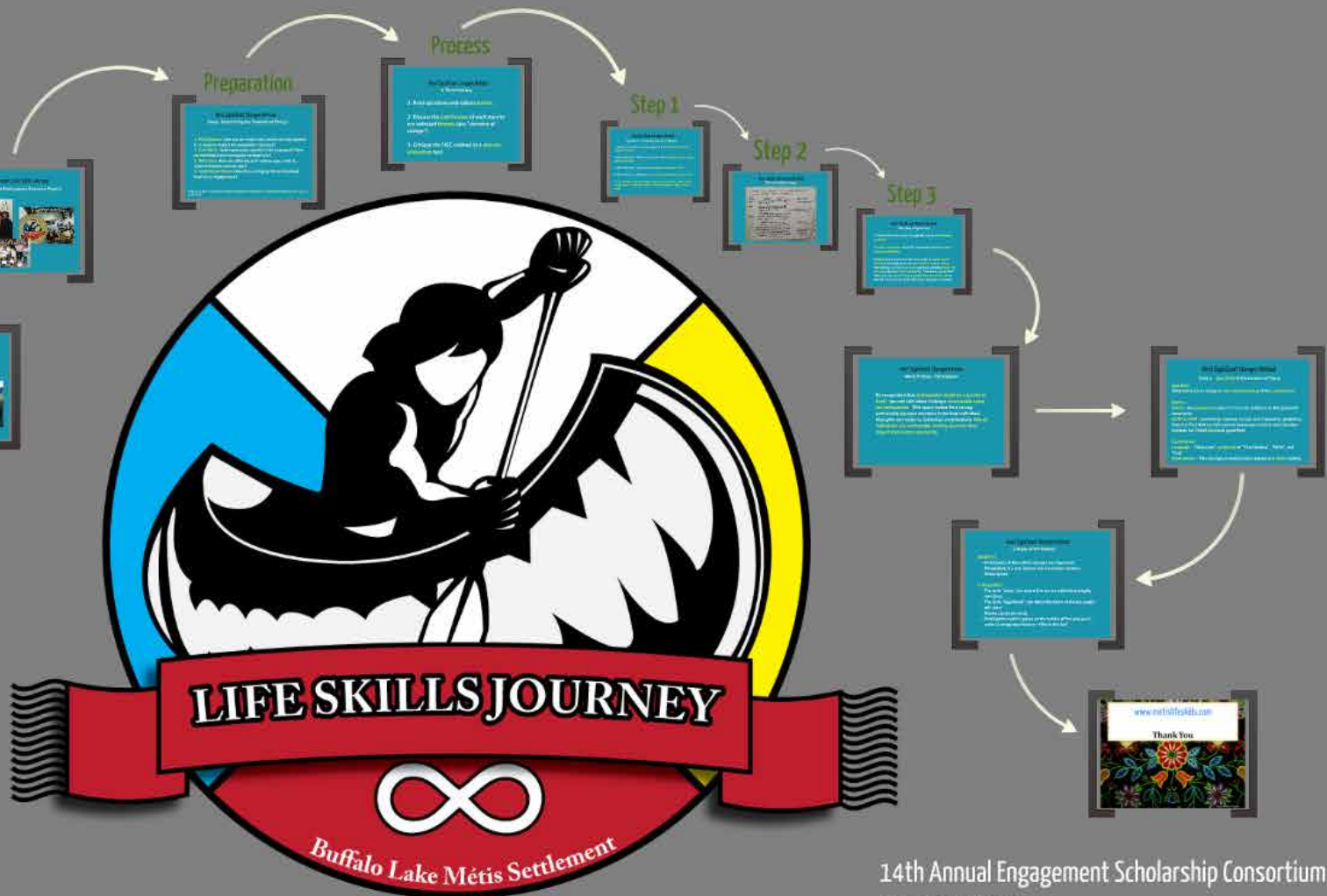




14th Annual Engagement Scholarship Consortium
 October 2013



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Engaged Partnership Transforms Academic Practice

Authentic Engagement with a Metis Settlement in Alberta, Canada

Fay Fletcher, Alicia Hibbert, and Fiona Robertson
Faculty of Extension, University of Alberta



Alberta's Metis Settlements



Metis Settlements Life Skills Journey

A Community Based Participatory Research Project



Preparation

Most Significant Changes Method Setup - Determining the "Domains of Change"

1. **Participation:** How can we reduce the burden of participation in a research project for community members?
2. **Specificity:** How community-specific is the approach? Have we minimized pan-Aboriginal assumptions?
3. **Difference:** How are differences in culture, age, rural vs. urban lifestyles used as tools?
4. **Institutional Issues:** How do we mitigate the institutional barriers to engagement?

