Evaluating knowledge exchange work in libraries: challenges and possibilities

Keeping it ReAL

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Presenters: Kristina McDavid[1] | Heather O'Brien[2] | Karine Souffez [3] | Heather De Forest[4] | Nick Ubels[1,5] | Jess Yao[2]

[1] UBC Library | [2] UBC iSchool | [3] UBC Knowledge Exchange Unit | [4] SFU Library | [5] UBC Learning Exchange

Setting the Scene

Making Research Accessible Initiative (MRAi)	Supporting Transparent & Open Research Engagement & Exchange (STOREE)	Interview Study
DTES RAP		*Librarians at the centre of community-oriented knowledge work*

Community Scholars Program

Our team

Heather
De Forest
CSP
MRAi
STOREE

Kristina
McDavid
MRAi
STOREE

Heather
O'Brien
MRAi
STOREE

Karine
Souffez
MRAi

Nick
Ubels
MRAi

Jess
Yao
STOREE

We acknowledge that our work happens on the unceded, traditional, and continually occupied territory of the xʷməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Səlílwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) peoples.

These projects are part of our ongoing commitment to changing the negative impacts of extractive ways of doing research and encouraging a more engaged and collaborative culture of knowledge exchange.
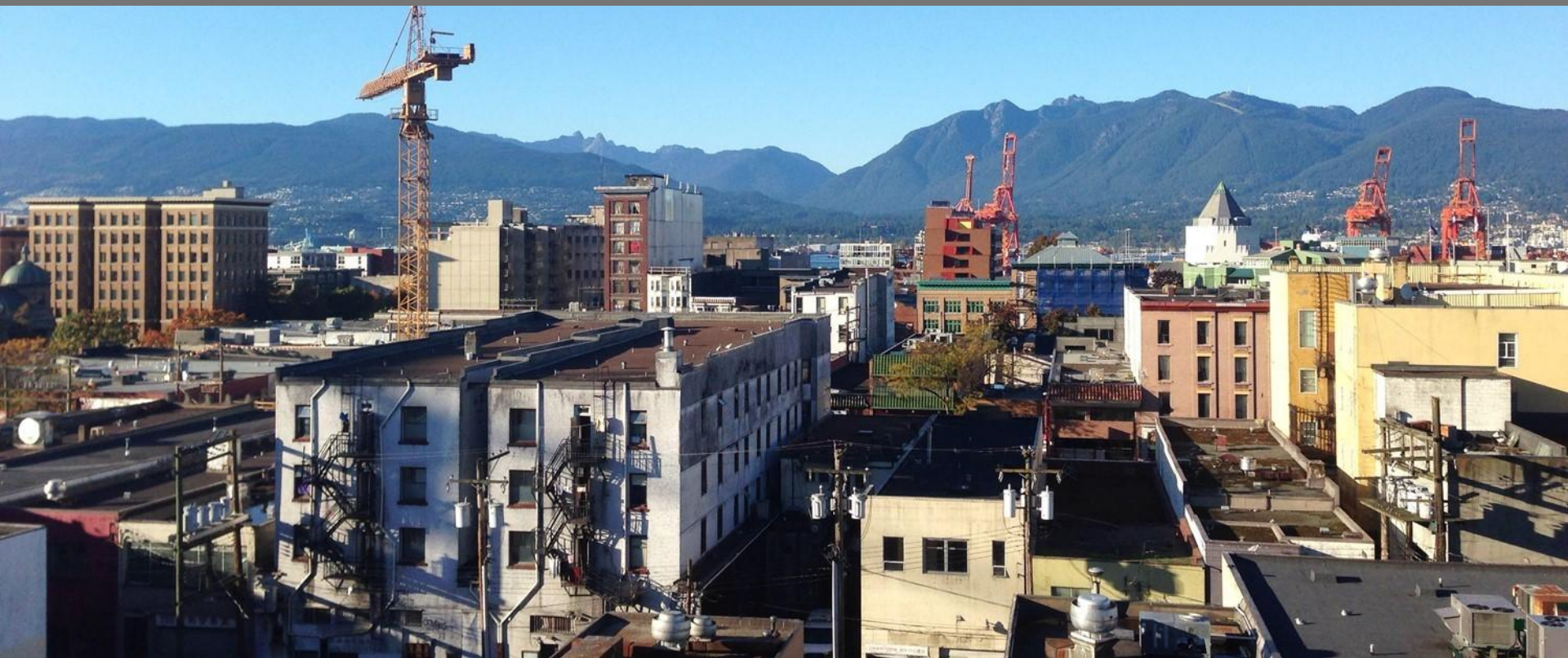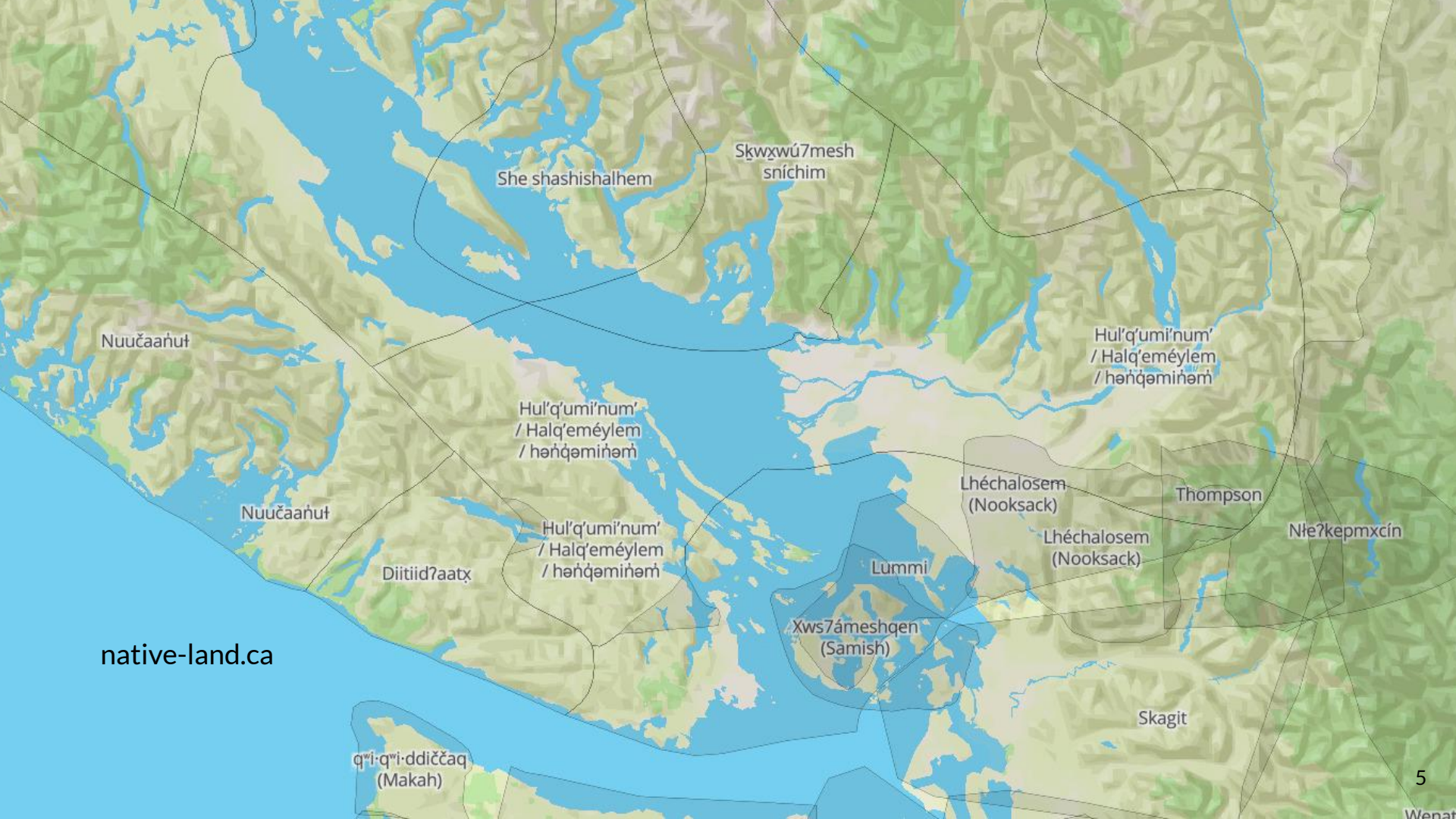
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Sḵwx̱wú7mesh
sníchim

