



Examining Fourth Generation Evaluation

Application to Positive Youth Development

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The utility of Guba and Lincoln's (1989) Fourth Generation Evaluation (FGE) method has been a source of debate in the field of evaluation (e.g. Adelman, 1996; Greene, 1996; Laughlin and Broadbent, 1996). The majority of these debates tend to focus on hypothetical implementation issues. Few, if any, have attempted to examine FGE through direct application of the method to an actual evaluand of interest. The purpose of the present article is to examine the utility of incorporating the FGE methodology as one of the first steps in a community–university collaboration regarding youth. The strengths and limitations of the FGE methodology will be highlighted through a discussion of its application. Revealed strengths of FGE include the involvement of multiple stakeholder groups, exposure to multiple perspectives, and fostering early support for later programmatic developments. Limitations include difficulties in defining stakeholders, and providing evidence of education and empowerment. The information gained from this application has practical implications for others seeking to employ the FGE methodology.

Review of the Literature

Trends in Evaluation and Youth Development

Federal funds related to youth prevention and intervention for such issues are often the first to be earmarked for elimination during times of fiscal crisis. Given the current political and economic climate, program evaluation – especially that related to issues of children, youth and families – has perhaps never been more important than it is today. In some cases, evaluation can be the determining factor

in decisions related to whether a program is continued, altered or dissolved (Small, 1990). In other cases, as Adelman (1996) suggests, the impact of an evaluation is sometimes determined by the degree to which it is 'politically expedient'.

Consistent with views adopted by other fields of inquiry, a current trend in the arena of youth development is an increased focus on methods which include community or stakeholder input from the beginning of program definition and design. Such methods are sometimes referred to as 'empowerment evaluation' because they help program participants to evaluate themselves and/or their communities with the goal of improving programs and fostering self-determination (Fetterman, 1996). Such empowerment strategies are gaining popularity in the field of youth development in part because funders are beginning to incorporate empowerment as a funding strategy. The following statement from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation is illustrative:

... individuals and groups of people must be empowered to become change-makers and solve their own problems, through the organizations and institutions they devise. . . . Through our community-based programming, we are helping to empower various individuals, agencies, institutions, and organizations to work together to help identify problems and to find quality, cost-effective solutions. (Transitions, 1992: 6, in Fetterman, 1996)

A second trend in the area of youth development and evaluation is a focus on developmental contextualism, a model rooted in Bronfenbrenner's process-person-context model of development (1986). As stated by Lerner (1986, 1991, 1992, 1995) and others (e.g. McKinney et al., 1994) developmental contextualism assumes that:

The development of children and youth is seen as occurring in relation to the specific features of their actual, 'ecologically valid' context, that is, their specific family, neighborhood, society, culture, physical environments, and even the particular point in history within which they live. (p. 429)

Developmental contextualism suggests that the effects of the person and the environment are bidirectional and synergistic such that the sum of their joint effects is greater than the sum of their individual effects. This synergistic effect demonstrates the futility of examining the individual outside of his or her context. This model views youth programs or interventions as mechanisms which have the potential to alter context, and thus developmental outcomes. With respect to evaluation, it is interesting to note that Ostrom et al. (1995) stress that:

Inclusion of the perspectives, values, meaning systems, and experiences of all stakeholders into the evaluation process adds an important feature to the development of programs. Such inclusion constitutes an important means to empower youth, families and other community stakeholders to become central participants in the enactment of programs promoting valued goals. (p. 434)

Finally, a third and more recent trend in the arena of youth development is the movement away from what has been an historically narrow focus on adolescent problem behaviours to a more broadly defined focus on positive youth development (e.g. Moore and Gleib, 1995; Pittman and Wright, 1991; Zeldin and Price,

1995). Unfortunately, as several researchers have noted (e.g. Elliot, 1993; Moore and Glei, 1995), given the recency of this trend, few empirical studies or theoretical guidelines exist to foster its study. For example, Moore and Glei (1995) state '... there is no societal consensus on the specific characteristics and behaviours that should be defined as positive youth development. In fact one's values have the potential to affect how success is defined' (p. 24). Further, several authors have suggested that communities may have differing criteria of what competencies youth should acquire to become successful adults (Pittman and Cahill, 1991).