Dempsey, S 2010, 'Critiquing Community Engagement', *Management Communication Quarterly*, vol. 24, no. 3, p. 359-390.

Process

Most Significant Changes Method A Three-Part Day

1. Read questions and collect **stories**.
2. Discuss the **significance** of each story to pre-selected **themes** (aka "domains of change")
3. Critique the MSC method as a **process evaluation tool**

Most Significant Changes Method

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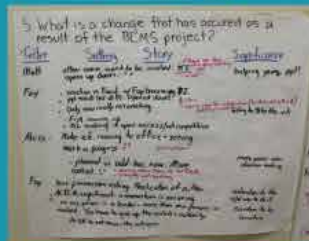
Step 1

Most Significant Changes Method Questions - Collecting Stories of Change

1. What is a change you have noticed in the relationship between project partners?
2. Has there been a change in how you view or understand the project and its outcomes?
3. Has there been a change in how you understand your role?
4. What has been a change in your understanding of the community?
5. Can you tell us about a change that has occurred as a result of the project in the community, office, university, anything that comes to mind?

Step 2

Most Significant Changes Method The Participation Story



Step 3

Most Significant Changes Method The Story's Significance

1. Participation can occur strategically, based on **individual strengths**.
 2. Equal contribution does NOT necessarily mean the same kind of contribution.
- Strategic planning allows the community to know how to contribute and allows everyone to ask the right questions. Maintaining a sense of structure (control) can help reduce the stress and burden in the community. "Community grounded" does not mean that everyone should have the same role or that all decision-making should happen through consensus.

Most Significant Changes Method

Questions - Collecting Stories of Change

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Most Significant Changes Method

The Participation Story

5. What is a change that has occurred as a result of the BLMS project?

Teller	Setting	Story	Significance
Matt	other comm. want to be involved. opens up doors. ••	KS • if they're exc. then we're doing something right. • no cost	helping young ppl!
Fay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reaction in Facul. w/ Fay becoming PI. • ppl treat her diff. Opened doors. • Only now really resonating. • FrA moving up - BL making it open access/not competitive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • matters • mitigating risk for collaboration (for those not getting it) - space, grad students • willing to take the risk. 	
Alicia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Katie etc. coming to office + seeing work in progress. •• - planned vs add-hoc now. More control. •• - planning allows them to contribute. - asking the right questions 	spatial presence.	more power over decision making
Fay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • less permission asking. Realization of author. • ACFCR significant. a momentum is occurring • no one person is a leader - more than one person is involved. You have to give up the control + authority its OK to not know the outcome 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> realization its the right way to do it. Freedom to be inovative

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Most Significant Changes Method

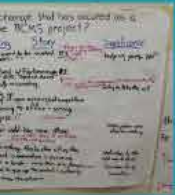
The Story's Significance

1. Participation can occur strategically, based on **individual strengths**.
2. **Equal contribution** does NOT necessarily mean **the same kind of contribution**.

Strategic planning allows the community to know **how to contribute** and allows everyone to **ask the right questions**. Maintaining a sense of **structure** (control) can help **reduce the stress** and burden in the community. “Community grounded” does not mean **that everyone should have the same role** or that all decision-making should happen through consensus.

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Most Significant Changes Method Novel Finding - Participation

By recognizing that participation might be a burden in itself, you can talk about finding a comfortable space for participation. This space makes for a strong partnership because members know how individual strengths can relate to individual contributions. Not all individuals are comfortable making decisions that impact their entire community.

Most Significant Changes Method Story 2 - Specificity in the Context of Policy

Question:
What has been a change in your understanding of the community?

Stories:
Elders - the unexpected nature of the role of Elders in this particular community
OCAP & CIHR - Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession guidelines from the First Nations Information Governance Centre and Canadian Institute for Health Research guidelines

Significance:
Language - "Aboriginal" compared to "First Nations", "Metis", and "Inuit"
Assumptions - Pan-Aboriginal assumptions applied to a Metis context

Most Significant Changes Method

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Story 2 - **Specificity** in the Context of Policy

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Significance:

Language - "Aboriginal" **compared** to "First Nations", "Metis", and "Inuit"

Assumptions - Pan-Aboriginal assumptions applied to a **Metis** context

Most Significant Changes Method

Critique of the Method

BENEFITS

- Participants define which changes are important
- Storytelling is a less formal, more inclusive medium
- Group-based

CHALLENGES

- The term "Story" can sound like we are collecting lengthy narratives
- The term "Significant" can affect the kinds of stories people will share
- Stories can be personal
- Participants need to agree on the results of the process in order to assign significance - Who is this for?



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Thank You



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