Nuučaańuł

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/ Halq'eméylem
/ hən̓q̓əmin̓əm̓

Huľ'q'umi'num'
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Nuučaańuł

Huľ'q'umi'num'
/ Halq'eméylem
/ hən̓q̓əmin̓əm̓

Lhéchalosem
(Nooksack)

Thompson

Lhéchalosem
(Nooksack)

Nłe?kepmxcín

Diitiid?aatx̣

Lummi

Xws7ámeshqen
(Samish)

Skagit

qʷi·qʷi·ddiččaq
(Makah)

Wenat

Reflection

How can a spirit of **reciprocity** be embodied in knowledge exchange work?

- In our interactions with community...
- In the collections we provide access to...
- In the way we evaluate this work...

Agenda

- Part 1: Situating knowledge exchange (KE) evaluation in library and information settings
  - What are the experiences of librarians and archivists engaging in KE work around evaluation? Observations and takeaways
- Part II: The KE evaluation landscape
  - Why and how are we evaluating KE?
- Part III: Interactive discussion & gallery walk
- Part IV: Wrap up and next steps

Part I: What are the experiences of information professionals in evaluating knowledge exchange?

Librarians at the centre of community-oriented knowledge work
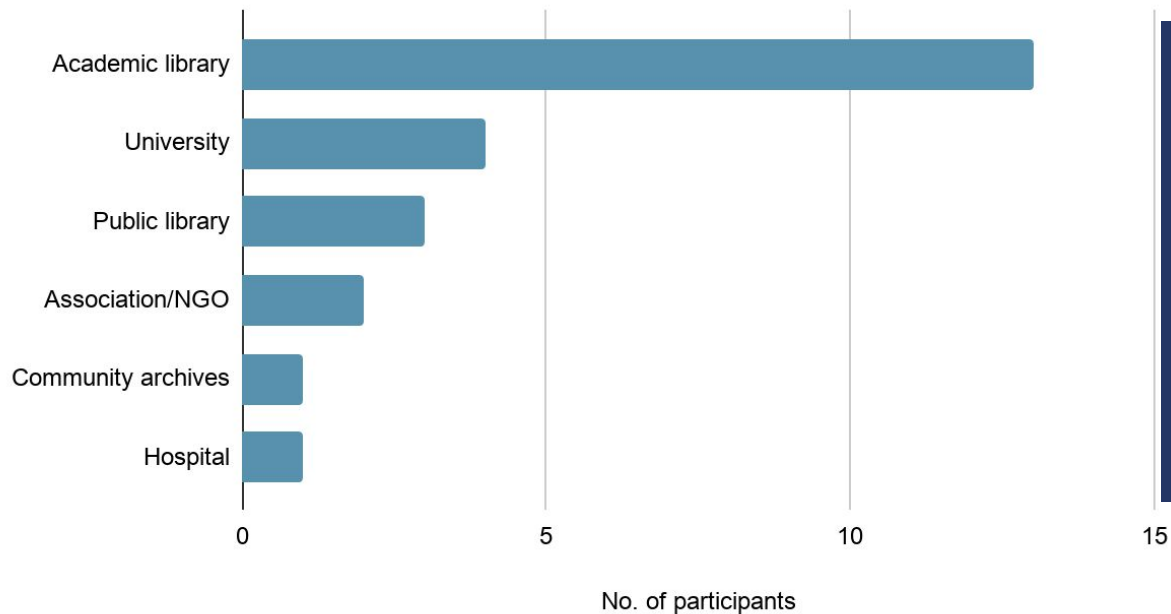
What is knowledge exchange work?

The ways in which librarians help to translate, share, and move information within and between the communities they serve.

