://vimeo.com/340762744>

Walter, M., & Aitken, W. (2019). Situating Indigenous Knowledges and Governance Within the Academy in Australia. (E. A. McKinley & L. T. Smith, Eds.), Springer Singapore.
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-1839-8_301

Walter, M., and Andersen, C. (2013). *Indigenous statistics: A quantitative research methodology*. Routledge: New York.

Williams, J. (2023, April 05). Here are some suggested guidelines when considering the use of Indigenous Knowledges in your classroom. [Status update]. Facebook.
<https://www.facebook.com/jodie.williams.5477/posts/pfbid0nBqx7xRdqyfxwpAgGDWDRGcnegzbun2FKYF9n3qaAS8Gh3EmFBToh6CU3xNZrZKul>

Wilson, S. (2008). *Research is ceremony*. Halifax: Fernwood

Wilson, S. (2021). Can We Digitize Ceremony? By Dr. Shawn Wilson: Part of Queen's University Faculty of Education World Indigenous Lecture Series. [video]. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EL-TUzVY174>

Wilson, S. (2022, December 20). Research is ceremony. [video]. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Evc5VDHEChE>

Zusman, J, and Bissonette, R. (1973). The Case Against Evaluation (With some suggestions for improvement). *Issues in Program Evaluation: Interdisciplinary Studies from the State University of New York at Buffalo*. 2(2). Pp. 111-125.