

The Development and Use of Interpersonal Competencies by Evaluators

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Abstract

The field of program evaluation has deemed interpersonal competencies as important and has included them as an essential competency domain for program evaluators; however, little is known about how evaluators develop and use interpersonal competencies. The purpose of this study was to explore interpersonal competency development and use by evaluators. This was completed through a comparative analysis of the interpersonal competencies included in existing sets of evaluator competencies, a review of competency structures from other professions, and interviews with experienced evaluators. First, the interpersonal competencies essential to evaluation practice were explored to further validate those included in the draft *American Evaluation Association Evaluator Competencies* (AEAEC). Results supported the inclusion of the current interpersonal competencies in the draft AEAEC and provided additional competencies that emerged through the comparative analysis. Second, this study attempted to better understand the ways in which interpersonal competencies are developed by experienced evaluators. As a result, experienced evaluators described developing interpersonal competencies in four ways, including through the practice of evaluation, formal education experiences, professional development opportunities, and life experiences. Third, this study attempted to illuminate some of the interpersonal competency development needs among new evaluators. Findings suggest that novice evaluators typically need further development in several interpersonal competencies and that these competencies are also assessed in the hiring process. Fourth, the potential ways to structure the AEAEC to promote use of the interpersonal competencies were explored.

Through the review of competency structures, four potential ways to structure them emerged, including by categorizing competencies, job function, level of expertise, and developmental level.

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Chapter One: Problem Statement

Introduction

Program evaluation demands that practicing evaluators apply many skills. As the evaluation field continues to develop and grow, concern about the competencies evaluators should possess and how to train future evaluators properly are continually a topic of conversation (Canadian Evaluation Society [CES], 2010; Kirkhart, 1981; King, Stevahn, Ghere, & Minnema, 2001; Mertens, 1994; Patton, 1990; Perrin, 2005; Scriven, 1996, Stevahn King, Ghere, & Minnema, 2005a). Over time, scholars have proposed many frameworks to identify the tasks and skills necessary for evaluation practice (e.g., see Anderson & Ball, 1978; Covert, 1992; Kirkhart, 1981; Mertens, 1994; Patton, 1990; Sanders, 1979; Scriven, 1996; Worthen, 1999).

Based on the absence of established competencies for evaluators and the consequences associated with their absence, King et al. (2001) developed a taxonomy of essential evaluator competencies. Evaluator competencies include the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required of program evaluators (King et al., 2001). The rationale for establishing evaluator competencies was that the field would benefit through improved training, enhanced reflective practice, promotion of research on evaluation, and continued professionalization of the field (Stevahn et al., 2005a). As a result of this team's continued work, the *Essential Competencies for Program Evaluators* (ECPE) were developed, and the evaluation field was provided with a foundation to establish agreement on the competencies an evaluator should possess (Stevahn et al., 2005a). The Canadian Evaluation Society has used the ECPE as a foundation for their work

establishing the *Competencies for Canadian Evaluation Practice* (CCEP), which are used as a requirement to be designated a Credentialed Evaluator (CES, 2010). In 2015, the American Evaluation Association (AEA) created the AEA Competency Task Force to further refine the existing competencies, and as a result it has issued a draft of the *AEA Evaluator Competencies* (AEAEC) (American Evaluation Association [AEA], 2017). Although the work to formally identify the competencies needed for evaluation practice is in progress, the evaluation community in the United States has not yet officially adopted a set of evaluator competencies.

Importance of Interpersonal Competencies

The draft AEAEC is a comprehensive set of evaluator competencies categorized into five competency domains: professional, methodology, context, planning and management, and interpersonal (AEA, 2017). The interpersonal domain is the focus of this study. In the draft AEAEC, the interpersonal domain focuses on human relations and social interactions that ground evaluator effectiveness for professional practice, which includes the following competencies for a competent evaluator: (a) interacts ethically in interpersonal relations at all times; (b) values and fosters constructive interpersonal relations foundational for professional practice and evaluation use; (c) uses appropriate social skills to build trust and enhance interaction for evaluation practice; (d) listens to understand, engage, and honor diverse perspectives; (e) addresses issues of privilege and power dynamics in interpersonal relations; (f) communicates in meaningful ways throughout the evaluation (written, verbal, visual, etc.); (g) facilitates constructive and culturally responsive interaction throughout the evaluation; (h) collaborates and engages

in teamwork; (i) negotiates decisions for evaluation practice; and (j) addresses conflicts constructively (AEA, 2017).

The interpersonal domain has been identified as one of the essential competency domains for program evaluators because much of the work surrounding an evaluation study involves interacting with others. Evaluators interact with clients, program participants, staff, board members, and other relevant stakeholders while designing and conducting evaluations. The applied nature of evaluation creates a need for evaluators to have the knowledge and skills necessary to respond to complex situations or issues as they arise. Because of this applied nature, several evaluation scholars have emphasized the importance of interpersonal competencies for evaluators (King & Stevahn, 2013; Kirkhart, 1981; Leviton, 2001; Mertens, 1994; Nadler & Cundiff, 2009; Patton & Patrizi, 2005; Perrin, 2005; Skolits, Morrow, & Burr, 2009; Zorzi, Perrin, McGuire, Long, & Lee, 2002). King and Stevahn (2013) assert that

[T]he ability to interact skillfully with individuals and groups is one of the fundamental competencies of an evaluator, because the process of program evaluation is, finally, a series of human interactions and relationships over time. (p. 10)

When evaluators cannot adequately navigate interpersonal issues as they arise, it can lead to problems throughout the evaluation process and can be detrimental to relationships with clients and stakeholders, create issues in collecting good data, or affect the validity and use of results. In addition, this may leave stakeholders with a negative evaluation experience that may contribute to future resistance to evaluation or trust in evaluation findings. Patton (2008) acknowledges this by stating, “[M]any of the problems encountered by evaluators, much of the resistance to evaluation, and many failures of use

occur because of misunderstandings and communication problems” (p. 53). In their study on the barriers program staff perceive in implementing evaluation, Taut and Alkin (2003) found that human factors most frequently explained barriers over context factors and concluded that training for evaluators should include skill building in the human factor areas such as communicating effectively with evaluation clients, addressing negative attitudes, and building trust.

Despite the importance of interpersonal competencies and the issues that arise when these interpersonal competencies are lacking, little attention has been paid to the “interpersonal factor” of evaluation in the literature (King & Stevahn, 2013, p. 6). King and Stevahn (2013) point out that the evaluation field has largely ignored the interpersonal factor despite its importance in evaluation practice. Largely, the field has focused on the technical skill and theoretical knowledge needed to practice evaluation, which is necessary, but not sufficient, if evaluation is to make a meaningful impact on programs and society (Dillman, 2013; King & Stevahn, 2013). Leviton (2001) argues that successful evaluations hinge on the ability to deal with non-technical issues, such as hidden agendas or attempts to undermine the evaluation, and reprimands the evaluation community for not taking this issue more seriously.

Preparing Evaluators for Practice

Evaluation training programs strive to provide training opportunities to prepare students for competent evaluation practice by including theoretical, technical, and practical knowledge (Lee, Wallace, & Alkin, 2007; Mertens, 1994). To add complexity to teaching evaluation students, much of what occurs in an evaluation study requires

interaction between individuals since the evaluator interacts with clients, staff, and other stakeholders (King & Stevahn, 2013; Mertens, 1994; Zorzi et al., 2002). A competent evaluator must have the necessary interpersonal skills to navigate the complex interactions encountered throughout an evaluation. To accomplish this, assurances should be made that evaluation students develop the appropriate interpersonal competencies through evaluation training.

At this time, the field's understanding of how evaluation students are prepared for practice and acquire interpersonal competencies is limited. Dewey, Montrosse, Schroter, Sullins, and Mattox (2008) found that formal evaluation training programs often do not teach interpersonal skills, despite their being highly valued by employers, and these are the skills found to be lacking in new evaluators. In a later study, Kaesbauer (2012) had consistent findings, concluding that interpersonal competencies are often not taught in formal evaluation training programs. Although research on the topic is only emerging, these preliminary findings shed light on the gaps between the competencies taught and the competencies needed in practice.

Approaches to the Development of Interpersonal Competencies

Evaluation courses typically rely on traditional teaching approaches where students do not necessarily get a sense of how to apply what they have learned through lecture (Alkin & Christie, 2002; Patton & Patrizi, 2005). Due to the applied nature of evaluation, the literature on teaching program evaluation consistently recommends using practical and hands-on experiences (Altschuld, 1995; Christie, 2012; Dillman, 2013; Gredler & Johnson, 2001; Morris, 1994; Nadler & Cundiff, 2009; Preskill, 1992;

Trevisan, 2004; Wortman, Cordray, & Reis, 1980). Evaluation scholars also assert that approaches to teaching interpersonal competencies to evaluation students should incorporate real-world, hands-on experiences (Altschuld, 1995; Christie, 2012; Dillman, 2013; Gredler & Johnson, 2001; Morris, 1994; Nadler & Cundiff, 2009; Preskill, 1992; Trevisan, 2004; Wortman et al., 1980). The rationale for practical, hands-on experiences is that traditional teaching approaches, such as lecture and readings, alone do not sufficiently prepare students for evaluation practice (Christie, 2012; Stevahn et al., 2005b; Trevisan, 2002; Weeks, 1982). Students do not get a sense of what it would be like to practice in the real-world or how to apply what they learn in a lecture (Lee et al., 2007).

In the literature on evaluation, there is little research on how to provide practical, hands-on experiences to evaluation students. Over a decade ago, a review of the literature by Trevisan (2004) compiled existing articles on practical evaluation training approaches and categorized them into four categories: (a) simulation, (b) role-play, (c) single course projects, and (d) practicum experiences. Since the literature review by Trevisan (2004), problem-based learning (Lee et al., 2007) has also been identified as an approach to providing practical training in evaluation. The literature on practical evaluation training approaches consists of reflective narratives, where authors provide written descriptions of their instructional approach for teaching evaluation; none of the articles were research studies. Although many articles provided the perceived benefits, challenges, and student feedback, few provided course evaluations or measured outcomes. These reflective narratives are an important start to understanding how to implement practical evaluation

training approaches in an evaluation course, but they also highlight the need for more research to understand the impact of an evaluation training experience on student development of the interpersonal competencies needed for practice.

Research Questions

Several evaluation scholars have discussed the importance of interpersonal competencies for evaluation practice, and their importance has further been confirmed by their being identified as one of the essential competency domains for program evaluators. Despite this, little is known about how evaluators develop interpersonal competencies and what interpersonal competencies are still need of development when new evaluators begin their practice. As the AEA moves towards endorsing a set of evaluator competencies, it is important to gain a better understanding of how evaluators develop interpersonal competencies, as well as those still in need of development for new evaluators, as they will be an expectation for practice. In addition, the implied reason for having an established and endorsed set of evaluator competencies is so that they will be used. To ensure use, there is a need to explore the ways in which the evaluation field can promote the use of the interpersonal competencies. Accordingly, the research questions of this study were:

1. What interpersonal competencies are essential to the practice of evaluation?
2. In what ways have experienced evaluators developed the interpersonal competencies identified as essential to the practice of evaluation?
3. What interpersonal competency development needs exist for new evaluators?

4. What are the potential ways to structure or present the interpersonal competencies to promote use?

To answer the first three research questions, a comparative analysis of the interpersonal competencies included in existing sets of evaluator competencies was conducted to identify the alignment with the AEAEC interpersonal competencies. The interpersonal competencies identified through the comparative analysis were further examined through interviews with experienced evaluators to better understand the interpersonal competencies essential to the practice of evaluation and how they were developed.

For the fourth research question, exploring the potential ways to structure or present the interpersonal competencies to promote use, a review of competency structures from other professions was completed. The review was completed to uncover different ways that AEA competency set could potentially be structured to encourage the use of the competencies by intended users. Potential ways to structure or present the interpersonal competencies was further explored in interviews with experienced evaluators to gain their perspective as practitioners on what would promote the use of the interpersonal competencies by various user groups.

Significance of the Study

The results of this study are significant in several ways. First, this study contributes to the ongoing work to establish a comprehensive set of evaluator competencies for the field by providing another form of supporting evidence to ensure that the interpersonal domain is comprehensive. The results could be used to further

refine and validate the draft AEAEC interpersonal domain. Second, results of this study describe the ways in which experienced evaluators developed their interpersonal competencies and the interpersonal competencies they perceive as typically still in need of development by new evaluators. Since there is little previous research on these topics, further exploration through this study provides a better understanding of the potential ways new evaluators can develop their interpersonal competencies and the competencies that may need to be addressed. Third, results from this study provide initial direction on what structures could promote the use of the interpersonal competencies once the content has been finalized. Fourth, this study can also serve as a pilot for further research on evaluator competencies. The study's procedures can be repeated with other competency domains in future research.

Definition of Key Terms

Evaluator Competencies

Evaluator competencies specify the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that distinguish professional evaluators and define competent evaluation practice (King et al., 200; Stevahn et al., 2005).

Interpersonal Competencies

In evaluation practice, interpersonal competencies focus on the human relations and social interactions that ground evaluator effectiveness for professional practice (AEA, 2017). Interpersonal competencies are identified as one competency domain needed to carry out sound program evaluations.

Competency Item

A competency item is a statement that specifies a specific knowledge, skills, or dispositions that an individual practitioner within a profession must possess for competent practice.

Summary

This thesis is organized into six chapters. Chapter One provided an introduction and described the purpose and significance of the study. Chapter Two presents a review of the pertinent literature related to development and current state of evaluator competencies and evaluator training, focusing on what is taught in evaluation training programs, the competencies students develop in these programs with specific attention to the interpersonal domain, and how to develop interpersonal competencies in students. Chapter Three includes a description of the methodology, including design, procedures, data collection, and analysis. Chapter Four presents the results from a comparative analysis of the interpersonal competencies included in existing sets of evaluator competencies and the review of competency structures from other professions. Chapter Five presents the results from interviews with experienced evaluators. Chapter Six will be a discussion on the findings, implications, and opportunities for future research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Literature reviewed for this study is presented in two parts. The first part explores evaluator competencies, including the benefits of establishing a comprehensive set of evaluator competencies and the development and current state of evaluator competencies in the field. The second part explores the literature on training evaluators, including what is known about what is taught in evaluation training programs, the competencies students develop in these programs with specific attention to the interpersonal domain, and how evaluation scholars assert students in evaluation training programs are supported to develop interpersonal competencies.

Evaluator Competencies

Since its inception, the field of evaluation has experienced significant growth and increased attention to professionalization (LaVelle & Donaldson, 2010; Stevahn et al., 2005a). With the growth of the field, concerns about what competent evaluation practice looks like, how to properly train new evaluators, and ensuring quality evaluation studies have led to increasing attention to the need and feasibility of having a comprehensive set of evaluator competencies (Altschuld, 1999a; Altschuld, 1999b; Jones & Worthen, 1999; King et al., 2001; LaVelle & Donaldson, 2010; Lee et al., 2007; Smith, 1999; Worthen, 1999). As a result, the evaluation field has envisioned its own set of competencies that evaluators, practicing in diverse settings and using diverse methods, agree are essential to their practice (King et al., 2001, p. 230). A set of competencies would include the knowledge, skills, and dispositions program evaluators need for successful professional practice (Stevahn et al., 2005a, p. 45).

Benefits of a Comprehensive Set of Evaluator Competencies

Establishing a comprehensive set of evaluator competencies is of interest to a variety of stakeholders affected by evaluation training and practice. McGuire and Zorzi (2005) point out that those who seek to ensure quality evaluation practice and protect the reputation of the field, such as evaluation associations, practitioners, educators, clients, and employers, would have an interest in evaluator competencies. Stakeholders could use evaluator competencies to ensure that evaluators have the necessary competencies for practice and are more likely to produce evaluations that are useful and of high quality (McGuire & Zorzi, 2005). Without a set of evaluator competencies to guide the field, several consequences may result. Stevahn et al. (2005a) provide five consequences that can occur from the absence of established evaluator competencies, including: (a) anyone can claim to be an evaluator, due to no standardized licensing or credentialing, which can result in incompetent practice; (b) those who would like to hire an evaluator have no easy way of identifying who may be qualified; (c) aspiring evaluators may find it difficult to determine what they need to learn and where to do so; (d) trainers of evaluation do not have a resource to support curricula choices; and (e) the field lacks research aimed at developing and validating theory-based descriptive models to guide effective practice (p. 44). Stevahn et al. (2005a) assert that if consensus could be reached on a comprehensive set of evaluator competencies, there would be multiple practical applications resulting in benefits to the field of evaluation and evaluation practice. A comprehensive set of evaluator competencies would address these consequences, and the field would benefit

through improved training, enhanced reflective practice, advanced research on evaluation, and continued professionalization of the field (Stevahn et al., 2005a).

