The University of Alberta

The Development of an Evaluation Tool to Measure Cultural Exchange between University Students and Youth Transitioning Out of Homelessness

by

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the Requirements for the degree of Master of Science

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DEDICATION

To my parents, for their love, support, and continued belief in my ability to achieve my dreams.

To my sister, Erin, for reminding me that throughout life's challenges there is always time for laughter and humor.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to create an evaluation framework for a Cultural Exchange Program, linking students at the University of Alberta to youth currently living at or receiving services through a transitional housing facility called Cunningham Place. The primary goal of the program was to give students and youth an opportunity to interact and share life experiences, so that a mutual understanding could be established. Utilization-focused evaluation guided the development of the evaluation framework, so outcomes would reflect the needs and interests of relevant stakeholder groups. Qualitative methods of data collection, including participant observation, interviews, and focus group sessions served as sources of information for this study. Results indicated that a flexible, ongoing evaluation was needed to assess the Cultural Exchange Program. Context, content, and design of the evaluation are provided at the end of this report, including survey instruments and tracking sheets for measuring process, impact, and outcome variables.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Youth homelessness is a growing problem in Canada. Recent evidence indicates that the numbers of both absolutely homeless youth (i.e. individuals who live outdoors, in abandoned buildings, or use emergency shelters), and relatively homeless youth (i.e. individuals who live in unsafe, inadequate or insecure housing, who pay too much of their income for rent, or who temporarily stay with friends or relatives), is increasing (Kraus, Eberle, & Serge, 2001). While accurate enumeration can be difficult to achieve due to the transient nature of the population (Novac, Serge, Eberle, & Brown, 2001), recent statistics from the *Environmental Scan on Youth Homelessness* (Kraus et al., 2001) indicate that in large urban areas, the number of youth using drop-in centres and shelters is on the rise. In Halifax, Nova Scotia during the year 2000, 300 youth used a youth drop-in centre over a period of just four months. In Montreal, Quebec it was reported that between 1996 and 1997, youth under the age of 18 represented 4.6% of the total shelter population. The *Toronto Report Card on Homelessness* (2001) also found that from 1998 to 2000, shelter usage by youth ages 15 to 24 rose from 20 to 23 per cent.

In Edmonton, Alberta the escalating numbers of homeless youth mirror findings from across Canada. In the year 2000, 1123 individuals were found to be living on the streets or in insecure housing situations in Edmonton (Edmonton Joint Planning Committee on Housing, 2000). In 2003, the homeless counts had risen to almost 1900 individuals (Edmonton Joint Planning Committee on Housing, 2003). This was an increase of almost eight hundred homeless individuals over a period of just three years. Even more startling, was that homeless youth were found to represent nearly 7% of the entire population (Edmonton Joint Planning Committee on Housing, 2003).

The issue of youth homelessness is further complicated in Edmonton, by the over-representation of Aboriginal People. While Aboriginal People account for only 4.5% of the total population in Edmonton, they compromise almost 43% of the homeless population (Edmonton Joint Planning Committee on Housing, 2003). This overrepresentation of Aboriginal people, and the high percentage of youth that are homeless, warrants further attention by researchers, service providers, policy makers, and funding agencies alike.

Justification for the Research Study

Recent evidence indicates that youth homelessness is inherently different from the adult or family homeless populations across Canada. Although many of the causes of homelessness are the same for adults and youth (i.e. drug and alcohol abuse, STDs, and physical and mental health problems), the paths leading to homelessness are very different. Structural developments in society, such as high unemployment rates, poverty, and shortages of accessible and affordable housing strongly impact low-income families in Canada (Tavecchio, Thomeer, & Meeus, 1999). In contrast, psycho-social factors, including a lack of attachment and connectedness to primary caregivers and adverse circumstances in their family of origin appear to be the key causes of youth homelessness (Munro, Laboucane-Benson, & Benson, 2003; Tavecchio et al., 1999; Van der Ploeg & Scholte, 1997).

While reports tend to vary across studies, there is a strong indication that almost three quarters of all homeless youth come from families in which severe dysfunction exists (Ryan, Kilmer, Cauce, Watanabe, & Hoyt, 2000; Tyler & Cauce, 2002). This includes substance abuse, criminal activity, domestic violence, and physical, emotional or sexual abuse (Anderson & Imle, 2001; Bao et al., 2000; Bronstein, 1996; Kipke, Palmer, LaFrance, & O'Connor, 1997; Mounier & Andujo, 2003; Shaffer & Caton, 1984; Stein et al., 2002; Tyler & Cauce, 2002). In addition, the family environments of homeless youth are often characterized by frequent episodes of parent-child conflict, discipline problems, poor communication, a lack of caring, affection and support, alienation and minimal supervision (Janus, McCormak, Burgess, & Harman, 1987). Subsequently, youth who experience victimization in their home environment, tend to report lower levels of social support and fewer feelings of warmth, caring and affection from family members and other caregivers (Dadds, Braddock, Cuers, Elliott, & Kelly, 1993; Kipke et al., 1997; Ringwalt, Greene, & Robertson, 1998).

These findings are significant because high levels of social support have been linked to positive outcomes for adolescents and youth. Social support has been shown to reduce negative effects of life stressors by enhancing the youth's ability to cope with mental and emotional challenges and make successful adaptations to new situations (Daniels & Moos, 1990; Gore & Aseltine, 1995; Unger, Kipke, Simon, Johnson, Montgomery, & Iverson, 1998; Wills, Vaccaro, & McNamara, 1992).

In order to address the support and attachment needs of homeless youth, programs must be designed that build supportive and trusting relationships, that foster the youth's sense of connectedness and attachment, and that speak to reactions of negative experiences within the family of origin (Munro et al., 2003). Support networks, such as family members, positive peer groups, mentors, outreach workers, and community groups are necessary to develop strength, coping abilities, and positive self-esteem in children and adolescents (Anderson & Imle, 2001).

Project Background

This study represents one piece of a larger research project entitled the LINKS Project. The LINKS Project was proposed in response to the growing concern for youth homelessness in Edmonton and it involves community-based actions to address the support and attachment needs of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal homeless youth, as well as a longitudinal research component, which will monitor the experiences of homeless youth over a period of one year.

The LINKS Project consists of three strategies: 1) program development, in which a Cultural Exchange Program and an evaluation tool for the program were designed; 2) program implementation, whereby the Cultural Exchange Program will be implemented through a transitional housing facility for homeless youth in Edmonton; and 3) a longitudinal research component, whereby the experiences of homeless youth will be monitored over a period of one year (see Figure 1).

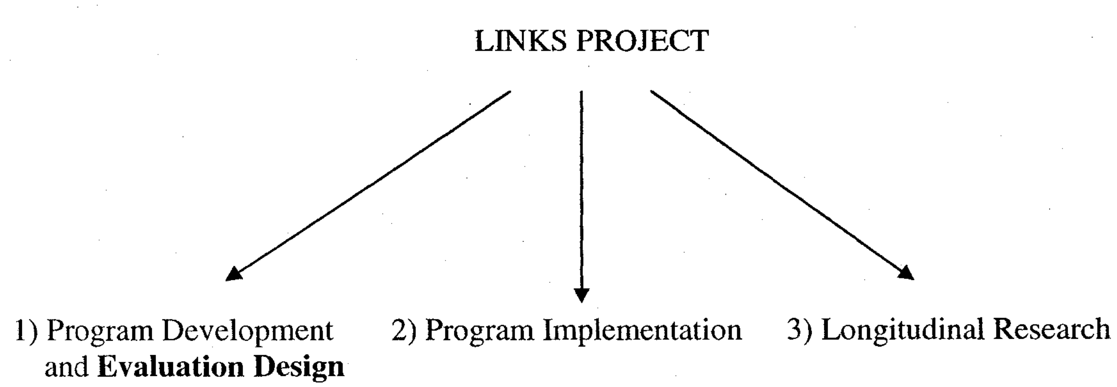


Figure 1: Overview of the LINKS Project

The primary goal of the LINKS Project is to develop a program that will address the support and attachment needs of youth transitioning out of homelessness and assist them to increase control over their lives. It is also hoped that through the longitudinal research, a rich profile of the experiences of homeless youth will be produced, including socio-environmental factors that enhance or inhibit youth's ability to transition out of the street culture.

Purpose

Due to the fact that the LINKS Project is so large and multifaceted, this study focused on only one phase of the project: the development phase. More specifically, this project concentrated on the design of an evaluation framework to systematically collect information about the Cultural Exchange Program. The evaluation framework was developed during the early phases of program planning to ensure that outcomes reflected the program goals. It should be noted that results from this investigation were used only to design the evaluation framework. Strategies to analyze quantitative and qualitative findings will be explored later on, by other members of LINKS Project Team.

What is Program Evaluation?

Program evaluation is defined as "the systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and outcomes of programs to make judgments about the program, improve program effectiveness, and/or inform decisions about future programming" (Patton, 1997, p.23). Recent literature suggests that the most effective evaluation tools are ones that have been tailored to meet the specific circumstances of the programs that they are evaluating (Rossi, Lipsey, & Freeman, 2004). The more closely the evaluation tool reflects the needs and interests of primary intended users, the more likely it will obtain accurate results (Dymond, 2001; Green, 1987; Nichols, 2002) and be used for decision-making about the program (Patton, 1997; Rossi et al., 2004).

Why Perform a Program Evaluation?

More frequently, organizations and individuals involved in the development or delivery of programs are expected to carefully plan their interventions and justify their reasons for selecting a particular course of action. Program evaluations are useful because they provide valuable information about program expenditures, program operations, and program results (Wholey, Hatry, & Newcomer, 2004). In addition, program evaluations help to focus and re-orient valuable resources so that the most desirable and effective program can be implemented (Owen & Rogers, 1999). A carefully planned evaluation tool can provide a great deal of information about the merit of a program and what modifications need to take place in order for the program to be implemented effectively and to acquire useful results.

Utilization-Focused Program Evaluation

To evaluate the Cultural Exchange Program, utilization-focused program evaluation was applied. Utilization-focused program evaluation is evaluation "done for and with specific, intended primary users for specific, intended uses" (Patton, 1997, p.23). The primary goal of utilization-focused evaluation is to design an evaluation tool that will meet the needs of the individuals who will be using it. In utilization-focused evaluation there are no set criteria for content, method, model, theory, or use (Patton, 1997). The evaluation can involve any type of design, serve any purpose (i.e. formative, summative, developmental), and apply any mode of data collection (i.e. quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods) (Patton, 1997). Rather than act as a model for program evaluation, the utilization-focused evaluation is a process to help primary intended users, such as program sponsors, program managers, and target participants select the most appropriate method for their particular situation. By actively engaging primary intended users, the evaluator is teaching them about the importance of evaluation (Nichols, 2002), training them how to use the evaluation properly, and consistently verifying the utility of the tool being developed (Patton, 1997). In addition, the more intended users understand the evaluation and feel ownership over it, the more likely they will use the results later on (Patton, 1997).

Engaging Primary Intended Users

To engage primary intended users in the design of the evaluation tool, qualitative methods of data collection were employed. Through participant observation, interviews, and focus group sessions with relevant stakeholders groups, including university students, youth transitioning out of homelessness, service providers, and staff from local funding agencies, the investigator for this study was able to learn about important components to include in the evaluation design. Particular emphasis was paid to: 1) the purpose of the evaluation; 2) structural components, including preferred methods of data collection; and 3) outcomes of interest.

Research Questions

The research question and sub-questions that guided this study were:

"What do university students, youth transitioning out of homelessness, service providers, and staff from local funding agencies want in an evaluation tool for a Cultural Exchange Program?"

a) What process, impact, or outcome variables will demonstrate success?

b) How can this be accounted for in the design of the evaluation tool (i.e. what methods of data collection should be used)?

c) Do university students, youth transitioning out of homelessness, service providers and funding agencies share similar perspectives about what constitutes program success? If not, how can the evaluation tool be designed to suit all of their needs?

Significance of the Study to Health Promotion Practice

An accurate evaluation of the LINKS Project is important to the development of health promotion practice because there is increasing pressure on researchers in the field of health promotion to be accountable for the programs they implement (Patton, 1997) and to justify their activities by providing evidence of effective results (Raphael, 2000). According to the health promotion literature, many programs lack clearly defined and measurable outcomes (Casebeer & Thurston, 1995; Patton, 1997; Rossi et al., 2004; Wholey et al., 2004), and as a result, evaluators are unable to determine whether a program is truly successful. An evaluation of the Cultural Exchange Program will offer several solutions to the difficulties of evaluating community-based programs. The involvement of university students, youth transitioning out of homelessness, service providers and staff from local funding agencies will ensure that the evaluation tool is reflective of the needs of individuals impacted by the intervention. In addition, the probability of collecting irrelevant data is reduced by identifying any discrepancies between intended and actual program operations early on. Together, these factors can help to facilitate the design of a tool that is relevant to those that will be impacted by the intervention.

GLOSSARY

Absolute Homeless: Absolute homeless individuals will be defined as individuals who live outdoors (e.g. on the street, in parks, and under bridges) or in abandoned buildings. It also includes people who use emergency shelters or hostels (Edmonton Joint Planning Committee on Housing, 2003; Kraus et al., 2001).

Relatively or Sheltered Homeless: Relatively or sheltered homeless individuals will be defined as individuals who live in emergency accommodations or condemned housing and are expected to be 'on the street' at the end of their stay (Edmonton Homelessness Count Committee, 2002). The relatively homeless include individuals who live in unsafe, inadequate or insecure housing, or who pay too much of their income for rent. This also includes people who are renting hotel or motel rooms by the month, or who are temporarily staying with friends or relatives (also known as couch surfing) (Kraus et al., 2001). People who are relatively homeless are also referred to as the 'invisible' homeless and are considered to be one step away from homelessness.

Homeless Youth: For the purpose of this investigation, homeless youth will be defined as individuals who are between the ages of 18 and 29 years and have no home (i.e. living 'on the streets'); are living in a place that is not intended to be housing or is not suitable for long-term residence; or are at risk of becoming homeless through the loss of their home, being discharged from an institution or facility with nowhere to go, or through loss of income support (Social Support Research Program, 2004).

At-risk/High-risk Youth: In this study, the terms at-risk youth and high-risk youth will be used interchangeably. At-risk youth will be defined as individuals who, due to their cultural background, or social, economic, and environmental circumstances, are at risk for becoming homeless, or for engaging in negative or unhealthy behaviors, such as school dropout, high-risk sexual activity, pregnancy, drug or alcohol abuse, and violence (Barron-McKeagney, Woody, & D'Souza, 2001).

Program Evaluation: Program evaluation is defined as "the systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and outcomes of programs to make judgments about the program, improve program effectiveness, and/or inform decisions about future programming" (Patton, 1997, p.23).

Utilization-Focused Evaluation: Utilization-focused evaluation is a specific type of program evaluation, which involves working closely with intended users of the evaluation to ensure that it reflects their needs and interests (Patton, 1997).

Intended Users/Stakeholder Groups: The terms *intended users* and *stakeholder groups* will be used interchangeably in this study. A stakeholder will be defined as any individual who has an invested interest in the focus of the evaluation (Cousins & Whitmore, 1998; Patton, 1997). This will include researchers, program participants, service providers, and program sponsors.

Program Participants: People, groups, communities, or other units that receive the intervention or services being evaluated (Rossi et al., 2004).

Program Facilitator: Any individual responsible for delivering and monitoring the program activities (Rossi et al., 2004).

Service Providers: Personnel responsible for delivering services to members in the community or acute care settings (Fluhr, Oman, Allen, Lanphier, & McLeroy, 2004). Services can include tangible things, such as food, clothing, and shelter, or less tangible things, such as education, counseling, and support interventions. The caseworkers at Cunningham Place represent one type of service provider. These individuals offer support, guidance, information, and access to resources to the youth at Cunningham Place.

Funding Agencies: Organizations that initiate and fund the program being evaluated (Rossi et al., 2004).

Process Evaluation: Evaluation occurring throughout the program, to determine if services are being offered as intended and if the target population is being reached (McKenzie & Smeltzer, 2004).

Impact Evaluation: Assesses the immediate effects of the program by measuring short and intermediate outcome variables (McKenzie & Smeltzer, 2004).

Outcome Evaluation: Determines whether the program has met its long-term goals and objectives by variables over time. Outcome evaluation is generally performed through a follow-up evaluation (McKenzie & Smeltzer, 2004).

Formative Evaluation: An evaluation intended to generate information that will guide program improvement (Scriven, 1991). Formative evaluation is more comprehensible than process evaluation because information is collected from a variety of sources, both before and during program implementation (McKenzie & Smeltzer, 2004). Information collected through a formative evaluation is used by individuals interested in increasing the program's effectiveness, such as program participants, program planners, program funders (Rossi et al., 2004).

<u>Summative Evaluation:</u> An evaluation used to determine whether program expectations were met (Scriven, 1991). The purpose of a summative evaluation is to render a summary judgment on the program's performance, and therefore might influence decisions about the continuation of the program, allocation of resources, or restructuring of program activities. Summative evaluations are conducted at the end of the program and are usually intended for decision makers in charge of program oversight, such as funders, administrators, and upper management (Rossi et al., 2004).

CHAPTER II

CULTURAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM OVERVIEW

This chapter provides an overview of the Cultural Exchange Program, including program goals and objectives, program structure and examples of program activities. To design the Cultural Exchange Program, another Master's student from the Department of Human Ecology conducted focus group sessions and individual interviews with relevant stakeholder groups, including students enrolled at the University of Alberta; youth currently living at or receiving services through Cunningham Place, a transitional housing facility located on the east side of downtown Edmonton; and service providers currently working at Cunningham Place.

The original vision for the Cultural Exchange Program was a mentorship or peer support intervention. In this instance, mentorship is defined as a reciprocal relationship or "an alliance between two people, which creates a space for dialogue that results in reflection, action, and learning for both" (Rolfe-Flett, 2000, p.1). While university students, youth transitioning out of homelessness, and service providers supported a program that would foster a reciprocal relationship between university students and youth, they felt that the focus of the program should be on a mutual exchange of information and life experiences, rather than just superficial interaction between the two groups. Subsequently, there appeared to be greater support for a *cultural exchange* program, whereby university students and youth would develop a connection through the diffusion of their life experiences.

Benefits of Cultural Exchange

Cultural exchange is a concept not widely covered in the health promotion or social science literature. Among peer-reviewed publications, only two articles were found, which explored cross cultural interactions between different groups of people (Chandler, 2002; Salzman, 2000). Findings from these articles indicated that very positive outcomes could result from the interaction between two different cultural groups. Chandler (2002) found that through writing exercises, college students and low-income youth could enhance their knowledge and empathy towards one another. Similarly, Salzman (2000) found that mentors gained an awareness of the issues facing cultural minority youth, while mentees developed a stronger and more positive ethnic identity, showed increased levels of self-esteem and demonstrated a decrease in unhealthy risk-taking behaviors.

Amongst the grey literature, most of the information related to the concept of cultural exchange, centred on programs associated with international development and travel. Some of these organizations included non-profit agencies, such as Canada World Youth and the Global Youth Network, as well as government programs, such as the International Youth Internship Program, which is part of the Youth Employment Strategy (YES) as part of the Career Focus stream of the Government of Canada. According to these organizations, the benefit of cultural exchange is that it raises positive awareness about other cultures and it promotes mutual understanding amongst different groups of people from around the world. Regardless of where individuals are located or the type of work they are engaging in, cultural exchange programs can cultivate understanding, empathy, respect, and cooperation between diverse groups of people.

University Students and Youth Transitioning Out of Homelessness as "Cultural" Groups

Both university students and youth transitioning out of homelessness represent very unique populations in society. Similar to other religious or ethnic groups, university students and youth transitioning out of homelessness have social and material structures that shape their lives and social values. Wyn and White (1997) describe culture as a "distinct pattern of life, and the ways in which social groups give expression to their social and material life experiences" (pg.72). This definition of culture can be used to demonstrate how both university students and youth transitioning out of homelessness represent distinct cultural groups, since within each group, there are common characteristics that unite members and shape *cultural* norms. For university students, this could be the act of attending classes throughout the week, living near the university, or studying for mid-term examinations at the same time each year. In contrast, common characteristics that unite youth transitioning out of homelessness could be the experience of sleeping in a shelter or on the streets, exposure to drugs or violence, or the daily struggle to find food. For the remainder of this report, university students and youth transitioning out of homelessness will be viewed as two distinct cultural groups, each of which possesses knowledge, values, and experiences that are unique to their particular group and situation.

Rationale for Creating a Cultural Exchange Program

Service providers believed that a Cultural Exchange Program would offer university students an opportunity to gain a better understanding of the realities of youth homelessness. Consistent with this view, the university students admitted that their knowledge of homelessness was limited. They saw the Cultural Exchange Program as a way to learn more about homelessness from the perspective of youth who had lived and experienced it.

Homeless youth liked the idea of a program that would encourage new relationships to form and supported the exchange of knowledge between university students and youth who had experienced street life. As one youth pointed out

> "See, they've got book smarts, we've got street smarts. Let's put them together and see what comes out." (Focus Group 1, p. 4).

The youth were excited to teach the university students about their life experiences and to learn about the student's lives as well.

To date, only one intervention has been identified in the literature, which attempted to connect post-secondary students with vulnerable youth in a reciprocal exchange. Chandler (2002) used group writing exercises to connect college students with low income youth over a period of ten weeks. Results from the study indicated that the experience of writing together allowed students and youth to connect to each other through increased understanding, knowledge, and empathy. Both the students and the youth reported increased self-knowledge, emotional catharsis, and a greater understanding and appreciation of others. These findings suggest that it is possible to combine post-secondary students with vulnerable youth in a reciprocal relationship and that positive outcomes could result from this interaction.

Program Goals and Objectives

The primary goal of the Cultural Exchange Program is to *provide university students and youth transitioning out of homelessness with an opportunity to learn about each other's culture, with the intention of reducing prejudices and increasing understanding* (Cultural Exchange Program Manual, 2004, pg.2). In addition to facilitating cultural exchange between university students and youth, the program will also strive to achieve several sub-goals, including: 1) the formation of trusting relationships; 2) knowledge transfer, by sharing individual life experiences and gaining knowledge through the understanding of someone else's life experiences; 3) the development of interpersonal and life skills specific to each program participants needs; and 4) engagement in new activities (Cultural Exchange Program Manual, 2004; Personal communication, Lisa Connery, November 1, 2004).

Program Participants

Potential participants in the Cultural Exchange Program will include:

a) Residents of Cunningham Place, or youth that receive services through Cunningham Place

b) Students from the University of Alberta

Youth transitioning out of homelessness will be eligible to participate in the Cultural Exchange Program if they are a resident of Cunningham Place or receiving services through Cunningham Place and between 18 and 29 years of age. University students will be eligible to participate in the Cultural Exchange Program if they are registered in either full or part-time studies at the University of Alberta. The Cultural Exchange Program will be offered as part of an independent study course in Human Ecology at the University of Alberta. Therefore all eligible students must be registered in HECOL 490, under the supervision of Dr. Brenda Munro. Connecting the program with an independent study will not only increase student's commitment to the program, but it will also provide them with an opportunity to gain valuable practical experience while obtaining three units of university course credit. Students will not need to have prior experience working with homeless youth to be a part of this program. An interest in the program, regardless of motivation, will be the only pre-requisite for participation (Cultural Exchange Program Manual, 2004).

Program Size

The program will begin with ten individuals, including five students from the University of Alberta and five youth currently living at or receiving services through Cunningham Place. A total of ten program participants will allow for effective group discussion and activities that can be managed by one facilitator. Based on the success of the program, there could be an increase in the number of program participants in subsequent years (Cultural Exchange Program Manual, 2004).

Program Length

The Cultural Exchange Program will take place over a period of sixteen weeks. Program sessions will occur once a week and each session is expected to last two to three hours. To decrease confusion for program participants, sessions will be held on the same day and at the same time every week, unless a specific need arises due to the type of activity planned. Clear beginning and end points to the program will be emphasized, so that participants don't develop false expectations about the length of their involvement in the program, or their relationship with other members in the group (Cultural Exchange Program Manual, 2004).

Program Structure

The Cultural Exchange Program will consist of both group activities and one-to-one activities. During the first four weeks of the program, activities will take place in a group setting to allow participants to get to know each other and to build rapport. The activities will concentrate on fostering teamwork and promoting interaction between the university students and the youth.

After the first four weeks of the program, participants will be placed into pairs and will engage in one-on-one activities. For the remaining three months of the program, one-on-one activities will take place every other week, with group activities continuing on opposite weeks (Cultural Exchange Program Manual, 2004).

Flexibility will be a big part of the program design. University students, youth, and service providers all believed that the program should be flexible enough to allow participants to take ownership over program activities. During the weeks where one-on-one interaction occur, each pairing of a student and a youth will decide on what activities they would like to engage in. In this way, the student and the youth can get to know each other better and accommodate each other's needs.

On the weeks where no one-on-one activities take place, the group will participate in pre-established group activities. At this point, program participants will take turns organizing a group event. Each pairing of a university student and a youth will have an opportunity to organize and lead one group session, where the emphasis will be on sharing experiences and cultural exchange.

At the end of the four month program, there will be a celebration. This time will be devoted to having fun and sharing what participants have learned and accomplished throughout the sixteen week program.

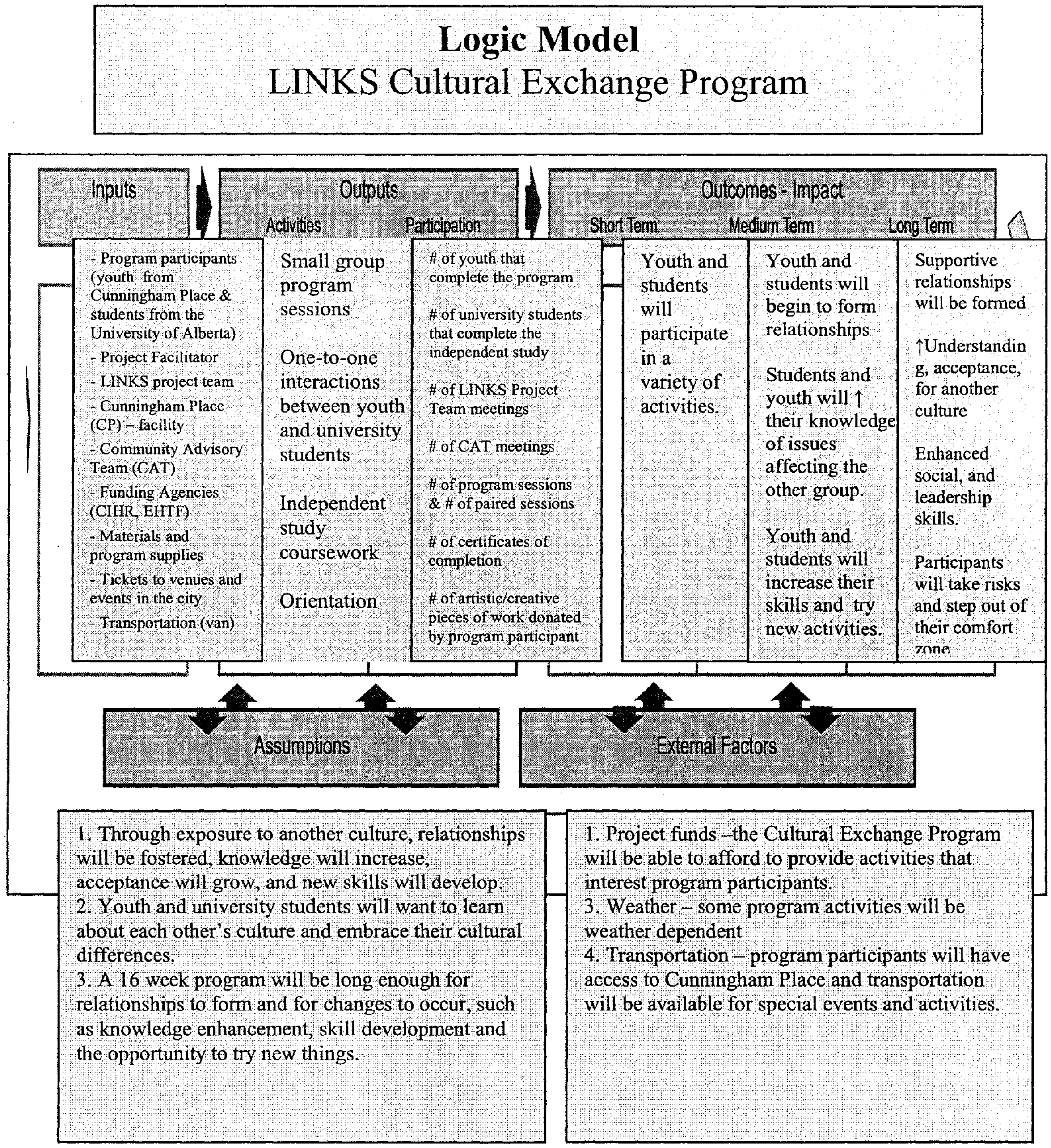
Program Activities

There was strong support for a program that involved leisure activities, while also encouraging the exchange of information between program participants. University students, youth transitioning out of homelessness, and service providers all believed that by engaging in leisure activities, program participants could get to know each other, while also having a good time. Service providers and youth transitioning out of homelessness felt that recreational activities were lacking at Cunningham Place, particularly in the evenings, and therefore they saw the program as an opportunity to fill that gap (Personal communication, Lisa Connery, November 1, 2004). Some activities supported by university students, youth, and service providers included: 1) sports; 2) drama or music; 3) artistic activities; 4) public outings, or things that would encourage the youth and the university students to develop independent living skills (i.e. going to the bank to learn how to interact with the teller); 5) cultural events (i.e. attending a Pow-Wow or a round dance); and 6) volunteering (i.e. helping out at a soup kitchen) (Cultural Exchange Program Manual, 2004). An example of a two hour group session is provided in Appendix A.

Logic Model

To provide a visual representation of the Cultural Exchange Program, a logic model was developed. Logic models are useful because they provide a clear illustration of the flow of reasoning within the program, (Rossi et al., 2004; Unrau, 1993). The program logic model is designed much like a horizontal flowchart, showing the cause-and-effect relationship between program activities to their anticipated outcomes, with some of these outcomes occurring short-term and other taking place over a longer period of time. This logic model is presented as Figure 1.

Figure 1: Logic Model for the Cultural Exchange Program



Assumptions

Several assumptions are articulated in the Logic Model. It is important to address these assumptions as they may effect or limit outcomes associated with the Cultural Exchange Program.

Firstly, the Cultural Exchange Program assumes that through exposure to another culture, university students and youth transitioning out of homelessness will form trusting relationships, increase their knowledge, and develop new skills. While literature does indicate that knowledge can be gained, attitudes can change, and new behaviors can be developed through mentorship programs or peer support interventions (Chandler, 2002; Nyamathi et al., 2001; Tierney, Grossman, & Resch, 1995; Yancey et al., 2002), this may not be the case for the Cultural Exchange Program. The Cultural Exchange Program represents a new and innovative program and therefore, it is hard to know whether interactions between university students and youth will result in similar outcomes as other interventions involving mentors and high-risk youth.

A second is that both university students and youth transitioning out of homelessness will want to learn about each other's culture and embrace their cultural differences. As the logic model demonstrates, university students and youth transitioning out of homelessness will have an opportunity to work together and to get to know each other through their engagement in the program activities (short-term outcome). As the university students and youth interact, they will begin to increase their knowledge and understanding of the other culture (intermediate outcome). Over time both the university students and the youth will develop a greater acceptance of the other culture and may even engage in activities to advocate for the other group (long-term outcome). In order to achieve the long-term goals for the program, both the university students and youth must be willing to overcome their apprehensions and engage in program activities together. Due to the fact that university students and youth transitioning out of homelessness represent such distinct populations, this could be more difficult than the program logic model suggests.

A third and final assumption is that a sixteen week program will be long enough for relationships to form and for changes to occur as a result of the program. Literature on mentorship and peer support interventions indicate that approximately twelve to fifteen months is necessary for changes to be seen as a result of a peer-support intervention (Royse, 1998). While the Cultural Exchange Program represents a unique intervention, these findings suggest that sixteen weeks might not be enough time for changes to occur. Careful and accurate monitoring of program outcomes will be necessary to see if the intervention has any real effect on participants and whether a longer intervention is needed.

Summary

The Cultural Exchange Program was developed in partnership with university students, youth transitioning out of homelessness, and service providers. Therefore, it represents the needs of individuals who will be involved in the program. Cultural exchange is a new and understudied concept (Chandler, 2002), particularly in the context of pairing post secondary students with youth transitioning out of homelessness. The Cultural Exchange Program has tremendous potential to foster communication, relationship formation and knowledge sharing between university students and youth transitioning off the streets. For this reason, evaluation is so important. Using the logic model as a guide, the evaluation can address program goals and measure to what degree program success was achieved.

CHAPTER III

LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review was conducted to examine previous research that was pertinent to this study. All literature was examined for content, underlying assumptions, and relevance to the context of this study. A computer assisted literature search was conducted of six electronic databases, including Academic Search Premier, CINAHL, Embase, Health Star, Medline, and PsychINFO. These databases were selected because of their focus on health and social science material. Search terms applied to each of these online databases included: homeless and youth/teens/adolescents; high-risk/ at-risk and youth/teen/adolescents; homeless and Aboriginal youth; cross cultural exchange; cross cultural connection; mentorship; support; peer support; social support; and evaluation.

In addition to electronic searches, hand searches were conducted of two peer-reviewed journals: Evaluation and Program Planning and The American Journal of Program Evaluation. Additional sources of information were obtained by reviewing reference lists of published articles; reading unpublished doctoral and master theses related to the topic of youth homelessness; and through conversations with health professionals and academic experts specializing in homelessness and Aboriginal health issues. A final approach to the collection of relevant literature was an online search of the internet using two search engines, Yahoo and Google, for programs currently being offered to high-risk or homeless youth. A total of two hundred and twenty-two resources were identified in the literature. Of these resources, forty-two were relevant to this research study and subsequently included in this report. Inclusion criteria for all resources were as followed:

a) Published between the years 1990 and 2005.

b) Available in the English language.

c) Involved a reciprocal relationship or cross cultural exchange between homeless youth and other members of society (for a definition of at-risk youth, see page 10 of this report). The age, ethnicity, gender, occupation, or sexual orientation of the society members was irrelevant, in terms of the literature review.

d) Involved community-based interventions. Clinical trials or interventions taking place in acute care settings were excluded from this study because the content tended to focus on chronic health conditions (i.e. diabetes, stroke rehabilitation, post-traumatic brain injury) and subsequently, was not applicable to the socio-environmental factors impacting homeless and at-risk youth.

e) Involved a detailed description of how the program was evaluated, including outcomes of interest, timing of the evaluation, and methods used to collect data about the program.

It should be noted that the preliminary review of the literature revealed only one study that involved a reciprocal relationship between post-secondary students and vulnerable youth (Chandler, 2000). Subsequently, the literature review was expanded to include mentorship, as well as other social support programs, offered to high-risk or otherwise vulnerable youth, including: youth of ethnic minority; youth with developmental or cognitive disabilities; youth living in foster care; and youth of low socio-economic status, so that a clear understanding of program evaluation could be achieved. Data collected from this review provided significant information about how support programs can be effectively evaluated for process, impact and outcome variables.

The following sections of this literature review will focus on methods used to evaluate other mentorship and peer support programs. Particular focus will be paid to: 1) the outcomes of interest within each program; 2) methods used for collecting data about each outcome (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed method design); 3) the use of a control or comparison group; 4) the timing of the evaluation (i.e. how often the evaluation was performed); and 5) whether or not a follow-up component was included.

Outcomes of Interest

In terms of outcomes of interests, the majority of mentorship or peer support programs focused on psycho-social characteristics and behavioral change, as the primary outcomes of the intervention. This included things such as: changes in self-esteem, self-efficacy, optimism towards life; confidence; levels of anxiety, hostility or aggression towards others, improvement in school performance, and positive relationships with family members and friends (Nyamathi et al., 2001; Tierney et al., 1995; Yancey et al., 2002).

An example of a mentorship program, which looked primarily at psycho-social characteristics, was an impact study by Tierney et al. (1995) of the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program. Tierney et al. (1995) found that youth who were matched with a mentor experienced positive changes in their level of hostility, their confidence level, their school performance, and their relationships with other people, as compared to their counterparts who remained on the waiting list for the program.

Nyamathi et al. (2001) evaluated the impact of peer, nurse-managed, and standard HIV risk reduction programs on psychosocial well-being and behavioral outcomes among homeless women. This study found that individuals and their partners in the peer-mentored program had greater psychosocial well-being, including lower levels of anxiety, hostility and depression, at six month follow-up, and were less likely to use non-injection drugs or alcohol than the other two groups.

Finally, in a population-based study of multiethnic teens living in Los Angeles County, California (Yancey et al., 2002), there is a positive correlation between role model selection and protective psychosocial characteristics. Youth who could identify a positive role-model in their life earned higher grades, had higher self-esteem, and had stronger ethnic identity than youth without role models.

