

**Language Nests
Initiative
An Evaluation Proposal**

May 2nd, 2011



Program Overview

- Introduced in NWT in January 2003
- Concept is to involve full-time immersion of pre-school children in the Aboriginal Language through regular daily activities
- Language instruction occurs through participation and immersion rather than just through instruction
- Preschool teachers, elders and other community members play a vital role
- Children are usually between 2-5 years of age
- Funding from Contribution Agreements through the Department of Education, Culture and Employment
- Currently 19 child care facilities with 350 children enrolled

Overall objective: To provide Aboriginal pre-school children with opportunities to learn their Aboriginal language

Expected outcome: Children will have a basic understanding of the language which will provide a strong foundation for a successful transition to the K-12 school system.

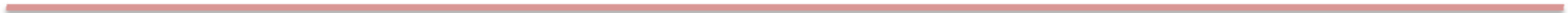
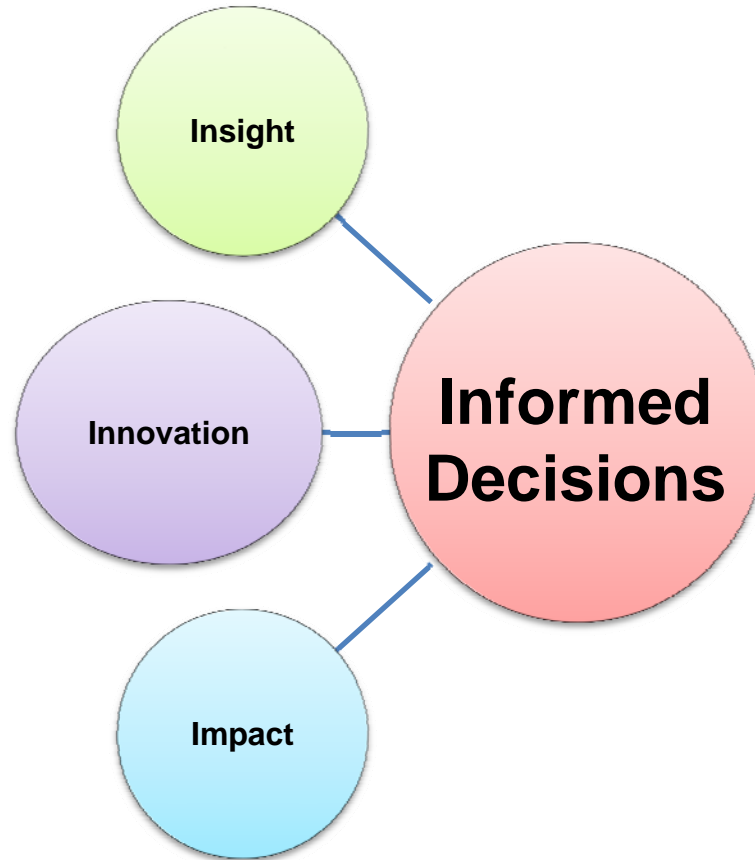


Purpose of Evaluation

- Is the program being implemented in the way that was designed by ECE? In other words, are the individual programs being operated as immersion programs?
 - What are the achievements of the programs?
 - Does the Language Nest Initiative provide good value for money?
 - How could the Initiative and the programs funded be improved?
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Approach to Evaluation





Adhering to Program Evaluation Standards

•Utility

- Credible track record
- Stakeholder opinions are considered throughout the process
- Philosophy of evaluation is clear and defined
- Approach will provide relevant information
- Timelines will include regular reporting

•Feasibility

- Budget will be realistic, prudent, frugal and effective
- Methods will be practical and responsive to program needs
- Cultural and language needs will be incorporated

•Propriety

- No conflict of interest to declare
- A formal agreement will be established
- Consideration of ethical and legal rights e.g. Informed consent
- Regular reporting to company and stakeholders

•Accuracy

- Use of a solid, mixed methods approach
 - Reliable and valid instruments
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Advisory Committee

- Purpose

- To involve key stakeholders in all phases of program evaluation.