Improve training. Patton (1990) asserts, “[E]valuation has become a demanding and challenging profession. Part of the responsibility of the profession is to assure that adequate training opportunities are available to produce skilled, competent evaluators” (p. 48). One application of a comprehensive set of evaluator competencies would be to address this issue. In formal university-based training programs, evaluator competencies could be used in the design of programs, required courses, curriculum, instruction, and assessment to ensure programs equip students for professional practice (Stevahn et al., 2005a). Using evaluator competencies as a framework, evaluation training programs could intentionally address needed competencies. Without this framework, important competencies may not be addressed and leave students with gaps in their evaluation knowledge and skills (Stevahn et al., 2005a). Evaluator competencies could also be used to assess levels of proficiency and areas where further training is needed (Ghere et al., 2006).

Since evaluators enter the field in many ways, a set of evaluator competencies could also be used to determine the professional development needs of evaluators once they are practicing. Ghere et al. (2006) point out that once inside the evaluation profession, evaluators have little direction about how to develop competencies. Evaluator competencies could be used to help identify competencies that need further development (Stevahn et al., 2005a). Developers and trainers of professional development could use

evaluator competencies to guide the type of development opportunities to offer and the content of those experiences (Stevahn et al., 2005a).

Enhance reflective practice. Another application of a comprehensive set of evaluator competencies would be to enhance reflective practice by using evaluator competencies as a framework for individuals to reflect and conduct a self-assessment of their own practice. Evaluators and those in training to become evaluators may have difficulty identifying what they need to learn and the competencies they need to develop (Stevahn et al., 2005a). Using framed reflection, the evaluator benefits by “being acutely aware of personal evaluation preferences, strengths, and limitations; self-monitoring the results of actions intended to facilitate effective evaluation studies; and planning how to enhance future endeavors” (Stevahn et al., 2005a, p. 46).

Advance research on evaluation. Until recently, research on evaluation has not been a focus within the field (Christie, 2003). In the past decade, the amount of research on evaluation theories, methods, and practices has increased substantially (Coryn et al., 2015). An established set of evaluator competencies would play a role in further advancing this research. Stevahn et al. (2005a) give three possible areas of research on evaluation related to evaluator competencies, including examining the role of competencies in effective evaluation practice, investigating the impact of training on skill acquisition and application, and determining variables that mediate successful evaluation practice (p. 46). Evaluator competencies could also be a catalyst for further research especially in areas where research is lacking such as validating theory-based descriptive models to guide effective practice (Stevahn et al., 2005a).

Advance the professionalization of the field of evaluation. A comprehensive set of competencies could also assist in professionalizing the field. Stevahn et al. (2005a) point out that even without agreement on the competencies, discussing what competencies evaluators need can advance the agenda on what is important for evaluation practice. A comprehensive set of evaluator competencies needs to be established to provide a foundation to pursue licensure or credentialing of evaluators (Altschuld, 1999b; Stevahn et al., 2005a). Stevahn et al. (2005a) also point out that a set of evaluator competencies may increase the potential for program accreditation, an important step toward professionalizing the field.

Development of Evaluator Competencies

Over time, several evaluation scholars have proposed frameworks that identify the tasks, skills, and dispositions necessary for evaluation practice. Kirkhart (1981) proposed eight major descriptive categories of evaluator skills, including methodological skills, knowledge areas providing substantive background, systems analysis skills, political savvy and understanding, professional ethics, management skills, communication skills, and interpersonal skills or character traits (p. 188). At a keynote address to the Australasian Evaluation Association on the challenges of program evaluation being a profession, Patton (1990) informally proposed that an “evaluator’s swag” should go beyond methods and techniques and include multiple and diverse methods, communication skills, conceptualization and program logic capabilities, consulting skills, interpersonal competence, political sophistication, knowledge of how organizations work, creativity, and verbal and written presentation skills (p. 48).

Mertens (1994) compiled a list of knowledge areas and skills associated with evaluation through existing literature, presentations on training at the American Evaluation Association annual meetings, consulting with other evaluators, and reflecting on her own experience as an evaluator trainer (p. 21). The list of knowledge and skills that resulted is divided into three categories. The first category is the knowledge and skills associated with research methodology, including philosophical assumptions of alternative paradigms and perspectives, methodological implications of alternative assumptions, and planning and conducting research (Mertens, 1994). The second category is the knowledge and skills needed for evaluation, but borrowed from other areas, which included people skills, negotiation, oral and written communication (Mertens, 1994). The third category includes the knowledge and skills unique to specific disciplines of education, psychology, health, business, government, and public administration (Mertens, 1994). Scriven (1996) discusses his perspective that those doing “technically challenging” evaluations need to have “reasonable competence” in the areas of basic qualitative and quantitative methodologies, validity theory, generalizability theory, meta-analysis, legal constraints on data control and access, funds use, and personnel treatment, personnel evaluation, ethical analysis, needs assessment, cost analysis, internal synthesis models and skills, conceptual geography, and evaluation specific report design, construction, and presentation. (p. 159).

The development of these frameworks by evaluation scholars in the attempt to identify the evaluator knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for evaluation practice has generated conversations in the evaluation community on the value and

feasibility of developing a comprehensive set of evaluator competencies (Altschuld, 1999a; Altschuld, 1999b; Jones & Worthen, 1999; Smith, 1999; Worthen, 1999). With the diverse philosophical and practical approaches that exist within the field, there are questions on whether or not the evaluation community will be able to reach agreement on a set of evaluator competencies (King et al., 2001; Smith, 1999; Worthen, 1999).

The Essential Competencies for Program Evaluators. The frameworks presented to this point were not “derived from a systematic process or validated by empirical consensus building among diverse professionals in the field” (King et al., 2001, p. 230). Based on the lack of an established set of evaluator competencies and the associated consequences, a group of university researchers in the United States set out to develop a comprehensive set of evaluator competencies (Stevahn et al., 2005a). Starting in 1997, King and her colleagues began their work developing a comprehensive set competencies for program evaluators to determine if evaluators representing diverse roles, backgrounds, and experiences could reach agreement on the perceived importance of having a comprehensive set of competencies and, from there, what competencies are needed for evaluation practice (King et al., 2001; Stevahn et al., 2005b).

They developed a taxonomy of essential evaluator competencies through a process of reviewing evaluation literature, developing a list of competencies, and conducting an initial validation study with 31 evaluators from the Twin Cities area in Minnesota using a Multi-Attribute Consensus Reaching procedure (King et al., 2001; Stevahn et al., 2005a). The taxonomy of essential evaluator competencies outlined the knowledge, skills, and dispositions program evaluators need to be effective as

professionals (Stevahn et al., 2005a). After the taxonomy was developed, the group of researchers continued their work and refined the evaluator competencies. The revision process included cross-referencing the evaluator competencies with the *Program Evaluation Standards* (Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 1994), the *Guiding Principles for Evaluators* (American Evaluation Association Task Force on Guiding Principles for Evaluators, 1995), and the *Essential Skills Series* (Canadian Evaluation Society [CES], 1999).

As a result of this work, the *Essential Competencies for Program Evaluators* (ECPE) were established (Stevahn et al., 2005a). The ECPE includes six domains of practice: professional practice, systematic inquiry, situational analysis, project management, reflective practice, and interpersonal competence (Stevahn et al., 2005a). Each domain focuses on an area necessary for competent practice of program evaluation: (a) professional practice: foundational norms and values; (b) systematic inquiry: technical aspects; (c) situational analysis: analyzing and attending to the unique interests, issues, and contextual circumstances; (d) project management: nuts and bolts of conducting program evaluations; (e) reflective practice: focus on one's awareness of evaluation expertise and needs for growth; (f) interpersonal competence: people skills used in conducting program evaluations (Stevahn et al., 2005a). Within these six domains, there are sixty-one competency items (see Table 1).

Table 1

Essential Competencies for Program Evaluators (ECPE)

Competency Domain	Competency Items
1.0 Professional Practice	1.1 Applies professional evaluation standards 1.2 Acts ethically and strives for integrity and honesty in conducting evaluations 1.3 Conveys personal evaluation approaches and skills to potential clients 1.4 Respects clients, respondents, program participants, and other stakeholders 1.5 Considers the general and public welfare in evaluation practice 1.6 Contributes to the knowledge base of evaluation
2.0 Systematic Inquiry	2.1 Understands the knowledge base of evaluation (terms, concepts, theories, assumptions) 2.2 Knowledgeable about quantitative methods 2.3 Knowledgeable about qualitative methods 2.4 Knowledgeable about mixed methods 2.5 Conducts literature reviews 2.6 Specifies program theory 2.7 Frames evaluation questions 2.8 Develops evaluation designs 2.9 Identifies data sources 2.10 Collects data 2.11 Assesses validity of data 2.12 Assesses reliability of data 2.13 Analyzes data 2.14 Interprets data 2.15 Makes judgements 2.16 Develops recommendations 2.17 Provides rationales for decisions throughout the evaluation 2.18 Reports evaluation procedures and results 2.19 Notes strengths and limitations of the evaluation 2.20 Conducts meta-evaluations
3.0 Situational Analysis	3.1 Describes the program 3.2 Determines program evaluability 3.3 Identifies the interests of relevant stakeholders 3.4 Serves the information needs of intended users 3.5 Addresses conflicts 3.6 Examines the organizational context of the evaluation 3.7 Analyzes the political considerations relevant to the evaluation

Competency Domain	Competency Items
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.8 Attends to issues of evaluation use 3.9 Attends to issues of organizational change 3.10 Respects the uniqueness of the evaluation site and client 3.11 Remains open to input from others 3.12 Modifies the study as needed
4.0 Project Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1 Responds to requests for proposals 4.2 Negotiates with clients before the evaluation begins 4.3 Writes formal agreements 4.4 Communicates with clients throughout the evaluation process 4.5 Budgets an evaluation 4.6 Justifies cost given information needs 4.7 Identifies needed resources for evaluation, such as information, expertise, personnel, instruments 4.8 Uses appropriate technology 4.9 Supervises others involved in conducting the evaluation 4.10 Trains others involved in conducting the evaluation 4.11 Conducts the evaluation in a nondisruptive manner 4.12 Presents work in a timely manner
5.0 Reflective Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5.1 Aware of self as an evaluator (knowledge, skills, dispositions) 5.2 Reflects on personal evaluation practice (competencies and areas for growth) 5.3 Pursues professional development in evaluation 5.4 Pursues professional development in relevant content areas 5.5 Builds professional relationships to enhance evaluation practice
6.0 Interpersonal Competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6.1 Uses written communication skills 6.2 Uses verbal/listening communication skills 6.3 Uses negotiation skills 6.4 Uses conflict resolution skills 6.5 Facilitates constructive interpersonal interaction (teamwork, group facilitation, processing) 6.6 Demonstrates cross-cultural competence

Note. From “Establishing Essential Competencies for Program Evaluators,” by L. Stevahn, J.A. King, G. Ghore, and J. Minnema, 2005, *American Journal of Evaluation*, vol. 26, p. 43–50.

A study conducted by Wilcox (2012) initially validated the ECPE using a unitary validity framework. Wilcox (2012) conducted the study using a web-based survey and a series of interviews. The survey focused on what respondents believe program evaluators need to be able to demonstrate the essential competencies for program evaluators. Findings indicated that a majority of the competencies (58 of the 61) were considered “strongly necessary” and the remaining three competencies were considered “moderately necessary” (Wilcox, 2012). Interviews were conducted with nine experienced evaluators (Wilcox, 2012). Findings from interviews included: all respondents considered professional practice and interpersonal competence critical competency areas; all respondents thought highly of reflective practice, but recognized that they could do better in this area; respondents were rarely proficient in all systematic inquiry competencies, but were most likely to work with others in these situations; the extent to which respondents conducted situational analysis and project management varied by fields or role; and almost all respondents reported they did not do meta-evaluation (Wilcox, 2012).

The development of the ECPE provided the field with a foundation to establish agreement on evaluator competencies, but it was not officially adopted or endorsed by the American Evaluation Association (Altschuld, 2005; King et al., 2001; Smith, 1999; Worthen, 1999; Ghore et al., 2006; Morris, 2011). Since evaluators come from a variety of backgrounds, experiences, and methodological approaches, it has been difficult to come to consensus on what competencies define a competent evaluator (McGuire & Zorzi, 2005). Altschuld (2005) asserts that, despite this lack of official adoption, there

seems to be general agreement in the evaluation community on the set of competencies developed.

In creating the ECPE, Stevahn et al. (2005b) hoped to establish a basis from which further work could be completed:

Ultimately, whether or not consensus is reached on every competency in a comprehensive taxonomy, striving to establish this taxonomy should spark meaningful discussion on the knowledge, skills, and dispositions people perceive to be essential for effective practice. Doing so invites critical analysis, reasoned judgement, and better articulation of who we are and what we do as evaluators. We believe that future clarification of various evaluator roles and the competencies needed to enact them will emerge through grounded dialogue. (p. 108)

Althschuld (2005) further points out:

The intent of their work was and continues to be to promote debate and discussion about what evaluators do, how they go about conducting evaluations, and ultimately what should be included in the training of evaluators. They also acknowledge that much still needs to be done in clarifying terms, getting the field to agree on the competencies, and generating concrete depictions of each competency. (p. 163)

The *Competencies for Canadian Evaluation Practice*. During the same time the ECPE was being developed, another project focused on developing a comprehensive set of evaluator competencies, sponsored by the Canadian Evaluation Society (CES), was completed by Zorzi, McGuire, and Perrin in 2002. The project came out of a strategic planning process undertaken by the CES to address priorities of professional development and advocacy on behalf of the evaluation function (Zorzi et al., 2002). To meet these priorities, the project was designed to identify the “benefits of evaluation, the outputs of evaluation that lead to those benefits, and the knowledge and skills that evaluators should possess to competently produce those outputs” (Zorzi et al., 2002, p.

144). The knowledge and skills component of the research was to create a Core Body of Knowledge (CBK) that would be the basis for the CES's professional development program (Zorzi et al., 2002).

The CES (as cited in Zorzi et al., 2002) developed the following definition for the CBK:

The CBK comprises those theories, skills, and effective practices that people, working largely without supervision, must possess in order to plan, carry out, and report on valid and reliable evaluations of the programs of governments, other public sector agencies and organizations, not-for-profit organizations, and business. (p. 144)

To develop the CBK, Zorzi et al. (2002) conducted a literature review, two internet consultations with the evaluation community, two discussion sessions with delegates at the CES 2002 National Conference, and online discussions among the members of an international expert reference panel. The resulting CBK included 151 knowledge elements grouped into 23 general elements grouped into six categories. The categories included ethics, evaluation planning and design, data collection, data analysis and interpretation, communication and interpersonal skills, and project management (Zorzi et al., 2002).

In 2007, the CES announced that they would move forward with developing a professional designation for evaluators in Canada called the Professional Designation Project (PDP) (Buchanan, 2015). A foundational piece of this project was creating a set of competencies for Canadian evaluators (Maicher & Frank, 2015). The purpose of the set of competencies was to serve as one of three pillars, along with ethics and standards, for professional designation (Maicher & Frank, 2015). A Professional Designation Core

Committee (PDCC) was established to facilitate development and implementation of the professional designation (Maicher & Frank, 2015).

The development of the CES Competencies for Canadian Evaluation Practice (CCEP) built upon the *Essential Competencies for Program Evaluators* (ECPE) developed by Stevahn et al. (2005a). A comparative analysis was conducted using the ECPE (Stevahn et al., 2005a), the *Essential Skills Series* (Canadian Evaluation Society, 1999), the *CES CBK study* (Zorzi et al., 2002), the Treasury Board Secretariat Competencies for Evaluators in the Government of Canada, the *Program Evaluation Standards* (Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 1994), the *Guiding Principles for Evaluators* (American Evaluation Association Task Force on Guiding Principles for Evaluators, 1995), and the *Core Competencies for Evaluators in the UN System* (United Nations Evaluation Group, 2007). As a result of the comparative analysis, gaps and overlaps were identified among the documents to inform the development of a comprehensive set of evaluator competencies for the Canadian evaluation context (Buchanan & Kuji-Shikatani, 2014). From here, the PDCC drafted the CCEP, and, after member consultation and expert validation, the CES membership approved the CCEP in May 2009 (Buchanan & Kuji-Shikatani, 2014).

The CCEP include five competency domains: reflective practice, technical practice, situational practice, management practice, and interpersonal practice (CES, 2010). Each domain focuses on an essential component of overall evaluation practice: (a) reflective practice: fundamental norms and values and awareness of one's evaluation expertise and needs for growth; (b) technical practice: specialized aspects of evaluation;

(c) situational practice: application of evaluative thinking in analyzing and attending to the unique interests, issues, and contextual circumstances; (d) management practice: process of managing an evaluation; (e) interpersonal practice: people skills (CES, 2010).