The most common indicators used to measure the success of a mentorship or peer support intervention were changes in risk-taking behavior and the development of positive psycho-social characteristics. Some researchers focused on a reduction in drug or alcohol use, smoking, violent behavior and school drop out rates. In addition, there was a focus on increases in self-esteem, self-efficacy, optimism towards life, confidence, improvements in school performance, and positive relationships with family and friends (Nyamathi et al., 2001; Tierney et al., 1995; Yancey et al., 2002).

How Were Outcomes Measured?

While changes in behavior and psycho-social characteristics were the most common outcomes of interest, there was wide variation across studies in terms of *how* the outcomes were measured. Some programs used only qualitative measures, while others used primarily quantitative instruments. Still other programs used a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, in the form of a mixed method design.

Qualitative Methods

Programs that used only qualitative forms of measurement were relatively rare. In total, four studies were identified in the literature that included only qualitative data collection strategies. In these instances, interviews, open-ended questionnaires and self-reports were used to determine the impact of the intervention (de Anda, 2001; Waters, Clarke, Ingall, Dean-Jones, 2003). For example, a study by de Anda (2001) used only qualitative measures to evaluate the first year of a mentorship program, linking firefighters to at-risk high school students in a low income urban setting within Los Angeles County. The primary goal of the evaluation was to determine whether a relationship could form between a mentor and a mentee within the first year of the program. de Anda (2001) conducted semi-structured interviews with both the mentors and the mentees to learn about their subjective views regarding the mentoring relationship. Pre and post data were collected using the same set of standardized questions, so that comparisons could be made between the attitudes of participants before and after the mentoring relationship took place.

In another study, Waters et al. (2003) used questionnaires and telephone interviews to evaluate the effectiveness of a mentoring workshop for new nurse managers in New South Wales, Australia. The questionnaires were administered one week before and eight months after the workshop and included both closed and open response options. A follow-up telephone interview was also administered to program participants who expressed an interest by providing additional contact information. The telephone interviews followed a semi-structured format and included probes to explore general feelings about the program and practicalities of sustaining a mentor/mentee relationship.

Quantitative Methods

In contrast to the above examples, some programs used only quantitative measures to assess program outcomes (Roberts & Cotton, 1994; Royse, 1998). These measures tended to focus on behavior change, academic performance, and psycho-social functioning and generally included school records or formal survey instruments to measure variables such as self-esteem and risk-taking behaviors.

Roberts and Cotton (1994) focused on self-esteem and academic competence as two outcome variables for a mentorship program directed at African American high school students. Roberts and Cotton (1994) used the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory to measure self-esteem and collected grade point averages to assess for academic competence.

Royse (1998) also focused on self-esteem and academic performance as outcome variables of a mentorship program linking African American teenage boys to African American men in their thirties. The 10-item Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale was used to measure self-esteem, while school performances was evaluated using grade point averages, absences, and major disciplinary infractions. In addition, Royse (1998) chose to evaluate changes in attitude towards drugs and alcohol using the Drug Attitude Questionnaire (DAQ),

Mixed-method Design

The most common method used to evaluate mentorship or peer support interventions were mixed method designs. The majority of programs found in the literature combined both quantitative *and* qualitative measures to assess the impact of the intervention (Barron-McKeagney, Woody, & D'Souza, 2001; Hibbard, Cantor, Charatz, Rosenthal, Ashman, Gundersen, Ireland-Knight, Gordon, Avner, & Gartner, 2002; Terry, 1999; Webster et al., 2002; Westhues, Clarke, Watton, & St. Claire-Smith, 2001; Yancey, Siegel, & McDaniel, 2002).

Hibbard, et al., (2002) involved a community-based peer support program for individuals and their family members following a traumatic brain injury (TBI). Hibbard et al. (2002) used a retrospective quantitative interview to assess self-reported impacts of peer support on empowerment, quality of life, mood, skills and knowledge, and social supports. In addition, an in-depth qualitative interview with a subgroup of family members was used to supplement quantitative data and explore the specific benefits and limitations of the program.

Yancey et al. (2002) used qualitative interviews with both fixed and open-ended responses to determine emotional distress, problematic behavior, social stressors, coping resources, and demographic information from a population-based, multiethnic sample of adolescents in Los Angeles County, California. The qualitative information was supplemented by the 10-item Multi-Group Ethnic Identity Measure-Revised (MEIM-S) and 10-item Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, to add validity to the reports given in the qualitative interview.

Finally, Westhues et al. (2001) used a variety of quantitative data collection instruments to determine whether young females receiving the Building Positive Relations Program in conjunction with one-to-one mentoring from the Big Sister program faired better than females in the one-to-one mentoring program alone. Westhues et al. (2001) examined five variables: 1) self-esteem, 2) empathy, 3) positive peer and family relationships, 4) problem-solving skills, and 5) self-advocacy skills using paper and pencil tests. Self-esteem was measured using the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory; empathy was measured using a 10-item empathy subscale of the Social Skills Rating System; peer and family relationships were assessed by measuring secure attachments using the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA); self-advocacy skills were measured using the 10-item assertion subscale of the Social Skills Rating System, and social desirability was assess using an 8-item Lie Test incorporated into the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory with possible scores ranging from zero to eight. One qualitative measure was used to assess problem-solving skills. Westhues et al. (2001) used an adaptation of Robin and Foster's Problem-Solving Exercise to ask youth whether the problem was well-defined, what three possible solutions to the problem would be, and which solution they would choose and why.

According to de Anda (2001), the most effective evaluation tools combine both qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative methods are necessary to secure self-reported data on the participant's perspectives regarding the program's impact on intangibles, such as affect, attitudes, and values. The downfall with qualitative methods however, is that small sample sizes generally limit the generalizability of the findings (Trochim, 2001). Quantitative data, on the other hand, can obtain more concrete outcomes, such as school and career achievement, which can typically be generalized to other populations. Subsequently, a combination of both methods helps to increase the truthfulness of data findings and the generalizability to other populations.

Use of a Comparison or Control Group

A second source of variability between evaluations of different mentorship and peer support programs was in the use of a comparison or control group. Six out of twenty-four programs incorporated a control group into the evaluation design (LoSciuto, Rajala, Townsend, & Taylor, 1996; Roberts & Cotton, 1994; Royse, 1998; Tierney et al., 1995; Webster et al., 2002; Westhues et al., 2001). In many cases, the control group consisted of similar participants who were enrolled in the program, but received the intervention for shorter periods of time (Roberts & Cotton, 1994), or received only part of the intervention rather than the whole thing (LoSciuto et al., 1996; Westhues et al., 2001). In one instance, three schools served as the control group to compare and contrast program findings (Webster et al., 2002) and one program used a double-blinded design to prevent either group from knowing which one was receiving the intervention (Royse, 1998).

While comparison groups appeared to be a popular method for evaluating mentorship and peer support programs, literature on program evaluation offers a few reasons why this might *not* be the best option for programs directed at high-risk youth. Firstly, matching subjects could be extremely difficult because in many cases, youth come from very diverse backgrounds and have very unique experiences. Therefore, it would be hard to determine whether differences between the experimental group and the control group would be due to the intervention and not due to differences between the individuals themselves. Secondly, the assignment of youth to either an experiential or a control group could raise ethical concerns, since it would be unethical to deny youth the opportunity to participate in a mentorship program if they are in need of support or other specific interventions (Trochim, 2001). Therefore, while a comparison or control group might seem ideal, it may not be feasible in settings where matching subjects is extremely difficult or assignment to either a control or experiential group raises ethical concerns.

Pre-test/Post-test Design

One similarity between several of the program evaluations was the use of a baseline or pre-test measure to examine outcome variables prior to the implementation of the program. In most cases, the baseline measure coincided with the method used to collect data at the end of the intervention. Therefore, if self-esteem was measured by the

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale at the beginning of the program, it would be measured by the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale at the end of the program as well. The only study that did not include a baseline measure was a study by Terry (1999). In this case, the evaluator was only interested in gathering qualitative data from program participants at the end of the school year to determine whether they had positive experiences participating in the mentorship program and whether they would recommend that the program should be continued for another year. No specific outcomes regarding school performance or self-esteem were being evaluated in this particular instance.

Subsequently, any evaluation attempting to measure the impact of a mentorship or peer support intervention would require a baseline or pre-test measure, so that attitudes and behaviors at the beginning of the program could be compared to attitudes and behaviors at the end. Otherwise, changes as a result of the program would be difficult to assess.

Evaluation Frequency and Long-term Follow-up

The timing of evaluations varied considerably from one program to the other, with some programs incorporating longer-term follow-up than others. A couple of the mentorship programs used a pre-test, a post-test, and a follow-up measure three months after the intervention was complete (Roberts & Cotton, 1994; Westhues et al., 2001). Other programs kept with a similar design but extended the follow-up assessment to six or eight months (Waters et al., 2003; Webster et al., 2002). One program extended the follow-up even longer to include follow-up two and three years after the intervention had been initiated (Royse, 1998).

Evidence suggests that in order for outcomes to occur as a result of a mentoring relationship, a minimum of fifteen months must pass after the intervention has been implemented (Royse, 1998). This information suggests that more long-term evaluations are needed to accurately assess the impact of a support program on psycho-social characteristics and behavior change.

It should also be noted that none of the mentorship programs incorporated an ongoing or continuous evaluation, whereby the intervention was evaluated on a weekly or monthly basis. The most frequently programs were evaluated was at the beginning and end of the intervention, plus long-term follow-up in some cases.

Future Evaluations

Other than the study by Grossman and Tierney (1995), which incorporated an eighteen month follow-up, few studies have been able to demonstrate long-term benefits of mentorship programs. The long-term effectiveness of mentorship programs needs to be studied in order to determine if there is any impact on the growth and development of youth over time. In addition, with the exception of the study conducted by LoSciuto et al. (1996), which assessed the impact of mentorship program on 562 grade-six students, many evaluations of mentorship program incorporate only small sample sizes, thereby limiting the ability to generalize findings to other populations of at-risk youth.

Several of the studies measuring the effectiveness of mentorship programs used qualitative methods, such as reports by external personnel (i.e. school teachers) (Blum & Jones, 1993), or self-reports of the participants themselves (de Anda, 2001; Grossman & Tierney, 1995). While qualitative data can be useful to gain a rich picture of how participants felt about the mentorship program, it is also important to supplement anecdotal evidence with quantitative data, such as records of academic achievement, school attendance, or participation in other community programs, and by monitoring changes in motivation, behavior, and attitudes (Terry, 1999).

Evidence suggests that outcome variables should be assessed using multiple methods of evaluation in multiple environmental domains (LoScuito et al., 1996). This includes formative evaluation strategies, which would help to ensure that programs are being delivered as planned, so that outcome variables are associated with program implementation. In addition, recommendations have been made to include outcome variables that are reflective of the needs and interests of at-risk youth (Blechman, 1992; Mech, Pryde, & Rycraft, 1995). This supports the use of participatory evaluation, so that youth can be actively engaged in the process of designing the evaluation tool.

Researchers and health care providers need to evaluate the effectiveness of providing social support to homeless youth, and the impact of these programs for health and social services in the community. Such evaluations need to include not only changes in risk behavior, but also demonstrate changes in the process leading to outcomes, such as psychological functioning, knowledge, and motivation to change.

Based on these findings, it appears that an evaluation tool for a Cultural Exchange Program should include at least five specific components: 1) a pre-post design with a test-retest interval lasting a minimum of three months, preferably longer; 2) outcome variables that coincide with the objectives of the program so that the evaluation is reflective of the program design; 3) multivariate designs so that the evaluation measures more than one variable across more than one domain; 4) consistency amongst methods used (i.e. using the same set of standardized questions for both the pre and post-test measures, so comparisons could be made between participants at the beginning and end of the program); and 5) the use of both qualitative and quantitative measures to evaluate program effectiveness.

CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY

The most important decision in the research process is choosing which method to use to answer the research question(s). Several criteria must be considered when selecting the research method, including the purpose of the study, the nature of participants, and the question(s) that need to be answered (Field & Morse, 1985). In this chapter, the design and methods used to collect data for the development of the evaluation framework are discussed. Rationale for selecting qualitative research methods, including a grounded theory approach, are provided. In addition, strategies to recruit research participants and collect, synthesize, and analyze data are described. Measures taken to optimize methodological rigor and ethical conduct of the research study are also presented.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is a vast and complex area of methodology, which has grown out of a wide range disciplines, including anthropology, sociology, psychology, and political science (Creswall, 1998; Mason, 1999). Most researchers agree that qualitative research involves an interpretive and naturalistic approach to the subject matter (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994), meaning that qualitative researchers study phenomena in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of them in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research is based on the premise that gaining knowledge about humans is impossible without describing their experience as it is lived by the individuals themselves.

One common characteristic of qualitative research is the inductive collection and analysis of data, whereby the researcher enters the research environment without preconceived ideas about what the outcomes should be, and allows the data to transpire from the participants themselves (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Information collected this way allows for the generation of new questions, hypotheses, or theories about the phenomenon being studied, and results in a body of information that is innovative, rich, and descriptive in nature (Creswall, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

To design an evaluation framework that reflected the lived experiences of university students, youth transitioning out of homelessness, service providers, and staff from funding agencies, qualitative research methods were employed. Using an inductive approach to data collection allowed for an accurate understanding of the circumstances, from the perspectives of potential program participants, to be obtained.

Grounded Theory Approach

The label 'qualitative research' is an umbrella term to cover an array of interpretive techniques, seeking to describe, code, and understand the meaning of naturally occurring phenomena in the social world (Van Maanen, 1983). One method of qualitative inquiry is *grounded theory.* Grounded theory is consistent with qualitative research paradigms, in that it involves the study of human behavior and social interaction. However, grounded theory also includes its own set of criteria for systematically collecting, analyzing, and coding data, with the intent of generating a theory that relates to a particular setting (Charmaz, 2000; Chenitz & Swanson, 1986; Strauss and Corbin, 1990, 1998). Theory in this case is defined as a "set of well-developed concepts, which together constitute an integrated framework that can be used to explain or predict phenomena" (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p.28).

A researcher applying grounded theory does not begin a project with a preconceived theory in mind (unless his or her purpose is to elaborate or expand on an existing theory). Rather, the researcher begins with an area of study and allows the theory to emerge from the data itself (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Stern, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998). It is believed that theory derived from the data is more likely to resemble reality than theory derived by putting together a series of concepts based on experience or solely through speculation (Chenitz & Swanson, 1986; Glaser, 1998; Strauss and Corbin, 1990, 1998).

Rationale for Using Grounded Theory

One reason for choosing qualitative research is to present a detailed picture of a topic that needs to be explored and has not been widely covered in the literature (Creswall, 1994). Grounded theory is an appropriate method for addressing research questions about complex relationships or new areas of inquiry because it offers a systematic approach to the collection and analysis of data, in order to gain a better understanding of what is going on (Stern, 1994).

To date, few mentorship and peer support programs have incorporated evaluation tools from the onset of the program, in order to measure the impact of the intervention (Mech et al., 1995; Pryde & Mech, 1995; Sidoruk, 1995; Silva-Wayne, 1995; Webster et al., 2000; Westhues et al., 2001; Yancey et al., 2002). In addition, there appears to be limited evidence of evaluations that have been designed using input from relevant stakeholder groups. Subsequently, the development of an evaluation framework, which reflects the needs and interests of university students, youth transitioning out of homelessness, service providers, and members of local funding agencies would represent a new area of inquiry that could be systematically explored through a grounded theory approach.

Grounded theory was also selected because it offered the chance to generate concepts that really made sense to what was going on with the population under study (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The researcher of this study was drawn to the empowering nature of the approach, since results are grounded in the data, rather than being shaped by other theories or preconceived ideas. Through the constant comparative process, the conceptual level of the study was raised, allowing the researcher to continually develop a larger and less bounded picture of the topic being studied.

Research Design

The primary objective of this research study was to design an evaluation framework for the Cultural Exchange Program, which would reflect the needs and interests of relevant stakeholder groups. Data collected for this study occurred in two phases. The first phase of data collection occurred throughout June, July and August of 2004, while the second phase took place throughout February and March of 2005. The purpose of the first phase of data collection was to gather information to structure the Cultural Exchange Program. In addition, information was collected to assist in the development of an evaluation framework, which would measure process and outcome variables associated with the Cultural Exchange Program. Questions concerning both program design and program evaluation are provided in Appendix B1, B2, and B3.

The purpose of the second phase of data collection was to validate and expand upon findings from phase one of the study with regard to the design of the evaluation framework. An adjustment to the second phase of data collection was that informants were given a brief description of the Cultural Exchange Program prior to beginning data collection. By presenting an overview of the program first, informants were able to provide more detailed information about how the evaluation framework could be structured. Questions for phase two of the study elaborated on specific concepts that emerged from phase one of the study, including flexibility, internal versus external evaluators, mixed-method design, ongoing evaluation, follow-up, and the inclusion of artistic activities. Questions posed to participants in phase two of the study are presented in Appendix C.

Research Questions

The research question and sub-questions guiding this study were:

"What do university students, youth transitioning out of homelessness, service providers, and staff from local funding agencies want in an evaluation framework to assess the Cultural Exchange Program?"

d) What process, impact, or outcome variables will demonstrate success?
e) How can this be accounted for in the design of the evaluation framework (i.e. what methods of data collection should be used)?
f) Do university students, homeless youth, service providers and funding agencies share similar perspectives on what constitutes program success? If not, how can the evaluation framework be designed to suit all of their needs?

Recruitment and Sampling

Consistent with a grounded theory approach, two sampling methods were used to recruit participants into this study: 1) purposeful sampling and 2) theoretical sampling. Recruitment measures remained consistent throughout phase one and phase two of data collection. Each strategy is described and discussed below.

Purposeful Sampling

Purposeful sampling is defined as a calculated decision to sample a specific population based on preconceived ideas (Cutcliffe, 2000). In order to develop an evaluation framework for the Cultural Exchange Program, a purposeful sample of four groups of informants were selected. These included:

1) Students from the University of Alberta
2) Youth currently residing at, or receiving services through Cunningham Place
3) Service Providers currently working at Cunningham Place, and
4) Staff from local funding agencies in and around the city of Edmonton, Alberta

These participants were selected because it was believed that they had valuable knowledge to contribute to the evaluation design, based on their personal experiences (Cutcliffe, 2000; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) either being homeless, working with homeless youth, funding programs for homeless youth, or being a full-time student at a university.

University Students

All students in the study were recruited through the University of Alberta, which is a post-secondary academic institution located in Edmonton, Alberta. All recruitment took place on university campus through presentations given to classes in Human Ecology, Native Studies, and Health Promotion Studies. With permission of the course instructor, the investigator of this study attended the class and gave a brief overview of the research study. Afterwards, the investigator passed around a sign-up sheet for students to fill out if they were interested in participating in a focus group session. The investigator returned to the classroom at the end of the class to collect the sign up sheet and to answer any additional questions the students might have had. In one instance, a focus group was held immediately after the class ended because four students were able and willing to participate in the focus group at that time. For the remaining focus groups, interested students were contacted by either phone or email, and a convenient time and location was established for the focus group session to occur. All focus groups were scheduled to take place in the focus group room of the Human Ecology Building, aside from the focus group that occurred immediately after the class. Each focus group session lasted approximately one hour. It should be noted that further recruitment of students occurred through snowball sampling, whereby students in Human Ecology, Native Studies, and Health Promotion Studies contacted the researcher through the recommendations of their friends.

Criteria for selection of university students included:

1) That they were currently registered in one of three programs: Human Ecology, Native Studies, or Health Promotion Studies.
2) That they were in their third or fourth year or in graduate studies of one of the three programs.
3) That they had taken a strong concentration of courses in the area of health, wellness, family, relational counseling, social issues, Aboriginal culture, or community functioning.
4) That they were able to communicate clearly in the English language.

Students who fulfilled these four criteria were expected to have some background knowledge that was relevant to the research topic being investigated. In addition, higher level students were expected to have more personal experience and prior education to reflect on, which would add depth to the data collected. Knowledge of issues related to health, wellness, family, relational counseling, social issues, Aboriginal culture, and community functioning were assessed by the students themselves. Any student who felt that they possessed sufficient knowledge in these areas was welcome to participate in the study.

Youth Transitioning Out of Homelessness

In both phases of data collection youth were recruited through Cunningham Place. Cunningham Place represents a transitional housing facility for homeless youth on the east side of downtown Edmonton. Cunningham Place was established over the summer of 2004, as a result of a partnership between Native Counseling Services of Alberta (NCSA) and the Edmonton Housing Trust Fund, Edmonton Joint Planning Committee on Housing, The City of Edmonton, Correctional Services of Canada, and Human Resources and Development Canada. The facility shares a similar mandate to NCSA, which is to promote wellness to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal individuals, families, and communities through restorative justice, social programming, community development, and wellness initiatives (Personal communication, Marg Milicevic, January, 2005). Cunningham Place offers living space to 52 youth, for a maximum of three years. All residents are between 18 and 29 years of age and are currently striving for some form of personal development, either through employment service or preparation for independent living. Cunningham Place offered a safe, secure, and structured environment where interviews and focus group sessions could take place.

Recruitment of youth used two different methods: 1) direct communication and 2) poster presentations. Using direct communication, the researcher visited Cunningham Place on three separate occasions and asked youth directly if they would be willing to participate in a focus group session. Youth who agreed to participate were told of the time and the location for the focus group session. Based on the recommendations of service providers at Cunningham Place, all focus group sessions were scheduled to occur on the same day that the recruitment took place. This was to help avoid a lack of participation due to the transient nature of the youth population. Similar to university students, some additional youth requested to participate in the study after hearing about it through friends at Cunningham Place. Food and beverages were offered to youth during focus group sessions that occurred during a meal hour, however incentives were not advertised to youth in advance of their participation.

A secondary recruitment method was the use of posters displayed within Cunningham Place (see Appendix D). Youth who read the posters could contact the researcher by phone or email to acquire more information about the study and to arrange a meeting time. It should be noted that all youth who participated in the study were recruited through direct communication. None of the study participants were recruited through the posters displayed within the facility.

None of the staff at Cunningham Place were involved in the recruitment of youth at Cunningham Place and no information was given to staff about which youth were participating. All focus groups took place in a secure and comfortable room in Cunningham Place where responses could not be overheard by individuals outside the study.

Inclusion criteria for the youth included:

1) That they were between the ages of 18 and 29;
2) That they were absolutely homeless (i.e. living on the streets), living in shelters, or living in transitional housing (a.k.a. Cunningham Place); and
3) That they were able to communicate clearly in the English language

Youth transitioning out of homelessness were purposely selected for this project because their lived experiences make them the most qualified individuals to provide accurate information about what youth would need from a Cultural Exchange Program.

Service Providers

All of the service providers participating in the study were also recruited through Cunningham Place. At the time of the study, Cunningham Place had a total of 7 service providers and one Program Coordinator providing services to youth. All service providers at Cunningham Place were targeted for interviews during phase one of the study. Interviews proceeded until all willing service providers had participated in the study or until saturation had been reached. A total of 5 service providers contributed their responses to phase one of the study. This did not include the Program Coordinator at Cunningham Place.

For the phase two of the research project, a purposeful sample of two service providers were recruited through Cunningham Place. These service providers were selected based on their prior interest in the research project, their involvement with the Community Advisory Team for the *LINKS Project* and their willingness to participate in an interview session.

During phase one and phase two of data collection, service providers were recruited through direct communication by asking them if they would like to participate in an interview session. All interviews took place in an office at Cunningham Place, which was secure, comfortable, and easily accessible to staff, and where other staff can not hear or witness who was participating in the study.

Inclusion criteria for service providers included:

1) That they were a full-time employee at Cunningham Place.

2) That they were actively involved in providing services to homeless youth.

3) That they were able to communicate clearly in the English language.

Funding Agencies

Two individuals currently working in local funding agencies in and around the City of Edmonton were approached for participation in phase two of this study. Both individuals worked in organizations that had supported programs for homeless youth in the past. Therefore, both staff members were able to provide valuable information about what an evaluation framework should include to be of interest to organizations funding community interventions directed at high-risk youth.

Staff from the local funding agencies were asked directly, through phone conversations and email messaging, if they would be willing to participate in an interview. One of the interviews took place in the funding agency where the individual worked, in a secure office space where other individuals can not hear or witness what was being said. The other interview took place over the phone, with an individual who worked at a funding agency outside the Edmonton area. Consequently, this interview was not tape-recorded, but field notes were maintained throughout the interview process and recorded immediately after the interview was complete.

Inclusion criteria for staff from funding agencies included:

1) That they were currently employed by an agency which funds initiatives for homeless youth in or around the City of Edmonton;

2) That they had worked with project funding for at least two years; and

3) That they were able to communicate clearly in the English language.

Theoretical Sampling

The remainder of participants in this study were recruited using theoretical sampling. Theoretical sampling is defined as data gathering driven by concepts derived from the evolving theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In theoretical sampling, the researcher simultaneously collects, codes, and analyzes data. Based on data that has already been collected, the researcher decides what subsequent data is needed to in order to further develop the theory. The purpose of this approach is to gather data that will maximize variation among concepts and that will add density to the themes that have already been identified (Mellion & Tovin, 2002).

For phase one and phase two of this study, theoretical sampling took place after a series of interviews and focus groups had been completed and analyzed. In phase one, two additional interviews were conducted with service providers to ensure that all categories were well supported. No additional focus groups were conducted with either university students or youth transitioning out of homelessness. In phase two, one staff member from a local funding agency was contacted in order to supplement information in regards to the design of the evaluation framework. This individual was contacted on two separate occasions, once by telephone and once by email messaging. No additional interviews or focus groups sessions were conducted with university students, youth, or service providers at Cunningham Place.

Saturation

In grounded theory, sampling ends when nothing new has been said about the concepts under exploration and the collected data have reached a saturation point (Cutcliffe, 2000; Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Saturation is considered the point where collecting additional data seems counterproductive to the generation of the theory, in that the new data does not add any more strength to the concepts or themes that have been developed. Saturation can also be reached if the researcher runs out of time, money or both (Mellion & Tovin, 2002).

In phase one, saturation was reached after three focus groups were held with university students and after five interviews were conducted with service providers at Cunningham Place. The Program Coordinator and the two remaining service providers at Cunningham Place were not approached for an interview because the LINKS research team agreed that at that point, sufficient data had been collected. Only two focus group sessions were held with youth transitioning out of homelessness in phase one of the study. While a third focus group would have added strength to the data collected, limited time and resources prevented the researchers from doing so. One of the focus groups conducted with the homeless youth was very large, containing a total of 11 participants. The LINKS research team felt that the large size of the first focus group compensated for the lack of a third focus group because the opinions of a large number of youth had been represented.

In the second phase of the study, the responses given by university students, youth transitioning out of homelessness, service providers, and members of local funding agencies were taken collectively. Saturation was reached after three individual interviews and one focus group session had been performed. The interviews included one member of a local funding agency, two university students, and two youth from Cunningham Place. Data collection continued however, to include three more interviews to ensure that all stakeholder groups were represented in the overall findings. The remaining three interviews included two service providers from Cunningham Place and one member of a funding agency outside the City of Edmonton. The additional three interviews confirmed prior data collected in the first and second phases of the study.

Data Collection Strategies

Glaser and Strauss (1967) emphasized that the process of generating theory was independent of the kind of data used and therefore, a variety of data collection methods could be suitable. To develop an evaluation tool for the LINKS Project, five methods of data collection were used. These strategies include: 1) participant observation; 2) meetings with the Community Advisory Team (CAT) and the LINKS Project Team; 3) interviews; 4) focus group sessions; and 5) casual conversations with study participants before and after formal interviews took place. Each strategy will be described and discussed in the next portion of this chapter.

Participant Observation

Over the course of five months (i.e. January 2004 - May 2004), the researcher engaged in weekly participant observation at Cunningham Place, for approximately two to three hours each week. The term 'participant observation' refers to a method of gathering data, which involves the researcher immersing him or herself in a setting and systematically observing factors within that setting, including interactions, relationships, actions and events (Farrington & Robinson, 1999; Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Mason, 1999; Whyte, 1979). By being immersed in the study location, the researcher was able to see, hear, and begin to experience reality as the participants did, therefore allowing the her to learn directly from her own experience in the setting.

Performing participant observation at Cunningham Place had several benefits. Firstly, it helped the researcher to develop a better understanding of the social dynamics of the facility. This, in turn, allowed for data collection efforts to be more inclusive and specific to the needs of participants. Secondly, participant observation provided an excellent opportunity for the researcher to familiarize herself with informants, and for the informants to become comfortable around her. It was hoped that the more comfortable service providers and youth became around the researcher, the more likely they would be to participate in the study and be open to sharing ideas in the interviews and focus group sessions.

According to the literature, techniques for collecting data through observation can take on many forms. For the purpose of generating information about the social ecology of Cunningham Place, two methods of data collection were used: 1) field notes and 2) diagrams. Field notes were used to document what the researcher observed. They contained the researcher's thoughts and feelings, in addition to practical descriptions of the study setting (Mason, 1999). An example of field notes taken from Cunningham Place are provided in Appendix E. Diagrams were also used to add detail and contextual understanding to what was being observed at the facility. While the diagrams were very basic, they provided a reference point for the researcher to go back to once away from the research setting. Both of these techniques contributed to an audit trail that was developed by the researcher, which added strength to the validity of data findings.

Discussions with the Community Advisory Team (CAT) and the LINKS Project Team

Another strategy used to collect data for this study were monthly meetings with the Community Advisory Team (CAT) and the LINKS Project Team. The CAT and LINKS Project Team consisted of university students, researchers, service providers, policy makers, and leaders in the Aboriginal community, all of whom had an invested interest in issues affecting homeless youth. During these meetings, significant findings related to program design and evaluation were discussed. These meetings lasted throughout the duration of the study to monitor the integrity of the data collection process and to problem solve challenging situations. Overall, information shared during these meetings helped to shape and evolve the evaluation framework.

Interviews and Focus Group Sessions

While participant observation, as well as monthly team meetings, helped to educate the researcher about the social ecology of Cunningham Place, the primary mode of data collection, by which the evaluation framework was based, were individual interviews and focus group sessions.

In phase one of this study, focus group sessions were conducted with university students and youth transitioning out of homelessness, while individual interviews took place with service providers at Cunningham Place. All of the interviews and focus group sessions were facilitated by two graduate students: 1) the student designing the Cultural Exchange Program and 2) the author of this paper, who was responsible for the design of an evaluation framework to coincide with the program. Questions asked during phase one of this study reflected both the program and evaluation design and these questions are presented in Appendices B1, B2, and B3.

For phase two of this study, only individual interviews were used, with the exception of a combined interview with two youth from Cunningham Place. At the beginning of each interview, informants were provided with a description of the Cultural Exchange Program. At this time, each informant had the opportunity to ask questions or seek clarification about the program. Once each interviewee was satisfied with his or her understanding of the program, the interview began. All interviews were performed solely by the investigator of this study, and focused only the development of the evaluation framework for the Cultural Exchange Program. Key informants included students at the University of Alberta, youth currently residing at or receiving services through Cunningham Place, staff working at Cunningham Place, and individuals from local funding agencies in and around the City of Edmonton. The semi-structured questions guiding phase two of this study are outlined in Appendix C.

Both individual interviews and focus group sessions were applied to this research study to enhance the quality of the data collected. The investigator believed that individual interviews and focus group sessions would allow for greater depth of information because participants could elaborate on each question and offer new insight based on their unique knowledge and expertises. The investigator felt that focus group sessions would be particularly useful, given that several informants could be interviewed at one time, thereby creating a more cost-effective and time efficient strategy (Kleiber, 2004).

Deciding which data collection strategy to use was entirely related to the type of informants being assessed. The investigator believed that different methods would be suitable for different groups of informants. Individual interviews were considered to be more suitable for service providers at Cunningham Place because only a limited number of staff were available for participation in this study and several discrepancies existed between staff schedules, making the coordination of a focus group session quite difficult. In contrast, focus group sessions were considered to be more suitable for university students and youth transitioning out of homelessness because the social nature of these sessions would be less intimidating, thereby allowing for greater participation and a range of opinions to surface (Palys, 1997).

Casual Conversations

The final sources of data for this study were casual conversations with participants before and after each interview and focus group session. These natural conversations enabled university students, youth, and service providers to speak more candidly about their perceptions of the Cultural Exchange Program. In addition, it allowed quieter members of each focus group to share ideas they did not have a change to express during the formal interview process. The investigator maintained personal notes throughout the data collection process, which included ideas expressed during these conversations. All of these conversations were included with the final results of this study.

Data Recording

With the exception of a few outstanding circumstances, all interviews and focus group sessions were audio-taped using a digital tape recorder. Each audio-tape was transcribed within two or three days of the interview or focus group session and each transcript was accompanied by a set of field notes, outlining the investigator's feelings and observations during the interview process. Immediate transcription facilitated the successful generation of grounded theory because the data were fresh in the reviewer's mind and therefore less likely to be forgotten or altered by alternative sources of information. All data collected through interviews and focus group sessions were transcribed verbatim, with a margin included to the right-hand side of the page for memos and note-taking during the data analysis process.

Data Analysis

Once data had been transcribed, the investigator of this study began the process of analyzing the data. According to Strauss & Corbin, (1998) grounded theory relies on a systematic approach to data analysis and includes open, axial and selective coding, as well as the application of the constant comparison method. Although there are separate types of coding, the process is cyclical and fluid in that it can shift from open to axial to selective coding, and then back again, if necessary (McCann & Clark, 2003).

Open Coding

The first stage of data analysis was open coding. In this study, open coding involved line-by-line analysis of each transcript, to identify significant pieces of information related to the design of an evaluation framework for the Cultural Exchange Program. As similar concepts began to immerge from within each transcript, a **code** was developed. Once a code was identified, it was color coded and recorded with a short description, including its position in the transcript. Hand written or typed memos were recorded in the right-hand column beside each code, to express ideas, generate questions, or provide clarification. The researcher continued the process by checking the rest of the text for all possible instances of new codes, or the presence of already existing ones.

An example of coding that occurred in this study was *attendance taking*. Throughout phase one of this study, several university students suggested taking attendance throughout the program to monitor how frequently university students and youth were engaging in program activities. This idea was echoed by service providers at Cunningham Place, who believed that high attendance rates would indicate a greater interest and level of enjoyment on the part of the youth. As comments around attendance surfaced in a variety of transcripts, a code eventually was developed to represent these points.

Once a code began to accumulate, the investigator followed the constant comparison method and repeatedly compared and contrasted codes within and between each other until the basic properties of a **category** were defined (Mellion & Tovin, 2002). Categories depict the problems, issues, concerns, and matters that are most important to those being studied (Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998). Once categories were developed, they were differentiated in terms of their dimensions and properties, which also led to the production of **sub-categories** (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

The production of a category in this study can best be described by building on the example previously given. The code *monitoring attendance rates* was compared to other similar codes, such as *monitoring late leaving, monitoring participation rates,* and *monitoring the execution of program activities.* When these codes were taken collectively, they showed that process variables should part of the evaluation design. Informants felt it was important to assess whether the program was implemented as intended and whether it reached the intended recipients. Together, these codes formed a category called *process evaluation.*

Axial coding

In axial coding, the process begun in open coding is continued, by relating categories to their subcategories and linking different categories together (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Axial coding is different from open coding in that it aims to classify concepts by grouping or clustering concepts together into abstract categories (McCann & Clark, 2003). For example, the category *process evaluation* related to another category, *outcome evaluation,* which emphasized the need to evaluate outcome variables, such as relationship formation, knowledge, skills, and trying new things. These two categories taken together, lead to what would become the *content* of the evaluation framework.

Open and axial coding are not sequential acts, but proceeded together in a fluid process throughout the analysis. This process can almost be described as a zig zag pattern (see Figure 3), whereby information is consistently being reviewed within and between different groups of informants, until each category is re-evaluated, adjusted, and fine-tuned.

