

Transformative Qualitatively- Driven Mixed Methods: For a Change

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My Background

- Professor Emeritus, Gallaudet University
- Independent Consultant
- Former editor: *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*
- Founding board member: Mixed Methods International Research Association
- Past President of the American Evaluation Association



For a Change

“If you can read the handwriting on the wall, why do you keep hitting your head against it?”

---Me, at some random time when I was reflecting on the state of the world, research, relationships and other stuff

Why Transformative Research?

- Global pandemic
- Educational challenges
- Gender-based violence
- Discrimination against refugees, sex trafficking of migrants
- Addressing disabilities
- Increasing gap between rich and poor
- Violations of human rights
- Climate crisis

How do we as a community of mixed methods researchers contribute to transformative impact?

- By design
- Going beyond thinking of mixed methods as integrating quantitative and qualitative methods
- Rethinking the role of the researcher to support transformative change
- By incorporating strategies for increasing social, economic, and environmental justice into our studies
- By considering issues of equity throughout the research process

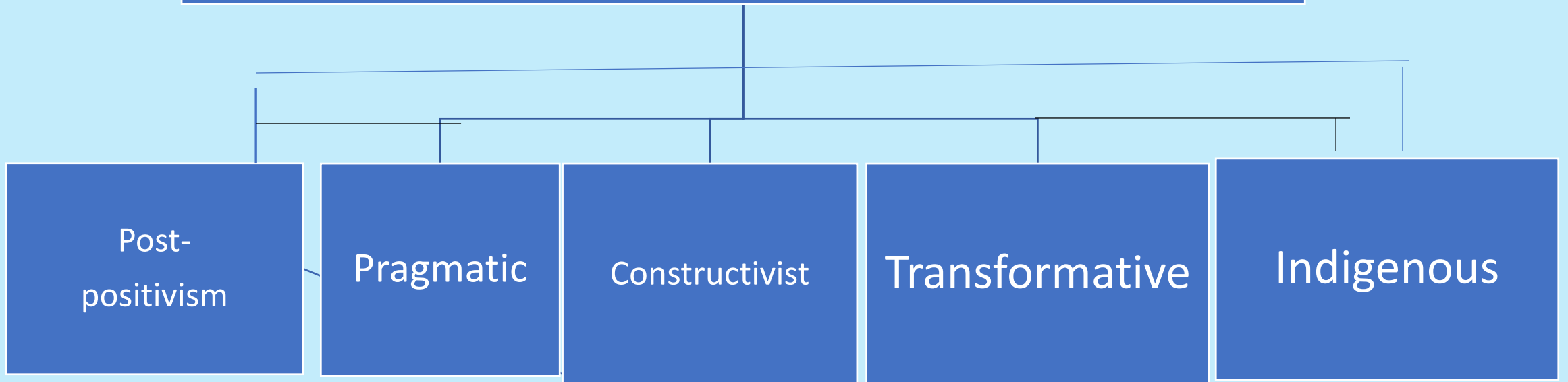
Research Assumptions

Guba and Lincoln

- Axiological: Nature of Ethics
- Ontological: Nature of Reality
- Epistemology: Nature of Knowledge & Relation Between Knower & That Which Would Be Known (Evaluators and Stakeholders)
- Methodology: Nature of systematic inquiry