Research questions:

1. *How are information professionals engaging in knowledge work?*
2. *What competencies do they have/need to do this work?*
3. *What are the challenges and opportunities?*

Snapshot of Participants (*N*=24)

Workplace

Academic library	
University	
Public library	
Association/NGO	
Community archives	
Hospital	

No. of participants

Embedded in research cluster
Indigenous knowledge management & engagement
Open education
Special collections
Liaison librarian
Community engagement
Public health
Information services
Knowledge mobilization
Medicine
Community archives
Research impact
Archives

Work Roles

Findings: Evaluating knowledge exchange work

Observations on evaluation of KE work

How do you measure a relationship? How do you measure communication?

Tara

...Every time [our first community librarian] went out, they would come back, we would sit down for half an hour to an hour to discuss everything that happened. It was a new job not only for this librarian but a job for the whole organization.

Alex

So if I made a little clinical cues toolkit and it's all infographic-y and they see it get picked up somewhere else, they're very happy…To see things like morph and move, I guess they view that as evidence of engagement with material and hopefully, learning. I do notice Medicine, in terms of educational materials, is more invested -- or interested -- in that than my own institution.

Fiona

We funded a number of graduate student internships where they went out and worked in community on research projects… and it was three to five years later that we heard, "Oh, I got a job with them" or "Oh, they changed their practice." It was a good lesson because now we know not to ask too early, but also that you need to follow up over time.

Alice

12

Evaluation: Observations (Interview Study)

- Challenge in fitting into typical library assessment models
- Projects evolving over time, shifting goals
- Potential to learn from other disciplines
- Trying to track the reach/uptake of their "products"
- Different types of evaluation for different audiences
- A complex journey, rather than a clearly-defined project

Takeaways

- Intentionality
- Reflection
- Stories
- Relationships
- Creativity
- Experimentation
- Flexibility

Where are you in your evaluation journey?

Writing the textbook

Getting started

Deep in the weeds

Winging it!
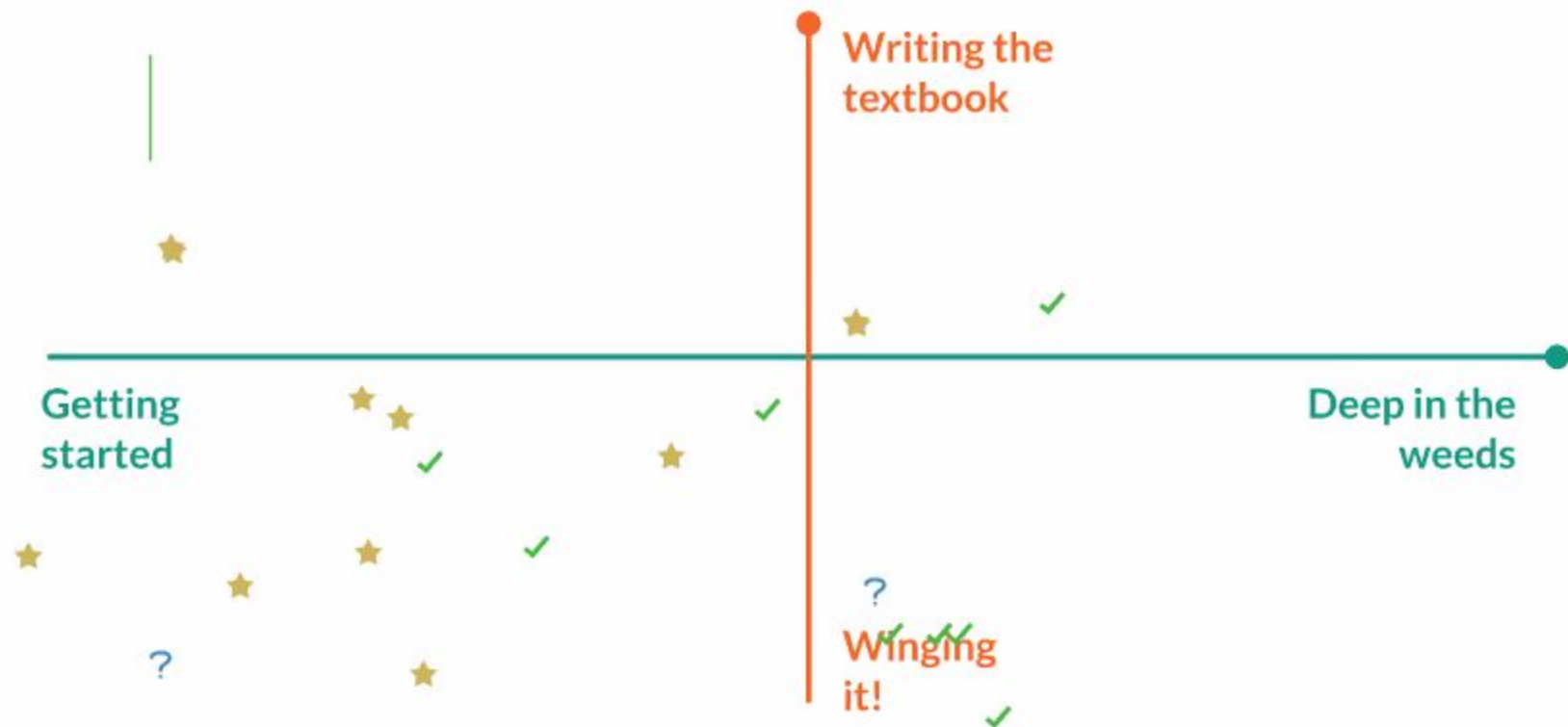
Part II: The KE Evaluation Landscape