Taken together, these trends suggest that one of the most viable approaches to determining indicators of positive youth development would be to incorporate community stakeholders in defining outcomes of positive youth development for their community. Because of its focus on empowerment, stakeholder input and negotiation, FGE was the method of choice for allowing stakeholders in the context of youth development to reach consensus about appropriate programmatic outcomes for youth in their community.

Fourth Generation Evaluation (FGE)

FGE is Guba and Lincoln's (1989) response to what they believe to be the inadequacies of previous evaluation methodologies. Guba and Lincoln's (1989) specific complaints include previous evaluation generations' political bias toward whoever sponsored the evaluation; inability to acknowledge pluralism in participants' perspectives; and over-reliance and emphasis on 'qualitative analysis of a quasi-scientific nature' (Laughlin and Broadbent, 1996). With FGE, the boundaries and parameters of the evaluand of interest are generated by the participants themselves via a process of negotiation indicative of the FGE process itself. The method is based on the assumption that reality is constructed through an interaction between the observer (evaluator) and the observed (participants) (Guba and Lincoln, 1989).

Specifically, FGE provides a constructivist-based process of negotiation among stakeholders which in theory: (1) attempts to help them reach consensus about their reality or to recognize discrepancies; (2) is educational because it provides stakeholders with the opportunity to incorporate others' perspectives of the construct into their own; and (3) is empowering because the entire process is built on negotiated stakeholders' constructions of the evaluand. Including the views and concerns of all stakeholders in this process is valuable because, in addition to contributing to empowerment, stakeholder input helps to define context. The basic process includes (1) identifying stakeholders; (2) examining stakeholders' claims, issues and concerns about the construct; and (3) seeking consensus among stakeholders via discussion, negotiation, and interchange.

The actual negotiation process of achieving consensus is what drives the FGE model because it is through this process that opportunities for empowerment and education arise. Specifically, during the first phase of the process, each stakeholder group is queried regarding their initial 'claims (favourable remarks), concerns (unfavourable remarks) and issues (areas of potential disagreement)' regarding the evaluand (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). These claims, concerns and issues are representative of stakeholders' constructions of the evaluand. Building

an evaluation on the basis of stakeholders' constructions is empowering in and of itself because it allows the stakeholders to define the outcome.

Some level of resolution is attempted during the second phase of the process in which the claims, concerns and issues of each stakeholder group are presented to other groups. It is during this phase of the process that opportunities for education arise. The FGE model operates on the assumption that, when presented with additional information, stakeholders will be open to changing their own constructions, thus allowing for consensus among stakeholder groups.

The final phase of the process is reserved for resolution of those issues that have not achieved group consensus. Specifically, this phase involves facilitated debates among stakeholder groups in an attempt to reach final consensus. Theoretically, overall stakeholder consensus is the goal; however, from a practical standpoint, it is obvious that this goal is not always possible. We tend to agree with Laughlin and Broadbent's (1996) assertion that 'to suggest that new information alone will generate change in the construction is naïve' (p. 291). Working toward the goal of consensus, however, becomes the key (Swenson, 1991).

Given the FGE process as described by Guba and Lincoln (1989), it becomes evident that the role of the evaluator is unique. As Adelman (1996) points out, in typical relativist evaluation approaches the evaluator 'makes interpretations of particular instances and relates these to emergent cases, making, to be honest, some judgements about the success or failure of the endeavour' (p. 294). In FGE, the evaluator's role moves from 'judge' to that of 'mediator' as he or she facilitates 'the rendering of judgments, conclusions, and recommendations by participants and stakeholders' (p. 260). In this sense the evaluator becomes a collaborator in the process rather than a controller of the process (Guba and Lincoln, 1989).