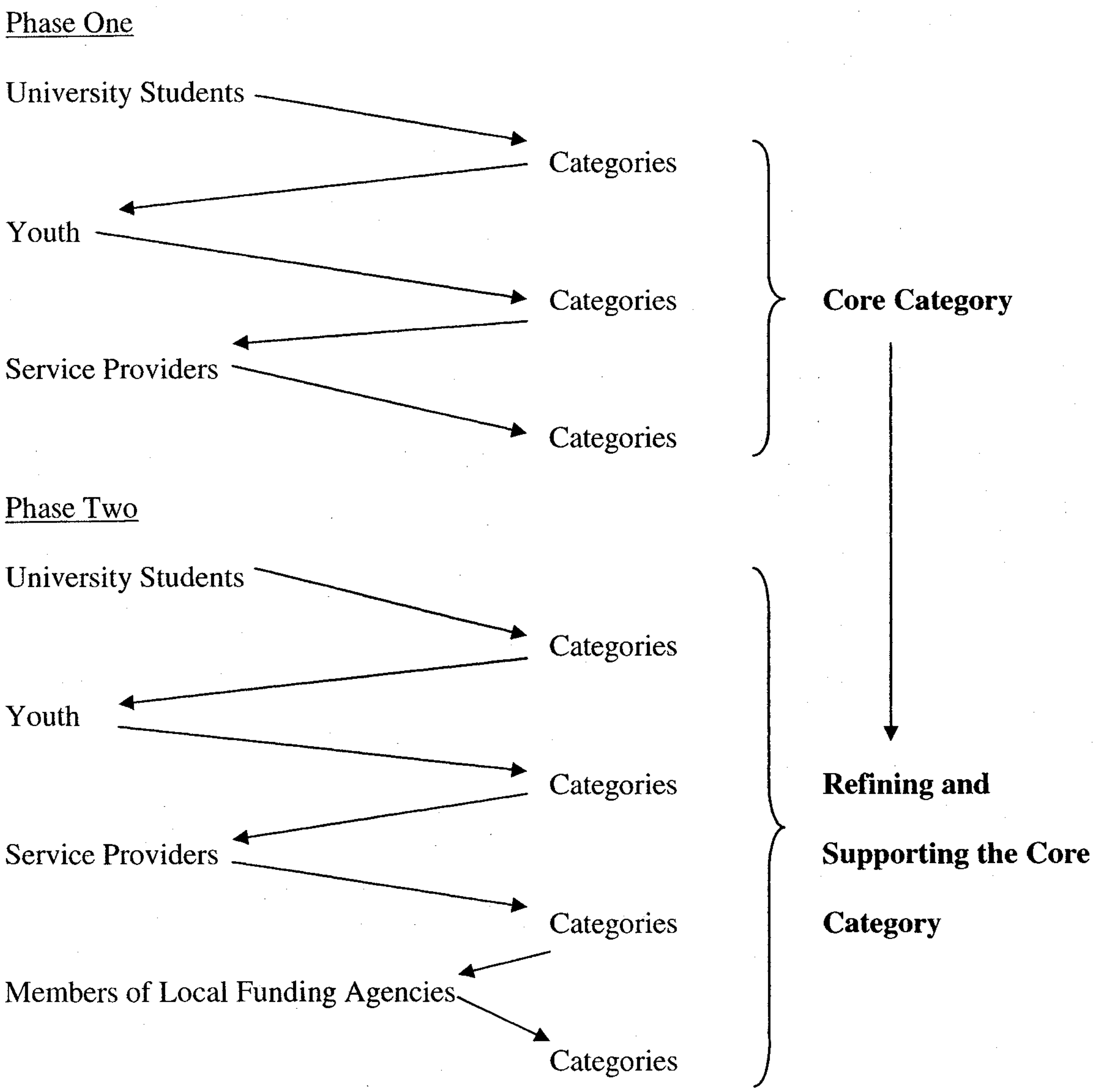


Figure 3: The zig zag process for analyzing data

Selective Coding

Selective coding is the term used by Strauss and Corbin (1998) to describe the process of integrating and refining any theory derived from the data. The first step in this study was to determine the central category that represented the main theme of the research. In terms of the evaluation framework for the Cultural Exchange Program, the central category was *flexible ongoing feedback.* This category was selected because it emphasized the importance of using different data collection strategies in the ongoing evaluation of the Cultural Exchange Program.

Once the central category had been identified, the theory was refined to support this concept (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This occurred through reviewing internal consistency, identifying gaps in the logic, and supplementing or omitting any poorly developed categories that did not contribute to the theory.

Inter-rater Reliability

To further refine the central category for this study, two researchers were used in the analysis of data findings. In the first phase of this study, data analysis was performed by two Master's students, one of which was responsible for the design of Cultural Exchange Program, while the other was responsible for the design of the evaluation framework. Each student analyzed the data independently, than the two students came together to discuss their results. Categories were rearranged and refined until agreement was reached between the two students.

In phase two, the researcher responsible for the development of the evaluation tool independently analyzed the data. When uncertain about a category, the researcher consulted with the Master's student from phase one of the study, with members of the

LINKS research team, as well as with her thesis supervisor. A review of the literature also helped the researcher to determine the central category amongst the data.

Validation

The final stage of theory building was validation (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This was accomplished in the present study using three methods: 1) comparing the theory to the raw data; 2) comparing the theory to information found through a comprehensive literature review; and 3) presenting the theory back to a sample of participants for their reactions. A total of five stakeholders provided feedback to validate data findings. These stakeholders included two university students, two service providers and one member of a local funding agency, all of which participated in phase two of the study. No youth transitioning out of homelessness, from either phase one or phase two of data collection, provided feedback to validate final results.

Methodological Rigor

Many qualitative researchers (Field & Morse, 1985; Krefting, 1991; LeCompt & Goetz, 1982; Sandelowski, 1986; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998) agree that the widely accepted standards for judging quantitative research must be redefined to fit the realities of qualitative study, including the complexities of studying social phenomenon (Haig, 1995; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). As Krefting (1991) points out, "researchers need alternative models appropriate to qualitative designs that ensure rigor without sacrificing the relevance of the qualitative research" (p.215). To assess the methodological rigor of this study, three attributes were assessed, including credibility, or truth value, consistency, and applicability.

Credibility

Credibility, or truth value, is a measure of the confidence the researcher has in the truth of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility resides in the accurate representation of human experiences as they are lived and perceived by the subjects beings studied (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Therefore, the truthfulness of a study can best be determined if the theory is presented clearly and if the participant's social world is described so vividly, that readers "can almost literally see and hear its people" (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p.228). One method of increasing the credibility of information collected in this study was the use of participant observation prior to data collection. The researcher believed that if participants recognized the researcher as someone wanting to learn about their experiences, they would be more likely to share their experiences and ideas openly, thereby increasing the likelihood that the information collected was truthful (Field & Morse, 1985).

Another method used to increase credibility of results was documentation, also known as an audit trail (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Rodgers & Cowles, 1993), or a methodological log (Patton, 1997). In this study, the researcher maintained an audit trail using three different methods. Firstly, the author maintained diagrams and field notes throughout the participant observation at Cunningham Place. Secondly, conceptual field notes were written immediately following each interview and focus group session, to supplement the audio-taped material and to help the researcher to organize her thoughts. Thirdly, code notes and operational memos were logged throughout the data analysis process and typed in the right-hand margin of the interview and focus group transcripts. All three methods allowed the researcher to examine her feelings, thoughts, and decisions throughout data analysis. It also served to provide a reference for the researcher to return to when examining the rationale for coding decisions.

Dependability

A second criterion for determining methodological rigor is the dependability of results. Dependability is similar to reliability, in that it refers to the accuracy of information over time (Field & Morse, 1985; Trochim, 2001). In qualitative research, consistency of data is evaluated on the basis of dependability (Field & Morse, 1985; Krefting, 1991). Measures that were taken in this study to enhance dependability includes the coding and recoding of the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998) and having informants review the researcher's interpretation of the data (Field & Morse, 1985). Once the evaluation framework was designed, all informants were sent a copy through email or postal mail. Feedback from participants helped to re-structure the evaluation tool, so it more accurately reflected the opinions of relevant stakeholders. By validating data with informants, the researcher was able to determine if opinions were shared, and therefore be more confident that the results were an accurate reflection of the population being studied.

Applicability

The final method used to assess methodological rigor was the applicability of results. It should be noted that the purpose of this study was not to ensure that findings were transferable to other settings, but to discover the basic concepts and categories in the data that related to the design of an evaluation tool. Findings from this qualitative study provided information about ways to evaluate a Cultural Exchange Program linking university students to homeless youth, however findings from this study may not be applicable to other populations in other circumstances and situations. Future research will be required to confirm or verify recommendations made about evaluating Cultural Exchange Programs as a result of this study.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for this study was sought through the Human Research Ethics Board at the University of Alberta. Site approval to conduct research at Cunningham Place was obtained through the CEO of Native Counseling Services of Alberta (NCSA). In addition, permission to conduct focus group sessions with students in the Department of Human Ecology, School of Native Studies, and Centre for Health Promotion Studies was approved by the Department Chair of each program.

Informed Consent

Prior to engaging in an interview or focus group session, every research participant was asked to read an information sheet (Appendix F1, F2, F3 & F4) and fill out a consent form (Appendix G1, G2, G3 & G4). At this time the researcher explained the study and answered any additional questions that the participants had. Participants were also be informed that they were free to decline participation in the study, or refuse to answer a question at any point during the interview or focus group session, without consequence.

Confidentiality

All data was kept in a locked filing cabinet, which only the Principal Investigators, Research Assistants and the Project Coordinator had access to. Only the researcher knew the identity of the participants, and numerical codes were assigned to protect the identity of each participant in the study. The data from this study will be kept for a period of seven years as required by the University of Alberta.

While several steps were taken to help protect the human rights of all participants, the researcher acknowledges that this study deals with a particularly vulnerable population (i.e. youth transitioning out of homelessness), and therefore represents an ethically sensitive research topic. Lee (1990, 1993) defines sensitive research as that which poses a threat to those involved, including both the participants and the researcher. Lee (1990) identifies people who are oppressed, disadvantaged, or less powerful as sensitive subjects. The researcher of this study acknowledges that tremendous sensitivity and diplomacy had to be displayed when working with all informants. Foreseeable ethical risks in this study included distress around questions concerning homelessness. While questions did not explore the youth's experiences being homeless in detail, it was suspected that the interview questions could cause youth to reflect on their homeless status, which may be embarrassing or painful and therefore, threaten their overall self perception or integrity (Robley, 1995).

Any possible harm to participants in this study was minimized by using a sensitive and flexible approach during the interview or focus group session (Brannen, 1995, Kylma et al, 1999). The researcher demonstrated empathy towards each informant and displayed holistic listening skills, so that participants felt free to express their ideas and opinions openly. The researcher also reminded participants that they did not have to answer questions that they found too personal or distressing.

Summary

Grounded theory was an appropriate method for collecting information on the needs of university students, youth transitioning out of homelessness, service providers, and funding agencies in order to develop an evaluation tool that would effectively measure the impact of the Cultural Exchange Program. The systematic approach to sampling, data collection, and data analysis helped to strengthen data findings and added rigor to study results. While some limitations of grounded theory do exist, the benefits of developing a detailed and holistic account of stakeholder needs, made this approach worthwhile. Ethical challenges of using grounded theory were overcome through careful planning of the research project and through the incorporation of strategies to support participant autonomy and to maintain participant confidentiality.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS

The purpose of this research was to understand what stakeholders wanted in an evaluation framework to assess a Cultural Exchange Program. All findings pertaining to the design and content of the evaluation framework, from the perspectives of research participants, are presented in this chapter. Since data collection occurred over two phases, findings from phase one and phase two of the study will be described separately, to aid in the clarity and continuity of data findings. All criteria influencing evaluation design are substantiated with statements made by informants, which have been excerpted from the data. To protect the anonymity of research participants, quotes have been referenced by stakeholder group and page number in the transcript (i.e. University student, Focus group #2, pg.9). In addition, all potentially identifying features have been changed or omitted from the data.

Core Category

In grounded theory, a core category typically emerges, which is able to integrate and explain the relationship between all categories that emerge from the data (McCann & Clark, 2003). In addition, the core category can account for any variation amongst the data findings (Glaser, 1978), including data that do not fit under the central theme.

The core category that best describes the process of evaluating a Cultural Exchange Program is *flexible ongoing feedback.* Information collected through phase one and phase two of this study indicated that the evaluation framework should be flexible enough to accommodate the needs and interests of each participant in the study. In addition, the evaluation framework should be accessible to all participants in the study, regardless of any limitation they might have (i.e. low literacy skills, lack of confidence speaking in a group setting, etc.). To help program participants overcome specific barriers, it was suggested that the evaluation framework offer several mediums by which participants could articulate their opinions about the Cultural Exchange Program. This included oral evaluations (i.e. interviews, small group discussions), written evaluations (i.e. questionnaires, tracking sheets), and even artistic endeavors (i.e. drama, painting, drawing, etc.).

Informants also believed that the Cultural Exchange Program should be evaluated on an ongoing basis, so the execution of program activities could be closely monitored and the impact on program participants could be continually assessed.

Overall, informants believed that the most truthful and accurate information about the Cultural Exchange Program would be obtained through the personal accounts of participants in the program, and this would be apparent regardless of *when* the evaluation was conducted or *what tools* were used.

The core category of *flexible ongoing feedback* emerged throughout every discussion regarding program evaluation. A summary of the core category and how it connects to each component of the evaluation design is presented next. The integral relationship between the core category and each component of the evaluation framework will be demonstrated in phase one and phase two of this study.

PHASE ONE

Findings from phase one will be broken down into three separate sections, to correspond with each group of stakeholders that were interviewed. This is to facilitate comprehension of the results and to allow for comparisons to be made between different groups of informants. The first section will look at information gathered from university students. In this section, four categories will be discussed, with the use of quotes to illustrate and support each point. In the second section, results from the focus group sessions with youth transitioning out of homelessness will be presented and the final section will include findings from interviews with service providers at Cunningham Place. A summary of the results for phase one of data collection is presented in Table 1.

University Students

A total of three focus group sessions were held with students at the University of Alberta. Each group contained four or five individuals, for a total of thirteen students who participated in phase one of this study. Of the thirteen participants, four were male and nine were female. Ages ranged from 19 to 42 years, with all participants identifying themselves as Caucasian. A total of five categories emerged from the data and each is presented in the next portion of this chapter.

Category One: Evaluation Context

The first category that emerged from the data was the context in which the evaluation would occur. Two main ideas were emphasized in this category: 1) evaluation must be valued and 2) outcomes must match the objectives of the program.

Table 1 – Results from Phase One of the Research Study

Results	Relevant Stakeholder Groups		
	University Students	Youth Transitioning Out of Homelessness	Service Providers
Category #1: Evaluation Context			
Evaluation is Important	X		
Match Outcomes with Program Objectives	X	X	X
Category #2: Evaluation Content			
Evaluate Process Variables	X		
Evaluation Impact Variables	X	X	X
Category #3: Evaluation Design			
Pre, Mid and Post-Test Evaluation	X	X	X
Ongoing (i.e. weekly or biweekly) Evaluation	X	X	X
Triangulate Data Findings	X	X	X
Mixed Method Design	X	Qualitative Methods Only	X
Evaluation Should Take Place in a Group Setting		X	
Internal and External Evaluators	Internal Only	Internal Only	X
Keep the Evaluation Simple	X		X
Flexibility Needed	X	X	X
Follow-up Needed		X	X
Confidentiality Very Important	X	X	X
Category #4: Evaluation Tools			
Interviews	X		X
Small Group Discussions	X	X	X
Surveys/ Questionnaires	X	X	X
Tracking Sheets (i.e. attendance)	X		X
Likert Scales	X		X
Journals	X		X
Pictures/Diagrams			X
Video Diary		X	

X = Recommendations for what should be included in the evaluation framework.

Must university students in phase one of this study recognized the importance of having a rigorous program evaluation in place. Based on practicum and work experiences, several of the university students suggested that program evaluations were often not used effectively or, in some cases, not being implemented at all. According to a couple of the university students, program evaluations were often pushed to the side to accommodate other program needs. This was especially common when there was competition for resources to implement program activities. To remain consistent with program goals, one student suggested that the evaluation framework be made a priority within the program design.

"The only thing I would add is that programs that I've been involved in, or other things that I've been involved in, need to keep current through evaluation. Some how, evaluation gets lost and doesn't happen and things become, not as, sometimes your intentions don't always meet, don't end up happening. So, I think that keeping evaluation, as a, as almost an objective, that this program will be constantly evaluated because it needs to be constantly relevant to all, as necessary." (University student, focus group #1, pg.10).

University students also saw the benefit of designing an evaluation tool along side the development of the Cultural Exchange Program, so that the evaluation tool could be reflective of the goals and objectives of the program. According to students, this would also help to ensure that participants were doing a good job and engaging in the roles they were assigned to do.

University students emphasized that outcomes presented in the evaluation tool needed to reflect the goals and objectives of the Cultural Exchange Program. For example, if regular attendance was identified as an important goal, it would be important to assess the number of youth and university students attending each program session. Without knowing what the program looked like, it would be difficult to assess process and outcome variables resulting from the Cultural Exchange intervention. As two students in Human

Ecology explained:

"It depends on the mandate of the program. It depends on what you guys are looking to do. What the outcomes are going to be. What the goals are." (University student, focus group #1, pg.4).

"Objectives and stuff like that. Like, if those were clearly laid out it might be easier to see if they were accomplished or not." (University student, focus group #1, pg.10).

In addition to having program goals in place, university students believed that participants should be responsible for setting personal objectives as well. These objectives would be decided at the beginning of the program and then written down in some format, so that participants and the evaluator could refer to the goals at a later date. The personal objectives would act as a baseline measure, so the evaluator of the program could accurately assess performance and how effectively participants were working towards their personal goals. One student thought the process of going through each participant's goals would also help to strengthen the bond between university students and youth transitioning out of homelessness.

"But, the objectives, right, you're both doing, like you pull out the sheet with your objectives, and as you go you see how things, how things, how we fulfill these objectives. And you just see how, or how your objectives, you know, leave a paper trail for them. What your goals are at the beginning and how they have changed. And, what, what do you think has helped you develop. As you keep on going, both people have to do it, right? And if we both have to do it through the same process maybe that will help the, you know, what's it called, the bond. Than it's like, I'm no better than you, I have to do the exact same thing you have to do. Right? And go through the same process." (University student, focus group #3, pg.17).

In addition, university students thought that writing down objectives would increase the likelihood that participants would be motivated to stick to their personal goals. As one law student explained:

"In the success literature, right, they're not sure why, right, but the people who succeed in life have articulated their goals. I don't mean verbally, I mean have written them down. Those people that write their goals down succeed in life. That's a fact, right. But they're not sure why that happens. So maybe, right from the start, you could get these people, right, to think about what they want… they write down their goals because it, you know, it's just like, you know, with all these multiple things going on, like shit can fall, right? You know, your moving forward, you know, but once you put your goals down on paper and you articulate them, all your energies are channeled, right, in that direction." (University student, focus group #3, pg.23).

Opinions varied in terms of how many objectives program participants should be required to set at the beginning of the program. Based on practicum placements, students in Human Ecology and Health Promotion Studies thought that program participants should be required to set approximately five objectives at the beginning of the Cultural Exchange Program.

"From a practicum perspective, like, our practicum you have, every student develops five or more practicum objectives for their practicum experience and they write a report at the end, and reflecting on how they met the objectives, if they benefited, and how they were modified." (University student, focus group #1, pg.2).

In contrast, law students thought it would be more beneficial to have program participants focus their energy on one goal. In this way, participants would learn to prioritize their needs and concentrate on whatever goal was most important to their life at that time. By focusing on just one goal, the program evaluator could acquire more detailed information about why success was or was not achieved.

"At the end of eight months you could give them options. Like one of them might be to not do, like oh, if they have a drug problem, I want to be clean for four months, or they have this, I want this to happen, or they, whatever. Individualize it and like have a list and choose one objective and this is what we're going to try to get done. And it just feels good doing it…And why did the goals not happen? Why did the goals, why did this goal succeed." (University student, focus group #3, pg.23).

All students interviewed agreed that at the end of the program, participants should be required to reflect on whether or not their objectives were reached. Discussing why objectives were or were not achieved would provide insight into the needs of individual participants and the structure of the Cultural Exchange Program.

Category Two: Evaluation Content

The second category identified by university students related to the content of the evaluation framework. University students emphasized that the evaluation need to assess both process and impact variables in order to achieve an accurate and detailed picture of the Cultural Exchange Program. By definition, process evaluation involves measurements that will indicate whether the program is functioning as it was intended to (i.e. Are students and youth attending the program sessions on a regular basis? Are the intended activities being offered in the manner in which they were planned?) (Rossi, Lipsy, & Freeman, 2004). Impact variables on the other hand, are outcome measurements of the short-term and intermediate goals of the program. Since the overall goal of the Cultural Exchange Program is "to provide homeless youth and university students with an opportunity to learn about each other's culture, with the intention of reducing prejudices and increasing understanding" (Cultural Exchange Program Manual, 2004), impact variables could include things, such as: Have relationships formed between the university students and the homeless youth? Do university students have more knowledge about the realities of youth homelessness? Do homeless youth have a better understanding of the lifestyle of university students? (Rossi, Lipsy, & Freeman, 2004).

In terms of process variables, university students felt the most important things to measure were attendance, level of participation in program activities, and drop out rates. As three students described:

"And participation and attendance would really, you know, um, really reflect how they commit to the program." (University student, focus group #3, pg.3).

"Well, there's going to be some objective efforts. Like drop-out rates, which would, that would help different groups. So there's all these objective things, like drop out rates of the students, of the people that were in it." (University student, focus group #3, pg.5).

"...I think the drop-out rate would be the best reflection of the success of the whole program. Especially if you're getting more of these youth, of the homeless youth, if you're getting more involved...Like have a sign in sheet for all of your groups..." (University student, focus group #3, pg.5).

In terms of outcome variables, the responses given by the university students were a little more complex. The university students emphasized that they would like to see the youth improve their capacity to function in society. This included greater stability, such as secure long-term housing, and an increased sense of autonomy. Students wanted to see the youth develop better control over their lives, make healthier decisions, take responsibility for their actions, increase their self-confidence, and improve their capacity to be self-sufficient.

"Ideally, I would like to see some sort of more permanency developed for the youth. Find some sort of home. More long-term, more than just 3 months. Whether it's with a family or on their own, or, just like you said (looks at participant 2), integrating them into society." (University student, focus group #1, pg.4).

"A sense of autonomy that is different from the autonomy you that you feel when you have no boundaries, like living on the street and that sort of thing. There's a false sense of freedom I think that, ah, happens with homeless youth on the street. But building a sense of autonomy that: I have control of my life, and in control of myself and I can make decisions that change me. And that, it's not a sense of, I can't do anything about this and that if I want to, this is where I can go for help. It's, it's empowerment, I think I'm drawing attention to, an objective is." (University student, focus group #1, pg.5).

University students viewed the Cultural Exchange Program as a way to help improve the life circumstances of youth transitioning out of homelessness. University students thought they could offer the homeless youth emotional support and guidance in terms of accessing resources in the community, such as employment services and housing. One university student described her role in the Cultural Exchange Program as:

"Someone who they could talk to. Like build them a support network and so that they know what they can access if they want to get a job or something, how they can go about doing it." (University student, focus group #1, pg.4).

Overall, the university students believed that as a result of the Cultural Exchange Program, they would obtain more knowledge and an increased awareness of issues affecting youth transitioning out of homelessness, resulting in a better sense of reality, in terms of what life would be like living on the streets.

"I would think awareness is probably a big one, if, if, even if you, ya, sort of have a feeling that these people are people. They're not monsters living on the street, and they're not dirty, and they're not diseased. And if you just, you know, get the feeling that they're on the same level as you. You're not better than them and you're not worse than them." (University student, focus group #3, pg.16).

"Maybe set up the whole program differently. You know, have the street people at Cunningham, set it up for them, so they can help university students. Right?...Reversal, right?...Because, university students, you know, they have not idea what it's like out there in the real world." (University student, focus group #3, pg17).

Two university students thought an outcome of the program would be the development of new skills, including interpersonal skills, communications skills, and leadership skills, which would be obtained through their interaction with the youth.

"I think skill development, like, it's one of those things that is kind of, not like if, if you, I want to learn, I don't know, how to use interpersonal relationship skills better, you can judge that by how well you used, you had or used them at the beginning and how well you used them at the end. Things like that. Derive skills and things like that." (University student, focus group #1, pg.5).

Finally, university students thought they would develop a deeper desire to be involved in community projects targeting homeless youth as a result of participating in the Cultural Exchange Program.

"I think one area that is less tangible, that you can't really measure, would be, ah, sense of awareness or sensitivity that the student could give back to the community or to their other relationships. Um, and, maybe keep volunteering in the future, or keep active in the community, or keep, you know, cause a lot of people, once they've beefed up their resume and they get into the work force they don't have time or, ya, maybe they don't see that as important anymore. Whereas, just having that commitment, or, ya, that's it." (University student, focus group #1, pg.6).

Category Three: Evaluation Design

The third category identified through focus group sessions with university students was the need for a rigorous evaluation design. Within this category, several sub-categories were emphasized. Each will be discussed and described separately.

1) Ongoing Evaluation

The first sub-category of the evaluation design was the need to conduct the program evaluation on an ongoing basis. According to four of the university students, an ongoing evaluation would allow for superior tracking of the Cultural Exchange Program by encouraging participants to voice their ideas and concerns on a continual basis. In this way, any issues that arise within the program could be quickly addressed and dealt with. Two university students believed that participants would feel more ownership over the program if their ideas helped to shape the way interventions were offered. As one student explained:

> "The nice thing about having it at least somewhat regularly is that you can kind of keep taps on if there's any problems starting. Whether it's relationship, or whether the person on the street themselves, or whether it's something going good too because it doesn't always have to be negative." (University student, focus group #2, pg.6).

To compliment the pre-post test measure, university students also recommended that informal evaluations take place each week. According to university students, the method of collecting data could vary, depending on the interests and needs of the program participants. Two university students suggested having participants complete a survey each week, while three other students thought a group discussion might be more effective. Three university students suggested journaling as a way to compile ongoing information about the Cultural Exchange Program. Students felt that journal would encourage self-reflection and critical thought. In addition, it would help participants keep track of their experiences throughout the program, making it easier to recall information during the midterm and final evaluations.

"Something that might be helpful, but some people might see it more as a homework kind of thing, is maybe like diaries or logs or something. You know, their experiences. 'Cause it's very to hard to look back three months and try to recall, like how did you feel about this activity? Did you find it useful? You know. So maybe keeping more, you know weekly diaries, just half a page entry or, if you would find that useful." (University student, focus group #2, pg.4).

While there was collective agreement amongst the university students that an ongoing evaluation needed to be performed, there was also acknowledgement that this approach could result in some limitations and challenges. One student mentioned that an ongoing evaluation would require more time and resources to implement, since it would involve the collection and analysis of additional data.

"...it would be optimal to measure it every two weeks, but is that feasible? Right, like do you have the man power? Do you have the resources? That's a lot of work!" (University student, focus group #2, pg.5).

In addition, one student acknowledged that program participants could become disinterested or disengaged from the program if they felt that the evaluation required too much time to complete.

"It would be optimal to do it as often as you can...like, if you look back at someone's goals that they right down, if they have a specific goal that they meet, then, you know, ask them about it. Because they can tell you, "ya, this is exactly what I had down, this is one of my objectives". So, I don't you know, but you could probably capture all of that, I think. But there's a fine line between doing it often enough and too often because if you go to someone once a week and shove a tape recorder in their face (group laughter), and say "hey, how's it going" (more group laughter), it's not going to be, like people aren't going to be as open to that." (University student, focus group #2, pg.5).

Finally, students raised the issue of privacy, and the right for participants to refuse to share their personal ideas and reflections about the program. One student warned that specific modes of data collection, including journal entries, could be deeply personal to program participants. Therefore, some individuals might not feel comfortable sharing their entries with other people in the program. Subsequently, it would be important for the evaluation framework to incorporate strategies to ensure that each participant's privacy would be respected.

"...if someone's not comfortable going every week or every two weeks doing that, you know, they can, you might be able to set something up where they just do it on a regular basis but they keep it to themselves until they want to submit it." (University student, focus group #2, pg.6).

2) Triangulation

A second sub-category that emerged from the data was the need to triangulate data findings. Triangulation is defined as the use of multiple measures and observations to try to get a better understanding of what is happening in reality (Trochim, 2001). Triangulation helps to overcome errors that are present in all types of measurement, by looking for consistencies across different types of data. University students believed that a more accurate and detailed picture of the program would be achieved through several different modes of data collection. For example, three of the university students suggested having each program participant evaluate his or her own performance, while also being evaluated by their partner.

"...you can ask the youth you're working with, you know, or you can tell them, this is what I would like to do, and at the end, do you think I did this well. And, if not, what do you suggest could I do better?" (university student, focus group #1, pg.6).

"You know, there's a great, ah, there's a great way to get that, sort of, you know how if you get a job and you have to go for that biannual performance reviews. Well, there's a methods where your reviewer and you both have the same form. Right? And you fill out the form on each other. Right? And then you compare that same form, you compare it back. Right? And you can see how you're thinking the same and you can see exactly where you're different. And, so, I thought I was like, you know, very fair, or whatever, you know. And then if the other person says, oh no, I'm fair. Then you knew exactly, and that was the point of departure. Right? I thought that was a very effective method." (university student, focus group #3, pg.3).

In contrast, other university students had some reservations about allowing students and youth to evaluate each other. These students were concerned that the university students and youth transitioning out of homelessness might feel uncomfortable judging each other's performance, particularly if they had started to develop a close relationship. University students suggested that the program evaluation include a "safe" method for program participants to evaluate each other's performance (i.e. by completing the evaluation anonymously). Instead of having the students and formerly homeless youth evaluate each other's performances, university students suggested having the Program Facilitator provide feedback on each participant's performance and then compare this information to each participant's self-evaluation, to see if any consistency exists. As one student explained:

"That's important too, the importance of having that sort of overheadish person that everyone sort of looks to. Like maybe that can be someone on staff who everyone can trust, or something like that. But it's also important for evaluation. So if things come up between intervals, for example, whatever, so I had success on this, or I had this issue, and, um, so, 'cause it is something that's really important. And things like that." (University student, focus group #2, pg.6).

3) Mixed-Method Design

Overall, there was some debate between university students around the use of qualitative versus quantitative methods of data collection. In the second focus group with students in Health Promotion Studies, one student felt very strongly that quantitative methods would not be useful for this type of project. This student believed that the program evaluation should be entirely "person-centered", whereby participants would have the opportunity to share their ideas and experiences openly, which would create a rich and detailed picture of the program. The student felt that quantitative measures, such as attendance, were secondary to how participants felt about the program. He even suggested that attendance could be part of the regular administrative tasks and not a part of the formal evaluation.

"Very broadly, I think qualitative... I think it would have to be something that is very person centered. It's got to be, like it's not going to be filling out forms, it's not going to be, or it shouldn't be, I shouldn't say it's not going to be (laughing). But, ah, I just think it would be a lot more useful to have, to be able to monitor that exchange somehow. Again, I could be wrong (laughing). I don't know. But, ah, you have to get some of those points in because that's really where the learning and the exchange is going to come from are those, those interactions. So, so ya, I really don't, I think just some qualitative methods." (University student, Focus group #2, pg.2).

In contrast, another student in the focus group believed there would be significant benefits to performing a quantitative evaluation. This student thought that quantitative evaluation could provide useful information to supplement data collected through qualitative methods. When university students and youth describe their interactions with one another, quantitative data could support or refute their statements, by showing how frequently each pair met, how long the students and the youth interacted, and the quality of their participation in each program activity. This student explained:

"I think that, that there might be some sort of place for some sort of quantitative analysis in terms of, in terms of what we were talking about around when to meet, how long to meet, and the kind of activities to do." (University student, Focus group #2, pg.3).

4) Keep it Simple

Another point emphasized by several university students, was to keep the evaluation framework short and simple. The students believed that a complicated evaluation would deter program participants from wanting to complete it. Essentially, students felt that the more time the evaluation takes to complete, the less likely that it will get done. As one student explained:

"The only concern would be length, you could bore somebody to tears if you ask too many questions." (University student, Focus group #2, pg.11).

5) Flexibility

According to university students, many different methods could be used to collect data about the Cultural Exchange Program. The students believed that the most important factor in choosing how the evaluation should be structured would be the needs and preferences of the program participants involved. As one student explained:

> "You could do it all kinds of different ways. You could have bigger groups with just each, like just the mentors or just the mentees, you could have a group with just the mentees talking to someone, you could have the director and mentee talking to each other. You could have all kinds. You could do it a thousand different ways." (University student, Focus group #2, pg.3).

Students thought that program participants should be able to choose how *often* they completed the program evaluation. It was suggested that a minimum number of evaluations be set (i.e. once every two weeks) and if the program participants wanted to go over and above the minimum, they could be free to do so. Students also suggested that the evaluation be flexible enough to accommodate special needs, such as literacy issues.

> "Well that sort of leads actually to another point I had, is that literacy is going to be a consideration. So that might not be feasible for a lot of participants…that's one of the reasons why I was thinking not having forms, and stuff like that. It's going to be, like reading level and issues like that are going to be hard." (University student, Focus group #2, pg.4).

One student suggested that a couple of different options be available to program participants, so that if one individual wanted to write, he or she would write, while if another individual was more comfortable talking, he or she could complete the evaluation orally.

> "…maybe another idea might be to have an option for different types of, you know, if people want to write they could write, if people want to talk, they can talk, if they want to fill out a form, than they can fill out a form, but it might be nice to have all of those things available, because, and have them as equal weight. So, one isn't better than the other, it's just a different way to respond." (University student, Focus group #2, pg.6).

While increasing the flexibility of the evaluation tool would be helpful in terms of meeting the individual needs of program participants, some university students were concerned that it could result in inconsistent outcomes. Comparisons between participants could be more difficult if some members are writing in journals while others are engaging in an interview once a month. According to the university students, the program evaluation would need to be carefully design to support flexibility, but also consistency of data findings.

"Well the timing could be different, the method could be different. But I think if you do it that way, you possibly might need to be a little more inconsistent. But you have to, going in, decide what sort of level of consistency you're looking for, 'cause, if you're looking for every week, bang on, than that might not be feasible, regardless of what method you pick…There's lots of different ways you could do it. There's lots of different effective ways to do it." (University student, Focus group #2, pg.7).

6) Follow-up

The sixth and final component of the evaluation design that immerged through focus groups with students at the University of Alberta was follow-up. University students thought having a follow-up evaluation was interesting, however issues around feasibility were raised, including how the project team would track old participants, whether they would have the time, resources and man power to implement a follow-up evaluation, and how changes in the participant's attitudes or behaviors could be linked back to the Cultural Exchange Program and not attributed to other socio-environmental factors.

"I think it might be really hard to keep track of people though. Like students at the university too. Because like, I'm assuming you're going back home after (looks at another student), like lots of people aren't' even, aren't even from Edmonton." (University student, Focus group #1, pg.8).

"And it would be hard to rule out like what would be changing those attitudes after so many years." (University student, Focus group #2, pg.10).

Students also felt that a very long period of time would have to pass before long-term outcomes could be obtained (i.e. five years).

"But I think, in terms of long-term, you would have to do very long-term for that because if you go to someone a year later and ask them, chances are they're still going to be the same. Especially if they're sort of in the 20-24 range, they're not going to change that much. So, not sure how realistic it would be to, like what the time line would be, to see whether that had changed or not because it would probably be at least five years down the road, the minimum time to see changes stick." (University student, Focus group #2, pg.10).

One benefit that students saw for conducting a follow-up evaluation was that it could serve as an effective networking strategy to increase awareness and support for the Cultural Exchange Program. A couple of the students suggested that individuals who used to be involved in the program might be interested in supporting the program again, either financially or by offering their time, resources and assistance.

"But, in terms of the longitudinal aspect, I think it's good for people to be able to keep in touch it they want to contact you, in case there are areas that, where, you are needing in the future, um, donations or certain, just certain things that may alumni can contribute to." (University student, Focus group #1, pg.9).

"I think it's good to, to keep those relationships open. Especially if once the student has gotten out into the workforce and they're in an area that is very much related or similar and maybe they have different experience that they can help with, um, in the future." (University student, Focus group #1, pg.7).

Youth Transitioning Out of Homelessness

A total of two focus groups were held with youth living at or receiving services through Cunningham Place. One of the focus groups had four respondents, while the other focus group had eleven, for a total of fifteen respondents in phase one of this study. Out of the fifteen individuals engaging in this study, six were male and nine were female. Ethnicity was as follows: Aboriginal (4), Caucasian (10), and African American (1). Ages ranged from 18 to 26.

Category One: Evaluation Context

Similar to the university students, youth transitioning out of homelessness saw the importance of matching outcome variables to the objectives of the program. In particular, youth encouraged program participants to set goals at the beginning of the program and then evaluate whether or not their goals were achieved at the end. The youth felt that all program participants should be striving to achieve personal and program goals, otherwise process and outcome variables could not be achieved.

Category Two: Evaluation Design

Similar to the university students, youth transitioning out of homelessness believed that rigorous methods needed to be included in the evaluation design. These methods are presented as the following sub-categories: qualitative data collection, ongoing evaluation, triangulation, group settings, internal evaluation, flexibility, follow-up, and confidentiality.

1) Qualitative Data Collection

Unlike university students, youth believed that *all* methods of data collection should be qualitative because they were more likely to portray an accurate picture of the program and how participants felt about their involvement within the program. Preferred qualitative data collection strategies included group discussions, open-ended questionnaires, or a video diary.

"What about once a month, doing a, like a, handing out an evaluation form. Like. Like, you know, like, how was this working, how was this working, how was this working, how was this working, and other comments". (Youth transitioning out of homelessness, Focus group #1, pg.2).

"Like an, oral, oral evaluation". (Youth transitioning out of homelessness, Focus group #1, pg.3).

"What about a video diary?" (Youth transitioning out of homelessness, Focus group #1, pg.3).

