



**Report on Student Engagement Activities for the
2015 CESBCY Evaluation Conference
in Vancouver, BC on November 20, 2015**

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Student Engagement Report

Introduction

A key priority of the 2015 CESBCY Evaluation Conference was to encourage student participation. This was accomplished through five main initiatives: student presentation, a Buddy Program, reduced student registration fees, bursaries and student volunteers. This report discusses these initiatives, outlining their implementation and results and, when applicable, ways in which they can be improved upon for future conferences. Two other key issues pertaining to student engagement, the resource table and communication, are also included in the report.

1. Student Presentations

- Calls were made for student presenters to give students the opportunity to present papers on projects they were developing, actively working on or had completed and to practice presentation skills that were related to the theme of the conference (please see Appendix A).
- Resource materials were sent to students on how to delivery effective presentations in advance of the conference.
- There were 3 student presentations at the conference.

2. Buddy Program

-For the first time at a CESBCY conference, a Buddy Program was implemented. It was modeled on the CES National conference Buddy Program in Montreal in 2015, based on discussions with Andrealisa Belzer. Discussions were also held with James Coyle and Kate Woodman from Evaluation Mentoring Canada who provided very helpful guidance and ideas for implementation (see Appendix B)

- The intent of the program was to match students or new evaluators to experienced evaluators to help students feel more comfortable and well-oriented during the conference (see Appendix C).

- A survey was developed for both students and seasoned evaluators (see Appendices D and E). The surveys were sent out via email in Word format (see Appendix F). This option was chosen over Fluid Survey or another platform due to the relatively small number of participants.

- Matching was based on common interests as best as possible.

- Once the matching was done, an email was send out to each pair of buddies to introduce each other and encourage communication in advance of the conference.

-Note: in the end, there were more students than experienced evaluators who registered so we had to directly ask some evaluators to join the program (who were happy to do so). We realized that most communication around signing up for the BP was focused on students and not experienced evaluators, which explained the difference in enrolment. Next time, efforts to recruit both types of participants should be undertaken.

-Note: there was some confusion regarding conference registration and buddy program participation. Some BP participants did not sign up for the conference and thought they could participate without registering for the conference. In the future, communication should make it clear that the BP is for conference registrants only to avoid this.

- A Buddy Program breakfast was also offered for buddies to meet up before the conference. It was attended by almost all BP participants.

- Note: although it was intended as a BP-only breakfast, many other conference attendees were also in the space for breakfast and it made matching for pairs a little challenging for some. For next time, it is recommended that a few tables be clearly marked with a sign as being for the BP breakfast.

- A total of 22 people (11 pairs of buddies) participated in the program.

- I was able to check in with most participants during the conference which seemed to be appreciated.

- A survey of the Buddy Program sent out after the conference showed generally positive results (see Appendix G in attached PDF). Feedback from question 6 of the survey provides some helpful guidance for improvements for the next time, including making suggestions for question to ask and opportunities to interact more with pairs.

3. Reduced Student Registration Fees

- It was important to encourage student participation in the conference. In order to help make the conference more accessible to students, an early bird discounted rate of \$86 was offered to students before October 9th and a discounted rate of \$93 was offered to students after this date.

- This discounted rate seemed to have had a positive impact on student attendance as there were 30 registered students at the conference (14 early bird, 13 regular and 3 students), which was higher than previous CESBCY conferences.

4. Bursaries

- The CESBCY Executive offered bursaries to students from across BC and Yukon attending the conference to help offset conference fees and travel expenses (see Appendix H). To apply, student had to submit a letter describing what they hope to get out of attending the conference and how it fits with their interest and/or experience in evaluation.

- Initially, it was planned that bursaries would be awarded as follows: 1 for Lower Mainland students @ \$100; 1 for Vancouver Island students @ \$200; and 1 for Interior/North students @ \$300, for a total of \$600. As no Interior/North student applied, one additional bursary of \$100 was offered to a second Lower Mainland student, for a total of \$400 in bursaries.

- A total of 5 students applied, and 3 bursaries were awarded. Two members of the CESBCY Executive independently reviewed all the applications and selected the three winners.

- There was some discussion about whether to mail students the money before the conference or at the conference and it was decided that they would be awarded at the conference. An email was sent out to the winners notifying them that they had won and they would receive their bursaries at the conference. During the lunch break, the CESBCY President Rob Malatest handed out the bursaries and photographs of the winners were taken after the conference.

- The students expressed their appreciation of the award and it was regarded as a good way to encourage student attendance at the conference.