With respect to positive youth development, FGE's goal of empowerment, education and consensus building means that the community would have the opportunity to define the competencies they perceive as valuable for ensuring young people's success in the community. As Garbarino (1985), Ogbu (1981) and Rappaport (1984) suggest, those competencies needed to be successful may be contextually specific and therefore should be defined by stakeholders in those contexts.

Adopting this methodology would allow us to examine the consensus or lack thereof among stakeholder groups related to the definition of positive youth development. More specifically, it would allow community stakeholders to reach consensus or acknowledge discrepancies about what competencies youth need to be successful in their community. Such consensus will be useful information for informing program design as well as evaluation. It will also reduce ambiguity about program goals and appropriate outcome measures.

It must be noted that FGE bears striking resemblance to other highly advocated constructivistic evaluation processes, such as the Participatory-Normative Approach (Weiss and Greene, 1992), the Development in Context Evaluation (DICE) Model (Ostrom et al., 1995) and even Phenomenological Research as described by Colaizzi (1978).

Further, the present method also addresses some of the issues raised by Zeldin (1995) regarding community-university collaborations. Specifically, Zeldin (1995) suggests that prior to the identification of problems and solutions, stakeholders

Evaluation 5(3)

should be engaged in conversation regarding their thoughts about youth development (e.g. ‘What are the characteristics of youth that stakeholders use to define “successful” young people?’, and ‘What are the daily experiences, opportunities and supports, that all youth require to achieve these outcomes?’). Zeldin (1995) states that answering such questions

. . . is a vital step in the early life of successful collaborations. . . . The process of asking and answering questions builds solidarity and a sense of common mission among stakeholders because the deliberations are not tied to current or future services or programs. (p. 453)

While we agree that this ‘asking and answering’ session is vital, we advocate, as do Guba and Lincoln (1989), that such discussion *should* be considered part of the evaluation process because it can help to delineate the community context as well as expectations about program outcomes. We suggest that this discussion be included as the first step of the community–university collaboration effort. In other words, the evaluand of interest for our purposes is potential program outcomes. Results of the specific FGE application are presented followed by a discussion of the method’s strengths and limitations.

Method

Participants and Data Analysis

The 20 participants in the present study consisted of stakeholders in the process of positive youth development in an urban southwestern community. Specifically, four groups of stakeholders were included: (1) youth (3 male, 4 female); (2) parents (2 male, 3 female); (3) school personnel (3 male, 1 female); and (4) community members (2 male, 2 female). Members of a community action team selected the initial participants in each stakeholder circle. Attempts were made to include both male and female respondents from a range of ethnic, economic, professional and educational backgrounds.

As prescribed in FGE, the constant comparative method (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) was used as the primary process of data analysis. This approach calls for the simultaneous collection and processing of data which is necessary to allow for the integration of stakeholders’ perceptions into the interviews with subsequent participants. The exact number of participants was determined during the process. Consistent with the constant comparative method (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), the process of adding participants and their views to each stakeholder group continued until information from the interviews became redundant or consensus about the topic occurred. There were no instances in which participants decided that their views could not be reconciled. This process was repeated for each of the four stakeholder groups.

Procedure

The FGE process began with an initial interview with the first respondent from the first stakeholder group. Following an explanation of the project and assurances of confidentiality, the interview began with a series of open-ended

questions designed to solicit the respondent's construction of positive youth development. It was important for the interview to be somewhat unstructured to ensure that the respondent was free to create his or her own construction of positive youth development. The interview became more structured as emerging constructions became clearer.