Within the interpersonal practice domain, there are 10 competencies (see Table 2).

Table 2

Interpersonal Competencies for Canadian Evaluation Practice

Interpersonal Practice Competency Items

- 5.1 Uses written communication skills and technologies
 - 5.2 Uses verbal communication skills
 - 5.3 Uses listening skills
 - 5.4 Uses negotiation skills
 - 5.5 Uses conflict resolution skills
 - 5.6 Uses facilitation skills (group work)
 - 5.7 Uses interpersonal skills (individual and teams)
 - 5.8 Uses collaboration / partnering skills
 - 5.9 Attends to issues of diversity and culture
 - 5.10 Demonstrates professional credibility
-

Note. From “Competencies for Canadian Evaluation Practice” by The Canadian Evaluation Society (CES), 2010, Retrieved from:

http://www.evaluationcanada.ca/txt/2_competencies_cdn_evaluation_practice.pdf

In 2010, the CES established the Credentialed Evaluator designation. One of the three applicant requirements for the designation was to demonstrate how evaluators’ education and experience align with the evaluator competencies (Buchanan, 2015). Specifically, CES states that successful applicants must demonstrate “education and/or experience related to 70% of the competencies in each of the five domains of Competencies for Canadian Evaluation Practice. Applicants will draw selectively from their education and/or experience and align this to 70% of the competencies in each of 5 competency domains” (CES, n.d.).

The American Evaluation Association Evaluator Competencies. In 2015, the American Evaluation Association undertook a renewed effort to refine the competencies needed for evaluation practice. The AEA formed a Competency Task Force to complete the work. Using the ECPE as a starting point, the task force set out to address issues raised in earlier reviews of the ECPE and conducted a listening session on the proposed evaluator competencies at the 2015 American Evaluation Association conference. From this work, a revised set of evaluator competencies titled “AEA Evaluator Competencies” was created, and a survey was administered to gather feedback from AEA members on the draft (AEA, 2017). Like the CCEP set, the draft AEAEC includes five competency domains: professional practice, methodology, context, planning and management, and interpersonal. Each domain focuses on a component of evaluation practice: (a) professional practice: what makes evaluators distinct as practicing professionals; (b) methodology: the technical aspects of data-based, systematic inquiry for valued purposes; (c) context: understanding the unique circumstances, multiple perspectives, and changing settings of evaluations and their users/stakeholders; (d) planning and management: determining and monitoring work plans, timelines, resources, and other components needed to complete and deliver an evaluation study; and (e) interpersonal: the human relations and social interactions that ground evaluator effectiveness for professional practice (AEA, 2017). Within the interpersonal domain, there are 10 proposed competencies (see Table 3).

Table 3

Draft AEA Interpersonal Competencies

Interpersonal Domain Competency Items

- 5.1 Interacts ethically in interpersonal relations at all times.
 - 5.2 Values and fosters constructive interpersonal relations foundational for professional practice and evaluation use.
 - 5.3 Uses appropriate social skills to build trust and enhance interaction for evaluation practice.
 - 5.4 Listens to understand, engage, and honor diverse perspectives.
 - 5.5 Addresses issues of privilege and power dynamics in interpersonal relations.
 - 5.6 Communicates in meaningful ways throughout the evaluation (written, verbal, visual, etc.).
 - 5.7 Facilitates constructive and culturally responsive interaction throughout the evaluation.
 - 5.8 Collaborates and engages in teamwork.
 - 5.9 Negotiates decisions for evaluation practice.
 - 5.10 Addresses conflicts constructively.
-

Note. From “AEA Evaluator Competencies,” 2017.

Interpersonal Competencies

Most of the early frameworks identifying the tasks, skills, and dispositions necessary for evaluation practice included interpersonal competencies (CES, 2010; Kirkhart, 1981; Mertens, 1994; Patton, 1990; Stevahn et al., 2005a). The most recent effort to refine evaluator competencies, the draft AEAEC, also includes an interpersonal domain defined as the human relations and social interactions that ground evaluator effectiveness for professional practice (AEA, 2017). The interpersonal domain continues to be identified as one the essential competency domains for program evaluators because much of the work surrounding an evaluation study involves interacting with others. Throughout the evaluation process, the evaluator interacts with clients, program participants, staff, board members, and other relevant stakeholders. Due to the applied nature of evaluation, several evaluation scholars have emphasized the importance of

interpersonal competencies for evaluators (King & Stevahn, 2013; Kirkhart, 1981; Leviton, 2001; Mertens, 1994; Nadler & Cundiff, 2009; Patton & Patrizi, 2005; Perrin, 2005; Skolits et al., 2009; Zorzi, Perrin et al., 2002). In their CES CBK study, Zorzi et al. (2002, p. 31) found that interpersonal competencies such as effective listening, questioning, and negotiation were important across all stages of the evaluation process.

In their study exploring program staff perspectives on barriers to evaluation implementation, Taut and Alkin (2003) found program staff emphasized human factors over evaluation or context factors in explaining barriers to evaluation implementation. From their recent experiences with program evaluation, program staff highlighted the importance of evaluators' social competence, particularly their ability to build relationships and trust (Taut & Alkin, 2003).

Taut and Alkin (2003) point out that most areas in which program staff perceived as barriers to effective implementation of evaluation were included in Patton's list of "threats to utility" (1997), which included

. . . failure to focus the evaluation on intended use by intended users; poor stakeholder understanding of evaluation generally and the findings specifically; low user belief and trust in the evaluation process and findings; low evaluator credibility; and failure to keep stakeholders adequately informed and involved along the way. (p. 263)

When evaluators cannot adequately navigate interpersonal issues as they arise, it can lead to problems throughout the evaluation process and can be detrimental to relationships with clients and stakeholders, create issues in collecting good data, or affect the validity and use of results. Due to the importance of interpersonal competencies, it is

important that evaluators develop competencies in this domain through evaluation training.

Evaluator Training

The evaluation profession has experienced significant growth since its formal inception in the late 1960s (LaVelle & Donaldson, 2010). With growth comes the concern on how to train future evaluators properly (LaVelle & Donaldson, 2010; Lee et al., 2007). Evaluation scholars have called for training that prepares new evaluators for practice and have brought attention to the evaluation field's responsibility in ensuring that this happens (LaVelle & Donaldson, 2010; Patton, 1990; Stufflebeam, 2001).

LaVelle and Donaldson (2010) assert:

Evaluators are made, not born, and an extended period of training is necessary to master the evaluation-specific skills and knowledge necessary to provide quality service to clients, as well as be socialized into the professional frameworks, standards, and ethical guidelines. The importance of this preservice training cannot be overstated. (p. 10)

Stufflebeam (2001) states “the evaluation field's future success is dependent on sound evaluation [training] programs that provide a continuing flow of excellently qualified and motivated evaluators” (p. 445).

To properly train evaluators for practice, training programs need to address multiple knowledge and skill areas. Every evaluation activity places demands on evaluators, requiring them to draw upon and utilize a variety of skills. Depending on the activity, demands can be technical or non-technical in nature; therefore, evaluation training must balance the inclusion of methods, theory, and practice knowledge and skills (Lee et al., 2007; Skolits et al., 2009).

Lee et al. (2007) state:

As teachers of evaluation practice, how does one strike this delicate balance within a curriculum where the student does not leave with a distorted, unbalanced knowledge of evaluation practice? We do not want to train one-size-fits-all evaluators who blindly apply social science methods, nor do we want theoretically capable evaluators who know all the various approaches to evaluation, but rather who practice without a solid grounding in research design and data analysis. We also need to make certain that students have developed appropriate interpersonal skills that permit them to navigate the relationships and interactions that guide an evaluation process. (p. 537)

To adequately prepare students for practice, attention to balancing all of the knowledge and skills an evaluator needs is important. Despite this, little is known about how or where students of evaluation training programs acquire competencies needed for evaluation practice and what competencies practicing evaluators possess.

Research on Evaluation Training Programs

In the United States, the preparation of evaluators for professional practice is uncontrolled when compared to other professions that require licensure, certification, or accreditation for entry into the profession (Engle, Altschuld, & Kim, 2006). When requirements of licensure, certification, or accreditation are in place, training programs must align what is taught with the knowledge and competencies required for entry into professional practice (Engle, Altschuld, & Kim, 2006). There are no such entry requirements for evaluation practice in the United States. For an individual, there are several ways to prepare for evaluation practice, including professional development workshops, certificate programs, and university degree programs (Engle, Altschuld, & Kim, 2006).

Professional development opportunities have become increasingly popular with well-established offerings sponsored by the AEA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Evaluators' Institute, and Claremont Graduate University (Christie, Quinones, & Fierro, 2013; Dewey et al., 2008). Despite this, little is known about the use of professional development opportunities to acquire evaluation training (Christie et al., 2013). For certificate programs, most are housed within universities, and what is known about these opportunities is embedded within the research on university-based evaluation training (Dewey et al., 2008). For university-based training, several studies have been conducted to better understand what evaluation training programs exist in the United States (Altschuld, Engle, Cullen, Kim, & Macce, 1994; Engle, Altschuld, & Kim, 2006; Lavelle & Donaldson, 2010; May, Fleischer, Scheirer, & Cox, 1986). These studies focus primarily on the university departments in which evaluation training programs exist and the titles of courses offered. This is a good starting point for learning where evaluators can be trained and what courses they may take. The most recent study conducted by Lavelle and Donaldson (2010) found evidence of 48 university-based evaluation training programs in the United States and another 13 programs that reported training evaluators, but did not provide curricular information.

Competencies Addressed in Evaluator Training Programs

Based on their research of evaluation training, Lavelle and Donaldson (2010) posed a question for future research: "How can we best prepare the next generation [of evaluators] for the challenges they will face?" (p. 21). In moving the field towards answering this research question, a limited number of studies have been completed to

better understand what competencies evaluation training programs address, the competencies new evaluators possess, and the competencies identified as important by employers (Davies & MacKay, 2014; Dewey et al., 2008; Dillman, 2013; Kaesbauer, 2012). As part of their research, each study addressed interpersonal competencies to some degree.

Dewey et al. (2008) explored whether graduate programs with an emphasis in evaluation are adequately preparing the next generation of evaluators. To accomplish this, they set out to better understand the competencies students develop during graduate training and how these competencies align with those required by organizations that employ evaluators (Dewey et al., 2008). Data were collected through a survey to AEA-affiliated job seekers, a survey to AEA-affiliated employers of evaluators, and an analysis of the job postings on the AEA job bank (Dewey et al., 2008). When it came to employers' perceptions of candidate quality, Dewey et al. (2008) found that a majority of employers rated candidates as having minor (47%) or major (31%) shortcomings in the evaluation competencies needed by their organization. When asked to identify the gaps in evaluator competencies, employers most frequently cited relating to clients or other stakeholders (28%) (Dewey et al., 2008). Employers also indicated a need for interpersonal skills more than any other competencies, but found this skill set to be lacking in entry-level evaluation candidates (Dewey et al., 2008). An analysis of the AEA job bank also uncovered that employers frequently sought interpersonal skills, with 79% of postings including this as a needed competency area (Dewey et al., 2008). Only one-fifth of evaluation job seekers reported being taught client or stakeholder relations in

graduate school. In addition, evaluation job seekers ranked interpersonal skills third from the bottom (of 19 skills) of skills acquired in graduate school (Dewey et al., 2008). Based on their findings, Dewey et al. (2008) concluded that employers highly value interpersonal competencies, but that these not given much attention in graduate programs.

A study by Kaesbauer (2012) exploring what evaluator competencies are taught in doctoral programs in evaluation resulted in similar findings to Dewey et al. (2008). Data were collected through interviews with program coordinators and faculty members of doctoral programs in evaluation, a survey sent to students in those programs, and a content analysis of program syllabi (Kaesbauer, 2012). Kaesbauer (2012) found that faculty reported teaching interpersonal competencies, yet students reported encountering this competency area less frequently. Findings suggest that faculty aim to address interpersonal competencies, but it may be difficult as these skills are primarily developed through field or practical experiences (Kaesbauer, 2012). Kaesbauer (2012) concluded that doctoral programs in evaluation may not sufficiently teach non-technical evaluation skills, such as communicating with stakeholders and resolving conflicts.

Dillman (2013) explored how different educational experiences contribute to the development of evaluator competencies using the ECPE as a guide. New evaluators identified through the American Evaluation Association Graduate Student and New Evaluators Topical Interest Group were surveyed to determine the educational experiences they participated in during evaluation training. Findings indicated that the perceived contribution of the different training experiences, such as coursework, mentorship, fieldwork, and participation in professional activities, changed depending on

the competency being developed (Dillman, 2013). Dillman (2013) found that the technical aspects of conducting an evaluation could mostly be acquired in the classroom, but that new evaluators did not rate the contributions of coursework very highly when it came to developing interpersonal competencies.

Another study completed by Davies and MacKay (2014) explored content being taught in current evaluation courses. To do so, they examined what topics were covered, how much time was spent on various topics, and how important instructors believed these topics were in preparing new evaluations to start practicing at a professional level (Davies & MacKay, 2014). Davies and MacKay (2014) gathered data through a survey administered to individuals affiliated with the AEA's Teaching of Evaluation Topical Interest Group who were teaching at a university program with at least one evaluation course. Using the ECPE as a guide, they created a list of potential topics evaluation training programs could cover (Davies & MacKay, 2014). Through their examination of university-based evaluation training courses, Davies and MacKay (2014) found considerable differences in topics covered and time spent on various topics. For introductory courses, content aligned with the practical considerations of conducting an evaluation, including evaluation approaches and evaluation planning (Davies & MacKay, 2014). For programs that offered advanced evaluation courses, topics covered varied widely among training programs (Davies & MacKay, 2014). Using the ECPE as a framework, Davies and MacKay (2014) found gaps in the training provided at many of the universities in relation to the importance of a topic and the amount of time spent on the topic. Additionally, actual evaluation experience was considered a very important part

of new evaluator training by most faculty members, but many did not offer an opportunity to do so, or it was optional (Davies & MacKay, 2014). Davies and MacKay (2014) noted there was some evidence that specific interpersonal competencies may be addressed if faculty spent time addressing related topics such as cultural competence or evaluation ethics.

Although limited in number, these studies contribute to the knowledge on evaluator training, providing insight on what competencies university-based evaluation training programs address and where gaps remain. The findings illuminate gaps that exist among the interpersonal competencies needed and expected to conduct evaluations, what is taught in evaluation training programs, and the skills new evaluators possess. They also highlight the difficulty of teaching interpersonal competencies to new evaluators within traditional classroom settings.

One limitation common across the studies completed on the competencies addressed in university-based evaluation training programs is that they attempt to cover all competency domains, thus providing breadth, but not depth to the knowledge that is contributed to the field. Future studies focusing on *specific* competency domains would be beneficial in deepening the field's understanding of where and how competencies are developed and what competencies evaluators possess and use.

Developing Interpersonal Competencies in New Evaluators

Evaluation scholars have advocated for intentionally teaching interpersonal competencies to evaluation students (Dewey et al., 2008; Christie, 2012; King & Stevahn, 2013; Leviton, 2001; Mertens, 1994; Taut & Alkin, 2003; Trevisan, 2002). To do so,

many have encouraged the use of practical experiences that are hands-on (Alkin & Christie, 2002; Altschuld, 1995; Dillman, 2013; Gredler & Johnson, 2001; Morris, 1994; Nadler & Cundiff, 2009; Preskill, 1992; Trevisan, 2004; Wortman et al., 1980). The rationale is that practical experiences should be incorporated into training for any practice-oriented field because they expose students to the complexities found in real-world settings and allow students to hone their interpersonal and technical skills (Trevisan, 2004; Altschuld, 1995; Fitzpatrick, 1994; Weeks, 1982). For evaluation students, practical experiences allow for the understanding and appreciation of the challenges of the non-technical issues that arise in evaluation work (Trevisan, 2002).

Several evaluation scholars assert that practical experiences are the most effective, if not the only way to develop interpersonal competencies (Garcia, 2016; Lewis & Williams, 1994; Nadler & Cundiff, 2009; Skolits, Woodward, Morrow, & Kaesbauer, 2012; Trevisan, 2004; Weeks, 1982). A recent study by Dillman (2013) supports these claims, finding that out of the different educational experiences a student can have, practical experiences are considered to contribute more to the development of evaluation competencies and are seen as the most important educational experiences for developing interpersonal competencies by evaluation students and new evaluators. As a result, Dillman (2013) stresses that evaluators need opportunities to take part in practical evaluation experiences to develop interpersonal competencies.