- Membership

- Representatives from the Department of Education , Culture and Employment
- Representative from child care facility
- Representative from the community (Elder)
- Representative from NWTTA
- Consultants from Unique Critique

- Mandate

- Verify the evaluation plan
 - Provide feedback on methodology
 - Determine if evaluation is appropriate to the program
 - Provide a forum to discuss and validate findings
 - Assist with dissemination of findings
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Stakeholder Profile

Primary Stakeholders

- Funding and other resources

- Participant enrollment and cultural integration

ECE
AHRDA
NWT Literary
Council

Children
Parents
Child Care
Facility Staff
Elders

Secondary Stakeholders

- Partners with Recreation Dept through Culture Camp

- Offer resources developed to these programs/projects

Recreation
Department
Local
Elementary
Schools

Aboriginal
Headstart
Program
Adult Education
Centre



Logic Model

**Language Nests
Initiative**



Goal of Program

- To provide Aboriginal pre-school children with opportunities to learn their Aboriginal Language



Inputs

- Program funding
 - Daycare centres
 - Early childhood educators
 - Community elders
 - Parents
 - Learning resources (language specific books, toys)
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Program Activities/Delivery

- Language instruction and classes
 - Language immersion through games, songs, etc.
 - Promotion of language among children and parents in daily activities
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Outputs

- # of children able to speak few-many words
 - # of children able to easily converse in language
 - # of parents participating in language acquisition activities
 - # of staff fluent in language
 - # of elders participating in activities
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Program Activities Link to Outputs

Program Activities

- Language instruction and classes
- Language immersion through games, songs, etc.



Output

- # of children able to speak few-many words
 - # of children able to easily converse in language
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Short-term Outcomes

- Increased children enrolled in programs
- Increased words learned by children
- Increased interest in Aboriginal language development
- Increased involvement and receptiveness of parents
- Increased number of children continuing language and immersion studies


Long-term Outcomes

- Increase number of children will use language in everyday contexts (outside daycare)
- Increased parental support and reinforcement
- Increased number of community members speaking Aboriginal language (as children become adults)
- **Preservation of language and culture in the Aboriginal Communities of the NWT**



Outputs Link to Outcomes

Outputs

- # of parents participating in language acquisition activities
 - # of staff fluent in language
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Outcomes

- Increased number of children continuing language and immersion studies
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Risks

- Parents who do not speak language will not enroll their children, parents will fear discrimination.
- Children will only speak language at daycare
- Aging population will lead to decrease language preservation by elders, parents will feel incompetent.
- Children will lose interest in language acquisition, language will not lead to culture preservation.

Assumptions

- Funding will continue, resources lead to language development, staff are supportive and knowledgeable
 - Immersion leads to increased competence, increased involvement of children will lead to increased parental involvement
 - Program success will lead to future involvement
 - Parent participation will enhance success, early exposure will lead to further interest
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Evaluation Matrix



Relevance

Questions

- Does Language Nets meet the needs of stakeholders?
- Do the objectives need to change?
- Is there a need for the Language Nests Initiative?
- Do similar programs exist?

Indicators

- Increased use of learned language
- Rates of participation in program
- Number of programs with similar objectives
- Success of other programs
- Satisfaction of elders with culturalization

Data Collection Methodology

- Focus groups
 - Key informant interviews
 - Participant observation
 - Document Review/Jurisdictional review
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Success in Meeting Program Objectives

Questions

- Is the implementation of Language Nests consistent with ECE design?
- Is the Language Nests Initiative successful in meeting its aims and objectives?

Indicators

- Level of cultural and language immersion in Early Childhood Settings
- Opportunities for language immersion for children
- Enhanced use of language post- Early Childhood years

Data Collection Methodology

- Likert scales
 - Before/after comparisons (pre and post tests)
 - Jurisdictional review
 - Participant observation
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Program Administration and Efficiency

Questions

- Does the cost of the program exceed the budget?
- Are program outcomes worth budget expenditures?
- What level of support is required by program staff?
- How to improve administration?