5. Volunteers

- Several calls were also made to recruit student volunteers for the conference. Students had the opportunity to sign up for a variety of positions, based on their interest (see Appendix I).
- Volunteering gave students the opportunity to build skills and network with other evaluators and students in the field.
- A general volunteer survey is available from Jitsutech.

6. Resource Table

- Resources were available at the resource table on courses and programs relating to evaluation from across BC and Yukon.
- A Power Point presentation was also showing intermittently which provided information about student engagement activities at the CESBCY, the student blog and the planned upcoming student-employer session in 2016.
- The presentation seemed to have good reach as several students contacted me expressing their interest in the student-employer session.

7. Communication

- On-going communication with institutions (including instructors, admin staff and other students) from across the region was a key part of this role, to share information about student engagement activities at the conference. They were also an important source of new contacts through networking, for example to learn about evaluation courses offered within other educational programs.

[Appendix A:](#) [Call for Student Presentations](#)

The *CESBCY Evaluation Conference* is being held in Vancouver, BC on Friday, November 20, 2015. This year's focus is on evaluations of non-profit initiatives across the province.

Call for Student Presentations

We strongly encourage full- or part-time students to take this opportunity to practice conference presentations by submitting a presentation proposal for the conference on their current evaluation research.

To fit with the theme of the conference, presentation proposals should demonstrate how the evaluation studies or project frameworks are innovative or state of the art; how and why a (planned) evaluation will include social media or other new technologies; how the evaluation is planning to assess shared or common measures with other non-profits or sub-programs; or any other possible theme ideas as described in the main Call for Presentations.

Student presentations are delivered by one or more students with the goal of sharing ideas of innovative evaluation studies that have been completed, are in progress or are planned. There are two student presentation options. The first option will be a presentation that should be no longer than 20 minutes with an additional 5 to 10 minutes for questions (intended for completed or in progress evaluations). The second option will be a presentation that should be no longer than 10 minutes, including time for questions (intended for evaluation frameworks). Student presentations can be held separately in a student's session or grouped with other paper presentations and will be identified as student presentations in the program.

Student presentation proposals should include the following:

- Title of the presentation
- A brief abstract of the content of the presentation (500 words max)
- A brief statement of relevance to the evaluation community
- A short biography of each presenter (500 characters max)
- Primary contact information (both name and email address)

Proposals can be emailed to: ConferenceBCY2015@gmail.com. Students are asked identify your proposal as a student presentation when submitting.

The deadline to submit presentation proposals is **May 31, 2015 at 11:59 PM PST**.

Appendix B:
Meeting Notes with James Coyle and Kate Woodman
from Evaluation Mentoring Canada

Recommendation 1:

- Soften the language and refer to the initiative as a “buddy” program not “mentoring” program
- Matching mentors and mentees in a complex process that requires training and is based on theory and literature. Manual matching has been problematic. The chance of a mismatch is high. MEC is working on implementing a software matching program to match the best possible.
- Naming it a buddy program changes people’s expectations of the program – more suited to a one day conference setting.

Recommendation 2:

- The key to the initiative’s success is having enough senior buddies. Usually there is an abundance of juniors but not enough seniors. Put efforts into signing up sufficient senior buddies.
- Screen (especially mentors) to ensure they will be at the conference all day, know the guidelines, etc. (they have heard of sr buddies leaving half way through a conference).
- Be clear on buddy program’s expectations for sr and jr
- Have checkpoints throughout the day to answer any questions from participants.
- Be prepared to handle any challenges that may arise (maybe have a buddy contact person present at conference)

Recommendation 3:

- At the conference, have slides or flyers etc. to let buddies know that they can formalize their relationship into a more long term one through EMC. Move from buddy to mentor relationship.
- By November, new MEC website should be up and running (Kate will advise)

Recommendation 4:

- Have back-up plans in place. For example, if not enough participants, it would still be good to hold a students’ breakfast and have Ron M or someone talk to students about evaluation, conference, etc.
- One option would be to have different coloured name tags (one colour means you are a sr evaluator and you are open to questions from jrs; another colour means you are a student – James said most evaluators are very welcoming and if they know someone is a student, they will come up to them and open up dialogue to make student feel more comfortable)

Recommendation 5:

- Have a short survey at the end so we can learn from buddies about the program for future conferences.

[Appendix C:](#)
[Buddy Program Information Sheet](#)

The 2015 CESBCY Evaluation Conference Buddy Program

Evaluation students and professional evaluator participants volunteering to the CESBCY Buddy Program will be matched on the basis of common interests. The CESBCY Buddy Program is intended to achieve the following:

- Evaluation students, especially those who are CES-conference “first-timers,” will feel comfortable and well oriented;
- Evaluation students will gain a better understanding of evaluation practice by exchanging with a seasoned evaluator;
- Evaluator participants will learn more about current evaluation education programs by exchanging with a student;
- The BP will facilitate networking among all BP participants at the conference.