The logic behind providing practical experiences is that traditional teaching approaches, through lecture and readings, are insufficient when used alone to prepare students for the challenges they may encounter when practicing as an evaluator (Christie,

2012; Stevahn et al., 2005b; Trevisan, 2002; Weeks, 1982). Lee et al. (2007) point out that evaluation courses typically rely on traditional lecture approaches, and students do not get a sense of what it would be like to practice in the real-world or how to apply what they learn in a lecture. Instructors recognize that there is a need to go beyond traditional approaches to teaching and incorporate approaches that are more engaging and hands-on to help students understand the inherent interactive nature of program evaluation (Lee et al., 2007; Trevisan, 2004).

Despite the recommendations for including hands-on or practical training, evaluation scholars have offered few details on how to do so. Trevisan (2004) identified this gap in knowledge and reviewed existing literature on the use of practical training experiences in evaluation. From this review, he documented four approaches found in the literature on how to provide practical training in evaluation: (a) simulation, (b) role-play, (c) single course projects, and (d) practicum experiences. Since the literature review conducted by Trevisan (2004), problem-based learning (Lee et al., 2007) has also been identified as an approach to providing practical training in evaluation.

Simulation. When using simulation, students are provided with a real-world hypothetical case of an organization or agency with an evaluation need (Trevisan, 2002; Trevisan, 2004). Cases include all information needed for the simulation, highlight critical decisions points, and allow students to work through the challenging dilemmas and dynamics in the evaluation process, including setting goals, diagnosis, managing conflict, recognizing high-payoff information, managing change, and working collaboratively (Patton & Patrizi, 2005). Usually in groups, students work through the

play also provides a safe environment for students to learn as the instructor can correct when needed (Alkin & Christie, 2002). In the evaluation training literature, Alkin and Christie (2002) have documented the uses of role-play to teach courses on theories of evaluation and on evaluation procedures.

Problem-based learning. Problem-based learning, similar to simulations and role-play, situates learning in a meaningful task where students work in teams on a provided case (Hmelo-Silver, 2004). The difference is that the case provided is ill-structured where students are not provided the information needed to come up with a solution beforehand (Hmelo-Silver, 2004). Instead, students must direct their own learning through seeking out new information to inform their decisions (Dolmans & Schmidt, 1996; Hmelo-Silver, 2004). The instructor’s role also transitions to a facilitator in problem-based learning where he or she supports and scaffolds the development of problem-solving, self-directed learning, and collaboration skills (Barrows, 1992 [in Savery & Duffy, 2001]; Savery, 2006). In the evaluation training literature, Lee et al. (2007) have documented their use of problem-based learning in a graduate-level evaluation procedures course. Lee et al. (2007) assert that problem-based learning is an ideal approach to use in evaluation training because it gives students an opportunity to not only learn content knowledge, but also experience “thinking like an evaluator” (p. 539).

Single course projects. A single course project is a short-term experience that is part of an evaluation course (Trevisan, 2002). Students receive training in program evaluation and then apply knowledge through a short-term project (Trevisan, 2002). The

few articles provided evaluation data on the experience (Trevisan, 2004). These reflective narratives are an important start to understanding how to implement practical evaluation training approaches in an evaluation course and the perceived outcomes. More research needs to be completed to further the understanding of the impact of practical training approaches on student learning and to make specific generalizable recommendations to the field (Davies & MacKay, 2014).

Summary

This chapter presented the literature in two parts. The first part explored evaluator competencies, including the benefits of establishing a comprehensive set of evaluator competencies and the development and current state of evaluator competencies in the field. The benefits of having an established set of evaluator competencies included improved training, enhanced reflective practice, advanced research on evaluation, and continued professionalization of the field. Several frameworks have been proposed to identify the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that evaluators need for practice. A formal effort to develop evaluator competencies resulted in the ECPE, which provided the foundation for the development of the CCEP and has since been revised to establish the AEAEC.

The second part of this chapter explored the literature on training evaluators, including what is known about what is taught in evaluation training programs, the competencies students develop in these programs with specific attention to the interpersonal domain, and how evaluation scholars assert students in evaluation training programs are supported to develop interpersonal competencies. The literature shows the

research conducted on how or whether interpersonal competencies are being taught to students in evaluation training programs is limited. The research that does exist demonstrates a gap in the interpersonal competencies needed and expected to conduct evaluations, what is taught in graduate-level evaluation training programs, and the skills new evaluators possess. To develop interpersonal competencies in new evaluators, evaluation scholars advocate for intentionally teaching through hands-on, practical experiences. In the field of evaluation, research does not exist that can provide direction on the best way to teach interpersonal competencies. Instead, evaluation scholars have offered reflective narratives on approaches they deem promising, including simulation, role-play, problem-based learning, single course projects, and practicum experiences.

The following chapter describes the methodology adopted to explore the development and use of interpersonal competencies by program evaluators and the potential structures that could be applied to the interpersonal competencies to promote their use.

Chapter Three: Methodology

In this chapter, I discuss the methodology adopted to explore the study's research questions. As stated in Chapter One, the purpose of this study was to further explore the interpersonal competencies for competent evaluation practice, including what they are, how they are developed, what development needs exist for new evaluators, and ways to promote their use. Based on this purpose, this study explored the following research questions:

1. What interpersonal competencies are essential to the practice of evaluation?
2. In what ways have experienced evaluators developed the interpersonal competencies identified as essential to the practice of evaluation?
3. What interpersonal competency development needs exist for new evaluators?
4. What are the potential ways to structure or present the interpersonal competencies to promote use?

Research Design

Based on the purpose and research questions, the intent of this study was exploratory. Chapter 2 documented that very little is known about the interpersonal competencies evaluators possess and the ways in which they develop them. To add to the existing knowledge on this topic, this study used a qualitative research design that sought to understand how people interpret their experiences and the meaning they attribute to them (Merriam, 2009). A qualitative approach aligns well with the exploratory purpose of this study to explore the interpersonal competencies that are essential to the practice of evaluation and how they were developed. Through the qualitative approach, I sought to

understand the interpersonal competencies that evaluators, individually or collectively through associations, use and identify as important. I also aimed to understand how evaluators interpret their own interpersonal competency development and the interpersonal competencies evaluators new to the field typically need to develop when they begin to practice. In addition, I explored ways that the interpersonal competencies could be structured or presented to promote use among intended users.

The study was conducted in three phases. Phase One was a comparative analysis of the interpersonal competencies included in the draft AEAEC with existing sets of evaluator competencies developed by associations throughout the world. The first phase explored the first research question. Document analysis was used to conduct the comparative analysis using electronic documents of the competencies developed by associations. Through the analysis of these documents, alignment of the individual interpersonal competency items to those included in the draft AEAEC was identified both to confirm included competencies and to identify potentially missing competencies.

Phase Two was a review of structures used in competency sets developed by other professions. This phase answered the fourth research question. Document analysis was used to conduct the review using electronic documents of the competencies developed and used by other professions. Analysis of these documents explored different ways the draft AEAEC interpersonal competencies could be structured or presented to promote their use.

Phase Three consisted of semi-structured interviews with evaluation experts. The third phase explored all four research questions. Through interviews, the interpersonal

competencies that experienced evaluators identify as essential to evaluation practice were uncovered, along with how they developed these competencies and the interpersonal competencies that they believe are typically lacking in novice evaluators. Interviews also explored potential ways to structure or present the interpersonal competences to promote use. Results from Phase One and Phase Two informed Phase Three.

Phase One: Comparative Analysis of Interpersonal Competencies for Evaluators

To date, comparative analyses between the existing frameworks of evaluator competencies have been completed with the *Program Evaluation Standards* (Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 1994), the *Guiding Principles for Evaluators* (American Evaluation Association Task Force on Guiding Principles for Evaluators, 1995), the Essential Skills Series (CES, 1999), the CES CBK study (Zorzi et al., 2002), the Treasury Board Secretariat Competencies for Evaluators in the Government of Canada, and the Core Competencies for Evaluators in the UN System (United Nations Evaluation Group, 2007). This process has provided a comparison between identified evaluator competencies and standards and ethics within the field and has been an important process for developing and revising competencies over time. What has not been completed is a comparative analysis among all existing evaluator competency sets to identify the similarities or differences in content; therefore, to address the first research question, a comparative analysis was completed focusing on interpersonal competencies. Analyzing the content of existing competency sets identified themes or categories of interpersonal competencies across the sets (Bowen, 2009). This

identification uncovered the alignment of interpersonal competencies across sets with the draft AEAEC to confirm those already included and uncover gaps.

Document analysis was used to conduct the comparative analysis of interpersonal competencies included in existing sets of evaluator competencies developed by professional associations with the draft AEAEC. The comparative analysis was confined to professional associations that had developed evaluator competencies and excluded evaluator competencies developed by other entities such as government agencies, educational institutions, and individual researchers. This criterion for inclusion allowed for a similar purpose and context in which the interpersonal competencies would be used as the AEAEC, which focuses on association members.

Search and Selection of Interpersonal Competencies

The first step in conducting the comparative analysis was to identify existing sets of evaluator competencies to include in the comparative analysis. An internet search using the Google search engine was completed to find existing competency sets. Professional associations often share information with members and stakeholders through a dedicated website; therefore, an internet search was an appropriate way to identify existing competency sets. The search was conducted using the terms “association evaluator competencies.” This search term was used since the goal was to identify competency sets for evaluators that were developed and used by associations. The search identified 10 sets of evaluator competencies. To verify that there were no other evaluator competency sets to include, I cross checked this list with the evaluator competency literature, which often provides examples of existing evaluator competency sets and

concluded that there were no other evaluator competency sets to include in this comparative analysis (e.g., see Galport & Azzam, 2016; United Nations Evaluation Group, 2015; Wilcox & King, 2014).

Within each of the 10 sets of evaluator competencies, a subset of competencies related to interpersonal skills, knowledge, and dispositions was identified and included in the comparative analysis. Five sets of competencies included a domain specific to interpersonal competencies; the remaining five did not. For the five sets that included a domain focused on interpersonal competencies, all competency items within the domain were included in the comparative analysis. For the five sets of competencies that did not have an interpersonal specific domain, all competency items in the set were reviewed. The description of an interpersonal competency provided in the draft AEAEC, “interpersonal competencies focus on human relations and social interactions that ground evaluator effectiveness,” was used determine whether an individual competency item should be included in the comparative analysis (AEAEC, 2016, p. 2). Thus, competency items that included a form of human relations or social interaction were included.

Analysis

To compare the interpersonal competencies in the draft AEAEC to those included in other sets of evaluator competencies to explore alignment, a qualitative content analysis was conducted using mixed procedures, deductive category assignment, and inductive category formation.

Deductive category assignment. The first step in the document analysis used a deductive approach for category assignment where predetermined category codes were

established before coding the competencies included in the comparative analysis (Elo & Kyngas, 2008; Mayring, 2014). Based on the first research question, there is a priori interest in identifying alignment with the draft AEAEC interpersonal competencies; therefore, predetermined categories were created based on these competencies. These categories included: the evaluator is able to (a) interact ethically, (b) build relationships, (c) use appropriate social skills, (d) listen to understand and engage diverse perspectives, (e) address issues of privilege and power dynamics (f) communicate effectively, (g) facilitate constructive and culturally responsive interactions, (h) collaborate with others, (i) negotiate, and (j) resolve conflict.

To keep the coding process organized, I used an Excel spreadsheet to create a categorization matrix that tracked competency items corresponding to each predetermined category (Elo & Kyngas, 2008). Using the predetermined category codes, I reviewed each of the interpersonal competencies included in the 10 sets individually. After reading a competency item, I assigned the item to one or more predetermined codes or no code if it did not fit with a predetermined code.

Inductive category formation. After reviewing each interpersonal competency item, those that did not fit with an existing code were analyzed to understand what additional interpersonal competencies professional associations have identified as essential to evaluation practice that were not included in the draft AEAEC interpersonal competencies. This second step in the document analysis used an inductive approach for creating categories where categories emerged from the remaining interpersonal competency items to reveal any gaps between existing interpersonal competencies and

the draft AEAEC interpersonal competencies. Each competency was reviewed individually, and a category code was established based on the item's content. Depending on content, the review of an individual item could result in multiple category codes. When reviewing an item, a check was made to determine if it fit within a category that had emerged from a previously reviewed item. This process was conducted one item at a time until all items were reviewed and coded.

Phase Two: Review of Competency Structures from Other Professions

The draft AEAEC competencies have been structured in a way that lists the individual competency items evaluators need for competent evaluation practice. Competency items were grouped into five domains based on similar topic areas. The topic domains used in the draft AEAEC include professional practice, methodology, context, planning and management, and interpersonal. Since evaluation is a broad field of practice, developers of the AEAEC sought to structure the competencies in a way that is inclusive to the multiple ways in which individuals can practice evaluation; therefore, the goal of the competency set is to be applicable across all evaluators (AEA, 2017). What has not been explored in the development of the AEAEC is how other professions structure their competency sets to better understand potential ways the AEAEC could be structured to better communicate the needed interpersonal competencies to those in the field and promote use. Phase Two explored this through document review to uncover ways that other professions structure their competency sets. The structure of a competency set consists of how the contents are organized, which can include arrangement or groupings of content, level of detail, and amount of detail. Analyzing the

structure of existing competency sets from other professions allowed for the identification of different ways competency sets can be structured.

Search and Selection of Competency Sets

An internet search using the Google search engine was completed to identify existing professional competency sets. An internet search was an appropriate way to identify existing professional competency sets because it is a common place to disseminate this type of resource to those in a profession. The search was conducted using the terms “professional competencies” and “professional competencies associations.” These two terms were used in the search because the goal was to identify competency sets developed and used by professional associations. In order for competency sets to be included in this first round of identification, they had to be (a) developed, or endorsed, and used by a professional membership association, (b) serving members in the United States, (c) for a profession that includes practice that requires interaction between the practitioner and stakeholders, (d) includes a form of individual practice, and (e) includes the possibility to work as a team with others in the profession. Since the draft AEA competencies were developed and will be used by the American Evaluation Association, the membership association for evaluators in the United States, the first two criteria were used to ensure that competencies would be used for a similar purpose and in a similar context. The last three criteria were also required for inclusion to ensure that practice within the profession was similar to the practice of evaluation where practitioners are practicing in a way that requires the use of interpersonal competencies. A practitioner within a profession would be required to use interpersonal competencies as

they interact with stakeholders, work in a team with others in the profession, and practice as an individual.

As a result of the search, 25 sets of professional competencies were identified that met the criteria for inclusion (13 using the search terms “professional competencies” and 12 using the search terms “professional competencies associations”). With 25 sets of professional competencies identified using the two search terms, I stopped searching for additional competency sets and began reviewing the structure of each competency set identified in the search. Since the purpose of this study is exploratory, the next step was to see what structures emerged from the sets identified and determine if additional searching was necessary or if the competency sets identified were sufficient in providing insights into ways competency sets could be structured.

Analysis

To identify the competency structures used by other professional associations, a qualitative content analysis was conducted using inductive category formation. The content analysis was completed at a high level where specific text was not examined, but rather the overall structural organization and components included in the document were examined.

Inductive category formation. To analyze the competency sets, an inductive approach was taken to form categories. First, each set was reviewed individually to understand how it was structured and to create or assign a category code. Reviewing the structure included examining what type of content was provided within the competency set and how that content was being organized. I documented how each competency set

was structured. If another competency set had a similar structure to one already reviewed, it was assigned the same category code. If the structure of the competency set was different from all of the previously reviewed competency sets, a new category code was created. Based on the exploratory purpose of this study and the identification of competency sets with differing structures, I did not search for additional competency sets to include in this review after the initial search. Since structure themes emerged and were repeated during my review, the competency sets included in this study provide informative examples of how other professions are structuring their competencies and could be used to explore further how the evaluation profession could structure the interpersonal competencies.

In addition to coding each competency set's structure, the content of the competency set document was reviewed for the stated uses of the competencies. It is important to understand the use of a competency set, as this should inform the structure. This information would be useful when interpreting how the draft AEAEC interpersonal competencies could be structured to promote use. Early developers of competencies for program evaluators identified the challenges that can be addressed by having a set of professional competencies, including (a) incompetent practice due to no standardized licensing or credentialing, (b) difficulty in identifying qualified evaluators, (c) difficulty in identifying professional development needs and opportunities, (d) developing or selecting quality curriculum, and (e) the lack of research in the field (Stevahn et al., 2005a, p. 44). Based on these challenges, Stevahn et al. (2005a) provided four potential

Minnesota so all interviews could be conducted in-person. Also, since amount of evaluation experience would potentially influence an individual's ability to speak to the research questions, participants must have practiced evaluation for a minimum of 10 years; this will ensure that participants have practiced long enough to draw on multiple experiences of using interpersonal competencies in practice. Individuals selected to participate also needed to interact with evaluation stakeholders such as program managers and staff, decision makers, and participants as well as other evaluation team members through their practice of evaluation. In addition, they needed to have experience supervising evaluators new to practice and watching them develop competencies for evaluation practice.