Respondents were first asked to describe the community in which they lived. Questions about community included things like 'Does this area have a sense of community?', 'Describe the community' and 'Are there any unique things about this community?'. Questions about the notion of positive youth development were couched in terms of competencies or success. Sample questions included 'Describe a really successful young person', 'What does success mean to you?', 'What is it about that person that makes them successful', 'What types of things are they able to do?' etc. The evolving interview schedule was adapted as necessary to ensure that all respondents, regardless of stakeholder group, comprehended the questions. This adaptation usually entailed changes in the level of language used and in the content of examples. The second and subsequent participants followed a similar process. When the subsequent participant completed his or her construction, the previous participant's construction was introduced and the second respondent was asked to comment on it. The process was repeated with each of the participants from all of the stakeholder groups.

It is important to note that interviews were not conducted with individuals from each stakeholder group in isolation; that is, the process was initiated with individuals from more than one stakeholder group at a time. This strategy allowed perceptions of the construct from each stakeholder group to be introduced to the others. For example, ideas generated by a participant from the adult school personnel stakeholder group were introduced for reaction to a young person from the teen stakeholder group. It was anticipated that such a strategy would provide more opportunity for learning to occur during the process. Stakeholders were interested to find out how similar or different their beliefs were compared to beliefs from other groups. This process generated four constructs of the concept of positive youth development – one from each stakeholder group.

Given the sequence of the inquiry and the number of participants, not every participant in each stakeholder group had the opportunity to react to every perception of the construct from other stakeholder groups in the initial interview format. In an effort to maintain the integrity of the method this opportunity was provided during a second iteration of the process. Specifically, participants were invited to comment on all the stakeholder constructions via a questionnaire constructed based on participants' interviews (see Appendix A). To prevent bias, rather than presenting the four constructions separately by stakeholder group, all of the constructions were presented together. This format allowed participants who were interviewed early in the process to react to perceptions of the construct that were generated in subsequent interviews. The questionnaire was also an attempt to provide an additional opportunity for stakeholder empowerment and education because participants saw their views represented as well as other stakeholders' views that may have differed from their own. Individuals were not identified during any part of this process.

Results

Several major categories of information emerged from the interviews with participants:

1. *A community description.* Each participant was asked to describe the area. Participants were asked whether the area had a sense of community or community identity. This category includes descriptions of the areas around the high school as well as descriptions of the school itself as a community.
2. *Definitions of success.* Each participant was asked to describe what success looked like for young people – in other words, how would he or she know if a young person had made it. This category includes participants' perceptions of success for young people.
3. *Constructions of components necessary for success.* These components were based on the participants' own constructions and on their responses to others' constructions.

Emergent Constructions

During the interview process, alternative views were presented to the participants after they had completed their own constructions. The FGE method generated rich qualitative information useful for informing the design of the program within that particular community. The introduction of alternative views challenged stakeholders to be clearer about their own views and, in some cases, prompted agreement or additions to views the stakeholders originally had not considered. This process generated a richer pool of information than would have been achieved if stakeholders were asked to respond to questions in isolation from others' responses.

The intent of asking for a community description was to generate shared knowledge of the community context within which the youth development program would be located. The initial interview question of 'describe your community' and 'does it have a particular identity' was refined to include information about diversity, safety and closeness based on stakeholders' input. A similar process occurred as stakeholders were asked to define success and how they would measure it. Themes of individuality, perseverance, independence, happiness and contentment, a willingness to help others and respect emerged. Finally, stakeholders were asked to describe a young person that they thought was going to be successful. As the following quotes illustrate, participants had definite ideas about the types of competencies, attitudes and qualities young people need to be successful. The following quotes demonstrate the diversity in responses:

I think that what will make this person successful is their drive. Their work ethic. Their ability to start something and finish it. Their ability to question authority – if they're not satisfied with an answer they want a reason. Just saying 'you can't do that', – they're not going to accept that; they want to understand the reason behind it. . . . And be willing to get along with everybody; not only just teachers and things and not in a false sense of getting along – I mean a real sincere person. . . . It's about becoming a person that's willing to get involved with others – that cares about people. (school personnel)