While registering for CESBCY 2015 Conference, evaluators and students are invited to fill out the online BP Enrollment form by clicking on this link: [need website link here]. **Registration for the Buddy Program closes Monday, November 4th, 2015.**

The buddy relationship will consist of three phases:

1. **Before the conference:** Based on your background and professional interests, the BP coordinator will match evaluation students with practicing evaluators. In mid-November, BP participants will be introduced to their “buddy” by email, so that they can correspond before the conference starts.
2. **During the conference:** The morning of the conference, buddies are invited to a breakfast where they can meet with their own buddies and other pairs of buddies. The student and evaluator participant will seek opportunities to spend some time together during the conference (e.g., during networking breaks and lunch). The evaluator participant will also assist the student participant with any questions about the conference sessions and logistics.

3. **After the conference:** The goal is that evaluators enrolled in the BP program fully benefit from the conference by establishing an enjoyable and productive professional link with evaluators. Participants will have the opportunity to sign up with Evaluation Mentoring Canada to formalize the relationship into a mentorship.

Disclaimer:

- The CES is only responsible for pairing individuals with similar professional interests. The BP is an informal opportunity to enhance your experience at the CESBCY Conference, and it should be an enjoyable experience for both the student and the evaluator. Therefore, BP participants should not expect career guidance or introductions to specific scholars in the course of the conference.
- In addition, the CES is not responsible for any issues arising between paired individuals.

We look forward to seeing you at the Vancouver conference on November 20th, 2015!

If you have any questions, please contact Michelle Naimi (michellenaimi@gmail.com).

CESBCY would like to thank Evaluation Mentoring Canada and the 2015 Montreal Conference organizers who generously shared their IBP documents and experiences as a basis for building the CESBCY BP.

Appendix D: Buddy Program Student Survey



CESBCY Buddy Program Survey to Match Students with Experienced Evaluators for the CESBCY 2015 Evaluation Conference

Student Survey Introduction

Welcome to the CESBCY Evaluation Conference *Buddy Program*! This initiative strives to enhance your experience at the Canadian Evaluation Society's British Columbia and Yukon (CESBCY) Conference in Vancouver on November 20, 2015. The objective of the *Buddy Program* is to pair students up with a seasoned evaluator "buddy" to help students feel more comfortable and well-oriented at the conference and gain a better understanding of evaluation practice by exchanging with an experienced peer.

This short survey will help organizers match you with a Buddy who will be an experienced evaluator buddy with similar evaluation interests. By answering this survey, you are granting permission to CESBCY 2015 Conference organizers to review your responses for the sole purpose of matching you with your CESBCY 2015 Conference Buddy. The criteria used will be based on similar interests and availability.

Part 1: Yourself

1. What is your full name?
2. What is your preferred name in the *Buddy Program* and on conference name badge:
3. Where do you live? (your city, town or area and province)
4. Where do you predominately work and/or study? (your city, town or area and province)
5. What will be your email for all correspondence in the *Buddy Program*?

Part 2: Your Background and Interests in Evaluation

6. How would you appraise your evaluation knowledge and skills?
 - Yet to be developed
 - Starting to develop
 - Foundational and on their way
 - Moderately developed and know my working preferences
 - Other, please provide an appraisal:

7. What best describes your experience in evaluation practices?
 - Extremely new to the field with no practice experience
 - Only studying with no practice experience
 - Some practice experience as part of an evaluation team
 - Led and completed an evaluation project
 - Led and completed more than one evaluation projects

___ Other, please provide a description:

8. Please rate from most interested (1) to least interested (3) your preferred use for evaluation.
- ___ For accountability (test, prove and/or validate program, project, service, intervention)
- ___ For learning (improve program, project, service, intervention)
- ___ For developing (support development of innovations and adaptations)
- ___ other, please describe use
9. Please rate your specific interest in **evaluation competencies*** that you hope will aid your development from your participation in the CESBCY conference experience from most interested (1) to least interested (5):
- ___ **Reflective Practice** competencies focus on the fundamental norms and values underlying evaluation practice and awareness of one's evaluation expertise and needs for growth
- ___ **Technical Practice** competencies focus on the specialized aspects of evaluation, such as design, data collection, analysis, interpretation, and reporting.
- ___ **Situational Practice** competencies focus on the application of evaluative thinking in analyzing and attending to the unique interests, issues, and contextual circumstances in which evaluation skills are being applied.
- ___ **Management Practice** competencies focus on the process of managing a project / evaluation, such as budgeting, coordinating resources and supervising.
- ___ **Interpersonal Practice** competencies focus on people skills, such as communication, negotiation, conflict resolution, collaboration, and diversity.