To identify experienced evaluators who met the established criteria, recommendations were gathered from my doctoral committee who are all involved in the evaluation community in Minnesota and have relationships with experienced evaluators. As a group, my committee generated a list of experienced evaluators who met the criteria for participation in the study. From there, committee members reviewed the list individually to identify any additional experienced evaluators and reviewed the settings in which potential participants practiced evaluation in to ensure diversity among interviewees. Since the context in which evaluators practice can be diverse, when selecting participants from the list, I ensured there was diversity in the type of evaluator (i.e., internal or external) and setting in which they work (i.e., consulting firm, higher education, government agency, or school district) to make sure that I was including different perspectives and experiences. Potential participants were contacted through

inform the first research question. A total of ten sets of evaluator competencies developed by associations were identified and included in the comparative analysis. Table 4 shows the associations that had a set of evaluator competencies, the title of the competency set, the year the competencies were established or revised, and the domains within the competency sets that included interpersonal competencies (Table 4).

Table 11

<i>Competencies coded as “facilitate constructive and culturally responsive interactions”</i>	
Competency Set	Interpersonal Competency Item
<i>AES Evaluators’ Professional Learning Competency Framework</i>	Evaluators attend to issues of diversity and culture throughout all communication planning and processes Evaluators use facilitation skills (group work), interpersonal skills (individual and teams) and conflict resolution skills to elicit robust qualitative input to evaluation data
<i>CES Competencies for Canadian Evaluation Practice</i>	5.9 Attends to issues of diversity and culture 5.6 Uses facilitation skills (group work)
<i>EES Evaluation Capabilities Framework</i>	2.24 Demonstrates gender awareness and cultural sensitivity Knows how to engage constructively with all stakeholders
<i>IDEAS Competencies for Development Evaluation, Evaluators, Managers, and Commissioners</i>	1.5 Displays appropriate cross-cultural competence and cultural sensitivity.
<i>UKES Evaluation Capabilities Framework</i>	2.24 Demonstrates cultural and gender awareness
<i>UNEG Evaluation Competency Framework</i>	Has the ability to employ mechanisms to engage users and beneficiaries in evaluation processes using techniques that support open and honest dialogue

The evaluator is able to collaborate with others. The eighth competency in the draft AEAEC interpersonal domain is “the competent evaluator collaborates and engages in teamwork” (AEA, 2106, p. 2). “Collaborate with others” was used to code competency items related to this theme across the competency sets. Six sets of competencies included a competency item related to this theme resulting in six competency items with this code (Table 12).

competency item for each code. [The competency set number used in Table 16 corresponds to its number listed in Table 4.]

were labeled to indicate the common theme across the competency items within the domain. In addition to the domain label, seven competency sets also included a description of the domain. These descriptions provided additional information for the reader to understand the grouping of the competencies by stating what is included in the domain. Four competency sets further grouped competencies within a domain to create subdomains. Competency sets that included domain descriptions or subdomains are identified in Table 19. [For the remaining tables in this chapter, the use of competencies letter used in the table corresponds to letter listed in Table 17.]

Levels of expertise. Five sets of competencies were structured by levels of expertise (Table 21). Levels of expertise are the progressive levels of knowledge, skills, and abilities that are required to practice competently within professional roles with increasing responsibility. Across competency sets using the level of expertise structure, competency items are grouped into topical domains, but how the domains are presented by level of expertise can differ. Competency sets using this structure are each described next.

The ACPA-College Student Educators International and NASPA-Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education *Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Educators* are, at the highest level, organized by topical domains (ACPA-College Student Educators International and NASPA-Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education [ACPA NASPA], 2015). Each domain includes a description of the domain and then presents competencies grouped by foundational, intermediate, and advanced levels. Competency items at the foundational level are a necessary foundation upon which intermediate and advanced level competences can be built (ACPA NASPA, 2015). If individuals possess the competency items within a domain, they can be reasonably confident that they are proficient for that domain within the given level (ACPA NASPA, 2015). An individual also may be in multiple levels at one time. For example, an individual may have not mastered all of the foundational competencies, but has mastered other competencies at the intermediate or advanced level (ACPA NASPA, 2015). Due to this, developers of the competencies point out that because an individual has met some intermediate or advanced level domains, this should not be confused with intermediate or

advanced level capability (ACPA NASPA, 2015). Also, the advancement from one level to another should not be equated with years of experience or job title as these do not guarantee increased proficiency in competencies (ACPA NASPA, 2015). Developers of competencies included several potential uses that would assist student affairs educators to succeed academically and professionally, including to develop learning outcomes, set expectations for graduates, self-assessment of proficiency levels, guide professional development selections, develop position descriptions, conduct performance evaluations, and advocate for the profession (ACPA NASPA, 2015).

As described in the previous section, the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) *AACRAO Core Professional Competencies* are structured by level of expertise and job function (AACRAO, 2015). Competency items are divided by the core professional competencies needed by all practicing within the profession, and three job function specific competency areas and are then grouped into topical domains. Within each of these topical domains, competency items are presented by level of expertise, which include entry level, intermediate level, and expert level. No information is provided on the intended use of the *AACRAO Core Professional Competencies*.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) *NAEYC Standards for Initial and Advanced Early Childhood Professional Preparation Programs* are at the highest level structured by two levels of expertise titled the Initial Standards and Advanced Standards (National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC], 2015). The Initial Standards are the expectations for first time early

childhood licensure and positions in early learning settings that do not require licensure (NAEYC, 2015). The Advanced Standards are the expectations for advanced roles in the early childhood profession, including accomplished or mentor teachers, program administrators, teacher educators, researchers, and policy makers (NAEYC, 2015, p. 9). For each level of expertise there are topical domains called standards. The standards are the same across both levels. Each standard includes a short description of the standard of what a well prepared practitioner should know and be able to do (NAEYC, 2015). Within each standard is a list of competency items, called key elements, that break out the components of each standard and focus on what practitioners should know, understand, and be able to do (NAEYC, 2015). Supporting explanation is also included, which gives a rationale of why the standard is important for teacher education programs and early childhood professional preparation. Although NAEYC uses the terminology of standards and key elements, throughout the *Standards for Initial and Advanced Early Childhood Professional Preparation Programs* the term *competencies* is used to define what the standards are and thus have been included in this review (NAEYC, 2015). One intended use of the competency set is curriculum and training development for higher education accreditation systems and professional development programs. The competencies also set the expectations for those preparing to enter the early childhood profession and support professional credentialing structures (NAEYC, 2015).

The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) *NACE's Professional Competencies for College and University Career Services Practitioners* are organized by level of expertise and job function (NACE, 2013). At the highest level, the

competency set is structured by functional areas, as described in the previous section. Within each functional area, the competency items are presented by level of expertise and grouped into topical domains. The levels of expertise include basic, intermediate, and advanced. NACE describes the levels of expertise as the progressive levels of knowledge, skills, and abilities required to be successfully in roles of increasing responsibility within the profession (NACE, 2013). Individuals in mid- or upper-level management positions would be expected to operate at the intermediate or advanced levels, and new or entry positions would function at the basic level (NACE, 2013). NACE points out that individuals functioning at a specific level of expertise should also be able to demonstrate the competency items in the levels below where they are currently functioning (NACE, 2013).

NIRSA: Leaders in Collegiate Recreation *Professional Competencies for Leaders in Collegiate Recreation* are structured, at the highest level, by topical domains that include a rationale for inclusion of the domain (NIRSA: Leaders in Collegiate Recreation [NIRSA], 2009). Within each domain are several topical subdomains. Competency items within each subdomain are presented by level of expertise that includes basic, intermediate, and advanced. NIRSA points out that levels of expertise are not tied to position titles and that individuals may find themselves at the different levels depending on their area of responsibility (NIRSA, 2009). Although practitioners in the profession should be able to achieve the basic level, NIRSA does not expect that individuals will work towards being at the advanced level for all competencies (NIRSA, 2009). Instead, an individual's work experience, education, development opportunities, and interests will

contribute to placement and growth within the competency set (NIRSA, 2009). The intended use of the competencies is to provide a framework for ongoing competency-based professional development and to inspire the purposeful acquisition of new skills (NIRSA, 2009). This includes the guidance on the development of training and identifying professional development needs. In addition, the competencies can be used to recruit and select candidates and assess and manage employee performance (NIRSA, 2009).

Developmental levels. Two sets of competencies were structured by developmental levels (Table 22). Developmental levels are the stage that individuals are in during their training or education in a profession. For both competency sets with this label, the American Psychological Association (APA) *Competency Benchmarks for Professional Psychology* and the Council of Counseling Psychology Training Programs (CCPTP) *Counseling Psychology Core Competencies*, developmental levels included readiness for practicum, readiness for internship, and readiness for entry into practice (American Psychological Association [APA], 2011; Council of Counseling Psychology Training Programs [CCPTP], 2013). At the highest level, competency items are grouped into topical domains. Competency items are listed within each domain and behavioral anchors are provided by developmental level. The behavioral anchors are what would demonstrate attainment of a competency at a given developmental level and are the minimum skills necessary to proceed to the next developmental level (APA, 2011; CCPTP, 2013). For example, in the domain “Relationships,” one competency is “Affective Skills,” students who are in the practicum level would demonstrate they are ready for internship if they exhibit behaviors related to “displays affective skills” (APA, 2011, p. 5). Students in the internship level would demonstrate they are ready for entry to practice if they exhibit behaviors related to “negotiates differences and handles conflict satisfactorily; provides effective feedback to others and receives feedback nondefensively” (APA, 2011, p. 5). Students preparing for entry into practice would demonstrate they are ready for practice if they exhibit behaviors related to “manages difficult communication; possesses advanced interpersonal skills” (APA, 2011).

The overall structure of both competency sets is similar since the *CCPTP Counseling Psychology Core Competencies* were adapted from the *APA Competency Benchmarks for Professional Psychology*. Since the *APA Competency Benchmarks for Professional Psychology* were intended to serve as a modifiable template for training programs to identify the competencies needed for specific psychology specialties, they were adapted to include additional areas specific to counseling psychology in the development of the *CCPTP Counseling Psychology Core Competencies* (CCPTP, 2013). One difference between the competency sets is that the *CCPTP Counseling Psychology Core Competencies* groups competency items into topical domains, and within the topical domains competency items are further grouped into foundational, functional, or organizational competency categories. The intend use of these competency sets is to be a resource for education and training programs in professional psychology to set expectations for graduates, develop curriculum, and assess student learning outcomes; therefore, structuring competencies around developmental levels is appropriate so that curriculum and assessment are aligned and there is a standard way to identify when students are ready for advancement (APA, 2011).

list of interpersonal competencies identified by professional associations as essential to the practice of evaluation. From this list and any additional competencies they identified, interviewees chose the three most important competencies and explained what makes each one important for practice. During this discussion, interviewees also explained whether they felt any competencies on the list should not be included as an interpersonal competency for evaluators.

Overall, interviewees identified 10 interpersonal competencies as essential or most important to their practice of evaluation. All 10 interpersonal competencies identified were included in the comparative analysis of interpersonal competencies for evaluators identified by professional associations (presented in Chapter Four), shown in Table 24. The interviewee responses for each of these competencies are further described in this section.

interviewee noted that establishing a relationship of trust between the evaluator and an evaluation client begins with the first interactions where you show respect, listen carefully, and demonstrate that you understand their needs. Another interviewee spoke about the importance of entering every encounter with sincere interest and mutual respect to establish and build relationships with evaluation stakeholders. In addition to establishing the relationship with evaluation stakeholders at the beginning of an evaluation, one interviewee mentioned the importance of continuing to build that relationship throughout the evaluation process and stated, “I think the relationship piece is about asking better questions, conducting an evaluation that really will be useful, and helping to facilitate the use of that information because it doesn't happen automatically” (Participant 11).

Several interviewees chose “build relationships” as one of the most important interpersonal competencies because they view the competency as subsuming other interpersonal competencies, including communicating effectively, using appropriate social skills, collaborating with others, negotiating, interacting ethically, listening to understand and engage diverse perspectives, facilitating constructive and culturally responsive interactions, and demonstrating professional credibility. The rationale for this competency subsuming other competencies was that in order to build relationships, evaluators need to use all of these other interpersonal competencies. One interviewee explained how the competency of “build relationships” includes the use of other interpersonal competencies:

Through building those relationships you're learning people's perspectives, you're building that credibility, you're building the trust, you're coming to a deeper

thought partner to work through interpersonal challenges. One interviewee spoke specifically about how discussions with mentors have helped to ensure they are interacting ethically in their evaluation practice when ethically challenging situations arise.

To develop their interpersonal competencies, a couple of interviewees also mentioned the importance of reflecting on their practice. The reflection process was described by these interviewees as reflecting on and learning from interactions and applying those learnings to future interactions. One interviewee explained how they reflect on their practice to help develop their interpersonal competencies:

I spend time after interactions looking at what went well, what didn't, how things went, doing follow up to clarify things. You learn by being an evaluator of your interpersonal skills, making that part of the learning agenda, engaging in reflective practice. (Participant 6)

A couple of interviewees mentioned that other professions they have worked in have required similar interpersonal competencies. These interviewees indicated they were able to develop interpersonal competencies in other professional settings, and when they started their evaluation practice they found them to be relevant and applicable to the evaluation context.

Formal education

Formal education was another way in which interviewees indicated they developed interpersonal competencies. Most interviewees cited learning and developing a few specific interpersonal competencies through their higher education experiences, both as an undergraduate and graduate student. Of the 15 interpersonal competencies for

development opportunities. Most of these competencies were mentioned by one interviewee and included: (a) build relationships; (b) listen to understand and engage diverse perspectives; (c) communicate effectively; (d) facilitate constructive and culturally responsive interactions; and (e) demonstrate gender awareness.

Life experiences

A couple of interviewees mentioned life experiences that allowed them to develop their interpersonal competencies for evaluation practice. One interviewee developed competencies around communicating effectively, building relationships, using appropriate social skills, and negotiating through their family interactions. Another interviewee spoke about their experiences in the Peace Corps and how they developed their ability interact with others in a culturally competent way. These interviewees acknowledged that general interpersonal competencies can be developed through other life experiences that can then be applied to evaluation practice.

Across interviewees, most interpersonal competencies were identified as being developed in more than one way. Only one interpersonal competency's development, "be an evaluation champion," was not identified by any interviewees. The following table shows the interpersonal competencies and the way it was reportedly developed by one or more interviewee.

Another interviewee also provided an example of how an evaluator’s inability to apply the appropriate interpersonal competencies in a given evaluation situation can lead to distrust among stakeholders:

Evaluation is a charged situation that comes with lots baggage so, whether it's an interview or design session, folks are attuned or picking up signals or carefully reading how the evaluator is coming across, what the evaluator's agenda is, how they're presenting themselves, making decisions about how much to trust them, and figuring out what the game is. So to the extent that they pick up signals that the evaluator is working on an agenda that is not one that they buy into, or that they're suspicious of, or isn't sensitive to them, anything that's off putting will create distrust and interfere with the authenticity of the evaluator. It's up to the evaluator to set the stage for that because that's the active part of being active, interactive, and adaptive. The evaluator, both from a power position and from a knowledge position and expectations position, usually is the first one to have to act and to set the stage. So how and what gets communicated will affect the tone and the trust and the agenda. (Participant 6)

As a result of not getting stakeholder buy-in and trust, some interviewees noted that the evaluation results can go unused. Intended users are no longer interested in the evaluation findings, and there can be a disconnect between the data and what is being evaluated, as one interviewee explained:

I think the biggest danger is the separation and the gap between results and program. They'll [stakeholders] give you the data, but the data is [sic] independent of the program because they're done. . . and the evaluation becomes a task rather than an opportunity to grow, change, innovate. I think those are the sad moments for me. Well, the data is [sic] dead, right? It should be living. It should be something that challenges a system or disrupts something or helps them [stakeholders] be different. And it should be living, but it isn't. And why go through the motions, why waste people's time, why waste your own time, why do this if it's going to be dead data? (Participant 2)

Another interviewee shared an experience where not utilizing the interpersonal competencies needed in the evaluation process led to the evaluation findings being not useful in all the ways the organization would have liked to use them:

I need to understand what problems people are trying to solve through evaluation so that I'm addressing those problems. So sometimes that can be very hidden for people. I still remember a time when we were working with [an organization] and from the beginning, I thought the evaluation was all about them responding to their federal grant and being able to meet the requirements of their federal grant as well as doing some learning from this pilot initiative that they were doing. I failed to understand that an important audience for them was their board, which is appointed by the governor, and so I didn't prepare information in a way that they could effectively answer questions for their board. I think that put them in a really difficult situation. And while they were satisfied with the learning they got from the evaluation and their ability to report to their federal funder, it caused them stress and anxiety in their workplace. (Participant 3)

If the evaluation findings go unused, the evaluation has failed. As one interviewee explained:

The biggest thing is the evaluation will fail if they don't trust, they don't respect you, you're not listening, you're not hearing them, they're frustrated, then it's done. I mean there's nothing more you can do. (Participant 5)

Ability to Develop and Apply Interpersonal Competencies

Interviewees were asked to talk about whether they felt an individual can purposefully develop the interpersonal competencies essential to evaluation practice.