Indicators

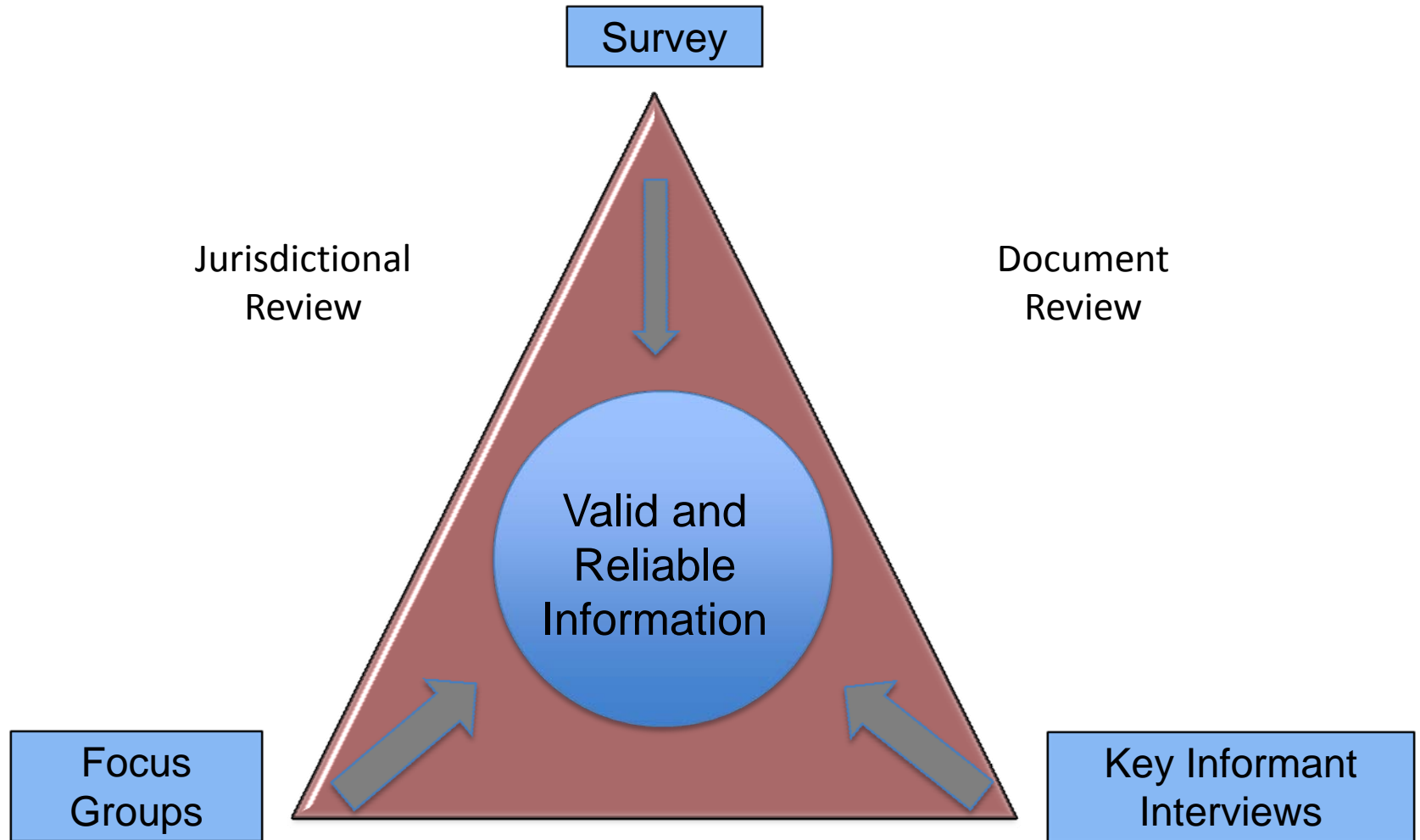
- Budget deficit or surplus
- Satisfaction of stakeholders
- Increased culturalization
- Language competence of staff
- Level of staff satisfaction
- Suggestions of program experts

Data Collection Methodology

- Focus groups
 - Key informant interviews
 - Surveys
 - Document review
 - Budget audit
 - Expert analysis of test results
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Mixed Methods Approach





Focus Groups

- A group interview/discussion with 5-10 participants
 - Facilitator guides discussion using a focus group interview guide developed for this study designed to reflect stakeholders perceptions of indicators
 - Can assess both verbal and non-verbal communication
 - Able to build on others ideas
 - Recommend 4-5 groups of parents; 2 groups of program staff
 - Could be harder to conduct due to the “listening” nature of some the Aboriginal people
 - Conduct the focus groups in a familiar area.
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Document/Jurisdictional Review