**taken from CES Competencies for Canadian Evaluation Practice, 2010*

10. What contexts and settings do you prefer or envision you working within? (Check all that apply)
- ___ Non-profit organizations
- ___ Business and industry
- ___ Education sector
- ___ Social and healthcare sector
- ___ Environment, agriculture, forestry, natural resources
- ___ Local, provincial and national government
- ___ Indigenous communities
- ___ International work
- ___ Other, please specify:
11. How do you see your evaluative practice in five years from now?
- ___ Still interested in the practice but not central to my career
- ___ Practice informs my career but not a central feature
- ___ Practice is a central part of my work and career
- ___ Evaluation is my career and I am known as a qualified evaluator
- ___ Other, please describe:

Part 3: Your Hopes for the Buddy Program

12. How do you envision the *Buddy Program* may support your participation before, during and after the CESBCY 2015 Conference? (please check all that apply)
- ___ Help me feel more comfortable and 'at ease' at the conference

- Help me feel more oriented to the conference sessions, logistics, and 'language'
- Help me decide if I want a more formalized mentoring relationship in the future
- Other, please specify:

13. At the end of the conference, what do you hope you have gained from the conference experience?

14. Is there anything else that you think would aid the conference organizers in matching you with an experienced and seasoned evaluator in the *Buddy Program*? Please respond in the text box below.

Thank you for your responses. You will be notified shortly via email regarding your buddy.

The CESBCY is only responsible for pairing individuals with similar professional interest. This is an informal opportunity to enhance your experience at the CESBCY Conference Nov. 20th in Vancouver, and as such, *Buddy Program* participants should not expect career guidance or introductions to specific scholars and speakers in the course of the conference.

If you have any questions about the *Buddy Program*, please contact Michelle Naimi michellenaimi@gmail.com.

We look forward to seeing you at the Conference!

Appendix E:
Buddy Program Experienced Evaluators Survey



**CESBCY Buddy Program Survey to Match Students with Experienced Evaluators
for the CESBCY 2015 Evaluation Conference**

Buddy Survey Introduction

Welcome and thank you for participating in the *Buddy Program*! This initiative strives to enhance the experience of students at the Canadian Evaluation Society’s British Columbia and Yukon (CESBCY) Conference in Vancouver on November 20, 2015. The objective of the *Buddy Program* is to pair students up with a seasoned evaluator “buddy” to help students feel more comfortable and well-oriented at the conference and gain a better understanding of evaluation practice by exchanging with an experienced peer.

This short survey will help organizers match you with a student with similar evaluation interests. By answering this survey, you are granting permission to CESBCY 2015 Conference organizers to review your responses for the sole purpose of matching you with your CESBCY 2015 Conference student. The criteria used will be based on similar interests and availability.

Part 1: Yourself

1. What is your full name?
2. What is your preferred name in the *Buddy Program* and on conference name badge:
3. Where do you live? (your city, town or area and province)
4. Where do you predominately work and/or study? (your city, town or area and province)
5. What will be your email for all correspondence in the *Buddy Program*?

Part 2: Your Background and Interests in Evaluation

6. How would you appraise your evaluation experience?
 - Intermediate (1 to 5 years of evaluation practice)
 - Advanced (5 to 10 years of evaluation practice)
 - Expert (10+ years of evaluation practice)
 - Other, please provide an appraisal:

7. Please rate from most interested (1) to least interested (3) your preferred use for evaluation:
 - For accountability (test, prove and/or validate program, project, service, intervention)
 - For learning (improve program, project, service, intervention)
 - For developing (support development of innovations and adaptations)
 - Other, please describe use:

8. Please rate your experience in **evaluation competencies*** from most interested (1) to least interested (5):
- Reflective Practice** competencies focus on the fundamental norms and values underlying evaluation practice and awareness of one's evaluation expertise and needs for growth
 - Technical Practice** competencies focus on the specialized aspects of evaluation, such as design, data collection, analysis, interpretation, and reporting.
 - Situational Practice** competencies focus on the application of evaluative thinking in analyzing and attending to the unique interests, issues, and contextual circumstances in which evaluation skills are being applied.
 - Management Practice** competencies focus on the process of managing a project / evaluation, such as budgeting, coordinating resources and supervising.
 - Interpersonal Practice** competencies focus on people skills, such as communication, negotiation, conflict resolution, collaboration, and diversity.