Most interviewees responded that people can develop all the necessary interpersonal competencies for evaluation practice. Some interviewees acknowledged that it can be more of a challenge for some people because it may not come naturally to them. A couple of these interviewees noted that, to do so, the individual needs to be open to learning the needed interpersonal competencies. As one interviewee commented:

Anything can be developed. You just have to be open to it. And sometimes I think you almost have to go against your nature. And those are the hardest to learn, but it can be done. I believe that anybody can learn. (Participant 2)

A couple of interviewees also noted that individuals who need to develop their interpersonal competencies might need different strategies for learning these competencies. One interviewee explained:

Maybe it means that people don't have naturally strong social skills, but even people that [sic] don't, I think they can learn it over time. And they might need a different strategy, like they might need a coach or a mentor. It might not be something they can learn from reading or classes and workshops, but they still can learn it. (Participant 3)

Another interviewee commented that individuals may need support in developing their interpersonal competencies for practice:

It's going to be a steeper learning curve, a more challenging situation for some. . . It's all learnable stuff. The key thing is you have to be in a situation where you receive feedback on the skills that you're good at and the skills that you're not so good at, and that is almost always lacking. (Participant 8)

A few interviewees also spoke about how it may never be comfortable for some individuals to apply specific interpersonal competencies. For some interviewees, they thought that these individuals could still learn how to apply them in practice. On the other hand, some interviewees commented that there may be factors an individual cannot overcome that would prevent them from being able to apply the interpersonal competency needed in a given situation. One interviewee explained their perspective of how an individual could learn to apply interpersonal competencies:

I think if you really want to try to develop any of these things, I think a person could. It might not ever be your comfort zone and it might be a struggle for you, but you could still try to work on it. If it really is an area that you really felt like you wanted to grow more, you could. . . . To say I'm not so good at negotiation, and I really need to figure out how to do a better job of that, and I am purposely going to go try and figure out a way to do it. So I feel like if someone has that within themselves, and they're willing to take that leap, they can try to. They could work on anyone one of these [interpersonal competencies]. (Participant 12)

For interviewees who thought that there could be cases where an individual would be unable to apply the needed interpersonal competencies, personality traits were cited as the barrier. This was more of an exception where some individuals may have personality traits that make it so uncomfortable to apply a particular interpersonal competency that they would be unable to do so. As an example of this, one interviewee commented:

Some people are so shy that it just is going to be hard for them to create a comfortable, interactive situation. I mean their shyness can become too much of a factor in an interpersonal interaction. I recognize that some aspects of interpersonal competencies are a factor of personality that are deeply embedded. (Participant 10)

Structuring the Interpersonal Competencies to Promote Use

To inform how the evaluation field could promote the use of interpersonal competencies identified as essential for the practice of evaluation by intended users, interviewees were asked about their ideas for structuring or presenting the interpersonal competencies. Interviewees suggested a few changes to the structure or presentation of the interpersonal competencies to increase or encourage use, including grouping individual competency items together within the domain, adding more description, and creating a graphic of the interpersonal competencies.

Some interviewees commented that they liked the brevity of the interpersonal competency items and saw an opportunity to further organize the list by grouping similar or related competency items together. This suggestion is similar to how other professions further grouped competencies into subdomains. A couple of interviewees suggested that there could be some natural groupings of competencies that would create a few subcategories under interpersonal competencies. An example provided was that one

potential category could be called “core relationships” under which the competency items of “build relationships” and “use appropriate social skills” could be listed. The reason behind the categorization was to reduce and organize the information presented in a way that is easy for an individual to process and see connections.

While some interviewees appreciated the brevity of the interpersonal competencies, others suggested that providing more description alongside the interpersonal competency items would improve use. A couple of interviewees suggested that the interpersonal competency items include information on the importance of the competency such as how each interpersonal competency enhances the quality of evaluation practice and the implications when these competencies are lacking. One interviewee commented:

I think it would be helpful to present it in a way that shows how this is going to make you do your job better, how this is going to make you better as an evaluator, how this might play out in practice if you don't have these competencies. As real as you can make it, as concrete as it can be made, I think that's helpful because these all are really important things that people really need to be thinking about and, if you can make that “what's in it for me,” make that real for people, and make them see that, this really would affect their ability to be an effective evaluator. (Participant 12)

Another interviewee had a similar suggestion and noted that not only would further information improve the quality of evaluations, but also the utility:

I don't know if this is borne out by data, but my observation is that many practitioners are practicing utilization-focused evaluation and would be motivated to care about interpersonal competencies if they saw that they would enhance the quality of their evaluation work or, for those that [sic] are using utilization-focused approaches, that it would enhance the utility of their work. I think in many sectors, not just in evaluation, in many fields interpersonal competencies can kind of be looked at as an afterthought, like the sixth competency area and instead of the first. I worry that without really tying it to the quality of their

evaluation work and the depth of utilization they can get from it, people won't attend to the interpersonal competencies. (Participant 3)

Creating a graphic that visually displays the interpersonal competencies was also suggested as a way to promote use by a couple of interviewees. Interviewees provided general ideas on how the visual representation could be structured, which included showing how the interpersonal competencies relate to each other or how they relate to other evaluator competencies to create a whole evaluator. Another interviewee provided a similar example of a visual that shows the interpersonal role of an evaluator and elaborated:

I think it's got to be more than a list. . . . We've got to disseminate the stuff [interpersonal competencies] in ways so you can print it off. It's got nice colors. It talks about these things. Evaluators can put them up in their offices. I think it's a way to disseminate it. (Participant 9)

Developing Supplemental Resources

Most interviewees suggested developing supplemental resources and tools that would help evaluators, educators, and employers in understanding, developing, and using the interpersonal competencies. Some interviewees suggested developing scenarios that allow individuals or groups to work through an interpersonal situation an evaluator may encounter in the process of conducting an evaluation. When presented with the scenario, an individual would need to identify and apply the appropriate interpersonal competencies for the given situation. Interviewees suggested that this could be done through discussion or acting out their response to the situation. In discussing the benefits of scenarios, one interviewee explained that being competent in the interpersonal

competencies is about situation recognition and applying the competencies to the appropriate situation, noting that this is a continuous cycle of observing and adapting:

People who get recognized as great experts have a capacity to figure out what's going on and adapt what they're doing, and the answers emerge from the situation. Great experts don't go in with a package, they don't have off-the-shelf stuff, they don't have a routine set of things that they do. What they have is some heuristic for understanding the situation. They have some way of making sense of it. (Participant 6)

Due to this, the interviewee pointed out that scenarios are beneficial because you can develop and learn to apply interpersonal competencies by practicing:

There may be situations for particular organizations you know people are going to go into, where you can do some rehearsing of interpersonal skills . . . so if you're evaluating a hugely controversial issue - abortion, immigration, segregation - where you know that these are lightning rod issues, they are going to be politically charged, there are going to be angry people, then there are ways to prepare. You don't want to go into those situations unprepared. . . . There are some ways that folks can figure out how that fits them that they can deal with that. It's not like there's not stuff that you can rehearse and get trained, but on that they're there quite situation-specific. (Participant 6)

Another interviewee also noted the importance of reflection in the process of developing interpersonal competencies and commented that there is value for an individual to reflect on how they addressed the interpersonal scenario and critique their own response or get feedback from others.

Some interviewees built upon the idea of developing scenarios to creating a guide that would assist in the development of interpersonal competencies. Individual learners or educators charged with developing curriculum could use a guidebook. One interviewee pointed out that a guidebook would be useful for cross-referencing training content with the interpersonal competencies and providing information on how to address some of these competencies in a training. Another interviewee suggested creating a guidebook

similar to the *Program Evaluation Standards* developed by The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (Yarbrough et al., 2010). This book provides an overview, guidelines, common errors, and illustrative examples of each standard. This interviewee went on to suggest that there may be an opportunity to build on the existing book's content to incorporate interpersonal competencies:

The standards book takes each one of the standards and does case examples of the standards in practice and has the different kinds of cases that the standards would apply to, what would you do, how would the standards apply in these different scenarios. I haven't looked at that for years, but it might actually be an interesting cross-fertilization to look at the standards scenarios and see if you could infer particular interpersonal competencies out of the scenarios. . . Look at which ones especially highlight particular kinds of interpersonal competencies and build on that. But that helps keep the interpersonal competencies connected to context, to situations, and to keep them from just being generic. I don't think of myself as generically competent in these things or think of them as generic competencies. I really do think that they're very much situational and contextual, and understanding that and knowing how to figure that out is the entry point into which ones to emphasize and build on. (Participant 6)

Another interviewee noted that a resource similar to the AEA Guiding Principles Training Package, which consists of a facilitator's guide, PowerPoint presentation, and case studies, would be helpful to teach or develop interpersonal competencies:

Several years ago, the AEA came out with the *Guiding Principles for Evaluators*, and they had a slide deck and activities that went with it. That was more of a self-study to give an overview to the guiding principles. I think that could be an effective tool kit for students to get an overview during their more academic preparation. So something that's structured kind of like that so they can understand [, for example,] why their professor is asking about a legislative conflict as they are designing an evaluation strategy. So to have something that's an overview that will help provide some context. (Participant 3)

In addition to tools and resources for evaluators and educators, interviewees suggested tools and resources that would help employers make use of the interpersonal competencies when hiring, reviewing performance, and setting professional development

strategies. For the process of hiring an evaluator, a couple of interviewees recommended developing resources employers could use in the process of interviewing candidates for evaluation positions. One idea was to have a list of potential interview questions that would help an employer understand whether the candidate has the interpersonal competencies needed for evaluation practice. Another idea was to develop mock situations that present a problem to the candidate that involves the use interpersonal competencies to solve. The candidate would need to address how they would approach the problem to demonstrate whether they are aware of and can apply the interpersonal competencies needed. A couple of interviewees suggested creating a resource that includes a checklist or tips for hiring an evaluator that could be disseminated to employers of evaluators. One interviewee who suggested this type of resource noted that employers are busy so the resource would need to be short, focusing on the key things they should look for in a potential hire’s interpersonal competencies.

To assist employers of evaluators in the supervision and further development of interpersonal competencies, some interviewees also suggested developing resources that would help in reviewing the performance of and providing feedback to evaluation employees and to set professional development goals and strategies. One interviewee commented that these resources would be helpful because sometimes the person supervising an evaluator has no evaluation knowledge and would need support in how to use the interpersonal competencies as a tool to support their supervision and development of the evaluator they supervise.

Awareness of the Interpersonal Competencies

Although the discussion was focused on how to structure or present the interpersonal competencies, about half of the interviewees also mentioned the need to generate awareness of the interpersonal competencies. It was important to have the competencies structured or presented in ways that would promote use, but interviewees also expressed a need to let potential users know about the interpersonal competencies. Interviewees spoke about different audiences that needed to be aware of the interpersonal competencies required for evaluation practice, including students of evaluation, current evaluators, employers, clients, and other evaluation stakeholders. Across these audiences, interviewees spoke about the need for them to know that there are interpersonal competencies for evaluation practice and that they are an integral part of the practice.

One interviewee commented about how awareness is the first step toward use:

The awareness is a huge, huge aspect. I mean people just being aware that interpersonal competencies are a large part of the work that we do, I think, is a really good first step. And what those things [interpersonal competencies] are from a general standpoint. (Participant 7)

Another interviewee expressed the need to make evaluators care about the interpersonal competencies and a way to do that is through increasing awareness:

Here I am a program evaluator and I don't know about it. I mean it's not that I don't know, I probably don't care. You have to make people care and I think the only way you can make people care is to make sure that it gets into evaluation training programs. (Participant 9).

Some interviewees spoke about how increasing awareness also conveys what is expected of evaluators. As an example, one interviewee commented:

I think this is obvious, I guess, but it [interpersonal competencies] has to be talked about as an important skill and a part of doing evaluation work. Evaluation work

is interpersonal. We [evaluators] do a lot of number crunching, but over half, 60, 70 percent of our work is interpersonal in all kinds of ways... So you have to tell anybody that [sic] wants to be an evaluator that this is going to be a part of your life, and, in the end, you need to be able to deal with a lot of different kinds of people, you need to be a good listener, you need to be a clear communicator, you need to be able to control your emotions in difficult situations. (Participant 10)

Summary

This chapter presented the results from interviews with experienced evaluators.

To summarize, the interpersonal competencies interviewees identified as essential to their evaluation practice included the evaluator is able to: (a) interact ethically, (b) build relationships, (c) use appropriate social skills, (d) listen to understand and engage diverse perspectives, (e) address issues of privilege and power dynamics, (f) communicate effectively, (g) facilitate constructive and culturally responsive interactions, (h) resolve conflict, (i) build evaluation capacity, and (j) demonstrate professional credibility. The ways in which experienced evaluators identified developing these competencies were through the practice of evaluation, formal education experiences, professional development opportunities, and life experiences.

When hiring an evaluator, all interviewees stated that interpersonal competencies are an important factor in their decision to hire. The specific competencies they assessed included: (a) build relationships; (b) use appropriate social skills; (c) listen to understand and engage diverse perspectives; (d) communicate effectively; (e) facilitate constructive and culturally responsive interactions; (f) collaborate with others; and (g) resolve conflict. Interviewees also identified the interpersonal competencies typically still in need of development for new evaluators, including: (a) build relationships; (b) use appropriate social skills; (c) listen to understand and engage diverse perspectives; (d) communicate

effectively; (e) facilitate constructive and culturally responsive interactions; (f) negotiate; (g) address issues of privilege and power dynamics; and (h) demonstrate professional credibility.

To promote use, interviewees provided suggestions on how to the structure of the interpersonal competencies. These included grouping individual competency items together within the domain, adding more description, and creating a graphic of the interpersonal competencies. Interviewees also suggested supplemental resources that would help evaluators, educators, and employers in understanding, developing, and using the interpersonal competencies.

In the next chapter, a discussion of the results from Chapter Four and Chapter Five is presented. In addition, the implication of the findings on the field of evaluation and direction for further research are discussed.

Chapter Six: Discussion, Implications, and Conclusion

Chapter Six discusses the findings of the study. First, Table 26 presents a brief summary of the findings. The next section discusses the findings from the comparative analysis of interpersonal competencies for evaluators, review of competency structures from other professions, and interviews with experienced evaluators. This section also discusses how the findings contribute to the literature and implications for the evaluation field. The final sections discuss the implications of findings on future research and closes with concluding thoughts.

Table 26

Summary of Findings by Research Question

Research Question	Summary of Findings
<p>What interpersonal competencies are essential to the practice of evaluation?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fifteen interpersonal competencies were identified, including the evaluator’s ability to: (a) interact ethically, (b) build relationships, (c) use appropriate social skills, (d) listen to understand and engage diverse perspectives, (e) address issues of privilege and power dynamics, (f) communicate effectively, (g) facilitate constructive and culturally responsive interactions, (h) collaborate with others, (i) negotiate, (j) resolve conflict, (k) be an evaluation champion, (l) build evaluation capacity, (m) create a favorable working climate, (n) demonstrate professional credibility, and (o) demonstrate gender awareness. • All interpersonal competency items included in the draft AEAEC were included in competency sets from other professional associations or were identified as being essential interpersonal competencies by interviewees. • Five additional interpersonal competency items, not currently present in the draft AEAEC, were discovered.
<p>In what ways have experienced evaluators developed the interpersonal competencies identified as essential to the practice of evaluation?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experienced evaluators reported four ways in which they developed their interpersonal competencies for practice: (a) through evaluation practice itself, (b) formal education experiences, (c) professional development opportunities, and (d) life experiences. • Individual interpersonal competency item development by experienced evaluators often occurred through a combination of these ways.