. . . I think another friend of mine will do well because of her grades but I think another of my friends doesn't have the grades but I think she'll make it because she's streetwise and knows how to deal with life and very logical – she's really outgoing and independent. She's got opinions, she's not quiet when it comes to her opinion. She fights for what she believes in. (teen)

Follow-Up Questionnaire

In the follow-up questionnaire (Appendix A) participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each of the statements constructed from all responses. Responses ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree or very important to not important at all. To provide an opportunity for recognition and feelings of empowerment, attempts were made to incorporate into the follow-up survey the language participants used in the interviews to describe their constructs. Of the 20 participants, 16 returned questionnaires. Results indicated that some level of consensus was reached in each of the categories.

Context (Neighbourhood Description) With respect to context, all of the stakeholder groups agreed that 'there are many individual neighbourhoods within the community'. The community, school personnel and teen stakeholder groups agreed that 'the neighbourhood could be characterized as lower to middle income'; one parent in the parent stakeholder group disagreed. The community, school personnel and parent stakeholder groups agreed that the neighbourhood had many different races and ethnic groups; one teen in the teen stakeholder group disagreed. Parent and school personnel stakeholders agreed that 'the neighbourhood has many single parent families'. Parent stakeholders agreed that 'the neighbourhood surrounding the high school is made up of more businesses and apartments than houses'. Finally, the community stakeholder group agreed that 'the neighbourhood surrounding the high school has a reputation as being rough'.

Definition of Success All of the groups agreed that success is a construct that must be individually defined. The community, parent and teen stakeholder groups agreed that success does not depend on how much money one makes; one member of the school personnel stakeholder group disagreed. The community, school personnel and parent stakeholder groups agreed that 'success for young people means having respect for others'; one teen from the teen stakeholder group disagreed. Parent and school personnel stakeholders agreed that success means 'constantly persevering or never giving up on a task'. Parent and community stakeholders agreed that success means 'being independent'. Parent, school and community stakeholders agreed that success means 'helping others'.

Core Components Necessary for Success Each of the four stakeholder groups was able to reach consensus about what core components they thought were necessary for success. Table 1 illustrates consensus within and between stakeholder groups regarding the core components for success. Questionnaire items are listed in the first column; only those items on which at least one stakeholder group reached consensus are listed. Columns two through five represent each stake-

holder group. Column six illustrates between group consensus (i.e. do all the stakeholder groups agree?). A 'plus' sign (+) in the column indicates consensus within that stakeholder group (i.e. teen, parent, school personnel community member); a 'minus' sign (-) indicates lack of within stakeholder group consensus (i.e. less than 100% agreement). Absolute consensus was reached among all four stakeholder groups that the core components necessary for young people's success include the ability to: think about and plan for the future; set goals; follow through or be persistent; take responsibility; take risks or accept challenge; get involved with others; have common sense; have a strong self-concept; have confidence; and have motivation.

Finally, as part of the process, these results were presented back to the community collaboration group to be incorporated as part of ongoing program planning. This step is critical in defining the university researcher as a partner in the process – not someone who just collects data and disappears.

Discussion

Applying Fourth Generation Evaluation

The study presents one of the first applications of the FGE methodology. A recent review of the literature revealed no published studies documenting FGE as an evaluation strategy. Indeed, Fishman (1992) pointed to the 'lack of documented case studies demonstrating the Fourth Generation Evaluation model' (p. 267). Several authors have suggested how FGE could be applied (e.g. Swenson, 1991; Laughlin and Broadbent, 1996), but to our knowledge none have actually presented application results.

This actual application of the methodology highlights several strengths of the strategy as well as several issues in need of further discussion. One strength of the FGE method is that it brings together a diverse group of stakeholders to examine an issue of concern. In the present study, the issue was in defining the concept of positive youth development. FGE evaluation demanded that each stakeholder articulate his or her beliefs about what competencies young people in the community needed to be successful. In some cases, it was clear that, although the stakeholders had been defined by a community action team, many had not thought about the issue of positive youth development prior to the beginning of the process. The FGE method provided them with an opportunity to formulate their opinions about the topic or to affirm the opinions they already held.