2) Ongoing Evaluation

Similar to the university students, the youth felt that a continuous evaluation would strengthen data findings because individual results could be reviewed collectively in order to support a particular idea about the Cultural Exchange Program. In addition, an ongoing evaluation would allow the program evaluator to track changes to the program over time.

According to the youth, the first component of the ongoing evaluation would be a pre-post test questionnaire, which would allow for comparisons to be made from the beginning to the end of the program.

"Well, maybe have a questionnaire from the beginning and what they, what the person thinks the program's going to be about and that kind of stuff. And have it halfway through and then at the end. So then you could compare all three." (Youth transitioning out of homelessness, Focus group #2, pg.4).

In terms of the baseline measure, one youth made an interesting suggestion to have all participants in the program fill out a questionnaire that was created by other members of the group. Students and youth would have to think about what they would do in scenarios that were completely foreign to them, but were a reality for the other group. For example, university students would be asked questions about what they would do if they didn't have anywhere to sleep at night; or what they would do if they were addicted to drugs. Similarly, youth transitioning out of homelessness would be asked to describe what they would do if they had a midterm to study for, or what they would do if they were stressed out because they were trying to balance school with a part-time job. Once the questionnaires were complete, the university students and the youth would share their responses. In this way, both parties would begin to learn about the realities of the other participants and they would begin to explore some of their own preconceived ideas and stereotypes about the other group. The youth thought the exchange of information would serve as a good introduction to the program and act as a baseline measure for which attitudes, assumptions, knowledge, and skills could be assessed. As this youth described:

"Hey, what about this? Okay since there's some misconceptions about each other's lives right university students or whatever. Okay, so the street kid makes up a questionnaire to give to the university student say like, what would you do in this scenario? If you were here what would you do if you didn't have any home? What would you do if you were addicted to drugs? What would you do if you couldn't find this? What would you do, like right? Give that to the university students, they fill it out and they get an idea of like well, well maybe I can't answer these questions cause I haven't been there, right. So they give out their educated guess of what they would do in that situation, and university students give...something for the street kid right. Like a similar one, right?" (Youth transitioning out of homelessness, Focus group #1, pg.14).

In addition to the pre, mid and post-test measure, a couple of the youth suggested having an informal evaluation take place approximately once a month. During this time, participants could talk about their experiences in the program, what they had learned up to that point, what they enjoyed the most about program and suggestions for what they would improve.

"What about once a month, doing a, like a, handing out an evaluation form. Like. Like, you know, like, how was this working, how was this working, how was this working, how was this working, and other comments". (Youth transitioning out of homelessness, Focus group #1, pg.2).

3) Triangulation

Triangulation was identified as a third strategy to increase the rigor of the evaluation design. Youth suggested that participants in the program evaluate each other, whereby university students would give youth suggestions about their performance and youth would give students feedback in return. Subsequently, individual performance would be evaluated by the individual themselves as well as by the partner with whom they were matched. This would allow for frequent communication between students and youth, which would encourage relationship formation, the development of rapport, and the provision of support.

One interesting finding from this portion of data collected was that although the youth felt that the Cultural Exchange Program should foster a reciprocal exchange of information between university student and youth transitioning out of homelessness, they still seemed to place the university students in a more dominant role than themselves. For example, one youth suggested that the university students should track their progress throughout the program through email messaging. This youth thought the continuous feedback would help the youth stick to their goals, as well as give a strong indication of how the youth were performing the in the program. This is evidenced by the following quote:

"Or what about suggestions that the university students give to the ah, give to the youth. They could have a list of suggestions, right, and then they could get back to that student and say, well ok, this is the suggestions I took, this is what I did, this is what I'm doing right now...You know, give each other their email address and say, like you know, thanks for giving me the suggestion, I took it, I did this, and now I'm here. Right? Do you have any more suggestions, right? Kind of like having someone on the inside as a contact". (Youth transitioning out of homelessness, Focus group #1, pg.6).

Unfortunately, the youth did not mention a reciprocal exchange, whereby the student would also be receiving suggestions from the youth. Subsequently, this could indicate that while youth would like to have an equal exchange with the university students, they might not see themselves as playing an equal role.

4) The Evaluation Should Occur in a Group Setting

One preference youth had in regards to the evaluation design was that the evaluation takes place in a group setting, rather than each individual being evaluated on their own. As one youth simply stated:

"Just group. I think group would be best." (Homeless youth, interview #2, pg.3).

The youth did not provide specific reasons for why they preferred a group setting for the evaluation; however their behaviors during the focus group session indicated that they might feel more comfortable and secure in the presence of other youth similar to themselves. This was evidenced by the fact that many youth only agreed to participate in the focus group because their friend was doing it, or because their friend signed them up for the session. Also, the youth tended to look at each other across the table for reassurance when they spoke. Youth did not hesitate to challenge each other's comments, however when the researcher spoke, the youth rarely challenged what was said. This might indicate a lack of security, comfort, or confidence on the part of the youth, or it might indicate that the youth behave differently when they interact with individuals they perceive to have more power than themselves. In this instance, more truthful responses might result from youth discussing the program in a group setting.

5) Internal Evaluation

In addition to group evaluations, the youth transitioning out of homelessness preferred for an internal evaluator as opposed to having the program assessed by someone external to the intervention. The youth thought that a more accurate evaluation of the program would be produced if it came from individuals who were familiar with how the Cultural Exchange Program was structured and operationalized.

"I think it should come from within." (Youth transitioning out of homelessness, Focus group #1, pg.9).

These responses corresponded with comments made by the university students, who felt that performances should only be measured by individuals actively engaged in the program.

6) Flexibility

The youth transitioning out of homelessness believed that flexibility was a very important component to both the program design and the program evaluation. One youth felt really strongly that the program should be as unstructured as possible so the interaction between students and youth could be as natural as possible. He used the words "raw" and "edge" to describe the process of developing relationships between students and youth.

"But then again that's too, that's too structured, it wouldn't be as raw, or whatever...I just mean that it would like ah, make it too official. Like it would take away some of the edge." (Youth transitioning out of homelessness, Focus group #1, pg.9).

Another youth emphasized that the program should be flexible enough to accommodate busy schedules, so the youth could balance the program with other commitments in their lives. The youth felt that is shouldn't be a big deal if someone missed a session or two for work or other commitments. Youth did not want to be punished (i.e. being removed from the program) for missing sessions.

"Well, if you miss a session, that, that shouldn't be that bad... if you miss a session because oh shit, I had to work, I had appointments, or had to do this, or I had to do this, or sorry I couldn't be there because I was out doing this, you know, like." (Youth transitioning out of homelessness, Focus group #1, pg.10).

This raised questions about how the program evaluation should address poor attendance, or what the expectations would be in terms of completing ongoing evaluations. These questions supported the need to have process evaluation, to find out why participants missed program sessions and what could be done to improve overall participation rates.

The importance of flexibility within the evaluation framework was also raised when discussing special needs of program participants. For example, one youth expressed that he was not comfortable using computers. Therefore, if the evaluation tool was only available online, he would not feel comfortable using it.

"But then again, people like me, who use computers and break computers and spam other computers don't use computers...Like everybody learns differently, right? (Youth transitioning out of homelessness, Focus group #1, pg.4).

Subsequently, it was suggested that the evaluation framework be offered in a few different ways so that all program participants would feel comfortable accessing it. This might mean using an online evaluation, as well as using a paper and pen approach and an oral means of collecting information.

Other special needs emphasized by youth in the study included: low literacy skills, health problems, addictions, mental illnesses, and limitations in terms of physical mobility. Therefore, the evaluation tool would need to be flexible enough to take into account all of the challenges and barriers that youth transitioning out of homelessness face.

7) Follow-up

The youth transitioning out of homelessness believed that a follow-up evaluation was feasible for up to six months to a year after the program was complete. Any longer and the youth thought it might be difficult to try to track participants from the study.

Youth felt that a follow-up evaluation would be valuable, since it would provide additional information about how the program impacted participants over a period of time. The youth also thought the follow-up evaluation would give former participants a reason to stay in contact with Cunningham Place after they moved out. As one youth explained:

"Actually, I could probably answer that question really great because I no longer live here, but I still come back to get resources here...because they helped me out through my, the whole time I was living here...and, like, I still work with my counselor here. And, I'm constantly here. So, like even having a program like that here, it still, that gives the person more, more things to come back here for." (Youth transitioning out of homelessness, Focus group #2, pg.5).

8) Confidentiality is Very Important

Privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity were all very important to the youth at Cunningham Place. The youth wanted to know that they could express their ideas freely without worrying about the consequences of what they said. Protecting the identity of all participants would be an important component of the evaluation design. This might mean doing individual evaluations as opposed to group evaluations, as the youth had previously suggested. The other option would be to only use questionnaires, so feedback could remain anonymous.

"What about once a month, doing a, like a, handing out an evaluation form. Like. Like, you know, like, how was this working, how was this working, how was this working, how was this working, and other comments. And then, you don't put any names on it and it's just an anonymous evaluation, right? That way you don't know if it's, if it's somebody from the university or somebody from ,you know, Cunningham actually filling out the evaluation. So, you know, nothing's biased, nothing's". (homeless youth, focus group #1, pg.2).

<u>Service Providers</u>

Altogether, five service providers from Cunningham Place participated in the first phase of data collection for this study. Two of the service providers identified themselves as Aboriginal, while the other three indicated that they were Caucasian. All participants were female and professional experience ranged from two to fourteen years. Three of the service providers were interviewed independently, while the other two engaged in an interview together.

Category One: Evaluation Context

During interview sessions with the service providers, it was stressed that the evaluation tool needed to reflect the goals and objectives of the Cultural Exchange Program. Service providers felt very strongly that an evaluation could not be conducted without knowing what the program looked like, including the duration of the program, activities within the program, and roles of participants. As one service provider expressed:

"That's why I asked, what does it entail? It's got to entail something in order for us to answer". (Service provider #4, pg.4).

These perspectives were similar to the opinions expressed by both university students and youth transitioning out of homelessness. Therefore, it seemed to be a consensus amongst all research informants that the evaluation tool could not be designed until the program had developed clearly defined goals and objectives.

Category Two: Evaluation Design

Similar to university students and formerly homeless youth, service providers believed that rigorous methods were needed to effectively evaluate the Cultural Exchange Program. Service providers suggested a number of different strategies to enhance the rigor of the evaluation and each one is discussed separately below.

1) Mixed Method Design

Similar to the opinions expressed by university students and youth transitioning out of homelessness, most of the service providers stated that they preferred qualitative modes of data collection because they felt it would provide a more detailed picture of the program. Subsequently, the service providers offered a number of ways that qualitative data could be collected about the program, including interviews, open-ended questionnaires, and journal entries.

"What would be a good way of getting them to evaluate? I think even, just a some um, some type of survey. Um, survey isn't a good word. Um, you know, a written document stating, ok, well in the last month have you noticed this about yourself? You know, something like that, open-ended". (Service provider #2, pg.5).

Overall, the preferred method of qualitative data collection was a semi-structured interview. Service providers believed that more information could be collected orally because participants could talk freely about their experiences and not be limited by the amount of space or the time it would take to fill out a questionnaire. One service provider also felt that informants tend to rush through questionnaires and therefore, do not give high quality information. She believed that information gathered through oral strategies was more thoughtful and detailed, and therefore of greater use to the individual collecting it.

"A questionnaire would be the easiest one. But this here is better, one-on-one...I think because a questionnaire is limited. Some people just tend to follow the question and yes/no. And if they want to get through it faster they can just write down short questions, or short answers I should say. So orally, I mean, you can explain more, you can take your time more". (Service provider #5, pg.5).

In terms of quantitative methods of data collection, the service providers suggested using likert scales, whereby program participants would rate the program, or their performance within the program, on a pictorial or numerical scale between one and ten. Based on their previous experiences working with homeless youth, several service providers emphasized that likert scales worked really well, particularly because it helped to overcome barriers associated with language or low literacy skills. Finally, one service provider mentioned that many Aboriginal People are visual learners and therefore might respond better to an evaluation, which included pictures or diagrams to compliment the questions being asked.

"Well, you could ask a question, in like for a lot of the youth they seem to be able to do, or at least in theory they do quite well on a scale of one to ten. Where was your comfort level?" (Service provider #3, pg.6).

"Ya they do. Scales work well". (Service provider #4, pg.7).

2) Triangulation

In addition to using mixed-method design, service providers emphasized triangulation as another effective strategy to increase the rigor of the evaluation. Service providers proposed two ways of triangulating data findings. One method was to have both university students and youth fill out a questionnaire and then compare the results, to see how closely the two groups related.

"...like if you were going to do it for a year or for six months, or for whatever, and then you have some kind of a form that your student would fill and then you would also have something that the participant would fill out in terms of what they got out of it or you know, what kinds of things happened for them." (Service provider #1, pg.2).

A second method of triangulating data was to have an individual, such as the Program Coordinator, evaluate the participants in the program, in addition to the program participants evaluating themselves. Similarities between the evaluations would increase the truthfulness and accuracy of the results, while differences could spark further discussion and re-assessment of the program. These opinions were similar to those expressed by both the university students and the youth transitioning out of homelessness.

3) Ongoing Evaluation

In terms of timing, service providers suggested that the evaluation tool include a pre-post design with a mid-term evaluation. Service providers considered the pre-post design to be the most rigorous and feasible method to implement because changes could be monitored from the beginning to end of the program. In the pre-post design, participants would complete a baseline survey or interview, a mid-term evaluation, and an evaluation at the end of the program. As two service providers stated:

"... if you had them do it for a school year and you evaluated somewhere in the middle to see how things are going, to see how people feel about things, and if you evaluated at the end". (Service provider #1, pg.6).

"It could be at the beginning and at the end too. What is the purpose and what are the goals of the student and did they achieve that at the end?" (Service provider #4, pg.5).

In addition to the pre-post evaluations, a couple of the service providers mentioned that an ongoing evaluation should be performed throughout the program. Service providers felt that a series of short informal evaluations would help to monitor participant performance and keep everyone on track.

"...the evaluation should be looked at quite frequently just to make sure they're still on track." (service provider #2, pg.7).

"To see how they're doing afterwards? Um, I'd probably say continuous. I know one program, and ah, the __ Project for Métis women, and I know they follow-up with their students all the time. You know, trying to see where they're working, trying to see how they're doing and certain things they can help them with." (service provider #2, pg.7).

Service providers even suggested that the evaluation tool incorporate a "check in" system each week. Subsequently, after each program session, participants would gather for a short de-briefing session whereby they could talk about the program, what was working, what needed to be improved, and how changes could be made. This way, problems could be addressed immediately and program participants would feel some ownership over the program of which they are a part.

"To me, each time they're together. Like a check-in of some sort after the session, whatever that entails. It could be very simple". (Service provider #3, pg.11).

"Like a mini check-in. You know, like, if you're looking at a six month program for instance, for me, I would say, every second visit, you're going to do a mini evaluation. But each time you're going to do a check-in to make sure both parties are ok afterwards...Because sometimes you can address the barriers, or address the problems before they become problems. And if it's not dealt with, than it's going to become a problem and you're not going to have that person showing up next time". (Service provider #3, pg.12).

4) Internal and External Evaluators

Service providers had mixed opinions about whether the evaluation should involve an internal or an external perspective. They defined the internal perspective as opinions that would come from the program participants (students and youth), while the external perspective would be fulfilled by a neutral party, such as either a caseworker from Cunningham Place or the Program Facilitator. While most service providers felt the program could be evaluated by both internal and external sources, they emphasized that more focus should be placed on the responses of participants in the program because they are the ones experiencing the intervention first hand and would have a more accurate perspective of what the program was accomplishing.

"Well, I think it's like hands on. The one who's participating is going to be the one who's more effective at evaluating it". (Service provider #4, pg.11).

Rather than be the primary source of information about the program, service providers felt that caseworkers could provide information to supplement material collected from the university students and formerly homeless youth. For example, the caseworkers could report on any changes in the youth's behaviors and/or attitudes since beginning their participation in the program.

5) Keep it Simple

Similar to the ideas expressed by university students, the service providers emphasized that the evaluation tool should be kept simple and straight-forward. The service providers were opposed to anything too long, detailed or complex. They suggested that the wording in the evaluation tool should be kept to a low reading level so that individuals who have limited literacy skills would not be disadvantaged. They suggested that interviews be conducted in the same manner, with simple and straightforward language, so that the interviewer is talking at a level that is easily comprehensible to the youth.

"Like everyone in here, and we pretty well have the same client base, has always been able to do something on paper, but it's got to be very common, easy wording. Um, it can not be complex. It can't be big words. And that is going to be absolutely crucial with your students, that they are able to talk on that level. 'Cause we've had it happen even on staff where if someone's throwing out big words and stuff, the clients are looking at them, like who the hell are you and where are you coming from? I don't understand. Like speak English. It's not their language. It creates some barriers". (service provider #3, pg.8).

6) Flexibility

Opinions were mixed amongst the service providers in terms of how much flexibility should be included in the evaluation design. Some service providers believed that structure was really important in order to obtain accurate results. Structure would help to ensure consistency between data findings, so that comparisons could be made between participants.

"Um, I think you may want to have some things in place because there is certain information you're looking for. So you'll want to have some way to get that." (Service provider #1, pg.7).

In contrast, some service providers thought the evaluation tool should be flexible to accommodate individual needs. The evaluation tool could include creative or artistic components. In addition, non-reading or writing components could also be available to accommodate lack of literacy skills amongst the homeless youth population. Two of the service providers agreed that the evaluation tool should be flexible enough to accommodate different learning styles. One service provider suggested that pictures or diagrams (such as the Medicine Wheel) be included in the evaluation design to meet the needs of visual learners. She also suggested that homeless youth have the opportunity to draw or to display their knowledge in a more artistic or visual way. Another service provider suggested that the evaluation tool include analogies or stories to make it easier for some youth to understand what the question is asking. This is evidenced by the following three quotes:

"Well, if they're self-evaluating themselves, they should be able to do it the way they want to, right? Whatever way that is, artistically, writing, singing". (Service provider #5, pg.10).

"I get individuals in my groups who are visual learners. You know, it needs to be demonstrated to them. Cause, I learned that I am a visual learner too and I thought I was dumb, but I realized that I was a visual learner and I had to be shown. So that's when I say to you, like what methods? And then right away I'm thinking about the medicine wheel. Like a self-care plan, like an action plan you could use for your physical, spiritual, mental, emotional." (Service provider #4, pg.7).

Overall, it appeared that service providers wanted the evaluation tool to be offered in a variety of ways to accommodate individual needs. Service providers suggested laying out clear expectations at the beginning of the program to encourage program participants to commit to whatever mode of evaluation they chose. Service providers believed that the homeless youth, in-particular, need to understand the commitment that is expected of them in terms of completing the program evaluation.

"I think you're gonna at the beginning too, it just reminds me, that you're gonna have to really lay it out as to what exactly are the expectations. You know, so when people make that commitment, hopefully you're going to have most people carry through. If they don't understand the commitment they may not. It might not mean anything to them. And sometimes a really good explanation of why you're doing it helps. It's like, our clients, our clients, that if they drop out of program, sometimes they don't think they can ever come back here. And we need to explain to them that it's very important that they get back to us and that they follow up with us and we can continue to help them. Or even if they're successful, please stay in touch, because that's how we get our funding, based on the outcomes. And if they understand it, they do it, usually". (Service provider #3, pg.9).

7) Follow-up

Service providers thought it would be beneficial to perform a follow-up evaluation however they were concerned that a long-term follow-up might not be feasible, due to the transient nature of both the homeless youth and the university student populations. The consensus seemed to be that six months post-intervention would be the most practical time frame to work with. Service providers suggested contacting the youth as soon as the program was over and then keeping track of them as long as they could afterwards. If youth could be tracked for a long time after the program was done, the service providers recommended keeping the lines of communication open.

“And then if you, I don’t know exactly how that could happen in terms of evaluating six months down the road or a year down the road because, like you say, the population is transient and you could lose track of them, but it sure would be nice to know how it impacted on them somewhere down the road”. (Service provider #1, pg.6).

“I would say as soon as possible and then track them as long as you can”. (service provider #5, pg.7).

Service providers saw the benefit of performing a follow-up evaluation, since it would show whether or not changes in behaviors and attitudes could be maintained even after the program was done. In addition, service providers thought it could act as an additional source of support for the homeless youth, as it would show the youth that members of the program still care about their well-being even after the program was complete.

“You know, give them that encouragement they need. And then, also, if you’re doing that after the program is done, well then they know that you’re still there. So then, if something does come up, they can maybe come and see you and ask you for their support.” (Service provider #2, pg.8).

8) Confidentiality is Very Important

Similar to responses given by the youth transitioning out of homelessness, service providers stated that confidentiality should be an important consideration in terms of how the evaluation framework is designed. Service providers felt that all program participants should feel safe to share personal information without worrying what would be passed on to other people. It was recommended that group evaluations take place only if all participants feel comfortable talking to one another. One service provider noted that one-on-one evaluations might be more appropriate to maintain the safety and integrity of all participants.

"Like, if it's something um, ya if it's something, like I said, for instance, you've been to the program everyday this week. You know, something like that, voicing it is good, you know. But, say for instance, somebody who has really um, struggled with sexual abuse in the past and can't maintain relationships, and they've met somebody, and they're doing good, you know. In that case, it might be something you would want to say to them in private. So it just depending on the, on the situation." (Service Provider #2, pg.9).

Summary

To summarize the first phase of data collection, it appears that university students, youth transitioning out of homelessness, and service providers all share similar perspectives in terms of how the evaluation framework for the Cultural Exchange Program should be designed. In terms of content, each group of informants stressed the importance of matching objectives to the program goals. University students, youth, and service providers all felt that the evaluation framework could not be effectively designed without a clear understanding of what the goals and objectives were for the program.

In terms of methods to evaluate the Cultural Exchange Program, university students, youth, and service providers all supported the core category of *participant feedback*. Stakeholder groups recommended that program participants be engaged in each aspect of the evaluation design, including: 1) ongoing evaluation; 2) triangulation; 3) qualitative data collection; and 4) follow-up. Stakeholders emphasized the importance of flexibility within the program design, to accommodate the special needs and interests of each participant in the program. University students, youth, and service providers also agreed that privacy was an important consideration, so participants would feel safe to share personal information about the program.

PHASE TWO

As mentioned previously, the purpose of the second phase of data collection was to validate and expand upon findings from phase one, particularly in regards to the design and structure of the evaluation framework. Individual interviews were conducted with relevant stakeholder groups, including students at the University of Alberta, youth currently living at or receiving services through Cunningham Place, staff currently working at Cunningham Place, and staff from local funding agencies in and around the City of Edmonton. Where possible, interviews were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim and field notes were maintained throughout the duration of the data collection process.

It should be noted that during the second phase of data collection only two interviews were conducted within each group of informants. The choice to interview only two individuals was made to accommodate limitations in terms of resources and time on the part of the investigator of this study. In addition, the LINKS Project team agreed that because saturation had been reached for most informants in phase one, two informants would be sufficient to supplement the data already retrieved. The purpose of phase two was not to generate new ideas, but to build upon ideas previously presented.

Similar to data analysis performed in phase one of this research study, information collected from each group of informants was analyzed separately. Then the information was compared and contrasted between the different groups of informants to see if similarities or differences existed. A summary of the research findings is presented in Table 2.

Table 2 – Results from Phase Two of the Research Study

Results	Relevant Stakeholder Groups			
	University Students	Youth	Service Providers	Staff from Local Funding Agencies
Category One: Evaluation Context				
Match Outcomes with Program Objectives	X			X
Category Two: Evaluation Content				
Evaluate Process Variables	X		X	X
Evaluate Outcome Variables	X	X	X	X
Category Three: Evaluation Design				
Mixed Methods	Qualitative methods preferred	Qualitative methods only	X	
Pre-Post Test Design	X		X	
Ongoing Evaluation	X	X	X	
Triangulation	X	X	X	
Internal &External Evaluators	X	Internal Only	Internal Only	
Flexibility	X		X	X
Follow-up	X (Within 1 month)	X (Within 3 months)	X (Within 1 month)	X (After 6 months)
Inclusion of Artistic Work	X		X	X
Dissemination of Results				X
Category #4: Evaluation Tools				
Interviews	X	X	X	X
Surveys/ Questionnaires	X	X	X	X
Small Group Discussions	X	X	X	
Observation			X	
Demonstration of Skills	X		X	
Tracking Sheets	X		X	
Likert Scales	X			
Journaling	X	X		
Suggestion Box	X			

X = Recommendations for the evaluation framework.

<u>University Students</u>

Two students currently enrolled at the University of Alberta agreed to participate in the second phase of data collection for this study. Both individuals were female, Caucasian, and graduate students in the Department of Health Promotion Studies. One of the students had participated in a focus group session during the first phase of data collection and therefore was familiar with the Cultural Exchange Program. The other student had not seen or heard about the Cultural Exchange Program until the day the interview took place. Both students agreed to be audio-taped for the purpose of the study. Subsequently, quotes from both individuals are presented in the following analysis and differentiated as Student #1 and Student #2.

Category One: Evaluation Design

1) Mixed-Method Design

Both of the university students supported the use of a mixed method design, whereby a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods would be used to collect data about the program. In particular, the students placed a lot of emphasis on qualitative modes of data collection. Both students believed that qualitative methods would create a rich and detailed picture of the program. Both students were particularly in favor of self-reporting because they felt this would most accurately capture the experiences of participants in the program. They felt this would be particularly useful during the pilot project, when very little would be known about how participants are impacted by the Cultural Exchange Program.

"Um, I'm not sure how you would go about evaluating whether or not people's skills grew, other than that they tell you what they think." (Phase Two, University Student #1, pg.1).

"But, especially in the early stages of evaluation, when you're in the pilot study or whatever, I would tend to think that you would get a lot more out of a qualitative evaluation than you would out of quantitative because I think a lot of times, people will…just talk and tell how you're feeling." (Phase Two, University Student #1, pg.3-4).

Students thought self-reports could be used to determine whether participants achieved any of the objectives of the Cultural Exchange Program (i.e. forming relationships, gaining knowledge, developing new skills, and trying new things) Both students provided examples of questions that could be posed to program participants. For example, to find out if participants had formed a relationship with their partner, or with other members of the group, university students suggested asking participants about the sustainability of the relationship or their desire to maintain the relationship with their partner after the program was completed. Questions included: "Do you feel the relationship you formed with your partner will last?" University students believed that the sustainability of the relationship would be a strong indication that a bond had formed between participants in the program, as articulated in the following two statements:

"Um, ya, in terms of interpersonal skills, again, I'm don't know exactly how you would evaluate that, you could perhaps, ask 'do you feel the relationship you formed with your partner, your match, or whatever, um will last? Or, do you feel, maybe how do you feel you benefited, so it's not just completely closed. Questions that are open-ended questions." (Phase Two, University Student #2, pg.1).

"Um, I think the one that sort of pops into my mind immediately is asking whether or not they would be interested to continue a relationship with the youth because I think a lot of the university students might only be interested in this for the credit that they're getting on their transcript and they don't necessarily have as much stake in it as a homeless youth might because the university student has the opportunity just to leave Cunningham Place and just to, sort of when they're done the 15 or 16 weeks and just to sort of forget about that part of their life. Like, hopefully that doesn't happen, but they have more of an opportunity to walk away than the homeless youth would, likely. So I would say a big one would probably be to um, ask if they plan on continuing the relationship with the homeless youth." (Phase Two, University Student #1, pg.6-7).

To determine if participants gained knowledge as a result of their participation in the Cultural Exchange Program, both of the university students suggested asking questions such as: Do you feel different now than you did at the beginning of the program? Do you perceive university students or youth transitioning out of homelessness differently? How have your perceptions changed?

"So, you know, maybe asking them, do you feel differently now about walking, you know, down Whyte Ave. or a main street and would you feel differently about that person now than you would have before you took this course? So, do you see them in a different light or something like that?" (Phase Two, University Student #1, pg.7).

One of the university students also suggested asking program participants if they would be more likely to join a coalition or a community group that is involved with issues affecting university students or youth transitioning out of homelessness, after having participated in the Cultural Exchange Program. The university student believed that greater interest in social issues affecting university students or homeless youth would be a good indication that knowledge had been enhanced. The student suggested asking participants if their engagement in the Cultural Exchange Program had affected their career choice, their advocacy for issues affecting university students or youth transitioning out of homelessness, and if they felt they were more empathetic to people they saw on the street or issues they read about in the newspaper.

To determine if participants developed new skills throughout their involvement in the Cultural Exchange Program, one of the university student suggested asking each participant a series of questions about their skills. For example: How do you feel this program has benefited your skill set? How do you feel this program will help you in the future? The university student thought open-ended questions were particularly important because, until the program has been implemented several times, it would be hard to know what skills participants would develop as a result of their participation. The program might aim to develop leadership and facilitation skills, however university students and youth might report enhanced communication skills instead. Open-ended questions would give participants the freedom to talk about all the skills they acquired throughout the program, so a broad and less bounded picture of skill development could be acquired.

"Well, again I guess you could do the self-report and do you feel you've grown, for example. Or, how do you feel this program has benefited your skill set? How do you feel this program will help you in the future? Interview? To talk to your employer? Other questions like that you could ask." (Phase Two, University Student #1, pg.1).

To determine if participants tried new things as a result of the program, both university students again suggested asking participants directly if they tried anything new and to describe what exactly they did.

"And then to try new experiences, I guess, I don't know, like I would think that you could probably just ask them." (Phase Two, University Student #1, pg.8).

While university students favored qualitative forms of data collection, they did see a place for quantitative data collection, in terms of monitoring attendance rates and the implementation of program activities. University students suggested that attendance rates be measured quantitatively by recording the number of times each participant attended sessions throughout the program.

"I think there's general things, which I guess could be quantitative. Like, certainly things like attendance and those kinds of things because I think that's only fair if you're expected, if this is a grading class environment, that you have, there's certain expectations. Like showing up. Putting in hours. You know, being reliable. Being dependable. Those kinds of things." (Phase Two, University Student #1, pg.2).

In addition, university students thought likert scales could be used to determine how much participants liked or did not like certain aspects of the program. Both students suggested having participants rank their enjoyment in certain program activities on a scale of one to five or one to ten.

"I mean, well you could do like sort of a likert scale, you know, where 1 is 'not at all' and 5 is 'very much' (laughing). Um, you know, how did you enjoy this or that, to get some sort of quantitative data out of it. (Phase Two, University Student #2, pg.2).

2) Ongoing Evaluation

Both of the university students supported the implementation of an ongoing evaluation, so participants could offer feedback throughout the duration of the program. In particular, students recommended a pre and post-test measure, so comparisons could be made from the beginning to the end of the program to see if any changes had occurred. Both students felt that the mid-term evaluation was particularly important to ensure that activities were being implemented effectively and that the needs of all participants were being met. In addition, a mid-term evaluation would help to identify any challenges that were arising between participants in the program. The students believed that if issues were dealt with quickly, the program would function more efficiently overall.

"I definitely think there should be some sort of midterm because I mean, if you wait the 16 weeks and then at the end, the people are like, oh, well, you know, I didn't reach that goal. I think because you have to, there has to be some sort of interjection, that if it isn't going as planned, you have to know that and be able to work on that. And I mean, there might be along the way, you might find partners who aren't working efficiently together that you have to make that change before the whole program is over and then you've lost that." (Phase Two, University Student, pg.8).

In addition to a more formal evaluation at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of the program, both of the university students suggested that an informal, ongoing evaluation take place each week. The university students suggested having a group discussion at the end of each program session, whereby participants could comment on the activities they engaged in that day and how the program was functioning overall. Another suggestion was to have participants complete a short survey each week, which would include both quantitative and qualitative questions. Similar to the group discussion, this survey would serve to assess each participant's performance that week and how they felt about the program activities that day. As one student explained:

"Because I mean even at the end of each group session, maybe that's where you'd like to, 'cause the group sessions are every week? Maybe a five question survey at the end of every group session, that way it only, it takes them one minute, not even, how, what, did you find today's session relevant, out of 10? Did you find that you learned something, out of 10? Like so, just so you have an evaluation on each session and then you have an evaluation every two weeks to a month on the person's experience and growth." (Phase Two, University Student, pg.10).

The option for participants to keep journals throughout the program was also suggested by each of the university students. The students believed that journals would help participants to keep track of their experiences throughout the program. In addition, journaling would provide a useful method to help participants recall information when they were completing the midterm and final evaluations. The only restriction associated with journaling, would be to limit each entry to one page, to prevent participants from becoming overwhelmed with the amount of work they were required to do as part of the program evaluation.

"So get them to every week or every month to write an experience or, ya, or journal entries every week. Because I think that, actually I think that would be a really good thing because to try to capture everything at the end of 16 weeks, you're going to forget a lot and you're gonna forget a lot of the experiences that you had. Um, so I think maybe every one to two weeks they should be making a least like maybe a data entry, journal sort of thing." (Phase Two, University Student, pg.8).

Another option provided by one of the university students was to have a suggestion box, where participants could offer feedback about the program through short comments or questions each week. This mode of feedback would be safe and convenient for participants because they could share their ideas anonymously and it would not require a lot of their time or energy to do so.

"...I don't think it could hurt to have a continuous thing, but I don't think I would make it necessarily mandatory because it might just seem like too much for participants to do. But maybe having sort of a suggestion box where participants could, you know, write down their thoughts for the week if they had anything that they felt was worthy of being said. Any suggestions or comments about, you know, this session or that session or, whatever, different parts of different sessions. Um, that might be good. Just so they have somewhere, if they do want to, they have somewhere to put their thoughts, but they're not forced to." (Phase Two, University Student #1, pg.5).

3) Triangulation

The third recommendation university students made to enhance the rigor of the evaluation framework was to triangulate data findings. They suggested using several different methods to evaluate how the program was functioning and then to compare and contrast the different modes of data collection to determine the most truthful and accurate results.

University students suggested having two separate group discussions, one with the university students and one with the youth transitioning out of homelessness, where each group of participants could discuss their ideas about the program separately. University students thought it would be more comfortable for participants to share their ideas in separate groups so they did not feel uncomfortable or threatened when expressing their ideas, particularly if they had concerns or negative feedback to give.

"I would definitely not be comfortable with um, having both groups together, just because if you want to get to the truth of, for example, university student's response to the relationship, if they had a crappy time with their partner and they just sort of held on because they were getting course credit or if they felt like they were always putting more into it than they were getting out of it or whatever, I don't know many university students that would feel comfortable with saying that, especially in front of their partner. So I would definitely separate the two groups. Um, and then, but I think a group interview within the two groups would be a good idea because then, I mean, especially if you do something like a focus group, then the groups, information they can, like different people can trigger different ideas and then you might get more information that way that people, that people, more people can speak to more issues." (Phase Two, University Student, pg.3).

4) Internal/External Evaluator

The university students had mixed opinions about using internal or external evaluators. Both students saw the benefit of using an internal evaluator, since this individual would be more familiar with how the Cultural Exchange Program was structured and would be more in tune to the specific needs and limitations of each participant in the program. However, the university students were uncertain whether an internal evaluator could objectively measure participant performance without providing some type of biased feedback. They explained:

"Well, I was just thinking about this. I would have, I would have typically said yes, I think you could evaluate others because, um, you know, like what I said about the whole group session, obviously it's going to be pairs leading the group sessions, so you could evaluate the effectiveness of the session, which then is a reflection of how well they did, and how well they prepared, and how well they speak and how well they lead it. But then at the same time, I think to evaluate others is a little unfair because, I mean I know that I've done this before, where you, you evaluate others based on what you see of them, but you really don't understand any of their background or their personality, right. Like, say I could evaluate them and say well, she didn't talk very much, and she never talked in groups, well maybe she has an anxiety problem, maybe she has very poor English language skills, like, so when you make those evaluations, you're making them just on what you see, without taking into account maybe their, the deeper routed problems that they have. So, maybe you shouldn't evaluate others, when you don't understand. Do you know what I'm trying to get at here? Because I know one time when I was a camp counselor, we had to do evaluations on um, what was it like, oh it was on communication and verbal skills and I had this one young camper and I gave her this really poor mark because she didn't every really participate and stuff and um, and when it came time to the evaluation she told me that she couldn't read. She was in grade six or seven and she couldn't read! And so, I felt horrible because how can you give a mark to someone on something that's not even applicable really to them, right? So that's why I would say, I don't know if you could evaluate others fairly." (Phase Two, University Student #2, pg.11).

"It's just the whole issue of evaluating others that I keep bringing back is like, in a one week session once a week, or whatever it turns out being, how can you really, I mean you can evaluate each other on the experiences and things you're getting from each other but, but when you only get to meet someone once, one or two hours a week, um over 16 weeks, how can you really fairly evaluate their progress? If you didn't know anything about them before they came in and when they leave?" (Phase Two, University Student #1, pg.12).

The university students felt that if participants in the program did evaluate each other, it should be kept confidential. This way, participants could feel safe to express their thoughts about the program without hurting anyone else's feelings.