Research Question	Summary of Findings
<p>What interpersonal competency development needs exist for new evaluators?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpersonal competencies are an important factor in the decision to hire an evaluator, and experienced evaluators reported looking for the following interpersonal competencies in candidates: (a) build relationships; (b) use appropriate social skills; (c) listen to understand and engage diverse perspectives; (d) communicate effectively; (e) facilitate constructive and culturally responsive interactions; (f) collaborate with others; and (g) resolve conflict. • Experienced evaluators also identified the interpersonal competencies that typically still needed development for new evaluators. These included the first five competencies identified as important to hiring (i.e., build relationships; use appropriate social skills; listen to understand and engage diverse perspectives; communicate effectively; and facilitate constructive and culturally responsive interactions). In addition, they identified three competencies needing development: (a) address issues of privilege and power dynamics; (b) negotiate; and (c) demonstrate professional credibility.
<p>What are the potential ways to structure or present the interpersonal competencies to promote use?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four competency structures emerged from the review: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Categorized competencies, where competency items were grouped into topical competency domains with no additional organizing within the competency set. This is how the draft AEAEC is currently structured. b. Job function, where competency items were organized by the different job functions an individual could have within the profession. c. Levels of expertise, where competency items were organized around the progressive levels of knowledge, skills, abilities, or dispositions an individual needs to practice competently within professional roles with increasing responsibility. d. The developmental level structure, which organizes competency items by the specific stages individuals are in during their training or education in a profession, such as a practicum, internship, or practice. • Experienced evaluators provided additional ways the interpersonal competencies could be structured, including grouping individual competency items together within the domain to assist with processing and seeing connections within the information presented, adding more description to convey the importance of each competency item, and creating a graphic of the interpersonal competencies to show relationships between and among competency items.

Discussion and Implications of Findings

Essential Interpersonal Competencies

Through the development and evolution of the evaluator competencies in the United States context, much effort has gone into determining what interpersonal competencies evaluators need for high quality practice (AEA, 2017; King et al., 2001, Stevahn et al., 2005a; Wilcox, 2012). Adding to this work, this study compared the draft AEAEC interpersonal competencies to 10 other sets of evaluator competencies developed by associations throughout the world to uncover the alignment among the interpersonal competencies identified as essential to evaluation practice. In addition, interviews with experienced evaluators who have extensive experience allowed for the inclusion of in-depth practitioner perspectives on their own evaluation practice and the interpersonal competencies that have been essential. The comparative analysis and interviews resulted in the identification of 15 interpersonal competencies essential to the practice of evaluation (Table 26).

Overall, the findings from this study further support the inclusion of the current interpersonal competencies in the draft AEAEC. All of the interpersonal competencies included in the draft AEAEC were also identified through the comparative analysis or interviews. Of the 10 interpersonal competencies included in the draft AEAEC, only one was not included in any other competency sets: “address issues of privilege and power dynamics.” Regardless, several interviewees identified it as an essential competency for practice, confirming the importance of its inclusion in the draft AEAEC. Through interviews, two of the interpersonal competencies included in the draft AEAEC were not

identified as essential to practice, including--“collaborate with others” and “negotiate.”

Although these were not mentioned, no interviewees reported that these competencies did not belong in the draft AEAEC. In addition, both competencies were included in six other sets of evaluator competencies developed by professional associations suggesting there is support for including these competencies in the draft AEAEC.

In addition to finding that the current interpersonal competencies included in the draft AEAEC are appropriate, this study also resulted in less support for including the competencies uncovered that are not currently included in the draft AEAEC. Through the comparative analysis, five additional interpersonal competencies were identified, but their occurrence in the data collected was limited. These additional competencies included: (a) be an evaluation champion (n=1), (b) build evaluation capacity (n=1), (c) create a favorable working climate (n=1), (d) demonstrate professional credibility (n=1), and (e) demonstrate gender awareness (n=2). Interviewees also identified “build evaluation capacity” (n=1) and “demonstrate professional credibility” (n=3) as essential to evaluation practice. For “demonstrating professional credibility,” a couple of interviewees noted that it may be an essential competency, but does not fit best within the interpersonal domain and instead might be included elsewhere in the draft AEAEC. Even though these competencies were identified through this study, findings suggest that they may not be a good fit for inclusion in the draft AEAEC based on the low occurrence with which they appeared or were mentioned. The AEA task force could take a further look at these novel competencies if they feel they may bring value to the interpersonal domain.

Ways Interpersonal Competencies Have Been Developed

Currently, there are no entry requirements for an individual to practice evaluation in the United States. Preparation of evaluators is uncontrolled when compared to other professions that require licensure, certification, or accreditation for entry into the profession (Engle, Altschuld, & Kim, 2006). As a result, there are several ways an individual could prepare for evaluation practice, including professional development workshops, certificate programs, and university degree programs (Engle, Altschuld, & Kim, 2006). Although these opportunities exist, little is known about how they prepare individuals with the interpersonal competencies needed for practice. Research conducted on this topic focuses on evaluation degree programs and examines evaluator competencies broadly by domain (Davies & MacKay, 2014; Dewey et al., 2008; Dillman, 2013; Kaesbauer, 2012). Although these studies resulted in limited findings on interpersonal competencies, they highlight that there are gaps in our knowledge of how evaluators develop interpersonal competencies and suggest that novice evaluators may not be developing them through evaluation degree programs.

This study further explored emerging findings from previous research from the perspective of experienced evaluators and went beyond examining interpersonal competency development through university-based evaluation training programs, exploring other ways in which these competencies could be developed. Instead of focusing on formal evaluation training and the competencies developed through the experiences, this study approached the topic in the opposite direction. First, the interpersonal competencies essential to evaluation practice were discussed and then the

ways in which experienced evaluators developed them. This process allowed interviewees to attribute their development to a variety of modes. As a result, this study further contributed to the knowledge on interpersonal competencies developed through evaluation degree programs, but also showed that evaluators are developing interpersonal competencies in other ways, including through the practice of evaluation, professional development opportunities, and life experiences. Interviewees also identified that the development of the individual interpersonal competencies occurred through a combination of ways, suggesting that when thinking about how individuals develop their interpersonal competencies, attention could be paid to multiple avenues to arrive at competence.

Evaluation practice. All interviewees attributed their development of interpersonal competencies to evaluation practice. Interviewees asserted that for development to occur there is a need to apply competencies in real-world evaluation settings. This finding supports what evaluation scholars have encouraged in the literature: to use practical, hands-on experiences to intentionally teach interpersonal competencies (Alkin & Christie, 2002; Altschuld, 1995; Dillman, 2013; Gredler & Johnson, 2001; Morris, 1994; Nadler & Cundiff, 2009; Preskill, 1992; Trevisan, 2004; Wortman et al., 1980). Of the 15 interpersonal competencies for evaluators identified by professional associations, 12 (80%) were identified by at least one interviewee as a competency they primarily developed in practice (see Chapter 5, Table 25).

In speaking about development through practice, interviewees expressed that development happened over time through opportunities to learn, practice, and reflect.

Most interviewees spoke about the importance of getting feedback from others, such as supervisors, colleagues, and evaluation stakeholders. Some interviewees also mentioned having a mentor, and a couple recognized reflecting on their practice has supported their development. As a result, interviews pointed to the need for intentionality when developing interpersonal competencies through practice, suggesting that individuals may need to actively identify interpersonal competencies in need of development, seek out opportunities to practice, solicit feedback, and participate in reflective practice.

Formal education experiences. Most interviewees spoke about formal education experiences as a way they developed interpersonal competencies. Of the 15 interpersonal competencies for evaluators identified by professional associations, 9 (60%) were identified by at least one interviewee as a competency they developed through a formal education experience (see Chapter 5, Table 25). Notably, several interviewees identified “effective communication” as an interpersonal competency developed through formal education experiences. Interviewees indicated that they had opportunities to take courses focused specifically on developing communication skills, or, through their coursework, they had many opportunities to develop these skills through team-based assignments, course papers, and presentations. For the remaining interpersonal competencies identified, each was mentioned by only one or two interviewees, indicating there was minimal overlap in interviewee experiences when developing these competencies through formal education experiences.

In addition, when developing these interpersonal competencies through formal education experiences, interviewees explained that the competencies were not explicitly

taught, but were practiced through team-based activities and assignments. Based on interviews, it appears that interpersonal competencies are often not explicitly taught in formal education settings, but rather students may be exposed to opportunities to practice interpersonal skills. It is unknown if these opportunities were intentionally constructed to develop interpersonal competence or if it was happenstance. Either way, interviewees reportedly did not receive training on interpersonal competencies prior to practice. For example, interviewees did not indicate they were taught effective communication strategies before completing team-based assignments.

Overall, findings from this study support what was discovered in previous studies that evaluators do not seem to be developing many of the essential interpersonal competencies in formal degree programs. Despite this, there seem to be opportunities within courses to develop interpersonal competencies through practice, but what is missing is the initial instruction. If interpersonal competencies were intentionally addressed within course curriculum, the opportunities for students to then practice or apply what they have learned may already exist through course activities and assignments. For example, if first given instruction on collaborating with others, students could then apply what they learned when doing a team-based activity. Based on the possibility of existing opportunities to practice and the limited instructional time available to prepare students for practice, intentionally embedding interpersonal competency development into existing courses could be a promising topic to explore further.

Professional development opportunities. Over half of the interviewees also identified professional development opportunities through trainings and self-study as a way they developed their interpersonal competencies. Of the 15 interpersonal competencies for evaluators identified by professional associations, 5 (33%) were identified by at least one interviewee as a competency they developed through professional development opportunities (see Chapter 5, Table 25). Since evaluators enter the field in many ways, evaluation-specific professional development opportunities may be a good way for evaluators to address their competency development needs. This study found that few interpersonal competencies were developed through professional development opportunities, and, when they were, the opportunities were not specifically for the practice evaluation. This may point to a need to further explore the professional development opportunities that exist for evaluators to develop interpersonal competencies and who is engaging in these opportunities.

Life experiences. Life experiences were also a way a couple of interviewees reportedly developed interpersonal competencies (see Chapter 5, Table 25). These interviewees acknowledged that general interpersonal competencies could be developed through other life experiences that could then be applied to evaluation practice. Although the field cannot shape the life experiences of evaluators, it is important to acknowledge that individuals may well bring competencies to their practice that they have developed outside of evaluation-specific training and practice.

Looking across the different ways experienced evaluators have developed interpersonal competencies, evaluation practice was the most cited for the number of

competencies developed and for the number of interviewees who experienced development in each specific competency. Based on the experiences of interviewees, it appears that a good amount of development of interpersonal competencies occurs *after* an individual has started to practice evaluation.

Three competencies--“build relationships,” “communicate effectively,” and “facilitate constructive and culturally responsive interactions”--were identified as being developed in each of the four ways. In addition, “listen to understand and engage diverse perspectives” and “demonstrate gender awareness” were identified as being developed through practice, formal education, and professional development. For these competencies, there seem to be multiple ways an individual could potentially develop them. For other competencies, practice was the only way interviewees identified that they developed them, including “create a favorable working climate,” “resolve conflict,” and “collaborate with others.” In addition, “use appropriate social skills” and “negotiate” were identified as developed through practice and life experiences. This could suggest that these competencies need more applied, hands-on opportunities to develop.

For two competencies--“demonstrate professional credibility” and “build evaluation capacity”--formal education was the only way interviewees identified developing these. This aligns with how interviewees spoke about these two competencies in relation to conveying their expertise, which they gained through their degree programs.

Interpersonal Competency Development Needs

The field’s understanding of the interpersonal competency development needs of practicing evaluators is limited. Despite the importance of interpersonal competencies

and the issues that arise when these interpersonal competencies are lacking, little research has been completed on whether evaluators possess these competencies. Before this study, only one study had been completed that informed the interpersonal competency development needs of new evaluators. In their effort to understand whether graduate programs with an emphasis in evaluation are adequately preparing the next generation of evaluators, Dewey et al. (2008) found that employers indicated a need for interpersonal skills more than any other competency, but found this skill set to be lacking in entry-level evaluation candidates (Dewey et al., 2008). Because the Dewey et al. (2008) study covered all evaluator competency domains, results did not provide information on the specific interpersonal competencies employers desired or which were specifically lacking in candidates. This study built off these findings by exploring what new evaluators are being assessed on when they enter the field and what interpersonal competencies are typically lacking when new evaluators begin to practice.

Assessing interpersonal competencies for hiring decisions. This study's findings confirm those of Dewey et al. (2008) in that interviewees considered interpersonal competencies important and assessed them in the hiring process. Of the 15 interpersonal competencies for evaluators identified by professional associations, interviews pointed to 7 (47%) that they specifically assess during the hiring process to determine if a candidate is a good fit for an evaluator position (Table 26).

A reason that several interviewees gave for why interpersonal competencies were important to assess centered on how it can be challenging to help an individual develop interpersonal competencies as compared to other evaluation-related skills. As a result, a

candidate's existing interpersonal competencies may weigh more heavily in a hiring decision than other competencies and skills. Since employers judge job candidates on their interpersonal competencies, it is important that new evaluators develop them before entering practice.

Interpersonal competencies lacking. Based on their experiences working with new evaluators, interviewees identified 8 of the 15 (53%) interpersonal competencies as typically still in need of development for new evaluators when they start practicing (Table 26). Despite the identification of interpersonal competencies that needed further development, interviewees felt that individuals could develop all of the interpersonal competencies needed for evaluation practice. This is promising since a lack of the interpersonal competencies essential for evaluation practice can have implications for an evaluation, including being unable to establish stakeholder buy-in and trust, leading to the collection of bad data, and resulting in evaluation findings that are not used.

In addition to speaking about the specific interpersonal competencies that are in need of further development, half of the interviewees spoke about how reading a situation and applying appropriate interpersonal competencies can be a challenge for new evaluators. Most of these interviewees discussed that, for new evaluators, this is the result of the tension between using rigorous research methods when coming out of an academic setting and attending to the interpersonal competencies needed for evaluation practice. This suggests that there may be a need to address more than just the development of individual interpersonal competencies in evaluation training. Individuals may also need

support in developing the ability to identify when to draw on specific interpersonal competencies in a given situation.

When comparing the competencies assessed and in need of development, five interpersonal competencies were identified as both (Table 26). Interviewees chose the competencies they assess because they deemed them important for a new evaluator to have when they start practicing. The fact that there are several competencies assessed that are also typically in need of development is of concern because this indicates that new evaluators may not be ready for practice in terms of their interpersonal competence. These competencies may need further attention in evaluator training to ensure that new evaluators are getting purposeful opportunities to develop these interpersonal competencies.

Supporting interpersonal competency development. Based on the finding that new evaluators typically need to develop some of their interpersonal competencies as they enter practice, it is important to explore how development could be supported. Once the AEAEC is adopted, AEA should articulate its role in ensuring that there are opportunities for individuals to develop the interpersonal competencies needed for evaluation practice. Based on AEA's commitment "to providing outstanding professional development for evaluators as well as to helping evaluators connect with other professional development opportunities," it may be an appropriate for the association to spearhead this effort (Learning, n.d.). A task force of AEA members could review AEA's current professional development offerings to determine whether the interpersonal competencies are addressed or if there is a need for additional or revised offerings. For

example, AEA has offered sessions through members on “conflict resolution” in the past. This may be an area where opportunities already exist and could be promoted. For other interpersonal competencies, there may not be existing opportunities, and this could be an area to develop further. In conjunction with this work, there could be further exploration into whether members would participate in professional development opportunities, if offered. From this study, interviewees who identified professional development opportunities as a way they developed interpersonal competences only noted that this occurred for a few competencies and that most of the time these opportunities were not evaluation-specific. What is not known is whether this is due to the lack of opportunities or their interest in participating in those opportunities.

Structuring Interpersonal Competencies

The current literature on evaluator competencies does not include how to best structure or present the competencies to promote use. Instead, much effort has been given to the content of the interpersonal competency domain and the benefits of competencies (Ghere et al., 2006; King et al., 2001; Stevahn et al., 2005a; Wilcox, 2012). As the content of the draft AEAEC is getting closer to being finalized, it is a good time to examine competency structures to inform potential next steps the field could take as we move toward use of the competencies.

First, it is important to understand the use of a competency set as that should inform its structure. Overall, other professional associations cited seven uses, including the following: (a) curriculum development, (b) graduate expectations, (c) self-assessment, (d) professional development, (e) recruitment and hiring, (f) supervision and assessment

of employees, and (g) promoting and advocating for the profession. Many of the uses discovered appear to align well with the benefits the field of program evaluation would like to achieve through an established set of evaluator competencies, which include improved training, enhanced reflective practice, advanced research on evaluation, and continued professionalization of the field (Stevahn et al., 2005a).

To realize these benefits, the competencies must be structured in a way that promotes use by intended users. By exploring the structures used by other professions, this study has built a foundation for examining potential ways to structure the draft AEAEC to maximize use through the identification of four different competency structures. The competency structures that emerged included: a) categorized competencies only, (b) job function, (c) levels of expertise, and (d) developmental level.

In examining potential structures for the AEAEC, a first step might be to state who the intended users of the competencies are and what they should use them for to provide further clarity. Then, a structure that best suits these uses should be selected. The structures that were discovered through this study could be used as a starting point for this work. Structure options and considerations include:

- If it is important to tie specific competencies to different roles, duties, or responsibilities an individual could have in the evaluation field, it might make sense to structure the interpersonal competencies by job function.
- If, instead, the field wanted to differentiate and identify the interpersonal competencies an individual should have at different professional roles with increasing responsibility, the levels of expertise structure might be preferable.