FGE also provided an opportunity for stakeholders to understand how others viewed the topic. As the results indicated, there was very little discrepancy during the interview process over what defines positive youth development. For the present study, rather than acting as a mechanism to uncover controversy, it may be that FGE served to highlight areas of common ground for the stakeholders. This was particularly powerful given the diversity among the stakeholders. The fact that FGE highlighted the issue of positive youth development and the consensus reached among diverse stakeholders about its definition, helped to ensure that the program received the necessary community support to become

Table 1. Components Necessary for Young People's Success

<i>Components</i>	<i>Teen</i>	<i>Parent</i>	<i>School Personnel</i>	<i>Community Members</i>	<i>Between Group Consensus</i>
Communicates with others	+	*	+	+	**
Thinks about and plans for the future	+	+	+	+	+
Set goals	+	+	+	+	+
Care about others	*	+	+	*	**
Follow through (persistence)	+	+	+	+	+
'Mind their own business' and stick to the task at hand	-	-	-	+	-
Accept and adapt to change	*	+	+	+	**
Work hard	*	+	+	+	**
Take responsibility	+	+	+	+	+
Take risks or accept challenge	+	+	+	+	+
Gets involved with others	+	+	+	+	+
Gets involved in the community	-	+	+	-	-
Must have a desire to achieve	*	+	*	+	**
Honesty	*	+	+	+	**
Common sense	+	+	+	+	+
A positive attitude	*	+	+	+	**
Sincerity	-	-	+	+	-
Respect for other people	+	+	+	-	**
A strong self-concept	+	+	+	+	+
A sense of humour	-	-	+	-	-
Organizational skills	+	*	*	+	**
Logic	-	-	-	+	-
Open-mindedness	-	-	+	-	-
Confidence	+	+	+	+	+
Motivation	+	+	+	+	+
Trust and support from others	*	+	+	+	**
A relationship with a caring adult	*	+	+	*	**

Questionnaire items are listed in the first column; only those items on which at least one stakeholder group reached consensus are listed. Columns two through five represent each stakeholder group. Column six illustrates between group consensus (i.e. do all the stakeholder groups agree?). A 'plus' sign (+) in the column indicates consensus within that stakeholder group; a 'minus' sign (-) indicates lack of within group consensus (i.e. less than majority agreement). * indicates that only one stakeholder within the group disagreed. ** indicates that relative consensus between groups was reached (majority).

operational and sustainable. Had major stakeholders not been made aware of the issue, it is likely that the program would not have received such broad community support. In several cases the stakeholders themselves became clear community advocates for the program.

Despite the verbal consensus, it is important to point out that absolute consensus (i.e. 100% agreement) was not achieved on the follow-up written survey.

Relative consensus was defined as majority consensus. How can the lack of absolute consensus be explained? Did this occur because the questionnaire was the first place stakeholders were actually able to view all the responses together? Could it be that the written survey was less intimidating than an interviewer? Could it be that stakeholders did not really disagree with any of the components listed, they just felt more strongly about some over others? Or is it that stakeholders hold different value systems? On the other hand, maybe these are the wrong questions. Perhaps it is the notion of 'absolute consensus' that really needs to be examined. Consensus among stakeholders is stated as a primary goal of FGE. Given our experience, we suggest that expecting all the stakeholders to agree on a single construction of the evaluand is idealistic at best – especially given the mandated inclusion of diversity among stakeholder groups. We suggest instead that focus of the evaluation should be the determining factor in defining 'consensus'. Guba and Lincoln (1989) describe four possible evaluation foci: (1) formative merit; (2) formative worth; (3) summative merit; or (4) summative worth. For example, in the present study a formative merit evaluation was undertaken to examine the concept of positive youth development because this type of evaluation is designed for 'assessing the intrinsic value of some evaluand with the intent of improving it' (Guba and Lincoln, 1989: 189). To this end, in the present study FGE generated a wealth of information related to stakeholders' views of positive youth development that will be useful for the program design team (the audience for this evaluation). Given our purpose, it seems counterproductive not to consider all the stakeholders' views as the program is being planned just because the entire group did not agree on degrees of importance. Once a program or more concrete evaluand has been clearly defined the focus of the evaluation would change thus altering acceptable levels of consensus. The subtleties between types of FGE foci and discrepancies in definitions of consensus should be addressed in the methodology.