"I think definitely between the partners, like your working partner, I think you should be able to, and it should be confidential and you should be able to, you know, um, and maybe parts are confidential and maybe parts of it are shared because you can, you still need to feed off of each other and you need to say well, I feel that I need, you need, I need you to share more with me. And then the other person might say, well I feel you need to give me more understanding, that's why I'm not sharing as much with you. So I think there, there is room for, room for evaluating others, but I think you have to be really careful so that you don't um, make other people feel bad or play on some of the skills they don't necessarily have maybe." (Phase Two, University Student #1, pg.12).

5) Flexibility

The fifth component of the evaluation design was flexibility. Each of the university students indicated that it did not correspond with principles of health promotion practice to dictate to people what they should learn or what they should get out of a program. Evaluating the program should be a collaborative process, whereby the interests and needs of all participants in the program are respected.

"But I do think that each, each individual should have the ability to set some other goals because I think that, ya like, what's the point. The point of them participating in this study is getting out of it what they truly need to get out of it, rather than people dictating what they think would be best." (Phase Two, University Student, pg.5).

Subsequently, students believed there should be room for flexibility in the evaluation design, in order to meet the needs of each participant in the program. If participants are most comfortable articulating their ideas verbally, they should be allowed to do so. Similarly, if participants choose to write their opinions down on paper, this method should be supported as well.

6) Follow-up

According to both university students, follow-up should occur within one month after completion of the program. This is enough time for participants to reflect on their experiences, while not loosing any important information they might want to share.

"Um, my only um, I think if you did the program in like a fall term it would be very easy to contact people in the spring. I think if you're doing this in a spring term, you're gonna, you're not gonna be able to follow-up with people over the summer. Either because they're graduating or because they're going off to work or whatever. I mean, I think optimally, maybe you'd like to contact them within a month, like maybe a month would be a good time period for them, enough time for reflection without maybe loosing that. So like, 3 or 4 weeks follow-up and say like, what did you really gain out of this program? Would you suggest it for others? Was it worthwhile? But like I said, I think it's the timing of the semesters that gonna be the most relevant." (Phase Two, University Student #1, pg.8-9).

There was a slight discrepancy between the university students in terms of the best way to contact participants after the program was complete. One student recommended doing a telephone interview because students might not be as enthusiastic about writing down their answers. The student felt that oral evaluations were more convenient and less time consuming than written evaluations because participants do not have to spend the additional time and energy writing out their ideas and editing their work. In addition, the student believed that the telephone would be a more convenient method to reach students and youth, since some individuals may not have easy access to a computer with internet.

"Um, like I don't know if you sent people something in the mail whether they would want to write again, right? Like after the fact that they're not part of their class or it's not part of their studies anymore. Maybe a telephone interview? Or, ya, or just some sort of follow-up by the telephone and just sort of saying, you know, like maybe 20 minute, or 10 to 15 20 minute, like can you just give me some ideas, or? 'Cause I think maybe a lot would be lost on a questionnaire. I think if the person could maybe speak openly. Maybe not even the telephone but maybe it could be just a little like 20 minute interview and. But I think telephone is probably the most convenient for students...I think, I think email would work, but like I said again, it's the whole like sitting down and having to write it...Cause I know for me, like I would have no problem, um if someone called me and they wanted to chat with me for like 15 minutes, I'd have no problem because that doesn't take any real effort, you know. You just sit there and they ask questions and you can just express yourself. But to sit down and have to write in an email, you're' like oh, oh, I have to do this (laughing). You know!" (Phase Two, University Student #1, pg.9).

In contrast, the other university student saw email as the best way to reach university students and youth from the study. The university student believed that email was the most reliable method of contacting people because most people have at least one permanent email address that doesn't change regardless of where they live or what they are doing. The university student also suggested contacting participants through their parents or a stable home address. A questionnaire could be mailed to their home as part of the follow-up evaluation.

"See, I would say that most university students, when they graduate, um, would maybe have a different email address than their U of Alberta one. But, generally, I think people have at least one other email address that they kind of consistently use for friends and family. So depending on whether they do have an email address like this, that would be their sort of their standard that they keep regardless of their location or regardless of their place. Um, than you could do follow-up through, as long as you wanted really... The other option, especially for undergrads, a lot of them, a lot of their parents live at a stable home address, so you could get their home address and then refer to their, if you have a follow-up or whatever and send it to their parents and get permission that way." (Phase Two, University Student #2, pg.9-10).

According to the first university student, the ability to follow-up with students will depend on when the program is offered. The university student believed it would be easier to follow-up with students after the fall term because most of them would still be in school. Trying to follow-up with participants after the winter or spring terms would be more difficult because many students would be leaving or graduating in the summer.

7) Artistic Work

Both university students admitted that they were not particularly interested in doing creative or artistic work as part of the evaluation design. The students did, however, support the incorporation of artistic work for those who were interested in expressing their ideas that way. Both students cautioned that all artistic work should be accompanied by a verbal or written description, so the work was not left to the interpretation of other people.

"I think if someone can express themselves that way better than any other way, I think that's great. For me, I know that I'm not artistic and I'm not creative (laughing), so I couldn't sort of articulate in a poem or like into like an artwork how I feel. But if someone could, that's awesome. Um, I guess, but I think the thing is, they still have to be able to, if they've done this artwork, right, they still have to be able to express, verbally, either written or orally, about what the artwork means and how they like, you know what I mean? They still have to be able to think through that process to explain what that means to other people." (Phase Two, University Student, pg.6).

Youth Transitioning Out of Homelessness

A total of two youth participated in the second phase of data collection for this study. Both youth were male and currently living at Cunningham Place. One youth identified himself as Aboriginal and the other stated he was Caucasian. Both youth were 20 years of age. One of the youth had participated in a focus group during the first phase of data collection. Therefore, he was familiar with the structure of the Cultural Exchange Program and the purpose of the present study. The other youth was new to the study and therefore, was unfamiliar with the Cultural Exchange Program and the purpose of designing the evaluation framework.

Rather than conducting two separate interviews, the youth requested to participate in an interview together. They youth stated that they felt more comfortable in a group setting, where other youth were present. Subsequently, one interview took place with both youth in a secure room at Cunningham Place. Each youth agreed to be audio-taped for the purpose of the study. Therefore, quotes from both participants can be found in the analysis below. The quotes are represented as Youth #1 and Youth #2.

Category One: Evaluation Design

Similar to the other stakeholder groups, youth transitioning out of homelessness suggested a number of different methods to rigorously evaluate the Cultural Exchange Program. The youth discussed qualitative forms of data collection, triangulation, ongoing evaluation, and the benefits of using an internal versus an external evaluator. Each of these topics will be analyzed and discussed separately in the next section of this chapter.

1) Qualitative Methods Preferred

Unlike university students, the youth transitioning out of homelessness did not support a mixed method design. Instead, they believed that the best way to evaluate the Cultural Exchange Program would be exclusively through qualitative methods of data collection. The youth felt that a detailed and accurate picture of the Cultural Exchange Program could best be established through casual conversation with program participants. This way, participants could describe what they liked and what they did not like about the program without being restricted by the time, space, or the skills required to write down ideas on paper. As one of the youth described:

"I don't know if a report would do it. I think just like, keeping an active conversation going, right. I mean, you can watch somebody grow just through how they talk and how they act. (Phase Two, Focus Group, Youth #2, pg.3).

Similar to participants in phase one of the study, youth believed that self-reports would be the best way to determine if the objectives for the Cultural Exchange Program had been achieved, including the formation of relationships, the obtainment of knowledge, the enhancement of new or pre-existing skills, and the willingness to try new things. For example, to determine if program participants acquired new knowledge as a result of the program, the youth suggested asking participants directly what they learned through their participation in the program activities.

"You know, you could just, with culture, like learning somebody's culture or background. You know, just like, oh, what did you guys do? Oh, so you did this. How does that represent your background? You know?...And, try to, through the one-on-one and even the group, developing through each person, each person's background. Like where they've been. I don't know where he's been, I, so, you now, do something that suits his background. For me, it would be like, ok, want to come for a walk for like 8 hours (laughing). That's my background on the streets. Want to see where I slept. I don't know." (Phase Two, Focus Group, Youth #2, pg.5).

Similarly, the youth believed that the best way to assess skill development would be through conversations with program participants, where the participants could report how their skills developed as a result of their participation in the program. In addition, the youth suggested that participants demonstrate some of the new skills they learned or the pre-existing skills they enhanced.

"That's, that's one of the easiest ones to, to ah assess, because like, they come in and they're all shy, or even if they come in with good leadership skills, you can watch as a group, either follow them or try to get them to make their own decisions, to see if more leadership qualities come out. If you're going to say something like ah, you know, how good was your relationship building, that would be a little bit different because it's hard to judge somebody's relationship in a group. You'd have to see it with nobody around, right? So like, if you could get honest opinions from everybody." (Phase Two, Focus Group, Youth #2, pg.4).

In addition to collecting oral feedback about the program, one of the youth suggested journaling, as a way to gather information about the Cultural Exchange Program. The youth believed that journaling would provide be a safe way for participants to express their feelings about the program. This was similar to the opinions expressed by the university students.

"You know, on a piece of paper, righting down. You would probably need a lot of loose leaf (laughing). Another way you could do it, possibly, to evaluate each person, is to ah, maybe even offer a journal. This is what we did session one. This is what I thought. You know?" (Phase Two, Focus Group, Youth #2, pg.8).

2) Triangulation

One of the youth strongly supported triangulation as a way to increase the rigor of the evaluation framework. This youth suggested interviewing the program participants separately (i.e. interviewing university students separately from the youth transitioning out of homelessness) and then comparing the responses from all participants together, to see if the stories differed or were the same. This youth believed that triangulation would increase the accuracy and reliability of results by drawing comparisons between different participants in the program.

"Talk to both people together and then talk to each person separately and then see if their stories differ." (Phase Two, Focus Group, Youth, pg.4).

3) Ongoing Evaluation

Both of the youth recommended having an ongoing evaluation, whereby participants would be monitored continually throughout the program to assess for changes in attitude, skill level, and relationships with other people. The youth suggested have a 'closing circle' at the end of every program session to discuss how each participant felt about the program and to make sure the needs of all participants were being met.

"Everyday. It would be better if it was everyday. Just in case something happens to a person or whatever." (Phase Two, Focus Group, Youth #1, pg.5).

To correlate with each program session, the youth suggested that check-ins take place every week for the first four weeks (i.e. weeks one to four) and then biweekly for the following ten weeks (i.e. weeks 5 to 15). On the last day of the program, the youth suggested having a final evaluation, which would be an informal conversation about the program to sum up how the participants felt and to bring closure to their experiences.

"See, with the first four, right, first four I think it should be everyday because you're building, you're building relationships there, you're building. But for the next 5 to 15, that's10, maybe every two, you know, just to keep in contact. And for the last one, right before the "program party" (whispering) (group laughs) just sit everyone down. Just have a discussion. Check in with everyone at the same time." (Phase Two, Focus Group, Youth #2, pg.5).

4) Follow-up

Similar to the university students, youth transitioning out of homelessness supported the inclusion of a follow-up evaluation. Both youth thought a follow-up evaluation would be very useful to track how the Cultural Exchange Program had impacted participants over an extended period of time. The youth thought the follow-up should be performed within three months after the program ended to avoid the loosing potential informants due to transience. This was evidenced by the following two quotes:

"Three months most." (Phase Two, Focus Group, Youth #1, pg.9).

"Three months most." (Phase Two, Focus Group, Youth #2, pg.9).

The youth believed that the best method to contact former participants for the follow-up evaluation would be through Cunningham Place or through the youth's last known home address. One of the youth also suggested using email to contact former participants in the study. This individual had a current email address and accessed it on a regular basis through services in the community, such as the YMCA. The other youth however, did not have a current email address and did not feel comfortable using computers. This individual did not feel that email would be an effective way to connect with homeless youth in the City. Subsequently, communicating through email might vary from one youth to the next, depending on interest, skills, and accessibility.

5) Artistic work

Both of the youth were hesitant about including artistic work into the evaluation design. The youth stated that they were worried that their artwork might be judged and they feared that if they were not good at art, their overall evaluation for the program would be poor. One of the youth acknowledged that art is a great way for youth on the street to express their feelings and their ideas, however it would be preferable to include art in the program and not make it part of the evaluation design.

"Um, It's like ah, just that it's, it could seem to other people, you know, I'm no good at art, therefore my evaluation's going to be bad. See I'm more interested in the participation than the actually, I , I think artistic, using any form of art, you know a little bit of expression, ah draw in, you know any kind of that thing, I think is a great way to express yourself and your ideas, but other people don't think that way." (Phase Two, Focus Group, Youth #2, pg.7).

<u>Service Providers</u>

Two service providers agreed to be interviewed for phase two of this study. Both service providers were female, Aboriginal, and had at least two years experience working with homeless youth. One of the service providers had participated in the first phase of data collection and the other service provider was acting as a member of the Community Advisory Team (CAT) for the LINKS Project at the time data was being collected for this study. Subsequently, both service providers were very familiar with the Cultural Exchange Program and had demonstrated continued support for the LINKS Project.

It should be noted that only one of the service providers agreed to be audio-taped for the study. The other service provider did not feel comfortable being audio-taped, but allowed the researcher to take notes during the interview session. As a result, only quotes from one service provider are incorporated into the data analysis.

Category One: Evaluation Content

In terms of the evaluation content, both service providers thought it would be important to assess process as well as impact variables. The service providers saw process variables as indicators of whether or not the program was accomplishing what it had set out to do (Rossi et al, 2004). This would include if activities were being executed as planned, whether participants where attending the program on a regular basis, and whether the cost of activities were similar to previous estimates.

In terms of outcome evaluation, both service providers recommended sticking with the four objectives of the Cultural Exchange Program. This included: 1) relationship formation; 2) knowledge enhancement; 3) skill development; and 4) trying new things. One of the service providers touched on the importance of both process and impact evaluation in the following statement:

"Well, I think that formal evaluation isn't necessarily a bad thing because you want to know, are we going where we want to go? Are we accomplishing what we want to accomplish? Has some other ah, off shoot occurred that we weren't expecting and how do we, how do we manage it? Incorporate it? Mitigate it? So I think that a formal evaluation tool is good and I think also as the group progresses, what's changed? What have you guys learned as far as implementing it, right? Which are also important things? So I think that a formal evaluation is, is very much needed." (Phase Two, Service Provider #1, pg.10).

Category Two: Evaluation Design

A second category that emerged from the data related to the design of the evaluation framework. Overall, service providers from Cunningham Place believed that a variety of rigorous methods were needed to evaluate the Cultural Exchange Program, including quantitative and qualitative modes of data collection, ongoing assessment, triangulation, and internal evaluation. The following section of this chapter will explore each component of the evaluation framework, as it relates to comments and opinions expressed by service providers from Cunningham Place.

1) Mixed Method Design

Both service providers recommended that the evaluation tool for the Cultural Exchange Program involve a mixed method design. According to each service provider, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection would create a rich and detailed picture of how the program was functioning and whether outcomes were being achieved. As one service provider explained:

"I think there has to be an equal mix of both. Um, because a kid might show up everyday, but is he really getting something out of it or is he just showing up for something free, right? Or is it just a warm place to hang out in the winter time for a night?" (Phase Two, Service Provider, pg.12).

Like university students, both service providers placed more weight on qualitative methods of data collection because they felt it would result in more specific and detailed information about the program. Both service providers also talked at great length about the use of self-reports. Through their experiences working with homeless youth, both service providers had found self reports to be a useful strategy to learn about the likes and dislikes of each youth. As one service provider explained:

"So, getting their feedback on how their experience was with it? I guess just asking them straight up, you know like, um, a lot of these youth, for the most part, are very vocal about what their likes and dislikes are and if, um, I was going to say, if they drop out with no indication, then, of anything being outwardly a problem, then that might be feedback right there. But then, you know, also, it could be like circumstance too. So, that's a, really a tough one to kind of elaborate on I guess, other than just asking them for their feedback straight up." (Phase Two, Service Provider #1, pg.1).

A second qualitative strategy that both service providers supported, to obtain information about the Cultural Exchange Program, was observation. From her experiences working with homeless youth, one service provider had found that changes in behavior could tell how an individual was coping and whether something significant had changed in his or her life. This service provider suggested monitoring changes in attitude or behaviors and noting anything new or inconsistent with earlier actions. This service provider felt that positive or negative changes in behavior could be an indication of how the Cultural Exchange Program was impacting program participants.

"...In a lot of ways too, it could also come out in behaviors. You know, suddenly, one of the participants who has a generally happy-go-lucky, upbeat attitude starts presenting with behaviors that maybe we really haven't seen, um, that could be an indicator of something bigger too, right." (Phase Two, Service Provider #1, pg.1).

Service providers felt that observation would be particularly useful when determining whether a relationship had formed between a university students and a youth transitioning out of homelessness. One service provider recommended looking for things, such as comradery between the two individuals (i.e. Do they appear to be getting along? Do they work well together? Are they displaying positive behaviors, such as laughing, joking, sharing materials?).

"I guess it's one of those things were you could use a lot of visual indicators, right. Is there comradery between the two prior to the commencement of the group, right or a session? Are they meeting more than once or twice? Like is it, does that commitment to getting to know each other, kind of, is that there?" (Phase Two, Service Provider #1, pg.3).

Service providers suggested using self-reports and observation to determine if participants gained knowledge through their participation in the Cultural Exchange Program. One service provider suggested asking participants if their stereotypes or preconceived ideas about the other group of people changed. If they had any 'ah ha' moments, whereby they experienced a genuine change in thinking about the other group of people.

"Um, I guess it might kind of come down to, once again, just asking, did you, where any of your preconceived ideas, where any of them shattered? Did you have any "ah ha" moments where suddenly something that you maybe didn't understand, or, or made a person irate before, like ah, those kids that spange all the time, or the squeegee kids! You know? And then, like, oh, now I understand! Like, any of those ah ha moments that just really facilitate a genuine change in thinking or approaching a certain group of people, a certain issue. Um, anything that just kind of really, I guess that, ya, just that self-report of change." (Phase Two, Service Provider #1, pg.7).

To evaluate skill development, both service providers suggested using observation and documenting changes throughout the duration of the program. In addition, service providers suggested asking program participants whether they felt they had acquired new skills throughout the program and then have them demonstrate the skills that they acquired.

"Um, I mean we see those changes. We see immense changes. Sometimes it's not always immediate. Do we really have a tool to assess that? Not really. Um, I mean, it's in as much as keeping a paper trail, right? Um, the documentation of incidents, ah conversations, anything like that. And I find, when you look back at the paperwork, when you read the file from beginning to end, you can really see that, that change and some of those changes are really vivid." (Phase Two, Service Provider #1, pg.7).

Finally, to evaluate if participants tried new things, the service providers suggested asking participants if they tried something new, if they did something they had never done before, or if they had taken any personal risks.

"Um, once again (laughing), I think just kind of asking them, like "did you do something that you could have never seen yourself doing before?" Whether it be, and I don't know what the boundaries would be with this, or the safety issues, whether it be ah a university student going down and checking out one of their drop in centres where they hang out or accompanying them to a soup kitchen and eating soup kitchen soup and you know, it's a tough thing to do when we're used to different qualities of food, different levels of access to food. Ah, did the ah homeless maybe attend and sit in on a class or walk around campus and have a coffee or a latte or something, you know? Stuff like that, you know. And I think that those are huge risks on either person's behalf 'cause there's that risk of judgment too that comes with it. Like, what's so and so doing here? Like what's that person here? Or that kid doesn't belong, you know? So I think those are huge risks." (Phase Two, Service Provider #1, pg.9).

In terms of quantitative data collection, both service providers thought it would be valuable to monitor things, such as attendance rates (i.e. Are participants showing up for the program?), absentees, lateness, and the quality of program participation (i.e. Are the participants engaging in all of the program activities? Are participants staying for the entire session or are they leaving the session early?). Service providers believed that keeping a numerical record of attendance and program participation would tell a lot about each participant's commitment to the program.

During a casual conversation after the formal interview had finished, one service provider mentioned that homeless youth will generally not participate in a program or activity that they do not enjoy. Therefore, poor attendance or early leaving could be an indication that either the program as a whole was not meeting the participant's needs, or the particular session was not enjoyable for the youth.

2) Ongoing Evaluation

Both of the service providers believed that the best way to evaluate the Cultural Exchange Program would be through an ongoing evaluation involving two strategies. Firstly, there would be a formal pre, mid, and post-test evaluation, whereby participants would be asked to set personal goals at the beginning of the program and then reflect on those goals halfway through the program and at the end.

"I think it needs to be ongoing. So you know, if it's a 16 week program, just do it in allotted increments. So, whether it be every four weeks or halfway through. You know, a pre, a mid, and a post evaluation, you know. Um, has the group's expectations of what it's going to be, um, have they changed halfway through and did it, were the outcomes what they expected?" (Phase Two, Service Provider, pg.11).

The second part of the ongoing evaluation would involve informal evaluations or 'check-ins' after every program sessions, whereby program participants could discuss how the program was going and offer suggestions for future improvement.

"Um, I think that there would be a really great opportunity um for that. And I know like that a lot of groups that have that process. A lot of times um, they'll do affirmations, so at the closing of a group, not every day, but towards the end or even, you know, through those things you say, ok, what can you tell me about so and so? What changes have you seen? And just kind of giving those affirmations um that are positive, right um and that are designed to uplift. I think that that really creates a shift." (Phase Two, Service Provider, pg.8).

Both of the service providers were confident that youth participating in the Cultural Exchange Program would be able to set goals at the beginning of the program. According to one of the service providers, goal setting is a strong focus at Cunningham Place to help youth prioritize their needs and work towards independent living. Youth at Cunningham Place would be used to setting personal goals and, therefore, should have few problems with this activity.

"Um, here, we have a heavy focus on goal setting. Um, and we do things called "action plans", which outlines 4 or 5 goals and then a long-term goal. So what do you need, what are the steps you need to take in order to get where you want to be? Um, sometimes the goals can change rapidly because we think of them as living, breathing organisms, just like us as people, right? Um, so, the youth are, you know, most of these kids are very goal oriented. They know what they want. The problem is barriers that are preventing them from reaching that, right? And, so that's in where the difficulty lies." (Phase Two, Service Provider, pg.10).

The benefit of goal setting is that university students and youth would have an opportunity to reflect on their needs and what they hope to get out of the program. Service providers believed that setting individual goals would help to personalize the program and make outcomes more meaningful to participants because they would directly relate to what each individual had identified as a priority for his or her personal development. The participants could take ownership over the program by reflecting on whether or not their goals were being achieved and offer suggestions for how the program could be improved to better meet their needs.

"But if the goals are to try new experiences, to relate to other people, to create understanding, these kids are willing to do almost anything that it takes in order to be understood because ultimately all of these kids want to be understood. That is why they're on the street, is because they feel misunderstood or that support hasn't been there, so anything that helps towards that I think is a fantastic point." (Phase Two, Service Provider, pg.10).

3) Triangulation

Both of the service providers supported university students and youth evaluating one another. The service providers saw it as a way to open the lines of communication between students and youth. In addition, they felt that it could help to address and dispel stereotypes that participants had of one another, or to affirm the progress that each participant had made. Service providers suggested that participants provide feedback to one another during group discussions at the end of each program session. As one service provider explained:

"I would do it as something together, right, because then it's, it is that exchange, um, which reading the program outline, is kind of the idea, right? So having that feedback from the two different groups towards each other I think, is, you know, would be really helpful. As far as, you know, maybe the homeless youth identifying biases that the university student has worked on, right, um the biases that the homeless youth have worked on, or the understanding that one discovered in another, I think that would be really helpful." (Phase Two, Service Provider #1, pg.8-9).

4) Internal/External Evaluator

Both service providers thought the Program Facilitator could have a role in evaluating the participants in the Cultural Exchange Program. The service providers believed that the Program Facilitator would have a good opportunity to observe participants throughout the program and note changes in their mood or behaviors.

"I think that that would be quite plausible. I mean for both groups of participants, right? Whether, because most people have behaviors when something's going on, right? Or if something's bothering them. Whether it becoming, a person becomes extremely withdrawn, or extremely gregarious, or in your face. Those passive-aggressive kind of behaviors. Everyone has that, and I think that within those group facilitations, who's going to catch that better than the facilitator, right? Um, so I think that that would be a very plausible way of evaluating it." (Phase Two, Service Provider #1, pg.2).

Both service providers also saw a place for the caseworkers at Cunningham Place to also have a hand in evaluating some of the participants in the program, particularly the youth transitioning out of homelessness. Caseworkers at Cunningham Place would be familiar with each youth in the program and therefore, they would be able to judge if changes in attitude, disposition, or behaviors were taking place. In addition, Caseworkers would be external to the Cultural Exchange Program and therefore could offer a more neutral and unbiased perspective. Subsequently, service providers believed that the youth might feel more comfortable sharing their thoughts and ideas with a Caseworker, rather than with the Program Facilitator who was directly involved with the program. Including Caseworkers in the program evaluation would serve to triangulate data, by comparing findings between the Program Facilitator and participants in the program.

"I think that a, a collaborative effort of the facilitators, the coordinators, the service providers is needed in that sense because we all, everybody presents different to everybody, right? So, with the, the combination of the different information sources, I think that would be helpful. Even something like journaling, where um at the end of the class where the other have a, a verbal journal where the youth's literacy skills are not in place, or um, or a written journal, you do at the end of class and hand in to the facilitator. And kind of ask them to document if there were any shifts in beliefs, any ah ha moments, any um, self realizations, I think that would give you a good indicator." (Phase Two, Service Provider #1, pg.8).

It should be noted, that service providers were the only respondents in phase two of data collection who saw a role for caseworkers in the evaluation framework. Other respondents, including university students, youth transitioning out of homelessness, and members from local funding agencies did not think the perspectives of caseworkers were as relevant to the program evaluation. While Caseworkers could provide insight about the youth participating in the program, other respondents felt that it would be difficult to distinguish whether changes in attitude or behaviors as noted by the caseworkers would be related to the program and not due to other factors.

5) Flexibility

Both of the service providers supported a flexible evaluation design. They each suggested that it would be helpful to give youth and students options in terms of how they respond to the evaluation questions. Both service providers acknowledged that many of the youth transitioning out of homelessness have low literacy skills and therefore, might feel uncomfortable filling out a written evaluation form. One service provider even cautioned that the youth might withdraw if they were not comfortable with the evaluation design, which would result in less information being collected about the Cultural Exchange Program. Subsequently, both service providers believed that it would be easiest for youth to answer the evaluation questions orally, through either a casual discussion or a more formal interview process.

One of the service providers also mentioned that having an oral evaluation would allow university students and youth to express their ideas more freely, without constrictions related to time or space on a piece of paper. This service provider felt very strongly that the evaluation tool had to be fun and interesting for the program participants, or else they would be less inclined to complete it. An oral evaluation would not only be less intimidating for youth, but it would also engage participants and offer them the chance to share their thoughts about the program in a descriptive and uninhibited way.

Both service providers suggested that a flexible evaluation design would help to support the learning style of each participant. If an individual is more comfortable sharing his or her ideas orally, then they should be given the option to share their ideas in that way. Similarly, if someone is more confident writing his or her ideas down on paper, than that format should be supported as well. According to service providers, supporting the strengths of each participant would make the evaluation less intimidating and would help to empower program participants in the process.

"I think that a selection, I guess just in my own personal opinion, I think that a selection would be useful um, because another contributing factor I guess from my experience, for a lot of these youth, when they have lower levels of education that are participating, the literacy skills may not be there. That's gonna be a, a factor that's gonna probably create that withdraw. Um, and having only one set method, that's a huge reason why a lot of these kids haven't made it through the school system is because they're being offered a learning style that doesn't necessarily fit with them. So if we can give them that, that opportunity whether they, you know, stand up and say something and the facilitator records important points of what they're saying. Whether it be, you know, having the opportunity to paint or draw a picture that incorporates the story of what their experiences have been. Or even tape recorder to tape record their thoughts, right? Or the journaling." (Phase Two, Service Provider #1, pg.12-13).

6) Follow-up

According to one of the service providers, the length of time to follow-up should depend on the stability of the program participants. To increase the likelihood of reaching participants, the service provider recommended that the follow-up occur within one month after the program is complete. If participants are more stable, follow-up could be extended to six months. The other service provider echoed this point-of-view by stating that the evaluation should occur within two weeks to one month, to increase the likelihood of reaching all participants.

One of the service providers suggested using incentives to encourage participants to partake in the follow-up evaluation. The type of incentives were not described, but the service provider believed that if students and youth were offered something for their time and energy, it would significantly improve the number of respondents participating in the follow-up evaluation.

7) Artistic Work

There was a slight discrepancy between the two service providers in terms of including art work into the evaluation design. One of the service providers was strongly in favor of including artistic work to supplement information gathered through qualitative and quantitative data collection efforts. This service provider believed that art would personalize the evaluation and add depth to information collected about the program.

The other service provider however, cautioned about using artwork for the purpose of the evaluation. The primary reason the service provider was not in support of using artwork was the fact that not all individuals in the program will be interested in art. Subsequently, the inclusion of artistic activities would be catering to the needs and interests of only a few people in the program, as opposed to all. The service provider went on to talk about stereotypes and misconceptions often present around Aboriginal People, including the common misconception that all Aboriginal people are interested in art. The Aboriginal population is very diverse and therefore artwork may not be the best form of expression for some people, while it might be very therapeutic for others. This service provider warned that one must be careful about making generalizations to entire groups of people. Instead, the service provider suggested being flexible and basing the inclusion of art on individual need, rather than making it mandatory for everyone.

"I don't know. That's a tough one because um, within the urban kind of culture, there's such a broad range of Aboriginal development. Individuals from ah, Buddhist Aboriginal. Not everybody's beads and feathers. Um, so we can't pigeon-hold everyone into beads and feathers. And not everybody's Cree, which is what a lot services are providing, within a Cree culture. So, I don't know how to effectively answer that one because um, Aboriginal just doesn't mean one same person. You know, there's sub-cultures within that too. So then, how do you break it down to explore those?" (Phase Two, Service Provider #1, pg.14).

Staff from Local Funding Agencies

Staff members from local funding agencies in and around the City of Edmonton, were involved the second phase of data collection for this study. A total of two interviews took place. One of the interviews was performed at the agency where the individual worked, while the other interview was performed over the phone. Only the interview conducted in-person was audio-taped. Insights and ideas from both staff members are presented in the data, however only direct quotes from one of the informants is provided in the analysis. Both staff members were female, Caucasian, and had worked for at least two years with a funding agency that supported community initiatives to assist high-risk youth. Subsequently, both staff members had personal experience to reflect on when answering questions related to the evaluation design.

Category One: Evaluation Content

Staff from local funding agencies echoed many of the statements made by other informants during phase one and phase two of data collection. One of the funders talked at great length about the importance of evaluating whether participants increased their knowledge and understanding of other cultures as a result of their participation in the

Cultural Exchange Program. In particular, this staff member wanted to know if the university student's attitudes towards homeless youth had changed. The funder believed that changing the perspectives of university students would lead to a decrease in negative stereotypes and misconceptions placed on homeless youth. This was particularly important because the funder saw university students as individual who could grow to be future leaders and decision-makers in society. She stated:

"Well, I think it's that awareness piece that is important. Particularly the um university students have a higher awareness for the issues facing homeless youth and braking down those stereotypes so that that has an opportunity to kind of spread through the community by people learning you know better, about the challenges. So I think that's something that's key to our organization is increasing awareness around the homeless issues. So, I think that would be important" (Phase Two, Funder #1, pg.1).

In terms of the youth transitioning out of homeless, both funders were primarily interested in very long-term outcomes. For example, one funder mentioned that she wanted to see some evidence of the youth reaching beyond their current social networks and developing new social support systems. This funder wanted to know if the youth were progressing out of the street culture and engaging in more positive behaviors, such as enrolling in school or maintaining healthier lifestyle choices. It was the funder's hope that the Cultural Exchange Program that would assist youth to break free of the street culture so they didn't get entrenched in that lifestyle forever.

"From the side of the youth, it would be nice if you were able to measure somehow the impact that it has um on their ability to reach beyond their regular social circles, or the circles that they travel in because I think part of the challenge with the youth is that they get stuck within this culture of living on the streets and so by having a program like this, if they were able to build more comfort interacting with others and thereby, you know, improving their opportunities to get out and do other things, whether it was going back to school or breaking free of that street culture." (Phase Two, Funder #1, pg.2).

In addition to evaluating outcome variables, such as knowledge and the formation of relationships, each funder also suggested that the evaluation tool measure process variables, such as attendance rates, the execution of program activities, and the quality of participation within program activities. Both funders felt it was important to monitor process variables so that outcomes could be evaluated accordingly. For example, if the program was only executed every two weeks as opposed to once a week, relationships might take longer to develop and this should be accounted for in the evaluation design.

"...so that at the end of the day, has the group done what they said they were going to do. So, that's the process. Right? They apply saying, this is the process we're going to take. So we want to be able to go in and say, did you actually do that? 'Cause we get groups now, coming back for second and third year funding, so we want to know, well did you actually do what you said you were going to do or did you just take this money and go off. You know, you got some good results, but it's not anywhere near what we were looking for. So I think it, to me, it would makes perfect sense that you would want to do that." (Interview #1, Funder, pg.6).

One of the funders noted that even if the program deviated a little bit from the original plan, as long as there was justification as to *why* the changes took place, than funding agencies would likely support the program, along with its alterations. This funder believed that the ability to justify program changes was an extremely positive outcome because it would show adaptability and a commitment on the part of the program to improve. The best way to justify changes would be through process evaluation.

"Even, if it's, you know, they came up, we had this process in mind, but then, you know, once we got on the road, and started doing it, and we realized the process needed adjustment. You know, because a lot of the stuff that's being done around the homeless, they're wanting to do best practices, so to me, it's admitting that you've learned from the process, that you know, you've had to adjust your process." (Phase Two, Funder #1, pg.7).

Finally, one of the funders felt very strongly that is was important to stick to the budgeting contract laid out before the program began. She noted that all money had to be accounted for at all times and that permission must be granted from the funding agency before any changes were made in terms of how money was allocated within the program. Making changes to the budget without discussion with the program funder could be detrimental to obtaining additional funding in the future. Process evaluation could help demonstrate which program activities were executed and which ones were not. This would support the allocation of program funds, so money is distributed where it is needed most.

"...one thing you should know, about the way we work and I don't know about other funders, but we have very rigid budget guidelines. Not so much what percentage should go where, but if you present a budget to us and the evaluation is 20% and you got a dollar figure there, that would become part of the contract. In order to take, um let's say, another line, oh, we need more money there, let's just take it from the evaluation, you can't do that, unless you come and get written permission from us. So once you've said you've committed that money, we expect it to be committed it in that way. And if not, you need to explain why. Um, and, that's because we do contributions as opposed to grants. And so we fund by actuals. Whereby a foundation, they just say, here's $50,000 for this project, you know, report back to us. They're not as rigid in their budget line." (Phase Two, Funder #1, pg.12).

Category Two: Evaluation Design

Members of local funding agencies outlined several components to the evaluation design, which included mixed methods, flexibility, follow-up, and artistic endeavors. Each will be discussed separately in the next portion of this chapter.

1) Mixed Methods

Both members of local funding agencies were in support of a mixed method design. Similar to other respondents in the study, funders believed that using a variety of methods to collect information about the program would create an accurate and detailed picture of how the program was functioning and how participants were being impacted by the interventions. As one funder stated:

"I think mixed method is better. Ya. We don't have any hard and fast rules, because we fund, the majority that we fund are capital projects, but we have started getting into, to more service oriented projects, and it looks like we're going to be continuing down that road, so this whole outcome measurements is fairly new to us [I – Ok] um and different groups choose different methods, so it's not like we've said, you know, we have a policy saying, all groups must follow this one method, so." (Phase Two, Funder #1, pg.5).

One of the program funders admitted to having very limited knowledge and experience assessing the quality of program evaluations. According to this individual, the funding agency where she worked devoted most of their finances towards projects that created housing for homeless youth, also known as "bricks and mortar" projects. This funder explained that funding for programs and services directed at homeless youth was a fairly new endeavor for her organization. In addition, this funder make clear that she had a very busy schedule and therefore, did not have a lot of time to learn how to assess the quality of a program evaluation. This was evidenced by the following quote:

"So, we've been very busy on the program delivery side, and our evaluation side, I have to admit, is, is probably lacking a bit, just because, as I said, we started out um, capital projects, so bricks and mortar. So, it's pretty easy to say, here's a million bucks, or whatever we've given, there's the building...So you go, and yes, here's the drawing, here's the project. Done. Right? So we're still in the learning stages of what we need to do around programming, program funding." (Phase Two, Funder #1, pg.6).

Subsequently, this could support the need to create a very simple program evaluation, which is clear and comprehensible, so that individuals with limited training in evaluation could still appreciate and make use of the results.