- Finally, if the field wants to provide direction on what interpersonal competencies individuals should have during different stages of their evaluation training, it may be appropriate to structure the interpersonal competencies by developmental levels.

In determining the best way to present the interpersonal competencies, attention could also be paid to how or whether individual competency items should be grouped together to assist with processing and seeing connections, the level of description provided to ensure the importance of each item is conveyed, and the formatting to ensure users can clearly understand the content and relationships between competency items. In addition, since the review of competency structures from other professions was conducted looking at the structure of entire competency sets, these structures could also be applied to other domains within the AEAEC or to the entire set.

Supplemental resources. Interviewees provided suggestions on what resources they felt would benefit users of the interpersonal competencies. Although these resources would be supplemental to the draft AEAEC, it is important to note that interviewees identified a need for practical resources that could guide the use of the interpersonal competencies by intended users. Among interviewees, there was concern that only having a document containing the interpersonal competencies would not be enough to foster use. Therefore, resources that support development and use were considered essential supplementary materials to the draft AEAEC. If resources are not developed, the fear was that the competencies would not be used, but instead, forgotten. A role for an AEA task force could be to develop additional resources that would help an individual use the

competencies. Further work could be undertaken to explore and develop the resources that would be most beneficial to the field.

Awareness. In addition to supplementary resources, interviewees expressed that raising awareness that the field has defined interpersonal competencies and that they are an important part of the practice was important. The first step towards use is to make intended users aware of the competencies. As the Task Force works to finalize the draft AEAEC, a next step could be to develop a communication strategy to bring awareness of the competency set to intended users. A communication strategy could focus on the various users identified through the competency structuring process. For example, the users that interviewees identified included evaluation students, current evaluators, employers of evaluators, and evaluation clients. For each user group, the task force could determine the how interpersonal competencies could be communicated to them.

Implications for Future Research

This study examined the interpersonal competencies that are essential to the practice of evaluation. In doing so, the interpersonal competencies considered essential by experienced evaluators were identified, but what remains to be explored is how important each of the interpersonal competencies is to practice. A future study could focus on determining the level of importance of each interpersonal competency for practice, asking: What interpersonal competencies do evaluators consider more important and less important for evaluation practice? To further understand how each of the interpersonal competencies is important to practice, a study could be conducted using the critical incident technique to identify situations where specific interpersonal

competencies make a difference in practice through the observation of evaluators, asking: How do evaluators use interpersonal competencies in practice? What happens when the evaluator does not use an interpersonal competency when needed? How did the use or lack of use of a competency impact the evaluation?

This study also uncovered the interpersonal competencies that may need further development by new evaluators and the ways in which experienced evaluators have developed their interpersonal competencies. Building from this, there are several ways additional research could add to the understanding of how individuals develop interpersonal competencies for evaluation practice and the best ways to support this development. One possibility would be to conduct a study with educators from evaluation degree programs on how to best support students' development in the interpersonal competencies, asking: In what ways can interpersonal competencies be integrated into the evaluation curriculum to support development towards competence? In what ways can interpersonal competencies be intentionally taught within evaluation courses?

A second possibility would be to complete a study following a group of students in an evaluation degree program to better understand where and when they develop interpersonal competencies, asking: What interpersonal competencies do students possess at the beginning, completion, and at intervals after their evaluation degree program? To what extent did they develop specific competencies during their degree program? To what extent did they develop specific competencies in practice after their degree program?

A third possibility would be to develop curriculum intended to address the interpersonal competencies and study the implementation and results, asking: What effects did the curriculum have on students' development of the interpersonal competencies? How do the results differ between students receiving the new curriculum (treatment) and old curriculum (comparison)? A study of this nature could be quasi-experimental following students over time to measure their interpersonal competencies before and after their evaluation training.

In completing further research, attention should also be paid to the interdisciplinary nature of evaluation, acknowledging that there are many pathways into the field. Therefore, within this research there is a need to explore ways to develop interpersonal competencies not only in evaluation degree programs, but also through other sources of evaluation training available to practitioners. The three possible studies presented above could also be completed on informal evaluation training using similar research questions.

Another possible study would be to research existing professional development opportunities to uncover what interpersonal competencies are being taught. Although professional development opportunities have become increasingly popular, little is known about the use of professional development opportunities to develop interpersonal competencies (Christie et al., 2013; Dewey et al., 2008). Questions to guide this research could include: What interpersonal competencies do existing professional development opportunities for evaluators address? What interpersonal competencies are missing from existing professional development opportunities for evaluators?

Finally, the focus of this study was on the interpersonal competency domain of the draft AEAEC. Further research could replicate this study focusing on each of the remaining competency domains. This research would further contribute to confirming the content included in each domain to ensure there are no gaps in the included competencies, identify ways experienced evaluators developed the competencies, illuminate any development needs that exist for new evaluators, and provide insight on the best ways to promote use of the competencies.

Concluding Thoughts

Due to the exploratory nature of this study, the findings are a starting point to better understanding the interpersonal competency development needs of evaluators. In beginning to explore this topic, I had many questions, including: Are interpersonal competencies considered important? Where do evaluators develop these competencies? Do evaluators know that they have been identified as a competence domain and, if so, do they refer to them in any way in their work? If not, what would get evaluators to use them? The answers I started to arrive at came from the literature, but also from my own experiences.

I quickly learned what I already suspected: interpersonal competencies are critically important for evaluators. Evaluation scholars have emphasized their importance and their importance has been demonstrated through the inclusion as a domain in the draft AEAEC (King & Stevahn, 2012; Kirkhart, 1981; Leviton, 2001; Mertens, 1994; Nadler & Cundiff, 2009; Patton & Patrizi, 2005; Perrin, 2005; Skolits, Morrow, & Burr, 2009; Zorzi, Perrin, McGuire, Long, & Lee, 2002). In my own practice, I have

experienced their importance firsthand. I interact with team members, clients, and evaluation stakeholders daily. I address conflicts and negotiate throughout an evaluation. I need to listen to multiple perspectives and identify issues of privilege. I need to effectively collaborate and facilitate constructive interactions with others throughout the evaluation process. All of this is necessary, along with other evaluator competencies, to ensure the evaluation process and resulting products are of high quality and used.

I also questioned where evaluators developed interpersonal competencies. When I first started to practice evaluation, I had an “ah-ha” moment where I realized my work requires a lot of navigation of interpersonal situations, but I was not exposed to training around the interpersonal competencies in my evaluation degree program. In reviewing the literature, I found some evidence that this might be the case for many evaluators as research conducted suggests that new evaluators may not be developing interpersonal competencies through evaluation degree programs (Davies & MacKay, 2014; Dewey et al., 2008; Dillman, 2013; Kaesbauer, 2012). Most of my interpersonal competency development was on the job through addressing interpersonal issues when they came up. Fortunately, I had colleagues who had strong interpersonal competencies and were able to help me navigate these interpersonal issues.

As for awareness of and using the interpersonal competencies, many of the evaluators I work with seem relatively unaware or unconcerned that there are interpersonal competencies that can be used to guide evaluation practice. Many of my colleagues were not formally trained as evaluators and have had limited exposure to what the evaluation field identifies as important competencies for practice. As a supervisor of

several evaluators, I noticed this can make it difficult for them reflect on their practice and identify areas where further development would be beneficial. From networking with other evaluators, I suspect this may be the same for other evaluation settings, and, as a result, many evaluators may face the same challenges in reflective practice and further development of their interpersonal competencies.

One comment that an interviewee made really resonated with me:

Interpersonal competencies can kind of be looked at as an afterthought, like the sixth competency area, instead of the first. I worry that without really tying it to the quality of their evaluation work and the depth of utilization they can get from it, people won't attend to the interpersonal competencies.

This, too, is my worry, i.e., that interpersonal competencies will always be an afterthought or a “nice to have” when the reality is that they are an important component of what makes a competent evaluator. Based on their importance, it may be worth having further discussions around whether interpersonal competencies should be a gateway skill set required for entrance into practice. With the impending formal adoption of the AEAEC, I am hopeful that there will be further discussion of and interest in the interpersonal competency domain and that the exploration into this topic will continue.

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Appendix A – Verbal Consent Form

VERBAL CONSENT FORM

The Development and Use of Interpersonal Competencies by Evaluators

You are invited to be in a research study of the development and use of interpersonal competencies by evaluators. You were selected as a possible participant because you have been identified as an experienced evaluator who is currently practicing evaluation and has been working in the field for at least 10 years, which will allow you to draw on your experiences using interpersonal competencies in your evaluation practice. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Background Information

This study is part of a Doctoral thesis project. The purpose of this study is to explore the interpersonal competencies evaluators use in their evaluation practice, how you developed these competencies, and the ways in which new evaluators could develop these competencies.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to participate in a one-hour in-person interview. If you agree, the interview will be audio recorded. Recordings will be transcribed for analysis purposes only and will be destroyed at the conclusion of this study.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study

There are no known risks associated with being in the study.

I do not expect you to personally benefit from this research. However, participation in the study will provide an opportunity to reflect on your experiences developing and using interpersonal competencies and, thus, contribute to important knowledge to the field of evaluation.

Compensation: No compensation will be provided for participating in the survey.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only the researcher will have access to the records. If you agree, I would like to audio record the interview. Recordings will be

transcribed for analysis purposes and only I will have access to the recordings and transcriptions.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University of Minnesota. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting the relationships.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is: Stacy Johnson. You may ask any questions you have now or during the interview. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at 651-206-2953, joh04296@umn.edu. You may also contact her doctoral advisor, Jean King, at kingx004@umn.edu or 612-626-1614.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), **you are encouraged** to contact the Research Subjects' Advocate Line, D528 Mayo, 420 Delaware St. Southeast, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455; (612) 625-1650.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to verbally consent before the interview begins by stating the following: I consent to participate in this study and agree to the audio recording of the interview.

Appendix B – Interview Protocol

Thank you for taking the time to participate in an interview with me today. As you know, I am conducting this interview as part of a research project for my dissertation at the University of Minnesota.

The purpose of this interview is to gain a better understanding of the interpersonal competencies that you use in practice and how you developed those competencies, where you see new evaluators needing development in their interpersonal competencies, and the ways in which interpersonal competencies could be structured to promote their use.

Before we begin the interview, I would like to reiterate that this interview is voluntary and you can skip any question you do not want to answer or end the interview at any time. Also, I would like to audio record the interview to accurately capture your responses. The interview recording will be transcribed for analysis purposes and after the audio recording will be deleted. In reporting, all identifiable information will be removed.

Before we start, do you have any questions about the study or interview?
Now, I will start recording. Please verbally consent to participating in this study by stating: I consent to participate in this study and agree to the audio recording of the interview.

First, I would like to talk a little bit about your practice of evaluation to help me better understand you as an evaluator.

1. Describe a recent evaluation you conducted.

[Probes:]

- What methodological approaches and data collection methods did you use?
- Who did you work with?
- How did you interact with evaluation stakeholders (such as clients, participants)?

2. Describe another recent evaluation you have conducted using a different approach or methods.

[Probes:]

- What methodological approaches and data collection methods did you use?
- Who did you work with?
- How did you interact with evaluation stakeholders (such as clients, participants)?

3. As you know, the topic of my research is on the interpersonal competencies that evaluators need and use. How do you define interpersonal competencies?

The draft American Evaluation Association competencies defines interpersonal competencies as the human relations and social interactions that ground evaluator effectiveness. We will use this definition in our discussion today.

4. Can you describe a time when interpersonal skills affected an evaluation you conducted in either a positive or negative way?

[Probes:]

- How was the evaluation affected?
- What, if anything, did you do to address the situation?

Now, I would like to talk about the interpersonal competencies that you use in your evaluation practice. I'm going to ask you to think of as many interpersonal competencies as you can.

5. What interpersonal competencies are essential to your practice of evaluation?
6. Using the interpersonal competencies you just listed, I would like to talk about why each one is essential for practice. What makes this [insert interpersonal competency] essential for practice? [Repeat item 6 until they have no additional interpersonal competencies].

[Probes:]

- How do you use this interpersonal competency in your evaluation practice?
- What are the implications when an evaluator does not have this competency?

Next, I want to show you a list of interpersonal competency themes that are included in evaluator competency sets that have been developed by several professional associations. [Give interviewee a copy of handout with the competencies they just mentioned added and give them time to read.]

7. Looking at this list of interpersonal competencies, including the one's you added, which three do you feel are the most important?

[Probes:]

- What makes each of these interpersonal competencies important for practice?

8. What interpersonal competencies on this list do you feel should not be included in a set of evaluator competencies?

[Probes:]

- What are your reasons for not including these competencies?

My next set of questions is about how you developed the interpersonal competencies you use in your evaluation practice. [Keep handout out for reference].

9. Let's start with [*insert interpersonal competency*]. What are some ways in which you developed this competency for evaluation practice?

[Probes:]

- What formal or informal training, if any, did you experience that addressed the development of interpersonal competencies?
- Are there other competencies on this list that you developed in a similar way?

[Repeat item 7 until all interpersonal competencies are addressed from the list and those added through item 4].

10. From the list of interpersonal competencies, which ones do you recall feeling most prepared in when starting to practice evaluation?

11. Which interpersonal competencies did you feel least prepared in when starting to practice evaluation?

Now, I would like to discuss where you see new evaluators needing development in their interpersonal competencies. [Keep handout out.]

12. From your experience working with new evaluators, what interpersonal competencies are typically still in need of development when they start practicing evaluation?

[Probes:]

- What effect does this have on their practice of evaluation?
- What effect does this have on the quality of their evaluation studies?

13. Which interpersonal competencies, if any, do you feel an individual cannot purposefully develop?

[Probes:]

- What is the reason these competencies cannot be developed?

14. Imagine that you are looking to hire an evaluator. To what extent would you consider their interpersonal competencies to determine if you would hire them or not?

[Prompts:]

- If you would consider their interpersonal competencies when hiring, how would you assess this (e.g., interview, resume)?
- What specific interpersonal competencies would you look for? How would you know applicants had these?

The last set of questions I have are about the ways in which the AEA interpersonal competencies could be structured, or presented, to promote use.

15. What ideas do you have for presenting the interpersonal competencies in a way that would be useful to users? This could include things such as the level of detail, organization, categorization, practice examples, further explanation, description of how it would look in practice, and so on.

[Prompts:]

- How could presenting interpersonal competencies in this way be useful to evaluators? Educators? Employers? Students?
- What would be some challenges in presenting the interpersonal competencies in this way to evaluators? Educators? Employers? Students? Well you might do it differently for each group.

16. Is there anything else you would like to share about the topics we discussed today?

Thank you for your time!

Handout Content

Definition: Interpersonal competencies are the human relations and social interactions that ground evaluator effectiveness.

The evaluator is able to:

1. Interact ethically
2. Build relationships
3. Use appropriate social skills
4. Listen to understand and engage diverse perspectives
5. Addresses issues of privilege and power dynamics
6. Communicate effectively
7. Facilitate constructive and culturally responsive interactions
8. Collaborate with others
9. Negotiate
10. Resolve conflict

11. Be an evaluation champion
12. Build evaluation capacity
13. Create a favorable working climate
14. Demonstrate professional credibility
15. Demonstrate gender awareness

Appendix C – IRB Determination Correspondence

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Twin Cities Campus

Human Research Protection Program
Office of the Vice President for Research

D528 Mayo Memorial Building
420 Delaware Street S.E.
MMC 820
Minneapolis, MN 55455
Phone: 612-626-5654
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Email: irb@umn.edu
<http://www.research.umn.edu/subjects/>

NOT HUMAN RESEARCH

May 9, 2017

Jean King

612-626-1614
kingx004@umn.edu

Dear Jean King:

On 5/9/2017, the IRB reviewed the following submission:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title of Study:	The Development and Use of Interpersonal Competencies by Evaluators
Investigator:	Jean King
IRB ID:	STUDY00000367
Funding:	None
Grant ID:	None
IND, IDE, or HDE:	None
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recruitment email language, Category: Recruitment Materials;• Verbal Consent Form, Category: Consent Form;• Interview Protocol, Category: Other;• HRP-503 Human Research Determination Form, Category: IRB Protocol;

The IRB determined that the proposed activity is not research involving human subjects. IRB review and approval is not required.

The IRB determined your planned activities described in this application do not meet the regulatory definition of research with human subjects and do not fall under the IRB's purview for the following reason:

Interviews focus on process not the individual participants themselves personally.

Driven to DiscoverSM

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are being considered and there are questions about whether IRB review is needed, please submit a study modification to the IRB for a determination. You can create a modification by clicking **Create Modification / CR** within the study.

Sincerely,

Jeffery Perkey, CIP, MLS
IRB Analyst