**taken from CES Competencies for Canadian Evaluation Practice, 2010*

9. What contexts and settings do you prefer or have experience working within? (Check all that apply)
- Non-profit organizations
 - Business and industry
 - Education sector
 - Social and healthcare sector
 - Environment, agriculture, forestry, natural resources
 - Local, provincial and national government
 - Indigenous communities
 - International work
 - Other, please specify:

Part 3: Your Hopes for the Buddy Program

10. How do you envision the *Buddy Program* may support your participation before, during and after the CESBCY 2015 Conference? (please check all that apply)
- Help students feel more comfortable and 'at ease' at the conference
 - Help students feel more oriented to the conference sessions, logistics, and 'language'
 - Help me decide if I want a more formalized mentoring relationship in the future
 - Other, please specify:
11. At the end of the conference, what do you hope you have gained from the *Buddy Program* experience?
12. Is there anything else that you think would aid the conference organizers in matching you with a student in the *Buddy Program*?

Thank you for your responses. You will be notified shortly via email regarding your student buddy.

The CESBCY is only responsible for pairing individuals with similar professional interest. This is an informal opportunity to enhance your experience at the CESBCY Conference Nov. 20th in Vancouver, and as such, *Buddy Program* participants should not expect career guidance or introductions to specific scholars and speakers in the course of the conference.

If you have any questions about the *Buddy Program*, please contact Michelle Naimi at michellenaimi@gmail.com.

We look forward to seeing you at the Conference!

[Appendix F:](#)
[Introductory Email for BP Participants](#)

Hello (Buddy) & (Student),

Thank you again for participating in the CESCBY 2015 Conference Buddy Program!

This is an introductory email to virtually introduce you to your conference student or buddy. I strongly encourage you to connect with your buddy before the conference to introduce yourselves in more detail and get to know more about each other's evaluation experience and interests.

At 9am on the morning of the conference, a breakfast is being held for Buddy Program participants. This will give you a chance to meet face to face before the 'busy-ness' of the conference begins. It will be held in the Segal room in SFU's Harbour Centre and I hope you all can make it. Please send me an email to confirm whether you will be attending the breakfast.

As previously mentioned, the objective of the *Buddy Program* is to pair students up with a seasoned evaluator "buddy" to help students feel more comfortable and well-oriented at the conference and gain a better understanding of evaluation practice by exchanging with an experienced peer. *Buddy Program* participants should not expect career guidance or introductions to specific scholars and speakers in the course of the conference.

If you have any questions about the *Buddy Program* before the conference, please feel free to contact me at this email address.

On the day of the conference, I will be the 'BP Point Person' so please let me know if you have any comments or questions at any time during the conference.

Looking forward to seeing you at the conference!

Michelle Naimi
michellenaimi@gmail.com
Student Engagement Lead
CESBCY Lower Mainland Conference
Collaboration, Contribution and Collective Impact

[Appendix H:](#)
[Bursary Information and Instructions](#)

In order to make the 2015 CESBCY Conference as accessible as possible for students, the BC Yukon Chapter of the CES is generously offering bursaries to students attending and/or participating in the conference to help offset the costs of registration and travel expenses. CESBCY will offer three bursaries:

- \$100 to a student from the Lower Mainland
- \$200 to a student from Vancouver Island
- \$300 to a student from the Interior/Northern BC

To apply for the bursary, students are asked to submit a ½ page to one page letter describing what they hope to get out of attending the conference and how it fits with their interest and/or experience in evaluation. Bursaries are open to full-time and part-time students.

Along with the letter, please include your name, email address, phone number, as well as the location and the name of the school in which you are enrolled.

Students are asked to send their letters to conferencebcy2015@gmail.com by **Friday, September 25, 2015**.

[Appendix I:](#)
[Call for Conference Student Volunteers](#)

Call for Volunteers

Our conference will rely heavily on volunteers to help get things done! Students are also encouraged to volunteer for the conference. We're using VolunteerSpot to organize our upcoming Sign-ups.

Here's how it works in 3 easy steps:

- 1) Click this link to see our Sign-Up on VolunteerSpot: <http://vols.pt/FKtmT6>
- 2) Review the options listed and choose the spot(s) you like.
- 3) Sign up! It's Easy - you will NOT need to register an account or keep a password on VolunteerSpot.

Note: VolunteerSpot does not share your email address with anyone. If you prefer not to use your email address, please contact me and I can sign you up manually.