2) Flexibility

Both funders were aware that every participant in the program represents a unique individual and would possess different skills, knowledge, and ability to take risks. Therefore, both funders acknowledged that the evaluation tool for the Cultural Exchange Program would need to account for differences between individuals in the program. As one funder explained:

"So, but realizing that success for one youth isn't going to be the same as for others. So, just the fact that some of these youth are participating in this is a huge success considering what they have been through. So, how objective you can be, I'm just trying to set outcomes, hmm, I'm having a bit of a hard time with that one, cause what we get and what we see. Cause we fund some other youth programs and they're for very high-risk youth and the very fact that those youth have built a relationship with that organization, it's a six week program, right, but they've got youth that continually come back to them that they dealt with a couple of years ago. They still come back. They're still getting help with different things. Their path forwards is very slow and not always straight. So, how to objectively measure the success of that, I don't know." (Phase Two, Funder #1, pg.2).

Both members of local funding agencies thought the evaluation framework should be flexible enough to accommodate the individual needs. In particular, the funders thought the evaluation tool should accommodate low literacy skills, which they believed to be prevalent among the homeless youth population. Both funders suggested giving participants flexibility in terms of how they completed the evaluation tool. Individuals with low literacy skills could answer questions orally, while individuals with strong literacy skills could be given the option to answer questions in a written format. The funders also suggested that individuals who enjoy art could display their evaluation artistically, as long as it was accompanied by a verbal or written explanation.

"Of this, maybe you demonstrate that you know, you've got five youth and all of them have got a different preference. And, you know, they're not all going to be able to provide their feedback in the same way, and what's, what's best for them? And so, I would say, on a project like this, personally, now I don't know if everybody in the organization would feel this way, that we need to be open to whatever works best for the youth. And maybe, like if they like to draw and that's all they want to do, maybe the student that's working with them says, ok well you do the drawing and then tell me what the drawing means to you. And they write down something to tell the story. Like, especially with art, you look at it and go ok, like what does that mean? So, it may, it may need you know, the pairing up to do that." (Phase Two, Funder #1, pg.8).

3) Follow-up

Both members of local funding agencies believed that it was very important to include a long-term follow-up as part of the overall evaluation framework. This way the funding agency would know if the program was achieving its goals and whether it was having an impact on participants over time. The funders noted that this was particularly important when programs were asking for repeated or sustainable funding.

Both funders admitted that their organization did not have any standard for how long the follow-up evaluation should take place, however both individuals believed that the longer the evaluation, the better. One of the funders suggested doing a few follow-up evaluations over a period of eighteen months. She thought this would be more informative because different individuals would show changes at different points in time.

"Um, no, we don't have a standard and I think longer is better. I think if you could do like three 6 six month follow-ups, that would really be ideal because I think you would see like with the youth, um they'll progress at different levels, and you know and some of them won't. So it would be interesting to see where they are at 6 months, 12 months, 18 months after." (Phase Two, Funder #1, pg.3).

The same funder suggested offering rewards as a way to keep participants committed to the follow-up evaluation. She believed that program participants would be more motivated to complete the follow-up evaluation if they received something for their efforts. The funder offered a few suggestions as to what could be given as an award, including CD's, movie coupons, and cash. Regardless of what was offered to participants, the funder noted that the most important aspect of the reward is that the value increase with time. For example, the funder suggested offered fifty dollars at six months, one hundred dollars at twelve months and one hundred and fifty dollars at eighteen months follow-up. The funder predicted that as more time passes, participants might need more motivation to complete the follow-up evaluation. She explained:

"We've talked in other programs about, is it, should we be offering carrots. You know? If you come back in 6 months we'll have whatever it is, and you know 8 and 12 months, so they, they think about it. I mean, some of them will just completely forget and it's how, you may want to look at that, what would be an appropriate award for keeping in touch...if you built some, maybe a little cash incentives or you know, if you could get a little gift pack where you know, they get CDs or little gift certificates and little things like that...I don't know how you feel, if there's ethics around that, but I keep thinking, if you wanted to do the 18 month follow-up, if there's lets say, $50 for the first one, $100 for the second, $150 for the third, or something like that...So there's something in it for them." (Phase Two, Funder #1, pg.3-4).

4) Artistic Work

One of the funders supported the use of artistic work in the evaluation framework, as long as each individual could substantiate his or her ideas with a verbal or written description, so the work was not misinterpreted. The funder felt that she was creative individual who had a real appreciation for how important artistic expression could be to youth living on the streets. She cautioned however, that incorporating artistic work in the evaluation design may not be widely accepted by all program funders. She suggested that before incorporating artistic work in to the evaluation, it would be important to investigate the expectations and opinions of each organization that could potentially fund the Cultural Exchange Program to ensure that they would be supportive of the process.

"Well, and I'm say, well, I'm a little more creative than maybe some other people. Like, I wouldn't, I'm not wanting to say that that's going to be widely accepted amongst funders, but I think because of the work we have done with the youth and just working in the homeless field, we have a better understanding of where these kids are coming from. Like I've done quite a bit of stuff with I Human and things like that, so I know, I mean a lot of them won't be able to sit down and put their ideas pen to paper and so you're going to have to be creative and that. So I would kind of say, you know, try to come up with something that is flexible enough for variety, yet gets the message across clearly to those who will be receiving it." (Phase Two, Funder #1, pg.9).

Category Three: Dissemination Strategies

One category raised by funders, which was not addressed by any other group of informants, was the issue of disseminating evaluation results. Both funders believed it was important to the findings with the organization(s) funding the project. Funders also thought is was important to share evaluation results with a broader community, to educate the public about the value of executing a Cultural Exchange Program. Both funders preferred to receive a written report as opposed to any other form of dissemination. This is because written reports were the format that most funders were familiar with. Electronic or hard copy versions of the report were considered to be fine.

"Um, it's good to have both actually. Well, you know, if we get it electronically then we can always do our own hard copies, but if there's, you know, if you end up that you do have some drawings, then obviously it's going to have to come in, in a hard copy. Um, so ya, it's not a very black and white answer, but ya, it will depend on materials." (Phase Two, Funder #1, pg.9-10).

One program funder mentioned that an alternative method of disseminating information about the program would be to have a member of the funding agency attend a session of the Cultural Exchange Program to observe first hand how it is functioning. Having funders witness the program directly could increase their understanding and appreciation for the intervention.

"Well, one of the things that we have done, is our Project Officers attend the graduation. So, I'm looking at your program, so on the 16th week right, and that would be something, to be able to just sit there and hear about it is a good thing. One of our Project Officers just loves going out and doing that. So that's one way. I think that, our board doesn't usually get presentations, so a written report would probably be best. Ya, I think so. But, ya, participation at the graduation would be really worthwhile." (Phase Two, Funder #1, pg.10).

Summary

In summary, it appears that all stakeholders involved in the second phase of data collection, shared similar perspectives about how the evaluation framework for the Cultural Exchange Program should be designed. Each component of the evaluation framework mirrored ideas presented in phase one of the study. In addition, all components reflected the core category of *participant feedback*.

University students, youth, service providers, and staff from local funding agencies emphasized that program participants should be the central focus of the evaluation design. This was evidenced in their recommendations to use qualitative forms of data collection, including self reports. In addition, service providers supported internal evaluation as opposed to hiring someone external to the program. This way, only individuals directly involved in the Cultural Exchange Program would have an opportunity to evaluate activities and outcomes. University students, youth, and service providers suggested that each participant in the program be involved in self assessment, in addition to being evaluated by the Program Facilitator. This is a form of triangulation, which would allow participants to share thoughts about their own performance in addition to how they felt about the Cultural Exchange Program. Finally, informants supported the implementation of an ongoing evaluation, where participant feedback could be obtained through a pre, mid, and post-test measure, and through weekly or biweekly small group discussions.

Informants suggested keeping the evaluation design flexible enough to allow participants to offer feedback in different ways. In addition, informants supported the inclusion of artistic activities for individuals comfortable expressing their ideas that way.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to design an evaluation framework for a Cultural Exchange Program, based on input from relevant stakeholder groups. Participants in this study described the evaluation framework as a continual process of gathering feedback from participants using quantitative and qualitative data collection tools.

In this chapter, the findings of this research study are presented in light of supportive theory and current literature. Insight from university students, youth transitioning out of homelessness, service providers, and staff from local funding agencies were essential to the development of the evaluation framework. In addition, a total of thirty-one references were used to support decisions about the evaluation design.

Each component of the evaluation framework will be discussed in detail, to justify decisions about content and design. Following the description of the evaluation framework, implications of the findings to health promotion practice will be discussed. Finally, the chapter will conclude with an examination of the strengths and limitations of this research study and suggestions for future areas of study.

Overview of the Evaluation Framework

For informants in this study, the evaluation framework used to assess the Cultural Exchange Program, will consist of four parts: context, content, design, and tools (see Figure 4).

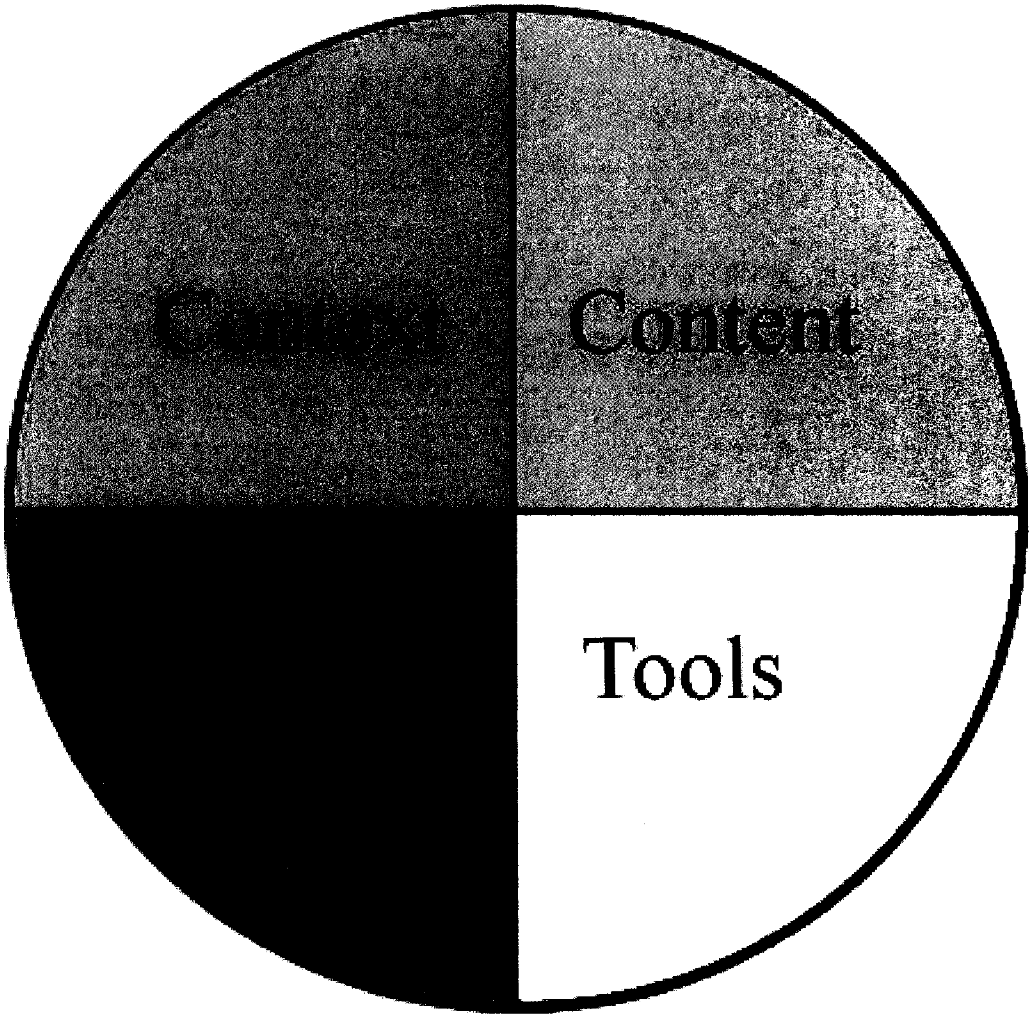


Figure 4 Components of the Evaluation Framework

Context refers to external factors that could impact how the evaluation framework is interpreted and used. Valuing program evaluation and understanding program goals are depicted at the top of Figure 5, indicating that they could influence all other components of the evaluation design.

The *content* of the evaluation framework deals with *what* the evaluation will be assessing. Informants felt that both process and outcome variables should be monitored as part of the evaluation of the Cultural Exchange Program. In terms of process variables, the evaluation should monitor whether the program was executed as planned and whether it reached the target recipients. In terms of outcome variables, the evaluation should monitor whether relationships formed, knowledge was increased, skills were developed, and participants tried new things. More information regarding process and outcome variables will be presented later on in this chapter.

Evaluation *design* refers to the general methods used to gather information about the Cultural Exchange Program. This includes triangulation, ongoing evaluation, and mixed-method design. The process of triangulating data findings is demonstrated by the arrows between the Program Facilitator, university students, and youth. Arrows pointing from the Program Facilitator to the university students and youth indicate that the Program Facilitator will be responsible for evaluating each group. Arrows corresponding between the university students and the youth indicate the assessment of each other's performance. Ongoing evaluation is illustrated by the circular arrows between the Program Facilitator, university students, and youth. The arrows indicate that evaluation is an ongoing process of feedback between participants in the program.

Finally, tools refer to *how* the Cultural Exchange Program will be evaluated. In

Figure 5, a list of quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments is provided in the centre of the circle. The tools indicate the variety of ways that information can be collected about process and outcome variables associated with the Cultural Exchange Program.

The core category of *flexible ongoing feedback* is presented in each part of the evaluation design. Participants are asked to provide feedback throughout the duration of the program, using the evaluation tools that best suit their needs and interests. In the next section of this chapter, each component of the evaluation design will be discussed in greater detail.

Context of the Evaluation

The evaluation framework must be interpreted within the context of the goals and objectives for the Cultural Exchange Program and the values of the individuals participating in the program. During the first phase of data collection, university students and service providers emphasized that an evaluation framework could not be effectively designed without first understanding the goals and objectives of the Cultural Exchange Program. One law student acknowledged that different program goals would require different forms of measurement, as articulated in the following quote:

> "...I would think that it would depend on what the goals and objectives are, like of what you're measuring, to see if you measured well. Um, so like, if we're looking at fostering relationships and making adequate pairings between people, out on social, you know outings and things like that, that would be different...than say, if it was looking towards something more long-term. In other words, building a co-op, or getting a plan for a co-op going...So, like a different end of what you would be evaluating." (University student, focus group #3, pg.3-4).

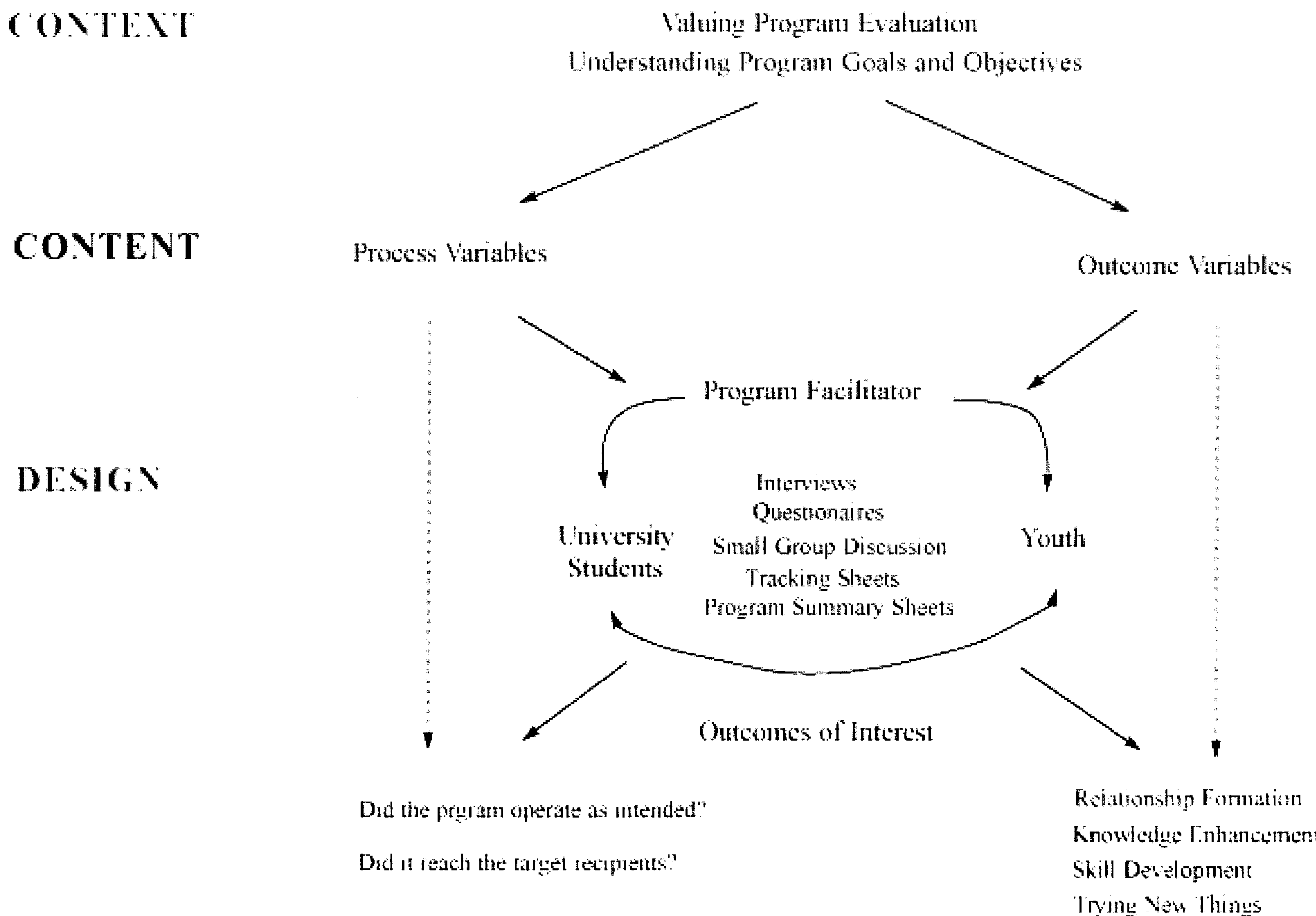


Figure 5. The Process of Evaluating a Cultural Exchage Program

The Cultural Exchange Program will not remain static over time. New information concerning process and outcome variables will continually cause the program to change. As new program goals and objectives develop, the original design of the evaluation framework will become less relevant. If the evaluation framework is to produce results that are meaningful to the Cultural Exchange Program, constant fine-tuning must take place. Subsequently, changes to the goals and objectives of the Cultural Exchange Program will result in changes to the evaluation framework as well.

The other contextual factor that will influence the evaluation framework is the *value* placed on it. During phase one of this study, university students suggested that program evaluations can get lost because finances or other resources go towards the program intervention instead.

"...programs that I've been involved in, or other things that I've been involved in, need to keep current through evaluation. Some how, evaluation gets lost and doesn't happen and...sometimes your intentions don't always meet, don't end up happening. So, I think that keeping evaluation, as a, as almost an objective, that this program will be constantly evaluated because it needs to be constantly relevant to all, as necessary." (University student, focus group #1, pg.10).

Literature has also accounted for the problems facing program evaluations, including resistance and lack of interest by stakeholder groups. Resistance can come from a lack of understanding about program evaluation (Taylor-Powell, Rossing, & Geran, 1998) or a perception that the evaluation will criticize or judge individual skill (Milstein & Wetterhall, 1999). Without strong support for program evaluations, it is unlikely that the tools will get used. The value placed on the evaluation framework is a significant factor influencing whether it is implemented and how it will be used.

Evaluation Content

The second component of the evaluation framework is *content,* which includes the *purpose* of the evaluation and the *corresponding questions* on which it will focus. Coinciding with strategies for a utilization-focused evaluation, it was essential that the evaluation framework respond to what key stakeholders felt was most important to measure (Patton, 1997). In addition, current literature was explored to determine best methods for tailoring the evaluation framework, so it would be a good fit with the circumstances of the Cultural Exchange Program. Based on the information collected, it was decided that the main purpose of the evaluation framework would be twofold: 1) monitoring program operations; and 2) monitoring the achievement of program goals.

On account of the fact that the Cultural Exchange Program represents a brand new intervention, the literature suggested that it would be most important to evaluate whether activities and services are delivered as planned (Chen, 2005; Fitzpatrick et al., 2004; Patton, 1997; Platt, Gnich, Rankin, Ritchie, Truman, & Backett-Milburn, 2004; Rossi et al., 2004; Wholey, Hatry, & Newcomber, 2004). According to Rossi et al. (2004), for a program to be effective at bringing about its desired effects, it must "carry out its intended functions in the intended way" (pg.170). Asserting how well a program is operating is known as a *formative* or *process* evaluation (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004; Patton, 1997; Rossi et al., 2004; Scriven, 1991). A formative evaluation will be used as part of a quality assurance measure for the Cultural Exchange Program, to assess the extent to which the program is being implemented as planned and whether it is delivering the intended services to the targeted recipients (Rossi et al., 2004), as indicated in Figure 5. A formative evaluation will be useful because it will help to furnish information about how the program is operating, so that ongoing improvements can be made.

In addition to monitoring program operations, stakeholders wanted to know how participants were benefiting through their participation in the program, including achievement in each of the four program objectives: 1) relationship formation; 2) knowledge enhancement; 3) skill development; and 4) participation in new activities (see Figure 5). Through opinions expressed by relevant stakeholder groups, it became clear that no matter how effective the Cultural Exchange Program was at reaching its target population and delivering the appropriate services, it would not be considered successful unless it brought about some measure of beneficial change. Subsequently, the framework will also include a *summative* evaluation to measure outcome variables (Rossi et al., 2004).

According to recent literature, combining process evaluation with an outcome assessment can result in a comprehensive evaluation strategy that tells a lot about how a program is functioning (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004; Patton, 1997; Rossi et al., 2004; Wholey et al., 2004). The investigator for this study supported the use of both formative and summative evaluations so that both process and outcome variables could be assessed. It was believed that the process evaluation would help to determine the quality and quantity of services delivered through the Cultural Exchange Program, while the outcome evaluation would show what impact these services had on participants in the program. Knowing what took place would help to explain why the program was or was not effective.

Evaluation Questions

The questions guiding the evaluation framework reflect the opinions expressed by relevant stakeholder groups, the LINKS Project team, and current literature on program evaluation. The questions are broken down into two categories, process evaluation and outcome evaluation. Within the process evaluation, questions explore whether the program reached the appropriate target population and whether the services were executed as planned. Within the outcome evaluation, questions are broken down into short-term outcomes, intermediate outcomes, and long-term outcomes. All of the questions included in the outcome evaluation reflect the original goals and objectives for the Cultural Exchange Program. These questions are listed below:

Process Evaluation

1) Is the Cultural Exchange Program reaching the appropriate target populations?
    a. How many youth and university students enrolled in the program?
    b. How many youth and university students attended each program session? Did they stay for the duration of the program or did some participants leave early? Why or why not?
    c. How many participants engaged in the first follow-up evaluation, one month after the program was complete? How many participants completed the follow-up 6 months after the program ended? How many participants completed the follow-up one year after the program ended? Were their answers thorough and complete?
2) Is the delivery of the Cultural Exchange Program consistent with the program design?
    a. Were the activities reflective of what was outlined in the program design?
    b. Did participants receive the specified amount, type, and quality of services?
    c. Was staffing sufficient for the number and type of activities that had to be implemented as part of the program?

d. Was the program well-organized (i.e. were facilities booked and the necessary materials supplied?)

e. Did participants enjoy the program? Were they satisfied with the services they received?

Outcome Evaluation

1) Short-term Outcomes

   a. Did university students and youth transitioning out of homelessness participate in a variety of different program activities?

   b. Did university students and youth transitioning out of homelessness interact with one another during the program sessions, by talking regularly, sharing supplies, and working together to complete specified tasks?

2) Intermediate Outcomes

   a. Did university students and youth transitioning out of homelessness begin to formulate a relationship with one another (i.e. did university students indicate that they felt more comfortable around the youth and did youth indicate that they felt more comfortable around the university students)?

   b. Did university students and youth transitioning out of homelessness begin to increase their knowledge and understanding of issues affecting the other group?

   c. Did university students and youth transitioning out of homelessness begin to develop new or existing skills (i.e. leadership, communication, or interpersonal skills)?

d. Did university students and youth transitioning out of homelessness try new activities through their participation in program?

3) Long-term Outcomes

a. Was a supportive relationship formed between the university students and youth transitioning out of homelessness?

b. Did university students and youth transitioning out of homelessness demonstrate an increased understanding, acceptance, and advocacy for the other group?

c. Did university students and youth transitioning out of homelessness enhance their existing skills or develop a repertoire of new skills, such as leadership, communication, or interpersonal skills?

d. Did university students and youth transitioning out of homelessness take at least one personal risk during the program, or step out of their comfort zone on at least one occasion?

Indicators

In order to evaluate outcomes resulting from the Cultural Exchange Program, indicators had to be developed. The development of indicators was an important step to designing the evaluation framework for the Cultural Exchange Program because each indicator was able to specify a point when the program goal had been reached and give clear, specific and measurable criteria to determine program success (Patton, 1997). Indicators for the Cultural Exchange Program are broken down into two categories: process indicators and outcome indicators and presented in Appendix H.

Evaluation Design

The third component of the evaluation framework, as outlined by participants in this study, was the evaluation *design*. In choosing the design of the evaluation framework, the investigator of this study followed the "good enough" rule, in that the strongest possible methodological design was selected (Rossi et al., 2004). According to Rossi et al. (2004), a good evaluation is one that "fits the circumstances while yielding credible and useful answers to the questions that motivate it" (pg.238). While other evaluation designs, such as randomized field experiments or quasi-experimental designs tend to produce more rigorous results (Mohr, 1995; Rossi et al., 2004; Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002), these approaches were not feasible given the small populations being studied, the structure of the Cultural Exchange Program, and the limited time and resource available to complete the evaluation design. Through conversations with research participants and by examining literature on program evaluation, it was decided that a longitudinal, quasi experimental mixed method design would be the most feasible method to evaluate the Cultural Exchange Program.

Longitudinal evaluations are defined as evaluations that take place over time and have at least two waves of measurement (Trochim, 2001). Currently, two types of longitudinal evaluations exist: 1) repeated measures and 2) time series design. The general rule is that if you have a few waves of measurement, you are using a repeated measures design, and if you have at least twenty waves of measurement, you have a time series design (Trochim, 2001). The Cultural Exchange Program represents a relatively short-term intervention, as it will only be administered over a period of sixteen weeks. For this reason, a repeated measures design would be more feasible to implement. The evaluation framework will consist of a pre-post test measure and a mid-term evaluation. In addition, continuous, informal evaluations will take place before, during and after the program is implemented. Both the pre-post test measure and the ongoing evaluation will involve qualitative and quantitative modes of data collection, constituting a mixed-method design.

Mixed-Methods

The use of a mixed method design will be beneficial to the evaluation of the Cultural Exchange Program because it will increase the variety and depth of information obtained (Greene & Caracelli, 1997; McConney, Rudd, & Ayers, 2002; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998; Weiss, 1998). Stakeholders involved with the design of the evaluation framework believed that combining quantitative and qualitative approaches would strengthen the evaluation by offsetting limitations associated with any one method. This perspective has been shared by current literature on program evaluation, which explains that mixed-method designs are a highly rigorous approach to evaluation because the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods reduces biases that one method would normally produce (Denzin, 1978; Greene & Caracelli, 1997; McConney, Rudd, & Ayers, 2002; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998; Weiss, 1998). Combining data sources and using multiple methods to support findings in a program evaluation is also known as *methodological triangulation* (Denzin, 1978), which helps to strengthen overall results.

The evaluation framework for the Cultural Exchange Program will be applying a *dominant-less dominant mixed method design,* whereby both quantitative and qualitative approaches will be used to collect data about the program, however equal weight will not be placed on all methods. In the case of the Cultural Exchange Program, more emphasis will be placed on qualitative modes of data collection. Stakeholders felt that accurate and detailed information about the program could only be obtained through the accounts of individuals directly experiencing the intervention. Subsequently, self-reports provided by participants will be given the most weight. While still important, less weight will be placed on the standardized tracking sheets completed by participants and the Program Facilitator at the end of each program session.

Internal Evaluation

All of the qualitative and quantitative data will be collected and analyzed by the Program Facilitator. The Program Facilitator will represent an internal evaluator because he or she will be involved with the Cultural Exchange Program over an extended period of time (Mathison, 1991). The investigator for this study felt that there would be several advantages to having someone familiar with the program conduct the evaluation, as opposed to hiring external personnel.

Firstly, using an internal evaluator is less expensive than hiring an evaluation contractor because the program does not have to pay additional fees to perform evaluation duties. While external evaluators generally have a lot of experience and expertise to draw from, they also require a significant amount of money to cover the cost of their services (personal communication, Tammy Horne, February 2004). Currently, the LINKS Project has limited financial resources, thereby limiting the amount of money that could be spent on program evaluation. An internal evaluator would be more feasible, given the financial constraints associated with the implementation and evaluation of the Cultural Exchange Program.

Secondly, internal evaluators have more knowledge of the program being evaluated, including its culture, its history, and the environment in which it operates. This knowledge can increase the use of the evaluation by guiding decisions about how it could most effectively be monitored for process and outcome variables.

Thirdly, the internal evaluator is likely to know more about the stakeholders involved with the program, and have some sort of relationship with them. If the relationship with stakeholders is positive, anxiety regarding the evaluation can be significantly decreased (Love, 1991).

The final advantage to using an internal evaluator is that he or she is more likely to remain with the program after the evaluation is complete. Subsequently, the internal evaluator for the Cultural Exchange Program would be able to serve as an advocate for the evaluation and promote the application of the results. According to Fitzpatrick, Sanders, and Worthen (2004), a recent trend in program evaluations is the increasing legitimacy of evaluations performed by individuals directly involved with the program. Therefore, the use of an internal evaluator (i.e. the Program Facilitator) would be a useful and cost-saving strategy to implement as part of the evaluation framework for the Cultural Exchange Program.

Follow-up

The final component of the evaluation framework is a follow-up measure. Through interviews and focus group sessions with youth transitioning out of homelessness, service providers, and members of local funding agencies, it was emphasized that a follow-up evaluation should take place to determine whether outcomes were sustainable over time. The majority of informants suggested that the follow-up evaluation occur shortly after the program was completed (i.e. within one month) to prevent high attrition rates, particularly because university students and homeless youth represent such transient populations

(Novac et al., 2002; Rich & Clark, 2005; Smart and Adlaf, 1991).

The only group of informants not in favor of a follow-up evaluation were the university students participating in phase one of this study. Overall, university students did not think a follow-up evaluation would be feasible to implement. The students questioned how the program would track former participants, how high attrition rates could be avoided, how the program would acquire the time and resources needed to implement the follow-up evaluation, and how changes in the participant's attitudes or behaviors could be linked back to the Cultural Exchange Program and not attributed to other socio-environmental factors.

In terms of tracking participants for the follow-up evaluation, the investigator posed a specific question to students and youth in the second phase of the study, which asked them to describe the most reliable way that the evaluator could contact them after their involvement in the Cultural Exchange Program had ended. The university students indicated that they could most easily be reached through email or by telephone. The youth transitioning out of homelessness on the other hand, felt that they could best be reached through postal mail at their last known address. Subsequently, follow-up could be quite feasible if questions are sent to program participants using strategies that most effectively meet their needs. For university students, this will be through telephone or email messaging, and for youth, this will be through postal services.

In terms of preventing high attrition rates, extensive efforts can be undertaken to keep former participants interested in the follow-up evaluation. During phase two of data collection, service providers and members of local funding agencies mentioned that rewards could be offered to individuals to get them to complete the follow-up evaluation. They suggested things such as money, movie coupons, CDs, or other materials that would be of interest to university students and youth. They also suggested that the rewards get bigger as time passes, since attrition rates increase with the passage of time (Trochim, 2001). Other studies performed with high-risk populations such as individuals seeking treatment for substance abuse, individuals with mental illnesses, and homeless adults, found that monetary rewards increased participation in the follow-up evaluation (Hser, Huang, Teruya, & Anglin, 2004; McKay, Foltz, Leahy, Stephens, Orwin, & Crowley, 2004). Methods, such as reminder notices, phone calls, contacting relatives, and conducting the evaluation in a location that was most convenient for the participants, were also used to increase the likelihood that the follow-up evaluation would be completed (Hser, Huang, Teruya, & Anglin, 2004; McKay, Foltz, Leahy, Stephens, Orwin, & Crowley, 2004). These strategies could be applied to the evaluation framework for the Cultural Exchange Program to increase commitment to the follow-up component.

One limitation of the follow-up evaluation for the Cultural Exchange Program is the short follow-up period. While stakeholders in phase one and phase two of study had suggested that follow-up should occur within one month to prevent the attrition of participants, the investigator of this study was not sure whether this would be long enough to determine if the Cultural Exchange Program had any real impact on attitudes and behaviors over time. The investigator for this study felt that a series of follow-up evaluations would be needed to demonstrate long-term effects of the Cultural Exchange Program. Therefore, in addition to the follow-up evaluation conducted at one month, two additional follow-up evaluations will take place, one at six months, and another one year after the program is complete. Questions used in the follow-up evaluation are included in Appendix I.

One final limitation to the follow-up evaluation is the lack of random assignment of program participants to different treatment conditions. University students acknowledged this limitation when they questioned how changes in the participant's attitudes or behaviors could be linked back to the Cultural Exchange Program and not attributed to other socio-environmental factors. Due to the lack of randomization and the lack of a control group in the pre-post test design, it will be hard for the follow-up evaluation to rule out that variables, other than the Cultural Exchange Program, could account for differences seen in former participants. For example, two months after the program finishes, a news story could break, which describes homeless youth as violent criminals, thereby decreasing public support for this population. Or, a new piece of provincial legislation could pass, which advocates for the rights of homeless youth, thereby increasing public support. The investigator for this study acknowledges that there is no way to control for these external variables. Subsequently, the only recommendation is to interpret results from the follow-up evaluation with caution (McKay et al., 2004; Porowski et al., 2004; Rich & Clark, 2005). While data might suggest that changes occurred as a result of the program, these findings can not be interpreted with any degree of certainty, as additional research will be needed to verify any results.

No Control Group

Before going on to describe the specific instruments that will be used to collect data about the Cultural Exchange Program, it should be noted that no comparison or non-equivalent control group will be incorporated into the evaluation design. There are three reasons for this decision: 1) the investigator for this study felt it would be unethical to deny services to youth or university students that are in need of support; 2) the number of university students and youth available to participate in the Cultural Exchange Program is limited, thereby making the random selection of program participants a difficult task; and 3) the life circumstances of each youth and university student are so unique that trying to find comparable populations would be quite challenging. Subsequently, rather than use a comparison group, the evaluation framework will focus on collecting baseline data with each participant in the program and then repeat the data collection at eight weeks and at sixteen weeks, to monitor the participant's progress throughout the program. Data collected over time will help to determine how each participant's knowledge, skills, and behaviors have improved. By comparing each participant to his or her own performance, realistic expectations can be set and trends throughout the program can be monitored.

Evaluation Tools

The final component of the evaluation framework includes the *tools* that will be used to collect information about the Cultural Exchange Program. These tools consist of: 1) a pre, mid, and post-test questionnaire; 2) informal group discussions; 3) standardized tracking sheets; and 4) a summary sheet completed by the Program Facilitator at the end of each program session.

Pre, Mid, and Post-Test Questionnaires

Through interviews and focus group sessions with university students, youth transitioning out of homelessness, service providers, and members of local funding agencies, it was strongly recommended that the evaluation framework for the Cultural Exchange Program include a pre-post test design. A pre-post test evaluation involves measurement on the same targets at two or more points in time, with the first measurements occurring before the program begins (Rossi et al., 20041; Trochim, 2001). According to literature on program evaluation, pre-post test designs are useful because they allow for comparisons to be made before and after the intervention has been implemented. Without a control group however, results from a pre-post test design must be interpreted carefully, as results could be due to factors unrelated to the intervention itself (Rossi, et al., 2004; Thorogood & Coombes, 2004; Wholey et al., 2004).

Prior to the commencement of the program, all participants will be required to answer a set of open-ended questions. These questions will gage each participant's expectations for the program and provide baseline data by which comparisons can be made (see Appendix J1). In addition to answering the standardized questions, each participant will be required to establish three or four personal goals. These goals should reflect the interests and needs of each individual in the program, however they are also expected to correspond with the four objectives of the Cultural Exchange Program, including: 1) relationship formation; 2) knowledge; 3) skill development; and 4) trying new activities and taking personal risks. These personal goals will be re-visited at mid-term and when the program has ended.

The mid-term and final questionnaires are intended to correspond with the pre-test, or baseline measure. Both the mid-term and the final questionnaires will consist of similar questions, so changes between the beginning and end of the program can be effectively monitored. Questions will relate to whether or not the participant's expectations for the program were reached and whether their personal goals, as well as the program objectives were achieved. The mid-term questionnaire will be administered halfway through the program (i.e. after eight weeks) (see Appendix J2) and the post-test questionnaire will be administered at the end of the program (i.e. after sixteen weeks) (see Appendix J3). All of the questions administered for the pre, mid, and post-test questionnaires can be answered either orally or in written format, depending on the comfort level and literacy abilities of each program participant.