A second issue with employing the methodology is in defining stakeholders. When the evaluand of interest is positive youth development, narrowing the pool of potential stakeholders becomes difficult. Guba and Lincoln (1989) advocate the inclusion of three types of stakeholders: (1) those involved in producing, using or implementing the evaluand; (2) those who could benefit; and (3) those who will be negatively affected. While this sounds good in theory, it is difficult to apply when the evaluand of interest is a broad concept like positive youth development. We agree with Greene's (1996) assertion that the adoption of qualitative evaluation should not necessarily negate the inclusion of theory, especially if that theory serves to explain context: '... use of a contextually grounded local program theory could importantly enrich and enhance qualitative inferences while still honoring the interpretive essence of our claims to know' (Greene, 1996: 282). In the present application role theory was used to provide the rationalization for stakeholder group membership.

Another issue with the methodology lies in the limitations of the stakeholders' abilities. By default FGE dictates that stakeholders be articulate enough to explain their views and at the same time open-minded enough to accept or to at least 'hear' the views of others. The importance of these attributes becomes more

salient depending upon the controversy level of the topic. Admittedly, the topic of the present study (positive youth development) did not generate a great deal of controversy among stakeholder groups. Most individuals were able to agree upon what competencies young people need to be successful in the community. With less controversial topics the focus needs to be on helping stakeholders to articulate their views and to be willing to say what they really think – especially if the topic calls for potentially socially desirable responses. Were the topic highly controversial, it seems unlikely that one would be able to assemble a group of stakeholders who were equally articulate about the topic and open-minded to other perspectives.

A fourth issue in the application of FGE exists in actualizing its goal of education. Several stakeholders changed or added to their constructions of positive youth development during the evaluation process. Does this change provide sufficient evidence for us to assume that education has occurred? Or does education automatically occur when stakeholders are simply exposed to alternative views? Guba and Lincoln state that stakeholders do not necessarily have to agree with others' perspectives, they just need to understand them. How do we ensure comprehension? Measures or indicators of education should also be included in the process. Again, Guba and Lincoln (1989) provide little guidance.

A similar issue involves actualizing FGE's goal of empowerment. Is it sufficient to conclude that stakeholders are empowered because their views are recognized as valid and included in the hermeneutic-dialectic process? A more definitive indicator of empowerment would provide more convincing evidence in support of the method. Evaluators employing FGE should define their measures or indicators of empowerment prior to implementation. Guba and Lincoln (1989) offer little advice for this endeavour.

Despite these issues, we believe that FGE provided a vital first step in establishing meaningful community–university partnerships. It helped to open discussion between community stakeholders and university program planners/evaluators. This discussion was critical for breaking down the long-standing stereotype that university does programs 'to' the community rather than 'with' the community. It is, however, only the first step. The next steps in the process should include program development and continued evaluation.

Program development can begin as soon as results are presented back to the community. Consistent with the DICE model (Ostrom et al., 1995), this step exemplifies the community–university partnership because it is built on the expertise found within the university faculty *and* the community stakeholders. As Ostrom et al. (1995) note, university faculty have expertise in identifying, organizing and building on community strengths as well as designing effective evaluation strategies. They also know how to help community stakeholders voice their perspectives about the community and their constructions about positive youth development. Community stakeholders contribute their expertise about context – defining their community as well as the outcomes and goals they have for their young people. Community stakeholders are also valuable players in ensuring program sustainability.