- Review of current literature and records
- Jurisdictional review involves government records
- Secondary data can indicate weaknesses or strengths of other programs and thus enhance Language Nests



Key Informant Interviews

- Face-to-face interviews, not telephone
 - Not intimidating, due to the one-on-one nature
 - Advisory committee to advise informant selection
 - Elders are a key group
 - Used for information regarding stakeholders needs, need for the program, required support, and how to improve the administration
 - Hire and train research assistants
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Surveys

- Open-ended questions and Likert scales
 - Random sample
 - Advantage of getting a mass amount of information quickly
 - Surveys must be adjusted to knowledge levels of the participants
 - Surveys to program staff administered after programs throughout different locations on a random day to ensure representativeness
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Data Analysis

Quantitative Data – SPSS

- Multivariate ANOVA
- Post-hoc tests
- η^2 test

Qualitative Data – Ethnography

- Common themes
 - Coding
 - Discovering the tacit knowledge
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Challenges and Proposed Solutions

Challenges	Solutions
Meeting the needs of different cultural/ethnic groups	Provide cultural sensitivity training to staff members and promote self-education
Parents may not be fluent in the language and therefore will not use the language at home and/or in the children's everyday lives	Provide promotional activities to better increase parental involvement and incentives to encourage them to learn; ensure learning programs are in place for parents
Potentially low education levels of participants	Tailor the surveys and other data collection methods to appropriate education level. Provide adequate explanation of all questions
Consistent attendance of children to the daycare programs	Promote parents to get involved in the program Empower children to keep the language and culture alive for their future Ensure there is a continuation of fun activities and involvement to enhance their learning
Children not continuing to study and use the language into the K-12 system	Have immersion programs available in the school system Make language courses mandatory in schools Form yearly cultural awareness days
Large geographic area	Hire and train research assistants to help reach spaced out population
The increase in the number of aging parents leading to cultural losses	Promotion of involvement from the younger population Encouraging consistent education from aging parents for promotion of learning Promotion of cultural awareness
Difficulty of obtaining information due to lack of internet access and phone services	Holding focus groups and key informant interviews in person instead of via telephone or internet



Ethical and Cultural Considerations

- Ethics approval – Human Investigations Committee Review
 - Be cognizant of differences in belief systems, religious ideologies, and languages of Aboriginal peoples
 - Informed consent
 - Use of multi-lingual translators (sought from translating services) to minimize the language barriers that may bring forth problems.
 - Formation of focus groups within cultural institutions such as the Native Women Association of Canada.
 - Research assistants undergo sensitivity training to ensure a completely open and non-discriminatory approach to all interviews and focus groups.
 - Take necessary precaution when dealing with vulnerable populations such as aboriginal people, children and elderly
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Projected Budget

Expenses	Cost
Consultant's Salary (2 Consultants x 6 months)	\$45,000
Promotion and Photocopying (Pamphlets, Tools, Consent Forms)	\$1,000
Key Informant Interviews (telephone costs, long distance)	\$1,000
Travel (Mileage for Consultants)	\$1,500
Bilingual Translation of Interviews	\$500
Postage	\$1,000
Transcription of Qualitative Data	\$1,000
Teleconferencing (Advisory Group Meetings)	\$1,000
Dissemination of Results (Publications and Presentations)	\$2,000
Secretarial Support	\$4,000
Miscellaneous	\$1,000
TOTAL	\$60,000



Timeline

Months

Task	1	2	3	4	5	6
Meet with administrators	X		X			X
Document Review	X					
Form Advisory Committee	X					
Identify Key Informants		X	X			
Develop/review instruments	X	X				
Conduct interviews			X	X		
Conduct Focus Groups				X	X	
Conduct Survey		X	X	X	X	
Data analysis		X	X	X	X	
Advisory Committee Meetings	X	X	X	X	X	X
Draft report				X	X	
Final report						X



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Thank You

- Canadian Evaluation Society
 - CES - NL Chapter
 - Memorial University of Newfoundland School of Nursing
 - Memorial University Student Affairs and Services
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