To support the data collected through the pre, mid, and post test questionnaire, other ongoing modes of data collection will also be implemented throughout the duration of the Cultural Exchange Program. These ongoing evaluation tools will consist of both quantitative and qualitative observations, so that multiple measures of the outcomes of interest can be obtained. Overall, the degree of certainty about the program effects is higher with ongoing evaluation because there is more information upon which to base the results. Included in the ongoing evaluation will be informal, small group discussions, standardized tracking sheets, and a summary report completed by the Program Facilitator.

Small Group Discussions

Firstly, university students, youth transitioning out of homelessness, and service providers all suggested that participants engage in a group discussion with the Program Facilitator at the end of every program session. Terms coined for this weekly or biweekly group discussion were ‘group debriefing sessions’ or a ‘closing circle’. The ‘closing circle’ will be a useful tool for collecting information about the Cultural Exchange Program because it can be structured to appear as part of the regular program activities, so it doesn’t take any additional time or energy to implement, while still providing a detailed account of the daily activities within the program.

The ‘closing circle’ will consist of both university students and youth transitioning out of homelessness and is expected to last about ten minutes at the end of each program session. At this time, participants will sit down in a circle and take turns commenting on the program session that day. Sample questions to guide the small group discussion are presented in Appendix K. It should be noted that these questions are simply a starting point to stimulate thoughtful discussion amongst the program participants. Questions might vary from week to week, depending on what participants are interested in discussing that day.

During the small group discussions, the Program Facilitator will stand to one side and take notes on flip chart paper. The flip chart paper will provide a venue for participants to validate their responses and it will provide concrete information for the Facilitator to refer back to when completing his or her summary sheet later that day. The Program Facilitator can use the information from each 'closing circle' to plan sessions for the upcoming week so that improvements to the program are ongoing and structured around the participant's needs. For the first four weeks of the program, the 'closing circle' will occur every week. Once participants are placed into pairs however, the evaluation will take place biweekly, as the group sessions will only occur once every other week.

Tracking Sheets: University Students and Youth Transitioning Out of Homelessness

In addition to the 'closing circle', stakeholders also recommended that participants complete a short tracking sheet each week. This tracking sheet will consist of a few brief questions in relation to the activities the participants engaged in that day, the quality of their participation, and their achievement in any of the four program objectives. The advantage of using tracking sheets is that they are inexpensive to design and administer, they do not require a lot of time or energy to complete, and the respondents can work at their own pace (Patton, 1998; Trochim, 2001).

While the tracking sheet will still involve self-reporting by participants in the program, the focus will be on collecting quantitative data. Stakeholders believed that quantitative data could provide concrete information about how participants were progressing through the program and the numerical information would allow for consistencies and inconsistencies in participant performance to be efficiently recorded.

Using likert scales, with numbers ranging from one to five, participants will be expected to place a numerical value to the quality of their participation and achievement in program goals each week. Examples of the standardized tracking sheets for both university students and youth transitioning out of homelessness are presented in Appendix L1 and L2 of the Evaluation Framework. An instructional sheet will accompany each tracking sheet to help participants learn how to fill out the form (see Appendix L3).

Tracking Sheet: Program Facilitator

The third component of the ongoing evaluation will be the completion of a standardized tracking sheet by the Program Facilitator. This tracking sheet will be similar to the forms completed by participants in the program as it will involve the assessment of each participant's attendance, punctuality, the quality of their participation, and their achievement in each of the four program objectives (see Appendix M1). These tracking sheets will also be accompanied by instructions to help the Program Facilitator fill out the form (Appendix M3). Most of the information collected will be quantitative in nature, since the Program Facilitator will use likert scales, ranging from one to five, to rank each participant's performance.

Stakeholders believed that having the Program Facilitator monitor each participant's performance throughout the program would serve as one form of triangulation, as it would supplement self-reports provided by the university students and the youth transitioning out of homelessness. Triangulation would help to overcome errors that are present in other types of measurement, by looking for consistencies across the different types of data

(Trochim, 2001).

Program Summary Sheet

The fourth and final component of the ongoing evaluation will be a program summary sheet, also completed by the Program Facilitator. Within this summary sheet, the Program Facilitator will maintain records of how each program session has progressed. This summary sheet will cover everything from gathering supplies for the program session, to the type of conflicts or challenges that arose within the group, to the number of times that he or she had to re-focus the group members to keep them on task. This sheet is presented in Appendix N of the Evaluation Framework. The Program Facilitator will complete the same summary sheet after every program session.

Exclusion of Artistic Activities

Throughout phase two of data collection, the issue of whether or not to use artistic work as a complementary form of program evaluation, remained controversial. The suggestion had been to supplement evaluation findings with artistry, completed by participants during the Cultural Exchange Program sessions. The artwork in this case, would include a variety of creative endeavors, including paintings, poems, or songs.

Some informants supported the inclusion of artistry because they felt it would make the evaluation more meaningful to participants and it would add depth to the information collected. In contrast, other participants believed that artwork was too subjective to be included in an evaluation framework and would not be suitable to all participants in the program.

While artwork has not been widely covered in the evaluation literature, a study by McLean, Henson, and Hiles (2003) demonstrated several benefits of using student drawings to evaluate a problem-based learning (PBL) curriculum at the Nelson R Mandela School of Medicine in Durban, South Africa. At the end of their first year of study, students were asked to reflect on their academic and clinical experiences by drawing how they saw themselves at the beginning of the school year (retrospective) and at the end of the school year. All of the drawings were accompanied by a brief description of what each student was trying to portray and then interpreted in reference to the new PBL curriculum.

Results from this study showed that artistic activities could provide valuable insight into the experiences of program participants. Drawings offered a wealth of information about apprehensions, struggles, and personal growth of the program participants. Researchers found that the act of putting ideas down on paper facilitated some reflection and introspection that promoted self-understanding on the part of each participant.

A couple informants in this research study were hesitant about the inclusion of artistic work because they believed that not everybody would have an interest in art or would have a strong ability to draw. In their study, McLean et al. (2003) noted that the quality of the drawings does not matter. They explained that the methods and materials used to create each picture varied significantly between students, with a large number of students using pencils and drawing only stick figures. Therefore, irrespective of artistic quality, drawings could provide a holistic perspective of the program being investigated, which would supplement other quantitative and qualitative methods used.

Another concern participants had was the possibility of their artwork being judged. In particular, youth transitioning out of homelessness were concerned that their work would be under the scrutiny of other people if it was included as part of the evaluation framework. They worried that if people responded negatively to their work, their overall evaluation for the program would be poor.

McLean et al. (2003) acknowledged that the analysis of drawings can be quite subjective and the interpretation of the work will depend on who is actually reviewing it. The evaluation framework for the Cultural Exchange Program would emphasize that no value should be placed on any of the artwork, since it is not the quality of the work that is being assessed, but rather, the story that the artwork is trying to tell. In addition, one could argue that the analysis of drawings is not very different from the interpretation of open-ended text from a qualitative interview or survey, since both forms require the categorization and interpretation of data. Subsequently, any artwork that could be submitted as part of the evaluation framework for the Cultural Exchange Program would be judged no differently than any other form of qualitative data. To increase the reliability of data analysis however, McLean et al. (2003) suggest that all artwork be assessed by more than one individual and that guidelines be established for interpreting the work.

The final apprehension that informants expressed during the second phase of data collection was the issue of stereotyping participants in the study, particularly Aboriginal youth. One service provider pointed out that not all Aboriginal people are interested in art and warned that one must be careful not to make generalizations about entire groups of people. This service provider suggested including artwork into the evaluation only if the majority of program participants asked for it, rather than assuming that all Aboriginal youth needed to express their ideas and feelings in that way. She explained:

"...within the urban kind of culture, there's such a broad range of Aboriginal development. Individuals from ah, Buddhist Aboriginal...not everybody's beads and feathers. Um, so we can't pigeon-hold everyone into beads and feathers. And not everybody's Cree, which is what a lot services are providing, within a Cree culture.... Aboriginal just doesn't mean one same person. You know, there are sub-cultures within that too." (Phase Two, Service Provider #1, pg.14).

Consequently, the investigator for this research study decided not to include artistic activities into the evaluation framework. Informants expressed a number of uncertainties about this approach, which suggested that the inclusion of artwork might not be an appropriate evaluation strategy for this particular program. In addition, since both Aboriginal People and youth transitioning out of homelessness represent very marginalized and vulnerable populations in today's society (Munro et al., 2003; Ryan et al., 2000; Tavecchio et al., 1999; Tyler & Cauce, 2002; Van der Ploeg & Scholte, 1997), the investigator for this study did not want to further jeopardize the well-being of either group, by having their work judged either intentionally or unintentionally. It should be noted however, that since several strengths were pointed out in the literature in regards to using artwork or drawings as part of a qualitative evaluation, this could represent an area for further research, to determine if benefits of this approach outweigh the potential limitations.

Implications

This study has several implications to health promotion practice, particularly in the areas of research and community engagement. The collaborative approach demonstrated that university students, youth, service providers, and staff from local funding agencies are able to play an active role in the first three phases of evaluation design: identifying relevant questions, planning the evaluation design, and selecting the appropriate measures and data collection tools (Zukoski & Luluquisen, 2002). This is important because only one study was identified, which examined strategies to recruit and engage highly transient and vulnerable populations in an evaluation design (Chiang & Keatings, 2001). Health promotion research and practice typically involves marginalized or otherwise vulnerable populations in society. Therefore, strategies to recruit and engage vulnerable populations would be useful to health promotion professionals. Findings from this study are a preliminary step to additional research, which is needed to learn about the process of engaging highly vulnerable or transient populations throughout the entire process of evaluation design.

In addition to recruiting vulnerable populations, more information is needed to understand how to work with a diverse population while engaging in evaluation design. The investigator of the study noticed that stakeholders were at different levels of readiness to learn about program evaluation. Working with people who have different education levels and varying exposure to evaluation, made it challenging to adopt a participatory approach right away. More information is needed about ways to build new skills and knowledge amongst diverse populations in larger research projects.

The final implication of this research study refers to ways of balancing what is considered 'good enough' for the evaluation at hand. In participatory approaches to program evaluation, data collection strategies are meant to fit the skills of the participants and the local resources available. The approach is challenged however, by what evaluators consider to be *rigorous* data collection. The investigator of this study constantly struggled with the task of creating a rigorous evaluation design, which would also meet the skill level of program participants and the resources available through the project budget and Cunningham Place. Additional projects using participatory approaches to program evaluation need to consider the issue of what is relevant and valid data. New and less rigid approaches to program evaluation need to be develop, which reflect the interests and skill level of more vulnerable groups in society.

Strengths, Limitations and Methodological Issues

A number of strengths, limitations, and methodological issues were identified throughout this research project. The implications of these strengths and limitations will be discussed in the next portion of this chapter.

Strengths

A strength of this study was the ability to obtain information from relevant stakeholder groups, including university students, youth transitioning out of homelessness, service providers, and staff from local funding agencies. Each group of informants represented individuals who could be involved in the Cultural Exchange Program in the future. Therefore, listening to their ideas and opinions helped to create an evaluation framework that would be relevant to the needs of future program participants.

Another strength of this study was the researcher's prior experience working with homeless youth as an outreach worker and an emergency nurse in an inner City Hospital. Understanding how to communicate with high-risk youth helped the researcher throughout the data collection process, by knowing when and where to connect with the youth at Cunningham Place. This included eating in the cafeteria at Cunningham Place during meal hours and hanging out in the smoking room in the evening. The researcher's prior experience also led to greater theoretical sensitivity when analyzing data findings and when formulating the core category for this study.

Limitations and Methodological Issues

In spite of the strengths listed above, several limitations and methodological issues constrained the development of the evaluation framework for the Cultural Exchange

Program. Each limitations relates to either: the research topic, research participants, methodology, or the analysis of results.

Research Topic and Research Participants

Before work on the evaluation tool began, academic investigators involved with the LINKS Project had already decided that a community-based intervention should be developed, which would link university students to youth transitioning out of homelessness in a supportive relationship. This decision was based on a review of the literature and previous work done by members of the LINKS Project Team. Therefore, the investigator for this study did not choose the research topic or the populations that would be included in the study, as these things had been decided beforehand. Subsequently, this study was limited by expectations already in place by the LINKS Project Team.

In addition, the investigator was limited by the age of participants who could be recruited into this study. Due to ethical constraints, the investigator was only able to recruit university students and youth transitioning out of homelessness who were greater than 18 years of age. Youth between 18 and 29 represented a more convenient sample for a couple of reasons. Firstly, all youth residing at Cunningham Place are between 18 and 29 years of age. Since all focus groups with youth were scheduled to take place through Cunningham Place, the LINKS Project Team felt it was important to remain consistent with the policies and practices of the facility. Secondly, obtaining consent to interview youth under the age of 18 can be problematic, particularly when so few homeless youth maintain positive relationships with their parents or other family members (CMHA, 2001). For this reason, the research team for the LINKS Project felt it would be more feasible to run focus groups with youth who were at least 18 years of age. The investigator for this study was aware that youth between the ages of 18 and 29 represent a slightly older sample than other studies conducted with homelessness youth (LoScuito et al., 1996; Tierney et al., 1995; Yancey et al., 2002). Subsequently, the researcher acknowledges that valuable information could have been lost due to the exclusion of informants less than 18 years of age.

Recruitment Challenges

A third limitation was the purposeful sampling and recruitment of research participants. The investigator for study decided to use a purposeful sample of participants from the University of Alberta, Cunningham Place and local funding agencies in and around the City of Edmonton. These groups represented individuals who could be involved in the Cultural Exchange Program once it was implemented, therefore, it was believed that they could provide the most relevant and detailed information to assist in the development of the evaluation framework. Unfortunately these samples were quite small, and subsequently limited the number of participants that could be recruited into the study.

This study was also limited by the methods that could be used to recruit participants. To protect the autonomy of youth transitioning out of homelessness, the Human Research Ethics Board at the University of Alberta did not allow for the recruitment of youth through staff at Cunningham Place. This was because the Ethics Board was concerned that youth would feel coerced to participate in the study. Subsequently, the investigator for this study used two alternative strategies: 1) direct recruitment; and 2) secondary selection (Chiang et al., 2001). Through direct recruitment, participants were asked directly by the investigator of this study if they would like to participate in a focus group session. For secondary selection, youth at Cunningham Place were recruited into the study through the use of posters displayed around the housing facility. Both strategies helped to ensure that only neutral parties had contact with participants so they could be free to choose whether or not they wanted to participate in the study. In addition, snowball sampling was used to recruit additional participants, which meant asking the existing participants to consider if they knew someone else who would be willing to participate in the study, and then asking the participant to give the information sheet about the study to this person. It is important to stress that this further distribution of the information sheet was based on a voluntary choice and the researcher did not know the identity of new participants until they were contacted by those individuals.

Similar to youth at Cunningham Place, the investigator also found the recruitment of university students to be quite challenging. Firstly, the number of university students available to participate in focus group sessions was quite limited. During the first phase of data collection, recruitment took place during the summer months. Therefore, significantly fewer students were on the University of Alberta campus than what would normally exist during the fall and winter terms. This resulted in smaller focus groups than were originally anticipated. Furthermore, the investigator was unable to recruit any Aboriginal students into the study despite attempting to recruit students from courses where higher numbers of Aboriginal students generally exist, including courses in the Department of Native Studies. University students represented the only group of informants where the perspectives of Aboriginal People were not shared. This may have altered data findings, as the worldviews of non-Aboriginal People may be different than those of Aboriginal students (Hewitt, 2000). Including the perspectives of Aboriginal students would have strengthened the design of the evaluation framework because several perspectives would have been incorporated into the final results.

Finally, the investigator of this study directly recruited university students, youth, service providers, and staff from local funding agencies based on voluntary participation and convenience. The investigator of this study acknowledges that selection bias could have occurred through voluntary participation, due to differences between students and youth who volunteered for the program versus students and youth who do not (Rossi et al., 2004). The investigator notes that some individuals, particularly youth at Cunningham Place, may have felt intimidated by the principal investigator and therefore chose not to participate in the study because they did not feel comfortable. In addition, there is a possibility that individuals who chose not to participate in the study were more sceptical about the feasibility of the program. Subsequently, this could have altered the results obtained because fewer negative ideas might have been expressed.

Generalizability of Findings

Another limitation of this study was the lack of generalizability of findings to other community-based populations. Overall, the sample size for the study was very small and only representative of four groups of informants, including students at the University of Alberta, youth living at or receiving services through Cunningham Place, service providers from Cunningham Place, and members of local funding agencies in and around the City of Edmonton. Consequently it would be very difficult to ascertain that the needs of the participants in this study are similar to other populations in other socio-environmental settings. Therefore, more extensive research would be required before findings from this study could be applied to other populations in other social settings.

Data Collection Issues

Several limitations and methodological issues were also associated with data collection. First of all, the quality of responses varied significantly between different informants in the study. This was particularly noticeable during the individual interviews with youth and service providers at Cunningham Place. A couple of the service providers admitted to being inexperienced with formal interviewing and stated that they felt quite nervous about participating in the interview session. These individuals provided answers that were very short and simplistic, despite the use of open-ended questioning. Probing questions were employed to facilitate more discussion around program evaluation; however responses still tended to vary between service providers. Focus groups may have helped service providers adjust to the interview process because they would have felt less pressure to respond to all of the questions and they could have built off of the ideas of other people. Interaction within a group setting could have also stimulated participants to think beyond their own experiences to consider the ideas of other informants (Kleiber, 2004).

During the first phase of data collection, some of the service providers really struggled with ways to structure the evaluation framework. A couple of the service providers stated that they would have found the interview easier if a basic outline of the program had been in place. Subsequently, during the second phase of data collection, all informants were provided with a summary of the Cultural Exchange Program prior to engaging in the interview session. This added clarity to the questions being asked and gave respondents concrete material to base their answers on.

While several benefits were noted in terms of using focus groups to collect data from study participants, limitations associated with this method of data collection also existed. Within some groups there were one or two individuals who tended to dominate the discussion. Subsequently, this may have prevented other members of the group from expressing their ideas fully. Additionally, respondents may have felt pressured to conform to the ideas of the more vocal participants. The investigator tried to balance the conversation by making eye contact with less vocal participants or creating opportunities for other participants to speak. In addition, the investigator spent time at the end of each focus group to speak with participants who had additional information to add.

A final limitation of this study was the use of direct quotes to report data findings. Since the study population represented a fairly small sample size, the researcher had to be careful to protect the identity of the informants while also providing ethically sound reporting. Ethically sound reporting means that researcher has to be open, honest, and accurate when providing results (Leino-Kilpi & Tuomaala, 1995; Weijer, 1997). The challenge in this qualitative study was to give enough information to demonstrate support for findings, however not so much that participants would be easily recognizable. The investigator refrained from using quotes with a lot of personal information attached and all names of people or locations were omitted from the quote and replaced with an underscore.

Audio-taping

During the first phase of data collection, there were no voiced concerns about the audio recorder. None of the respondents objected to being audio-taped or declined to participate in the study because a tape recorder was present. In most instances, once the interview or focus group began, respondents seemed to forget about the tape recorder and were able to engage in an open discussion about the evaluation framework.

During the second phase of data collection, two informants were not audio-taped for the purpose of the study. In one instance, a service provider from Cunningham Place refused to be audio-taped because it made her feel uncomfortable and she was concerned that other individuals would recognize a quote as being hers. In the other instance, a staff member from a funding agency outside the City of Edmonton had to be interviewed over the phone due to transportation limitations on the part of the investigator. Subsequently, the interview with this staff member could not be audio-taped because the investigator did not have the equipment to record a phone conversation.

In both cases, respondents allowed the investigator to keep personal notes throughout the interview process. In addition, both informants agreed to verify data after the analysis was complete. Unfortunately, without direct quotes it became more difficult to support ideas expressed by participants in the study. In addition, some of the information had to be interpreted from the investigator's notes and therefore may not have been completely reflective of what the informants were trying to express.

Verification of Data

All participants in the study were encouraged to engage in data verification. The evaluation framework for the Cultural Exchange Program was either mailed or sent electronically to all respondents in the study who had provided the researcher with a personal or work address, or an email account. A letter was sent with the evaluation framework, asking respondents for their feedback. Respondent were given the option of mailing their feedback to the investigator, phoning the investigator, responding by email, or setting up an informal meeting with the investigator to look over the evaluation framework and add any additional comments. By providing several options, the investigator hoped to achieve a high response rate for the verification of data.

The transient nature of the student and homeless youth populations, and the heavy workload of service providers and staff from local funding agencies made reaching all respondents quite challenging. Subsequently, only seven of thirty-nine respondents provided feedback to verify the evaluation framework. Of the individuals who did respond, all but one was from the second phase of data collection. This could be related to the fact that the second phase of data collection was conducted more recently and therefore these participants were easier to locate. Another reason for the higher response rate from participants in phase two of the study could also be related to the fact that individuals who participated in the second phase of data collection were more invested in the research project, since half of them had participated in both phase one and phase two. None of the youth transitioning out of homelessness provided feedback to verify the data collected. Subsequently, this information must be interpreted carefully, as it was left entirely to the interpretation of the investigator of this study.

Suggestions for Future Study

The purpose of this study was to explore a phenomenon about which very little empirical evidence currently exists. Findings gave insight into the design of an evaluation framework for a Cultural Exchange Program. Results however, should be interpreted carefully, as findings from this study are not conclusive. Further investigation is needed to confirm or refute the findings which emerged from this data.

An area that warrants further investigation is the opinions expressed by service providers and staff from local funding agencies. A total of thirty-nine informants engaged in this study, however the distribution of informants was not equivalent across all stakeholder groups. Participants in both phase one and phase two of this study included fifteen university students, sixteen youth transitioning out of homelessness, six service providers, and two staff from local funding agencies. The samples of service providers and staff from local funding agencies were quite small and therefore more information will be needed to ascertain whether the opinions expressed by participants in this study correlate with the opinions of a broader group of informants. Additional research could further develop the core category of *participant feedback* and produce findings that are more generalisable to other populations.

A second area of inquiry is the presence of stereotypes and misconceptions on the part of both university students and youth transitioning out of homelessness. Reflecting on comments made by each groups of informants, it became apparent that a lack of understanding existed on both sides. During focus group sessions, university students indicated that they wanted to have an equal and reciprocal relationship with the youth at Cunningham Place; however this was not always consistent in their responses concerning program evaluation. University students emphasized that they wanted to see the youth improve their capacity to function in society, however, they consistently viewed the youth as individuals in need of support and guidance. University students made comments, which suggested that they believed homeless youth to be "unstable", to lack self-confidence, to make "irresponsible" choices, and to be in need of assistance to get their life back on track.

Similarly, youth from Cunningham Place made several generalizations about the qualities, attitudes, and lifestyle choices of university students. Youth suggested that university students were all rich and owned expensive possessions, such as cars, clothes, and computers. In addition, some of the youth assumed that university students did not participate in any risk-taking behaviors, other than drinking alcohol. The youth viewed the university students as an outlet from negative influences in their lives and suggested that university students could teach them about healthy choices and pro-social behaviors. Some of the youth talked extensively about the different types of discrimination they face in society, giving examples of racial discrimination and maltreatment based on physical appearances. Aboriginal homeless youth were particularly sensitive to discrimination and talked about how members of society stereotyped them as drug addicts and alcoholics. The youth believed that university students would share similar views to the rest of society. References were made to the university students being arrogant, conceited, judgmental and non-accepting of individuals who were different, particularly individuals who represented a lower economic status or a cultural minority group. Some of the youth reflected on negative experiences where they were treated poorly by more affluent members of society. These negative experiences seemed to weigh heavily on their current attitudes and perceptions of the university students.

These findings were significant because they demonstrated the importance of implementing a program to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and personal experiences between university students and youth transitioning out of homelessness. It also supports the use of program evaluation to determine if stereotypes and misconceptions changed from the beginning to the end of the Cultural Exchange Program. Future research needs to be conducted around stereotypes and misconceptions to learn how these ideas originate, how they affect university students and youth transitioning out of homelessness, and whether cultural exchange is an effective strategy to improve relations between these two groups.

CONCLUSION

This study presents the only formative evaluation tool, which is designed to measure process and outcome variables for a Cultural Exchange Program linking university students to youth transitioning out of homelessness in a supportive and reciprocal relationship. Findings from this study are firmly grounded in qualitative data collected from four relevant stakeholder groups, including students at the University of Alberta, youth living at or receiving services through Cunningham Place, service providers currently working at Cunningham Place, and members of local funding agencies in and around the City of Edmonton.

Formulating the evaluation framework for the Cultural Exchange Program required the investigator to explore key aspects of the evaluation situation with stakeholder groups, including the purpose of the evaluation, the conceptual and organizational structure of the program being evaluated, and the resources available. Based on this information, the investigator was able to develop an evaluation framework that identified the questions to be answered, the methods for answering them, and the relationships to be developed with the stakeholders during the course of the evaluation. The collaborative process between stakeholder groups, the LINKS Project Team, and the investigator for this study was essential to this study and to the design of the evaluation framework.

Most evaluation tools used to measure mentorship programs or peer support interventions are meant to generate findings for program managers and funding agencies. Therefore, they use summative evaluations and focus almost entirely on outcome variables. In contrast, the evaluation framework for the Cultural Exchange Program will focus on both process and outcome variables through a formative evaluation design. Subsequently, it will generate findings that will be of value to all stakeholder groups, including program participants, program staff, and program sponsors. Any evaluator using this tool will obtain information about whether the program was implemented correctly and whether outcome variables were achieved.

Program evaluation is a vital component to every program design and should be treated accordingly. Adequate time and resources are needed to develop and implement an evaluation effectively. In addition, stakeholders should be involved in every stage of the design, implementation, and analysis of the evaluation tool, so it accurately reflects their needs. The more time and energy dedicated to program evaluation, the more likely useful findings will result, which can guide and improve upon health promotion practice.

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Appendix A

Example of a Program Session

AGENDA	WHO	TIME
Ice-Breaker Activity – Let's Draw a House	Group	30 min.
Group Activity – Cultural Impact Storytelling	Group	45 min.
Break	Group	10 min.
Snack – Pizza and a drink	Group	20 min.
Closure – Check-in Circle	Group	15 min.

Purpose

1) Group formation and relationship development
2) To start the cultural exchange process

Materials Needed

1. Pencils
2. Paper
3. End of the roll newsprint (white paper in long sheets)
4. Markers, pencil crayons, crayons
5. Snack (pizza and drinks)
6. Napkins
7. Cups
8. Garbage Bag
9. Paper towel
10. Cleaning product for the tables
11. 'Talking tool'

Activities

1. **Ice-Breaker Activity: Let's Draw a House**

Objectives: 1. To have participants engage in an activity that encourages sharing between the homeless youth and the students.

Time: 30 minutes

Materials: 1. Pencils
2. Paper

Instructions:

a. Place participants into pairs, one homeless youth with one university student. Give each pair a piece of paper and a pencil.
b. Tell the participants that they must draw a house as a team. There are several rules:
   - No talking.
   - Both people on the team must hold the same pencil during the whole activity.
c. After a few minutes, tell the groups to stop. Have the groups show their houses to the rest of the group members.
d. Once everyone has shown his or her house, take a few minutes to debrief. Possible questions include:
   - What happened for you during the activity?
   - What do you think influenced cooperation or competition between you and your partner during this activity?
   - How did your visualization of a "house" influence your drawing?
   - How was your visualization the same as or different from your partners?
   - How could this apply to a real-life situation?

Note: This activity provides the facilitator with an opportunity to observe if chosen pairings work well together and enjoy each other's company.

2. **Starting the Cultural Exchange Process: Life Maps**

Objectives: 1. To understand cultural learned patterns.
2. To encourage cultural exchange among participants through storytelling.

Time: 45 minutes

Materials: 1. Paper
2. Markers, pencil crayons or crayons

Instructions:

a. Give each participant a large piece of paper and some crayons or markers.
b. Have participants draw a map of their life. They should include pictures or words that represent the events, the people, the places and the decisions that have had an effect on their lives. Try to have participants think from a cultural perspective.
c. Have the participants think about which events were positive experiences and which were negative. They can put a mark of their choice beside the experiences to represent whether they had a positive or negative impact on their life.

d. Have participants share their life map. Give each person the opportunity to show the map to the rest of the group and to describe the different events that they have included and the impact that those events have had on their lives.

e. Discussion questions may include the following:
   - If you were to redraw the picture, would you include the same events? What would be different?
   - Did you know at the tie of the event how important it would be to you?
   - Would you change your story if you could?
   - What did you learn from the stories told by other people in the group?

Note. Life Map. By R. Benson (2004) Retrieved September 8, 2004, from First Steps Training Web site: www.firststepstraining.com/resources/activities/acrchive/activity_lifemap.htm Adapted with permission by the author.

3. **Snack** (pizza and a drink)

Objectives: 1. To allow participants a chance to talk with each other informally and to unwind.

Time: 20 minutes

Materials:
1. Pizza
2. Drinks
3. Napkins
4. Cups
5. Paper towel
6. Cleaning product for the tables

Instructions:

a. Have participants share in a snack, which offers them a chance to talk informally, get to know one another on a more personal-level and to wind-down from the session.

b. Encourage the students and the homeless youth to mix with one another during this time.

3. **Closure**

Objectives: 1. To give program participants an opportunity to talk about the evening.
2. To provide closure to the session.

Time: 15 minutes

Materials: 1. 'Talking tool'

Instructions:

a. Have participants sit in a circle.
b. Using the 'talking tool', allow participants to talk about their experiences one by one.
c. Discuss any concerns that come up and address any questions from program participants.

Appendix B1

Focus Group Questions for University Students (Phase One)

Program Design

1) Have you ever worked with homeless youth, or been a part of a program linking university students to homeless youth? If yes, please describe.

2) If not, what are your thoughts about such a program? Would this interest you?

3) What benefits would you see from pairing university students with homeless youth?

4) What barriers do you perceive?

5) What role should the students have within the program?

6) What training do you think the students would need to work with this population?

Evaluation Design

7) How could student performance be evaluated (i.e. self-evaluation, evaluation by the program coordinator, etc)?

8) What outcomes would be important to consider when evaluating student performance (i.e. increased knowledge of homeless issues, increased empathy for homeless youth, etc)?

9) How could learning be assessed (i.e. journal writing, written assignments, tests, etc)?

Appendix B2

Focus Group Questions for Youth Transitioning Out of Homelessness (Phase One)

Program Design

1) Do you currently participate in any programs at Cunningham Place? If so, which ones? If not, how come?

2) If there was a program that linked university students with youth living at Cunningham Place, would you be interested in it? Why? Why not?

3) What benefits do you see from linking students with youth at Cunningham Place?

4) What barriers do you see?

5) What do you think your role should be in this program?
What role should the students have? (Probes: Do you see them as a support for you? Do you see them helping you access resources? Would you just like a friend or a companion to talk to or hang out with?)

6) What kinds of activities would you like to do in this program?

7) What kind of training do you think that you would need to be in this program? What kind of training do you think university students would need?

8) How much time could you commit to this program?

Evaluation Design

9) What do you think you could get out of this program? What could the students get out of it?

10) How could we find out if you got out of the program what you had hoped? (Probes: How would I know if you increased your knowledge of community resources?)

11) What methods could you use to show us that you were getting something out of this program? For instance, maintaining a journal, being interviewed, or filling out a questionnaire.

12) How would you like to be evaluated in this program? Evaluate yourself, be evaluated by the students, or be evaluated by the program co-coordinator? Should it happen individually or would you rather talk in a group?

13) How often should the program be evaluated?

Appendix B3

Interview Questions for Service Providers (Phase One)

Program Design

1) Do you currently provide any programs that link university students to youth at Cunningham Place? If yes, please describe.

2) If not, how would you go about implementing a program, as described above, within your organization?

3) What benefits would you see from pairing university students with homeless youth?

4) What barriers do you perceive?

5) What role would the students/youth/service providers have within the program?

6) What training do you think the students would need to work with this population? What training would the youth need?

Evaluation Design

7) How could the program be evaluated?

8) What outcomes would you look for? (i.e. How would success be measured?)

9) What are barriers do you see to evaluating this program? How could they be overcome?

10) Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix C

Demographical Information and Interview Questions (Phase Two)

Demographical Information

University Students

Age:_____ Gender: __________

Program of Study:_______________

Year of Study:__________________

Ethnicity:______________________

Service Providers

Gender:________ Ethnicity_________

Years working with homeless youth:_____

Educational Background:______________

Youth Transitioning Out of Homelessness

Age:______ Gender:___________

Years Homeless:________________

Ethnicity:______________________

Staff from Funding Agencies

Gender:________ Ethnicity:__________

Years working in funding organizations:___

Educational Background:_______________

Research Questions

1) What changes should be we look for as a result of the program?

   Alternative wording: What outcomes should we be interested in?

   Probes: How would we know if students changed as a result of the program? How would be know if youth changed? How would be know if the program was successful or not?

2) Based on the goals and objectives of the program, how would we know if:

   a) Cultural exchange took place?

   b) Relationships formed between university students and youth?

c) University students and youth increased their knowledge and understanding of one another?

d) Stereotypes were changed?

e) New skills were developed?

f) University students and youth engaged in new activities or tried new things?

3) How could the changes be measured?

Alternative wording: What methods could we use to measure if the program was successful or not? How could we measure student performance? How could we measure youth performance?

Additional Questions to Expand on Categories from Phase One of the Study:

4) Do you think the evaluation could be completed in a group setting or do you think it's something that should be done individually?

5) When completing the evaluation, is there a way that's easier for you to express yourself?

Alternative wording: If you had a choice, would you prefer to complete the evaluation orally, in written format, or artistically?

6) How do you feel about artistic work being included in the evaluation design?

Alternative wording: Would you be interested in doing something artistic (i.e. music, song, dance) as a way of expressing your experiences in the program?

7) How flexible should be the evaluation be?

Alternative wording: Should participants in the program be given a choice in terms of ***how*** *they answer the evaluation questions and* ***how often*** *they complete* *the evaluation? Please describe.*

8) Do you see this evaluation framework including qualitative forms of data collection, quantitative forms of data collection, or both? Please explain.

9) When should the Cultural Exchange Program be evaluated?

   Alternative wording: Should the Cultural Exchange Program be evaluated at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end? How frequently should the evaluation take place?

10) Is a follow-up evaluation feasible for this program? If so, how long after the Cultural Exchange Program is complete, could a follow-up evaluation take place? What's feasible, given the transient nature of university students and youth transitioning out of homelessness?

11) What is the best way to contact university students/youth transitioning out of homelessness for the follow-up evaluation (i.e. email, phone, postal mail)?

12) Should somebody outside the program be involved in the evaluation, or should the evaluation only be completed by participants in the program?

   Alternative wording: Do you, do you see a place for the Project Coordinator or Caseworkers at Cunningham Place being involved in the program evaluation?

Appendix E

Examples of Field Notes from Participant Observation at Cunningham Place

Date: February 2, 2004
Time: 2:00 pm
Place: Cunningham Place (office, conference room, and cafeteria)
Participants: Case workers and homeless youth

Physical Features of Cunningham Place (outside)

- Cunningham Place is located near the corner of 95th St. and 104 Ave. in downtown Edmonton, close to Boyle Street.
- From the outside, Cunningham Place looks like a series of town houses (four in a row), which are tall and narrow in shape. They are composed of red brick and pale yellow aluminum siding and look very new (i.e. no chipped paint, no dents in the siding, windows clean, 'fresh' looking). The area outside Cunningham Place was very clean and well-kept. All the pathways and sidewalks outside the buildings were shoveled and no garbage was present anywhere on the premises.
- Cunningham Place appeared to blend in well with the surrounding homes. The only thing that identified the building as Cunningham Place were the words 'Cunningham Place' and a Bear Paw marked on the front door of Pod B (see Appendix B). In addition, there was a plaque commemorating Mr. Cunningham, who was the founder of the Native Counseling Services of Alberta (NCSA). A video camera was situated on a wall of the building that was adjacent from the plaque.

Notes to Myself

- I felt a little uneasy when I first got off the bus near Cunningham Place. This could have been related to the fact that I was unfamiliar with the Boyle Street area, or because I had been told that this particular area of Edmonton was not very safe.
- When I got closer to Cunningham Place I felt more at ease. The clean and well-kept appearance of Cunningham Place made me feel more comfortable and safe.
- The office had a calming effect. Although staff were busy moving about and engaging in conversation, I did not feel uneasy or overwhelmed.

Physical Features of Cunningham Place (inside)

- The main office space of Cunningham Place is located on the third floor of Pod B (see Appendix B)
- The office was brightly lit and decorated in neutral colors (i.e. walls painted off white, light brown, and deep red). The floor was covered by carpet, also neutral

in color (i.e. grays, browns, and reds). The space was very clean and tidy (i.e. no dust or garbage lying about).