KE Evaluation: mindsets, approaches, examples

- Community Scholars Program
- Making Research Accessible initiative
  - Downtown Eastside Research Access Portal

Goals - Why are we evaluating KE?

- Assess progress and goals achievement
- Demonstrate the difference we are making
- Link process and impacts
- Learn and adjust
- Surface the invisible
- Capturing the "grimpacts"
- Engage communities

Evaluating for different validities

- Outcome validity
- Democratic validity
- Process validity
- Catalytic validity
- Dialogic validity

Ozanne, J. L., & Anderson, L. (2010). *Community action research*. Journal of Public Policy & Marketing, 29(1), 123–137. https://doi.org/10.1509/jppm.29.1.123

Benefits - Who determines value?

Impact measures need to be fine-tuned for each target audience and both the types of decisions they face and the types of decision making environments in which they live or work (Lavis et al. 2003: 166)

- Involve all stakeholders when deciding what to measure
- Recognize that different groups or individuals have different goals
- Adaptable mindset:
    - Suspend assumptions
    - Recognize connection points
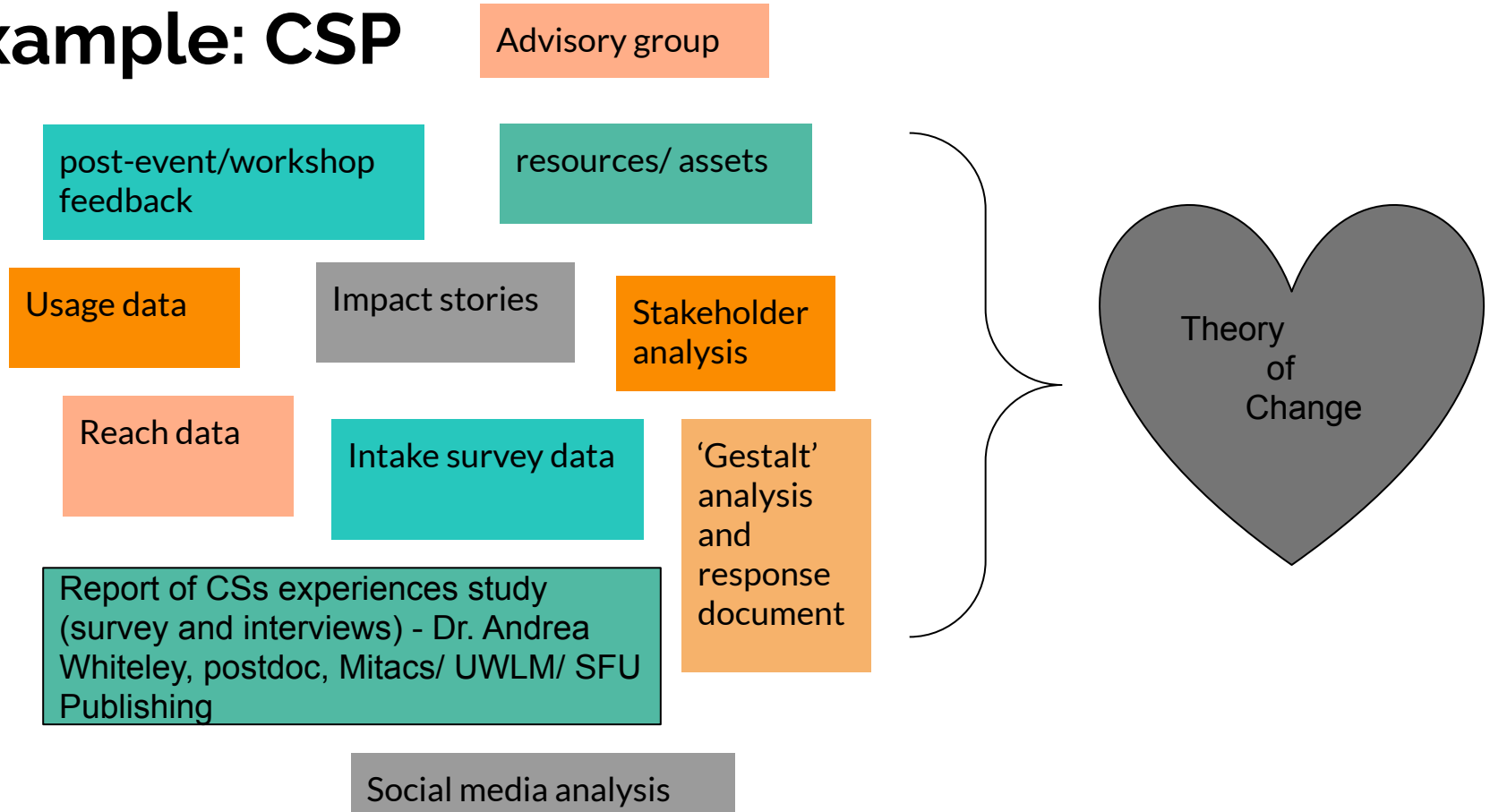
Approaches - How to evaluate KE?

- Impact-oriented approaches
  - Evidence of reach and significance of change
- Process-oriented approaches
  - Logic models
  - Contribution analysis
  - Developmental evaluation
- Evaluation of KE activities
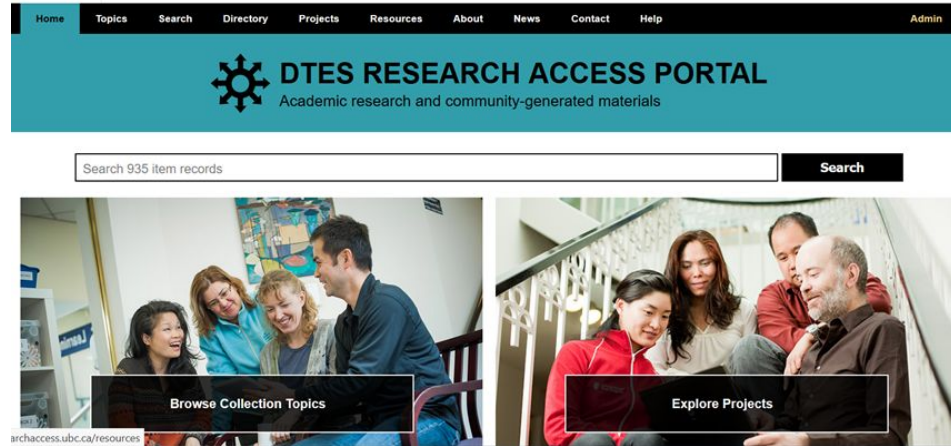
Examples of 'processual' benefits of the MRAi

Research Impact

Research use

Research uptake

Final outcomes and contribution:

Changes in behaviour and practices:

Changes in knowledge and or skills:

Reactions of research users and changes in awareness:

Engagement/ involvement:

Outputs/activities:

E.g. Improved platform facilitating access to information and research about the DTES

E.g. New connections within the Library leading to growth of UBC Library cIRcle and DTES RAP collections; collaborations between MRAi committee members leading to new opportunities and projects

E.g. Adoption of reflective practices by MRAi Steering Committee professionals; Changes in thinking and attitudes of students involved

E.g. Greater awareness of the project within the institution and the long-term sustainability of the project ; greater awareness of the need for education about open access and publishing parameters

E.g. Formalized partnership between the UBC Library and the UBC Learning Exchange; pooling of resources, knowledge and expertise among MRAi committee members

Example: CSP

Advisory group

post-event/workshop feedback

resources/ assets

Usage data

Impact stories

Stakeholder analysis

Reach data

Intake survey data

'Gestalt' analysis and response document

Report of CSs experiences study (survey and interviews) - Dr. Andrea Whiteley, postdoc, Mitacs/ UWLM/ SFU Publishing

Social media analysis

Theory of Change

Example: DTES RAP

- Engagement and evaluation go together
- Different measures for each user group
- Identifying new opportunities and user groups in this process
- Community and researcher advisory groups

Part III: Discussion and Gallery Walk

Discussion groups

- Please introduce yourselves and share a little about where you are at:
  - "The thing about KE evaluation that challenges me is…"
  - "I put myself on this part of the axis because…"
- Take a few minutes to discuss:
  - Challenges with evaluation of KE work
  - Possible approaches/solutions
- Put a few key ideas on virtual sticky notes at http://tiny.cc/ke-eval
- Try to match up challenges with possible approaches

Evaluation in Knowledge Exchange Work - Discussion Group

Challenges

How do you measure the impact of relationships?

Lack of time and resources for facilitation. And that impacts outcomes so much!

Complex to communicate outcomes to different audiences

Fractured feeling

Evaluating the process often gets lost due to the attention given to evaluating impacts.

culture of deliverables

Solutions

Process as product - when it feels like your productivity is not "up to standard"

Making room for reflection

Keeping in touch with the outcomes

Use OERs and IRs and open frameworks for dissemination instead of traditional publishing outputs

developing more comfort and space for uncertainty.

Recognizing that the process is the outcome.

Evaluation doesn't have to be about numbers!

Is there a way to do "quick and dirty" evaluation; I'm thinking of colleagues who champion "quick and dirty" u/x

Align evaluation to outcomes for authentic assessment

Working to shift the culture

short-term, medium term to long-term

Community responsive models of evaluation - may not correspond to timelines and expectations of funders and institutions

Work with Tri-Agencies and granting bodies to gain new understanding of deliverables

Reinvent "productivity" within the value of relationships, not outputs

Part IV: Wrap up and next steps

Reflection: How can a spirit of reciprocity be embodied in knowledge exchange work?

- STOREE KE study: Publications will be open access; plan to bring interested information professionals together to explore opportunities for support/collaboration
- MRAi & DTES RAP: Prioritizing value-added activities to community members for their insight into evaluation
- CSP: Convening reading groups; Amplifying CS activities; CSs give voice to the program

Links to projects

Downtown Eastside Research Access Portal

Supporting Transparent & Open Research Engagement & Exchange (STOREE)

Community Scholars Program

Bibliography

Photo of DTES:
https://images.glaciermedia.ca/polopoly_fs/1.20636570.1497648888!/fileImage/httpImage/image.jpg_gen/derivatives/facebookogimage_560_292/chinatown-tied-for-first-place-in-heritage-vancouver-s-2017-top-10-watch-list-photo-dan-toulgoet.jpg

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Contact info

Heather De Forest - heather_de_forest@sfu.ca

Kristina McDavid - kristina.mcdavid@ubc.ca

Heather O'Brien - h.obrien@ubc.ca; mraipartnership@ubc.ca

Karine Souffez - karine.souffez@ubc.ca; kx.support@ubc.ca

Nick Ubels - nick.ubels@ubc.ca

Jess Yao - mraipartnership@ubc.ca

If you would be interested in connecting with other information professionals to discuss KE work, please email mraipartnership@ubc.ca .