Program design should be based on community constructions as well as the

Evaluation 5(3)

existing academic literature in this area. In the present study, there were several similarities between stakeholders' constructions of positive youth development and the existing literature in this area. Such similarities are important to note to the stakeholders because they show that stakeholders' expectations are consistent with what has worked elsewhere. Presenting such information helps to solidify the community–university collaboration as a true partnership because it can be an affirmation of community stakeholders' constructions. If stakeholder constructions are divergent with existing literature, it may be that the academic perspective reveals information the community stakeholders had not thought of; conversely it may be that the evidence found in other studies is not truly applicable to their community given contextual differences.

After program direction has been established, it is critical to work with the community to establish meaningful indicators or measures of their goals for evaluation purposes. During this phase of the process it is important that the evaluator help the community to determine a method for measuring the outcome that the stakeholder groups defined as necessary to ensure positive youth development. Because stakeholders were given a voice in program direction and outcomes (i.e. 'what does success look like in this community?'), they will be more likely to support evaluation efforts to determine if their goals were reached. The resulting increase in community capacity is consistent with both participatory-normative evaluation (Weiss and Greene, 1992) and the DICE model (Ostrom et al., 1995).

In summary, through its inclusion of community stakeholders' constructions, Fourth Generation Evaluation proved to be worthwhile for enhancing the community–university partnership. It was particularly useful in uncovering important information about context as it defines the parameters related to positive youth development. If the issues mentioned above are addressed, FGE could become a powerful method in any program dependent upon community/stakeholder support. This strategy helps to ensure that stakeholder expectations are heard and that the program has support from its inception. We echo Zeldin's (1995) assertion that this support is vital to insure program success.

Appendix A

Participant Follow-Up Questionnaire

Section I

Each of the following statements was developed based on information gathered from the interviews. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the statements.

Participants were asked to describe this community.

SA = strongly agree A = agree U = unsure D = disagree SD = strongly disagree

1. There are many individual neighbourhoods within this community.
SA A U D SD
2. The neighbourhood surrounding the high school has a very strong sense of community or community identity.
SA A U D SD

3. The neighbourhood surrounding the high school can be characterized as lower to middle income.
SA A U D SD
4. The neighbourhood surrounding the high school has many single parent families.
SA A U D SD
5. The neighbourhood surrounding the high school has many different races and ethnic groups.
SA A U D SD
6. Resources (such as health care, counselling services, etc.) are available to this community.
SA A U D SD
7. Many older and retired people live in the area surrounding the high school.
SA A U D SD
8. The neighbourhood surrounding the high school is made up of more businesses and apartments than houses.
SA A U D SD
9. The neighbourhood surrounding the high school has a reputation as being 'rough'.
SA A U D SD
10. Expectations for teens attending the high school are set very high.
SA A U D SD

Section II

Participants were asked how they would define 'success' or 'making it' for young people. SA = strongly agree A = agree U = unsure D = disagree SD = strongly disagree

1. The meaning of the word success is something that must be individually defined.
SA A U D SD
2. Success does not depend on how much money one makes.
SA A U D SD
3. Success for young people means:
 - a. constantly persevering or never giving up on a task. SA A U D SD
 - b. being independent. SA A U D SD
 - c. being happy and content with your life. SA A U D SD
 - d. helping others. SA A U D SD
 - e. having respect for others. SA A U D SD

COMMENTS:

Section III

Everyone who participated in the interviews was asked to talk about the **core** components they thought were necessary to ensure success for young people. **Please read each of the components listed below and rate them for their importance. In other words, is each component absolutely necessary to ensure young people's success?** Or are some just nice to have but not necessarily core? On the scale provided, circle the response that best

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Evaluation 5(3)

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