- The furniture in the office was wooden and also looked very new (i.e. no dents, scrapes, stains, or scratches).
- Overall the space was very well-kept and inviting.
- In terms of the office layout, there was a secretarial desk at the front of the main room facing the door, which was the first thing I saw when I walk into the room. In addition, there was a photocopier and fax machine set up against the far wall. On the left wall was a series of filing cabinets and in the middle of the room was a round table with four chairs situated around it. The table was covered with numerous papers and pamphlets. Against the wall facing the secretarial desk were two chairs set up for visitors waiting to see staff. Currently there was a women waiting in the chair next to me. Beside the chairs, in the left lower corner of the room was a washroom, which was also very clean and well kept.
- To the right of the main room was a narrow hallway with two offices on the left hand side, and one at the end. The largest office at the end of the hall is Marg Milicevic's. Each office contained a large desk, a computer, filing cabinets or shelves, and several chairs. When staff members were not in the rooms, they appeared to close and lock the doors behind them.
- To the left of the main room were two more offices, also for program staff. Each office was large and contained the same furniture/supplies as listed above.

<u>Arrival at Cunningham Place</u>

- I arrived at Cunningham Place at 8:38 am on Monday, February 2, 2004.
- The office was very busy when I first walked in, with lots of talking and movement around the room.
- The secretary was sitting at her desk, talking on the phone and taking notes. Two case workers were standing by the filing cabinet, sorting through files and talking. The project co-coordinator was standing in the hallway to the right, talking with a colleague and then called the visitor to her office and closed the door.
- When I approached the secretary, she was very friendly and was knowledgeable of my appointment with the project co-coordinator.
- I waited approximately 5 minutes in one of the visitor's chairs before Marg approached me.
- We decided that I would be paired with a caseworker for the first part of the morning, and then I would observe the personal development program for the second half of the morning.

Notes to Myself

- A couple of the staff members looked my way when I entered the room. They acknowledge my presence with a nod or quick smile. While they were not overly friendly, I did not feel unwelcome.
- I felt very comfortable talking with the secretary. She was very warm and friendly.

<u>Observing the Case Workers</u>

- The case worker I was paired with was new to Cunningham Place (employed for approximately one month). Although new to the facility, she appeared to be very comfortable around the office and with other staff members. She easily located resources, made notes on the computer, and engaged in casual conversation with other case workers.
- From approximately 9:00 am to 10:30 am I sat in the main office area, talking with the two case workers scheduled to work that day. Of four homeless youth scheduled to meet with the case workers that morning, only one had arrived.
- The case workers did not show much emotion when their clients did not show up for the appointment (i.e. no signs of surprise, disappointment, or frustration). The case worker I was paired with simply shrugged her shoulders and said "it happens fairly often…Sometimes you have ten appointments in a row, and sometimes you have none". The other case worker supported this point, by stating that "the weather plays a big role too in whether or not the youth show up for their appointments".

<u>Observing the Personal Development Program</u>

- The personal development program (PDP) was taking place on the lower level of Pod C (see Appendix B), in one of the conference rooms.
- The room was fairly spacious, with three long tables arranged in a semi circle facing the front of the room. The program facilitator sat at a small desk facing at the front of the room, facing the participants. Behind the facilitator a stand with some chart paper was set up and it had several words written on it.
- There were 10 individuals in the room, including the facilitator and myself. All individuals participating in the program were seated behind the tables, facing the facilitator.
- There were four women and four men. There appeared to be a range of ages, from a teenager, to a man with wrinkled skin and graying hair. The individuals also varied in their appearances, with one woman wearing a lot of jewelry and make-up, while others appeared very unkept.
- A large window was located behind the participants, which made the room very bright.
- I took a seat in an empty chair at the end of one of the desks to the right.
- All participants looked up when I entered the room, though most turned their gaze away immediately when I looked their way. At first they seemed uncertain about my presence (i.e. they began looking around at one another and a few were whispering).
- Once I introduced myself, I found that the group seemed to relax a little. Besides the woman wearing a lot of jewelry, all group members made eye contact with me and smiled when I told a joke about getting lost on my to the facility.
- Throughout the session I tried to remain as invisible as possible, however it was evident that the group was very aware of my presence. This was evidenced by the fact that individuals consistently looked at me when talking, and asked for my opinion regarding two questions posed by the facilitator. It even went as far as the facilitator asking me to participate in a group activity, where I joined three

other group members in performing a role play about assertiveness in a bar setting.

- When the session was over, two participants stayed to ask me some questions about myself and to seek clarification about why I wanted to sit in on their group session. At this time invitations were also extended to allow me to return at a later data.

Notes to Myself

- Initially, I felt awkward joining the group. They were all silent when I walked and did not smile or make any welcoming gesture towards me.

- It wasn't until the group showed some sign of accepting my presence in the room that I began to feel at ease and less uncertain about the situation I was in.

- I am curious why the group wanted feedback to their answers and to involve me in their activities. Were they just trying to be friendly? Were they looking for validation and support? Were they testing me and my knowledge?

- I was not uncomfortable participating in the group session, however I was concerned that my engagement in group activities may have altered by ability to observe the group effectively.

Appendix G1

Informed Consent Form (University Students)

Do you understand that you have been asked to be in a research study?	Yes	No
Do you understand what the study is about?	Yes	No
Have you read the information sheet?	Yes	No
Do you understand the risks of the study?	Yes	No
Have you had a chance to ask questions about the study?	Yes	No
Do you know that you only have to answer the questions that you want to answer?	Yes	No
Do you understand that you have up to one week to withdraw any information hat you have given us and it will not be part of the results?	Yes	No
Do you understand that the focus group will be audio taped and then put into written form?	Yes	No
Do you know that members of the group will hear what you are saying and may share that information with others?	Yes	No
Do you know that only researchers, research assistants, future research assistants, graduate students and the coordinator will have access to the information that you give us now and in the future?	Yes	No
Do you understand that information you give could be used for other research?	Yes	No

This study was explained to me by: ______________________________

I agree to participate in this study.	Yes	No
I consent to the use of the data, including direct quotes, for the purposes described in the information sheet.	Yes	No
I consent to the use of data for future purposes such as program development, report writing, papers that may be sent for publication, for presentations to community groups and professionals and for graduate student these but your name will not be used.	Yes	No

_____________________________________ _____________________

Signature of the Research Participant Date

_____________________________________ _____________________

Signature of the Investigator or Designee Date

Appendix G2

Informed Consent Form (Youth Transitioning Out of Homelessness)

Do you understand that you have been asked to be in a research study?	Yes	No
Do you understand what the study is about?	Yes	No
Have you read the information sheet?	Yes	No
Do you understand the risks of the study?	Yes	No
Have you had a chance to ask questions about the study?	Yes	No
Do you know that you only have to answer the questions that you want to answer?	Yes	No
Do you understand that you have up to one week to withdraw any information hat you have given us and it will not be part of the results?	Yes	No
Do you understand that the focus group will be audio taped and then put into written form?	Yes	No
Do you know that members of the group will hear what you are saying and may share that information with others?	Yes	No
Do you know that only researchers, research assistants, future research assistants, graduate students and the coordinator will have access to the information that you give us now and in the future?	Yes	No
Do you understand that information you give could be used for other research?	Yes	No

This study was explained to me by: ______________________________

I agree to participate in this study.	Yes	No
I consent to the use of the data, including direct quotes, for the purposes described in the information sheet.	Yes	No
I consent to the use of data for future purposes such as program development, report writing, papers that may be sent for publication, for presentations to community groups and professionals and for graduate student these but your name will not be used.	Yes	No

_____________________________________   ______________________

Signature of the Research Participant   Date

_____________________________________   ______________________

Signature of the Investigator or Designee   Date

Appendix G3

Informed Consent Form (Service Providers)

Do you understand that you have been asked to be in a research study?	Yes	No
Do you understand what the study is about?	Yes	No
Have you read the information sheet?	Yes	No
Do you understand the risks of the study?	Yes	No
Have you had a chance to ask questions about the study?	Yes	No
Do you know that you only have to answer the questions that you want to answer?	Yes	No
Do you understand that you have up to one week to withdraw any information hat you have given us and it will not be part of the results?	Yes	No
Do you understand that the focus group will be audio taped and then put into written form?	Yes	No
Do you know that members of the group will hear what you are saying and may share that information with others?	Yes	No
Do you know that only researchers, research assistants, future research assistants, graduate students and the coordinator will have access to the information that you give us now and in the future?	Yes	No
Do you understand that information you give could be used for other research?	Yes	No

This study was explained to me by: ______________________________

I agree to participate in this study.	Yes	No
I consent to the use of the data, including direct quotes, for the purposes described in the information sheet.	Yes	No
I consent to the use of data for future purposes such as program development, report writing, papers that may be sent for publication, for presentations to community groups and professionals and for graduate student these but your name will not be used.	Yes	No

_____________________________________ _____________________

Signature of the Research Participant Date

_____________________________________ _____________________

Signature of the Investigator or Designee Date

Appendix G4

Informed Consent Form (Staff from Local Funding Agencies)

Do you understand that you have been asked to be in a research study?	Yes	No
Do you understand what the study is about?	Yes	No
Have you read the information sheet?	Yes	No
Do you understand the risks of the study?	Yes	No
Have you had a chance to ask questions about the study?	Yes	No
Do you know that you only have to answer the questions that you want to answer?	Yes	No
Do you understand that you have up to one week to withdraw any information hat you have given us and it will not be part of the results?	Yes	No
Do you understand that the focus group will be audio taped and then put into written form?	Yes	No
Do you know that members of the group will hear what you are saying and may share that information with others?	Yes	No
Do you know that only researchers, research assistants, future research assistants, graduate students and the coordinator will have access to the information that you give us now and in the future?	Yes	No
Do you understand that information you give could be used for other research?	Yes	No

This study was explained to me by: ______________________________

I agree to participate in this study.	Yes	No
I consent to the use of the data, including direct quotes, for the purposes described in the information sheet.	Yes	No
I consent to the use of data for future purposes such as program development, report writing, papers that may be sent for publication, for presentations to community groups and professionals and for graduate student these but your name will not be used.	Yes	No

______________________________ ____________________
Signature of the Research Participant Date

______________________________ ____________________
Signature of the Investigator or Designee Date

Appendix H

Table 4: Process Indicators

Outcome	Indicator	Data Collection (Methods)	Data Content
1) The program is being implemented as planned. - Program sessions take place every week for the first 4 weeks and then biweekly for remaining 11weeks of the program. - Within each program session, students and youth engage in activities that facilitate collaboration and communication. Students and youth share stories and educate each other about their life experiences. - From week 5 to week 11, each university student is paired with a youth from Cunningham Place. The pair meets at least once a week to participate in activities that they both find interesting and rewarding.	Both university students and youth state that they received program services every week for the first 4 weeks and biweekly for weeks 5 to 11. Both university students and youth state that they had an opportunity to talk about their life experiences and communicate with other members of the group. The Program Facilitator's summary sheets indicate that program sessions occurred as planned (i.e. weekly or biweekly) and included the scheduled activities as outlined by the Cultural Exchange Program Manual. Attendance records show that participants attended all group sessions (100% attendance rate). An attendance rate of 100% was	Semi-structured interviews with university students and youth from Cunningham Place. Summary notes made by the Program Facilitator. Tracking sheets completed by the Program Facilitator.	During interviews, students and youth will be asked: - Whether they received program services every week for the first 4 weeks and biweekly for weeks 5 to 11. - Whether they had an opportunity to engage in activities and talk about their life experiences with other members of the group. The Program Facilitator's summary sheet will be examined for: - The frequency of program sessions. - The type of activities provided. - The resources needed to execute each program session. - The quality of group participation. - Any challenges that arose during the session. - Suggestions for future improvements. The original design

	recommended by service providers to encourage high participation rates and to make the most of the limited number of program sessions.		of the Cultural Exchange Program will be contrasted to the Facilitator's summary sheets to determine if activities matched the original plan for the program. Tracking sheets completed by the Program Facilitator each week will show: - Attendance - Late arrivals - Early leaving - Quality of participation and – Absentees
2) The target population is being reached. - Students at the University of Alberta and youth currently living at Cunningham Place participate in the Cultural Exchange Program.	Four students at the University of Alberta and four youth currently living at Cunningham Place will voluntary participate for the Cultural Exchange Program.	Tracking sheets completed by the Program Facilitator.	Tracking sheets completed by the Program Facilitator each week will show: - Attendance rates - Late arrivals - Early leaving - Quality of participation and – Absentees
- University students and youth living at Cunningham Place attend the Cultural Exchange Program on a regular basis and participate in all program activities.	University students and youth transitioning out of homelessness will attend 100% of the program sessions and participate in all program activities.	Tracking sheets completed by the university students and the youth transitioning out of homelessness. Semi-structured interviews with university students and	Tracking sheets completed by program participants will show: - Attendance rates - Quality of participation in program activities

		youth from Cunningham Place.	During interview sessions, university students and youth will be asked to describe their commitment to the program and the type of activities they engaged in throughout the program.

Table 5: Short-term Outcome Indicators

Outcome	Indicator	Data Collection (Methods)	Data Content
a) University students and youth will interact with one another through participation in scheduled program activities.	University students and youth will both state that they worked with other members of the group on specific program activities. (i.e. through conversations, sharing materials, or sharing work space). The Program Facilitator will report that participants in the program interacted during scheduled program activities (i.e. through conversations and by sharing materials and/or work space).	Semi-structured interviews with university students and youth from Cunningham Place Summary notes made by the Program Facilitator.	During interviews, students and youth will be asked to describe their interaction with other members of the group. The Program Facilitator's summary sheet will be examined for the quality of group interaction between program participants and any challenges that arose during the program session.
b) Youth and students will participate in a variety of	University students and youth will both describe a variety of program	Semi-structured interviews with university students and	During interviews, students and youth will be asked to describe what activities they

activities.	activities that they participated in.	youth from Cunningham Place.	participated in.
		Group debriefing sessions	During the 'closing circle' at the end of each program session, participants will be asked to reflect on what activities and skills they performed that day.
	The Program Facilitator will report that university students and youth participated in 100% of the scheduled program activities throughout the duration of the Cultural Exchange Program.	Summary notes made by the Program Facilitator.	The Program Facilitator's summary sheet will be examined for the type of activities performed by participants during each program session.
	Attendance records will show that university students and youth participated in 100% of the program activities.	Tracking sheets completed by the Program Facilitator.	Tracking sheets will be examined for attendance records, late arrival and early leaving by each participant in the program.

Table 6: Intermediate Outcome Indicators

Outcome	Indicator	Data Collection (Methods)	Data Content
a) Youth and students will begin to form relationships	University students and youth transitioning out of homelessness both state that they enjoy working with their partner and feel	Semi-structured interviews with university students and youth from Cunningham Place.	During the interview, university students and youth will be asked to describe their relationship with their partner and other members of the group,

	comfortable interacting with other members of the group. On a scale of 1 to 5, participants in the program will be asked to rank their interaction with other members of the group. Scores should be at least 4 out of 5, which is considered very good. In this instance, very good interaction will be described as the participant engaging in several conversations with at least one other member of the group or collaborating with one other member of the group on at least one program activity.	Participant tracking sheet.	including comfort levels and enjoyment. Each participant's tracking sheets will be examined for scores on relationship formation with other members of the group. The higher the score, the more effective the interaction.
b) Students and youth will increase their knowledge and understanding of one another, including clarifying misconceptions and negative stereotypes about one another.	University students and youth can both describe at least one thing they have learned, or one stereotype that has been changed through their participation in the Cultural Exchange Program.	Semi-structured interviews with university students and youth from Cunningham Place	During interviews, students and youth will be asked to describe what they have learned about other members of the group and how this is different from their perception prior to beginning the Cultural Exchange Program.
c) University students and youth and students will begin to develop new skills or enhance pre-	University students and youth can describe one new skill they have begun to develop as a result of their	Semi-structured interviews with university students and youth from Cunningham	During interviews sessions, youth will be asked to describe one skill they have begun to develop since beginning the Cultural Exchange

existing skills (i.e. leadership, communication, or interpersonal skills).	participation in the program.	Place.	Program.
	University students and youth report a score of at least 4 out of 5 on a skill they have performed for at least three consecutive weeks	Tracking sheets completed by participants in the program.	On the weekly tracking sheets, participants will be asked to record the quality of their performance on at least one skill on a scale of 1 to 5.
	The Program Facilitator reports a score of at least 4 out of 5 on a skill for at least three consecutive weeks.	Tracking sheets completed by the Program Facilitator.	On the weekly tracking sheets, the Program Facilitator will record the quality of each participant's performance on at least on skill on a scale of 1 to 5. The higher the score, the better the performance.
d) Youth and students will try new things	University students and youth participate in at least one new activity during the Cultural Exchange Program.	Semi-structured interviews with university students and youth from Cunningham Place	During interviews sessions, youth will describe one new thing they have tried during their participation in the Cultural Exchange Program.

Table 7: Long-term Outcome Indicators

Outcome	Indicator	Data Collection (Methods)	Data Content
a) University students and youth will form a supportive	University students and youth state that they have a strong, comfortable, and	Semi-structured interviews with university students and	During interviews sessions, university students and youth will be asked to describe their

relationship with one another.	trusting relationship with their partner in the program. A strong relationship in this instance will be defined as a score of 5 out of 5, which is described as the participant engaging in frequent conversations with at least one other member of the group, the participant working consistently well with other members of the group during program activities, and the participant reporting that he/she feels comfortable interacting with at least one other member of the group.	youth from Cunningham Place Participant tracking sheet.	relationship with their partner, as well as with other members of the group. On the tracking sheet, participants will be asked to rank their ability to form relationships with other members of the group on a scale of 1 to 5. The higher the score, the stronger the relationship.
b) Understanding, acceptance, and advocacy for another culture will be increased.	University students and youth will state that they have increased their knowledge, understanding and acceptance of another culture as a result of their participation in the Cultural Exchange Program. Knowledge obtainment in this instance will be described as "the participant being able to describe at	Semi-structured interviews with university students and youth from Cunningham Place	During interviews sessions, university students and youth will be asked to describe one thing that he/she has learned about the other culture, the significance of this information and how it will impact his/her life.

	least one thing that he/she has learned about the other culture, the significance of this information and how it will impact his/her life." University students and youth will give themselves a score of 5 out of 5 for at least three consecutive weeks in order to show that knowledge has been enhanced.	 Participant tracking sheets.	 On the tracking sheet, participants will be asked to rank their knowledge obtainment on a scale of 1 to 5. The higher the score, the stronger the relationship.
c) Each individual in the program will develop at least one new skill or enhance at least one existing skill (i.e. social skills, communication skills, leadership skills, etc).	University students and youth will state that they have developed one new skill to enhanced one existing skills as a result of their participation in the Cultural Exchange Program. University students and youth can demonstrate at least one new skill they have developed or one existing skill they have enhanced. The Program Facilitator reports a score of at least 5 out of 5 on a skill for at least three consecutive weeks	Semi-structured interviews with university students and youth from Cunningham Place Demonstration of skills during debriefing sessions at the end of each program session. Tracking sheets completed by the Program Facilitator.	During interviews sessions, university students and youth will be asked to describe one new or existing skill they have developed as a result of their participation in the program. When asked, participants in the program can demonstrate a skill that they have developed or further enhanced as a result of their participation in the program. An improvement in earlier performances should be noted by the Program Facilitator.

	University students and youth will give themselves a score of 5 out of 5 for at least three consecutive weeks in order to show that their skills have been enhanced.	Participant tracking sheets.	On the weekly tracking sheets, the Program Facilitator will record the quality of each participant's performance on at least on skill on a scale of 1 to 5. The higher the score, the better the performance. On the tracking sheet, participants will be asked to rank their ability to form relationships with other members of the group on a scale of 1 to 5. The higher the score, the stronger the relationship.
d) Participants in the program will be able to account for at least one occasion where they took a personal risk or stepped out of their comfort zone.	University students and youth describe one risk they took during their participation in the Cultural Exchange Program.	Semi-structured interviews with university students and youth from Cunningham Place	During interviews sessions, youth can account for one risk they took during their participation in the Cultural Exchange Program.

Appendix I

Evaluation Framework: Follow-up

Date:____

Please circle: 1 month 3 months 6 months 1 year

Please circle: Youth at Cunningham Place University Student

Current Employment:____

Questions:

Overall Impression of the Program

1. Were you surprised by anything you experienced in the program?

Expectations

2. Were your expectations for the program reached? Why or why not?
3. Did anything happen in the program, or as a result of the program, that you did not expect? Please describe.

Future Impact of the Program

4. What are you doing in your life now?
5. Did your participation in the Cultural Exchange Program impact your life and/or career goals? How so?
6. Did participating in the Cultural Exchange Program change how you think about youth transitioning out of homelessness/university students? How?

Achievement of Program Objectives

<u>Relationship Formation</u>

7. Do you still keep in contact with your partner from the Cultural Exchange Program? Why or why not?

<u>Knowledge</u>

8. Tell me what you now know about youth transitioning out of homelessness/university students. Has this changed since completing the Cultural Exchange Program?

<u>Skill Development</u>

9. What skills did you develop and maintain as a result of the Cultural Exchange Program? Please describe.

Additional Comments

Appendix J1

Evaluation Framework: Pre-Test Measure

Date:____

Please circle: Youth at Cunningham Place University Student

Demographical Information

Age: ____________________ Gender (circle one): Male Female

Ethnicity:
Do you identify yourself as a Canadian? Yes No
Or do you identify with another ethnic culture? (Please specify). ____________

Educational Background (please check off all that apply):

- o Primary School
- o Middle School
- o High School
- o College (specify program of study): __________________________
- o Trade School (specify trade): ______________________________
- o University (specify program of study):_________________________

Questions:

Expectations:

1. Why did you become involved in this program?
2. What are you expecting to gain from this program?

Achievement of Program Objectives
<u>Relationship Formation</u>

3. What do you hope to gain from the other participants in the program (i.e. youth transitioning out of homelessness/university students)?

<u>Knowledge</u>

4. Tell me what you know about youth transitioning out of homelessness/university students.
5. What would you like to learn about youth transitioning out of homelessness/university students?

<u>Skill Development</u>

6. What skills would you like to develop through this program?

Risk-Taking/Trying New Activities

7. What activities would you like to try through this program?
8. What aspects of this program are you most excited about?
9. What are you most unsure about?

Goal Setting

10. Please list three personal goals that you would like to achieve by the end of this program.
    a.
    b.
    c.

Appendix J2

Evaluation Framework: Mid-Term Measure

Date:____

Please circle: Youth at Cunningham Place University Student

Questions:

Overall Impression of the Program:

1) What do you think of the program so far?
2) What do you like about it?
3) What do you not like about it?
4) Do you have any suggestions for improvement? What?

Achievement of Program Objectives

Relationship Formation

5) Do you enjoy interacting with your partner? What or why not?
    a. Do you feel comfortable around him/her? Why or why not?

Knowledge/Understanding

6) What have you learned from your experiences in the program thus far?
    a. What have you learned about youth transitioning out of homelessness/university students?
7) What else would you like to learn?

Skill Development

8) What skills have you developed?
9) What additional skills would you like to develop?

Risk-Taking/Trying New Activities

10) What activities have you participated in?
    a. Were any of these activities new to you?
    b. Do you feel you have taken any risks so far? If so, what?
11) What activities would you like to try that the program has not offered yet?

Achievement of Personal Goals

12) Have you achieved any of the personal goals you wrote down at the beginning of the program?
    a. If so, which ones? (Please describe).
13) Are your goals still realistic? Why or why not?
14) If not, what changes could you make to your goals to make them more achievable?

Appendix J3

Evaluation Framework: Post-Test Measure

Date:____

Please circle: Youth at Cunningham Place University Student

Questions:

Overall Impression of the Program:

1. Did you enjoy participating in the Cultural Exchange Program? Why or why not?
2. What did you like most about the program?
3. What did you like least?
4. What suggestions do you have to improve the program?

Expectations

5. Were your expectations for the program met? Why or why not?

Personal Goal Setting

6. Did you achieve the personal goals you set out at the beginning of the program?
7. If yes, which of your personal goals did you achieve? Please provide examples.
8. If no, provides reasons why your goals were not met.

Achievement of Program Objectives
<u>Relationship Formation</u>

9. Describe your relationship with your partner. Please include:
    a. How frequently you met and the type of activities you engaged in?
    b. What you enjoyed most about the partnership.
    c. What you enjoyed least about the partnership.

<u>Knowledge</u>

10. Tell me what you know about youth transitioning out of homelessness/university students.
11. How have your experiences in the program affected how you think about youth transitioning out of homelessness/university students?

<u>Development of New Skills</u>

12. What skills have you developed as a result of this program? Please provide examples.

<u>Risk-Taking/Trying New Things</u>

13. What new activities did you participate in?
14. Do you feel you took personal risks (i.e. got out of your comfort zone) while participating in the program. How so?

Appendix K

Evaluation Framework: Small Group Discussion

Describe the comments made by program participants at the end of the program session. Refer to flip chart paper used to record statements and ideas.

What did program participants like about the session?

What did program participants not like about the session?

What suggestions for improvement did participants give, if any?

What did participants say they gained/learned from the session?

Other comments:

Appendix L1

Participant's Weekly Tracking Sheet: University Students

Name:___________________________________

Week #:__________________________________

Date:____________________________________

List the activities you participated in today:

Rank the quality of your participation today and provide a reason why.

1	2	3	4	5
poor	fair	good	very good	excellent
Reason:				

Rank your achievement of the following program objectives:

Relationship Formation

1	2	3	4	5
poor	fair	good	very good	excellent
Reason:				

Knowledge

1	2	3	4	5
poor	fair	good	very good	excellent
Reason:				

Skill Development

1 poor	2 fair	3 good	4 very good	5 excellent
Reason:				

Tried new things

1 poor	2 fair	3 good	4 very good	5 excellent
Reason:				

Appendix L2

Participant's Weekly Tracking Sheet: Youth Transitioning Out of Homelessness

Name:____________________________________

Week #:___________________________________

Date:_____________________________________

List the activities you participated in today:

Rank the quality of your participation today and provide a reason why.

1 poor	2 fair	3 good	4 very good	5 excellent
Reason:				

Rank your achievement of the following program objectives:

<u>Relationship Formation</u>

1 poor	2 fair	3 good	4 very good	5 excellent
Reason:				

<u>Knowledge</u>

1 poor	2 fair	3 good	4 very good	5 excellent
Reason:				

Skill Development

1 poor	2 fair	3 good	4 very good	5 excellent
Reason:				

Tried New Things

1 poor	2 fair	3 good	4 very good	5 excellent
Reason:				

Appendix L3

Program Participant's Weekly Tracking Sheet: Instructional Sheet

Quality of Participation

Each week we would like you to think about your participation in the program. How many activities did you take part in? How hard did you work on each activity? How well did you work with other people in the program? Did you stay on task? Did you display a positive attitude? On a scale of 1 to 5, we would like you to rank your participation in the program. The following descriptions might help you:

1 = **poor** (did not participate in any activities; no verbal contributions or question asking; disruptive to other members of the group; unfocused on the task at hand)

2 = **fair** (participated in < half of the program activities; made few verbal contributions or asked few questions; easily distracted; at times had difficulty staying on task)

3 = **good** (participated in half of the program activities; occasionally asked questions or made verbal contributions; stayed on task most of the time)

4 = **very good** (participated in > half of the program activities; frequently asked questions and made verbal comments; worked well with other members of the group)

5 = **excellent** (participated in all of the program activities; frequently asked questions and made verbal contributions; remained on task all of the time; motivated and/or helped other members of the group)

Achievement of Program Objectives

Similar to the quality of participation, we would also like you to rank your achievement of each program goal, including: 1) your ability to interact and form relationships with other members of the group; 2) knowledge that you gained; 3) skills you developed; and 4) the extent to which you tried new things. The quality of goal achievement will be ranked on a scale of 1 to 5, according to the following descriptions:

Relationship Formation

1 = **poor** (did not interact with any other member of the group)

2 = **fair** (engaged in at least one conversation or had at least one interaction with one other member of the group)

3 = **good** (engaged in a couple conversations or interactions with at least one member of the group)

4 = **very good** (engaged in several conversations or interactions with at least one other member of the group; collaborated with at least one other member of the group on program activities)

5 = **excellent** (engaged in frequent conversations and interactions with at least one member of the group, consistently worked with other members of the group on program activities; felt comfortable interacting with at least one other member of the group).

Knowledge Obtainment

1 = **poor** (can not identify anything you learned from the program session)

2 = **fair** (with help, you are able to identify one thing that you learned in the program session)

3 = **good** (on your own, you are able to identify at least one thing that you learned from the program session)

4 = **very good** (on your own, you are able to identify at least one thing that you learned from the program session and also explain why it is significant)

5 = **excellent** (on your own, you are able to describe at least one thing that you learned from the program, the significance of this information and how it will impact your life)

Skill Development

1 = **poor** (can not identify any skill that you are beginning to develop)

2 = **fair** (with help, you are able to identify one skill that you are beginning to develop)

3 = **good** (on your own, you are able to identify at least one skill that you are beginning to develop)

4 = **very good** (on your own, you are able to identify at least one skill that you have begun to develop and also give examples of how you have done so)

5 = **excellent** (on your own, you are able to *demonstrate* at least one skill that you have developed through the program)

Tried New Things

1 = **poor** (you did not participant in any program activities and can not describe any new activity that you have tried)

2 = **fair** (you have participated in < half the program activities; with help, you can identify one new thing that you have tried).

3 = **good** (you have participated in half of the program activities; on your own, you can identify one new thing that you have tried)

4 = **very good** (you have participated in > half of the program activities; on your own, you can describe at least one new thing you have tried or one risk you have taken)

5 = **excellent** (you have participated in all program activities; you can list at least one new thing you have tried or one risk you have taken; and you can describe how this risk-taking has changed you as a person or impacted their outlook on life)

Appendix M1:

Program Facilitator's Weekly Tracking Sheet: University Students & Youth Transitioning Out of Homelessness

Name:________________________________

Week #	**Attendance**	**Reason for Absence**	**Late**	**Time of Arrival** *(if late)*	**Reason for Lateness**	**Quality Of Participation** *(provide numerical ranking AND reason why)*		**Achievement of Program Objectives**							
								Relation-ship Formation		Know-ledge Obtain-ment		Skill Develop-ment		Tried New Things	
						F	**P**	**F**	**P**	**F**	**P**	**F**	**P**	**F**	**P**
1.															
2.															
3.															
4.															

Appendix M2:

Facilitator's Weekly Tracking Sheet: Instructional Sheet

Week #:________________________________

Date:________________________________

Time:________________________________

Location:________________________________

Activities Planned:____

Attendance	P = Present	A = Absent
Reason for Absence	J = Job A = Appointment S = Sick W = Weather SC = School commitment O = other (specify)	I = Job Interview F = Forgot D = Didn't want to come T = Transportation issues P = In another program
	All of the reasons listed above were taken from interviews and focus group sessions held with homeless youth, university students and services providers. Informants identified logistical issues, such as transportation, environmental issues, such as the weather, and other commitments, including participation in other programs/services, jobs, school, medical or professional appointments, and social activities, as reasons why participants might be late or absent for the cultural exchange program.	
Lateness	L = Late *(Leave blank if the participant was on time).*	
Time of Arrival	Indicate the time when the participant arrived.	
Reason for Lateness	J = Job A = Appointment S = Sick W = Weather SC = School commitment	I = Job Interview F = Forgot D = Didn't want to come T = Transportation issues P = In another program

O = other (specify)

All of the reasons listed above were taken from interviews and focus group sessions held with homeless youth, university students and services providers. Informants identified logistical issues, such as transportation, environmental issues, such as the weather, and other commitments, including participation in other programs/services, jobs, school, medical or professional appointments, and social activities, as reasons why participants might be late or absent for the cultural exchange program.

Quality of Participation

After each program session, you, as the Program Facilitator will be responsible for ranking the quality of each program participant's participation. In addition, each program participant will be responsible for ranking the quality of their own participation. Your ranking will be recorded under the **F** on the tally sheet and the program participant's ranking will be recorded under the **P.** The quality of participation will be ranked on a scale of 1 to 5, according to the following descriptions:

1 = **poor** (did not participate in any activities; no verbal contributions or question asked; disruptive to other members of the group; unfocused on the task at hand)

2 = **fair** (participated in < half of the program activities; few verbal contributions or questions; easily distracted; at times had difficulty staying on task)

3 = **good** (participated in half of the program activities; occasionally asked questions or made verbal contributions; stayed on task most of the time)

4 = **very good** (participated in > half of the program activities; frequently asked questions and made verbal comments; worked well with other members of the group)

5 = **excellent** (participated in all of the program activities; frequently asked questions and made verbal comments; remained on task all of the time; motivated other members of the group during each activity)

Achievement of Program Objectives

As the Program Facilitator, you will also be responsible for ranking the quality of each participant's achievement on four of the program objectives, including: 1) the individual's ability to form a relationship with other members of the group; 2) knowledge obtainment; 3) skill development; and 4) the extent to which each participant tried new things. Each participant in the Cultural Exchange program will also be responsible for ranking the quality of his or her own achievement on each of those four objectives. Once again, your ranking will be recorded under the **F** (Facilitator) on the tally sheet and the program participant's ranking will be recorded under the **P** (Participant). The quality of achievement will be ranked on a scale of 1 to 5, according to the following descriptions:

<u>Relationship Formation</u>

1 = **poor** (participant did not interact with any other members of the group)

2 = **fair** (participant engaged in at least one conversation or had at least one interaction with one other member of the group)

3 = **good** (participant engaged in a couple conversations or interactions with at least one member of the group)

4 = **very good** (participant engaged in several conversations or interactions with at least one other member of the group; participant collaborated with at least one other member of the group during program activities)

5 = **excellent** (participant engaged in frequent conversations and interactions with at least one member of the group, participant consistently worked well with other members of the group during program activities; participant reports feeling comfortable interacting with at least one other member of the group)

<u>Knowledge Obtainment</u>

1 = **poor** (participant can not identify anything he/she learned through the program session)

2 = **fair** (with probing, the participant can identify one thing that he/she learned in the program session)

3 = **good** (independently, the participant can identify at least one thing that he/she learned from the program session)

4 = **very good** (independently, the participant can identify at least one thing that he/she learned from the program session and also state why it is significant)

5 = **excellent** (independently, the participant can describe at least one thing that he/she has learned, the significance of this information and how it will impact his/her life)

Skill Development

1 = **poor** (participant can not identify any skill that he/she is beginning to develop through the program session)

2 = **fair** (with probing, the participant can identify one skill that he/she is beginning to develop through the program session)

3 = **good** (independently, the participant can identify at least one skill that he/she is trying to develop through the program session)

4 = **very good** (independently, the participant can identify at least one skill that he/she has begun to develop through the program session and also give examples of how he/she has done so)

5 = **excellent** (independently, the participant can *demonstrate* at least one skill that he/she has developed through the program)

Tried New Things

1 = **poor** (participant did not participant in any program activities and can not describe any new activity that he/she has tried)

2 = **fair** (participant participates in < half the program activities; with probing, participant can identify one new thing that he/she has tried).

3 = **good** (participant participants in half the program activities; independently he/she can identify one new thing he/she has tried)

4 = **very good** (participant participates in > half of the program activities; independently he/she can describe at least one new thing he/she has tried or at least one risk he/she has taken).

5 = **excellent** (participant participates in all program activities; he/she can list at least one new thing he/she has tried or at least one risk he/she has taken; participant can describe how this risk-taking has changed them as a person or impacted their outlook on life)

Appendix N

Program Facilitator's Weekly Summary Sheet

Date:__________________________ Week #:______________________

Time of Session:________________ Location of Session:___________

# of Participants:____

Activities Planned:____

1. Estimate the amount of time it took you to prepare for the program session (Circle one).

   < 1 hour 1-2 hours 2-3 hours > 3 hours

2. Did you have any challenges planning the program session? If so, what were they and how were they dealt with?

3. Did the program session go as planned? Yes No
   Why or why not? *Please refer to the purpose and objectives for each program session.*

4. Were you able to obtain all of the necessary supplies to execute the program? Why or why not?

5. Were you able to secure an appropriate location for the program session? Why or why not?

6. Did any external factors affect the execution of the program session? (i.e. weather, special events, holiday, etc.). How did this impact the session?

7. On a scale of 1 to 5, rank the overall participation of the group. Provide examples to justify your ranking.

1 poor	2 fair	3 good	4 very good	5 excellent

8. On the same scale of 1 to 5, rank the group participation in each of the individual program activities. Provide examples to justify your ranking.

Activity:____

1 poor	2 fair	3 good	4 very good	5 excellent

Activity:____

1 poor	2 fair	3 good	4 very good	5 excellent

Activity:____

1 poor	2 fair	3 good	4 very good	5 excellent

Activity:____

1 poor	2 fair	3 good	4 very good	5 excellent

9. List any concerns, challenges, or conflicts that arose during the program session. How were the challenges handled? What was the final outcome (i.e. was the conflict or challenge resolved? Why or why not?).

10. How many times did you have to re-focus the group throughout the program session? ___________. What did you do to refocus the group?

11. If you were to repeat the program session, is there anything you would have done differently?

12. Rank your overall evaluation of the program session.

1 poor	2 fair	3 good	4 very good	5 excellent

Most Successful Part:	**Least Successful Part:**
General Comments:	