Frameworks for MM Research

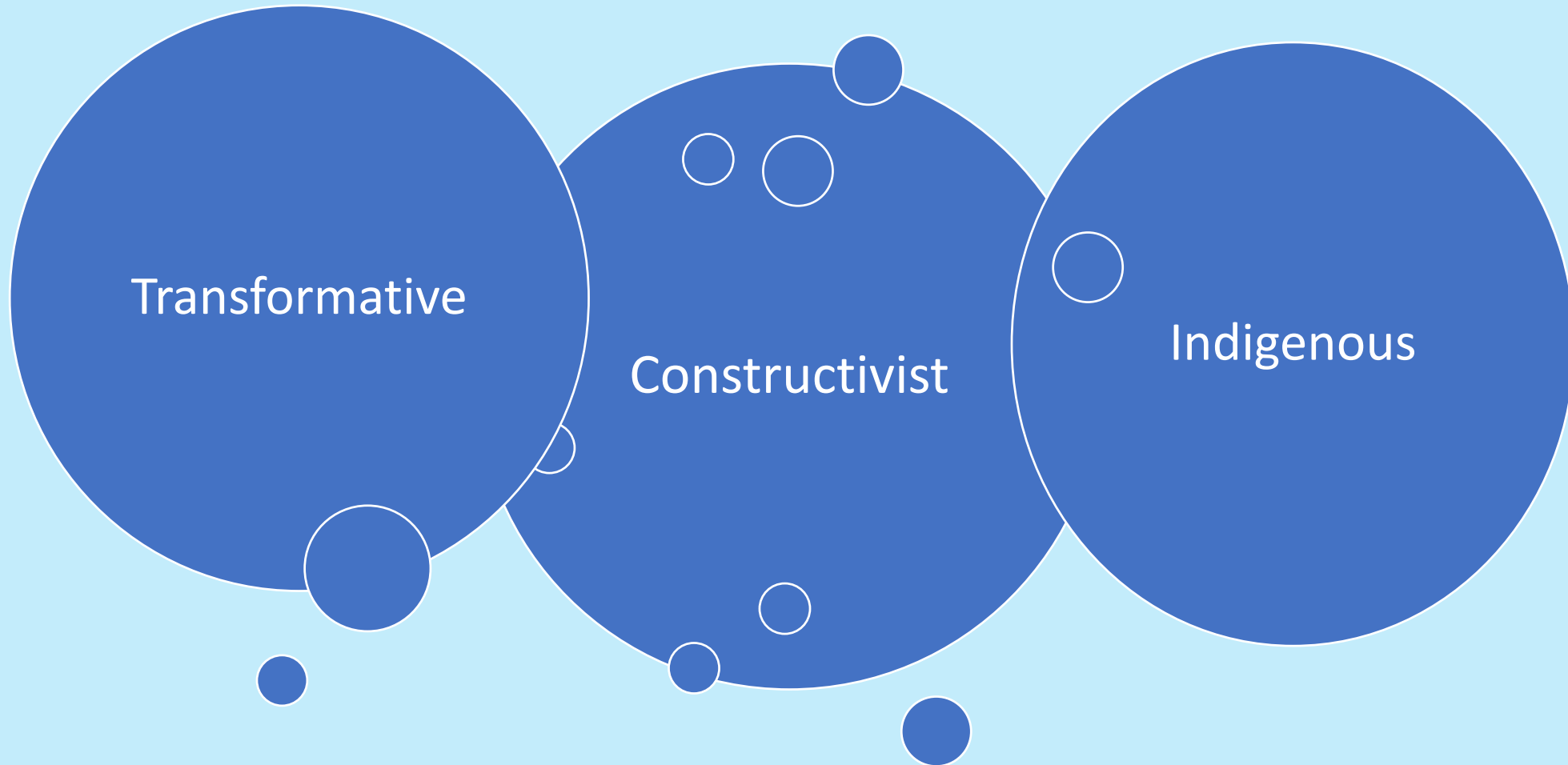
Anti-paradigm war



Assumptions that guide mixed methods choices

- Quantitatively Dominant: Post-positivism
- Qualitatively Dominant: Constructivism
- Design to answer research questions:
Pragmatism
- Design to address issues of justice:
Transformative
- Design to address decolonization:
Indigenous

Permeable Borders: Qualitatively Driven Mixed Methods



Transformative Paradigm

- Origins: marginalized groups
- Umbrella (Intersectionality)
 - Race/ethnicity, disability, gender, sexual identity, Deafness, socioeconomic status, religion, age.
 - Goal: Improved social, economic, and environmental justice

Indigenous Paradigm

- Interconnectedness, relationships, history, and honoring past, present and future
- Sovereignty, decolonization, repatriation

Transformative Paradigm

Assumptions	Beliefs
Axiology	Cultural responsiveness; promote social, environmental and economic justice & human rights; address inequities; reciprocity; resilience; interconnectedness
Ontology	Multi-faceted; consequences of privilege; historically situated
Epistemology	Relationships; Interactive; trust; coalition building
Methodology	Transformative, dialogic, culturally responsive, mixed methods; policy change

IFAD technical seminar
Transformative
Evaluation Mertens



- Identify the structural causes of inequality and discrimination (axiology) and unmask versions of reality that support an oppressive status quo (ontology)
- Recognize power relations (epistemology)
- Involve participatory and reflective processes through inclusion of the full range of stakeholders and **coalition building** (methodology)
- Aim for action to support the progressive realization of human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice

Sources: Mertens & Wilson, 2019

The Transformative approach to research

Phase 1: Relationship building



Phase 2: Contextual Analysis



Phase 3: Pilot testing



Phase 4: Implementation



Phase 5: Determine effectiveness



Phase 6: Use for transformative purposes

Key Components to Increase Impact

- Build culturally responsive relationships
- Adopt strategies to foster coalition building
- Address power inequities and plan for sustainability

Culturally Responsive Relationships

- Contextual factors: history, dimensions of diversity used as a basis for discrimination, legislation and policies, versions of reality
- **Example: drug addiction (Mertens, 2018b)**
- History: war on drugs vs. public health problem
- Basis for discrimination: In the U.S.: race
- Legislation: Excessive incarceration vs. Diversion programs
- Relationships: Justice system, mental health, social support
- Diversity: sexual minorities, veterans
- Quant: uptake of services, recidivism; Qual: content analysis, interviews

Coalitions

- Some funding agencies require them (e.g., Health Resources and Services Administration's Healthy Start and CDC cancer programs)
- Not typically included in mixed methods studies
- Researchers can learn from strategies used by coalitions to achieve transformative impact

Coalition building: Addressing Poverty and Fast Food

- Reality: kids in high school vs. families that can't make it work
- Fight for \$15: Fast food workers. SEIU with New York Communities for Change (NY 65,000 fast food workers) created a Movement by visiting apartments and fast food restaurants; used Twitter and Facebook; engaged the press (e.g., New York Times) and ministers, rabbis, City Council members, other government officials, members of African American, Latino and LBGT communities, Poor People's Campaign, NAACP
- Result: Fast Food Justice (a workers organization <https://www.fastfoodjustice.org/>) and \$15/hr in 20 states; House passed Raise the Wage Act (July 2019)

Greenhouse, 2019

Coalition Building

- Role of researcher: Contributing to transformative change
- Dominica McBride and colleagues (2020):
- Strategies for community engagement for transformative change:
 - Advocacy-Build capacity to advocate in community organizations
 - Mobilizing-Agency personnel and grassroots organizations
 - Organizing-Work directly with communities to organize themselves

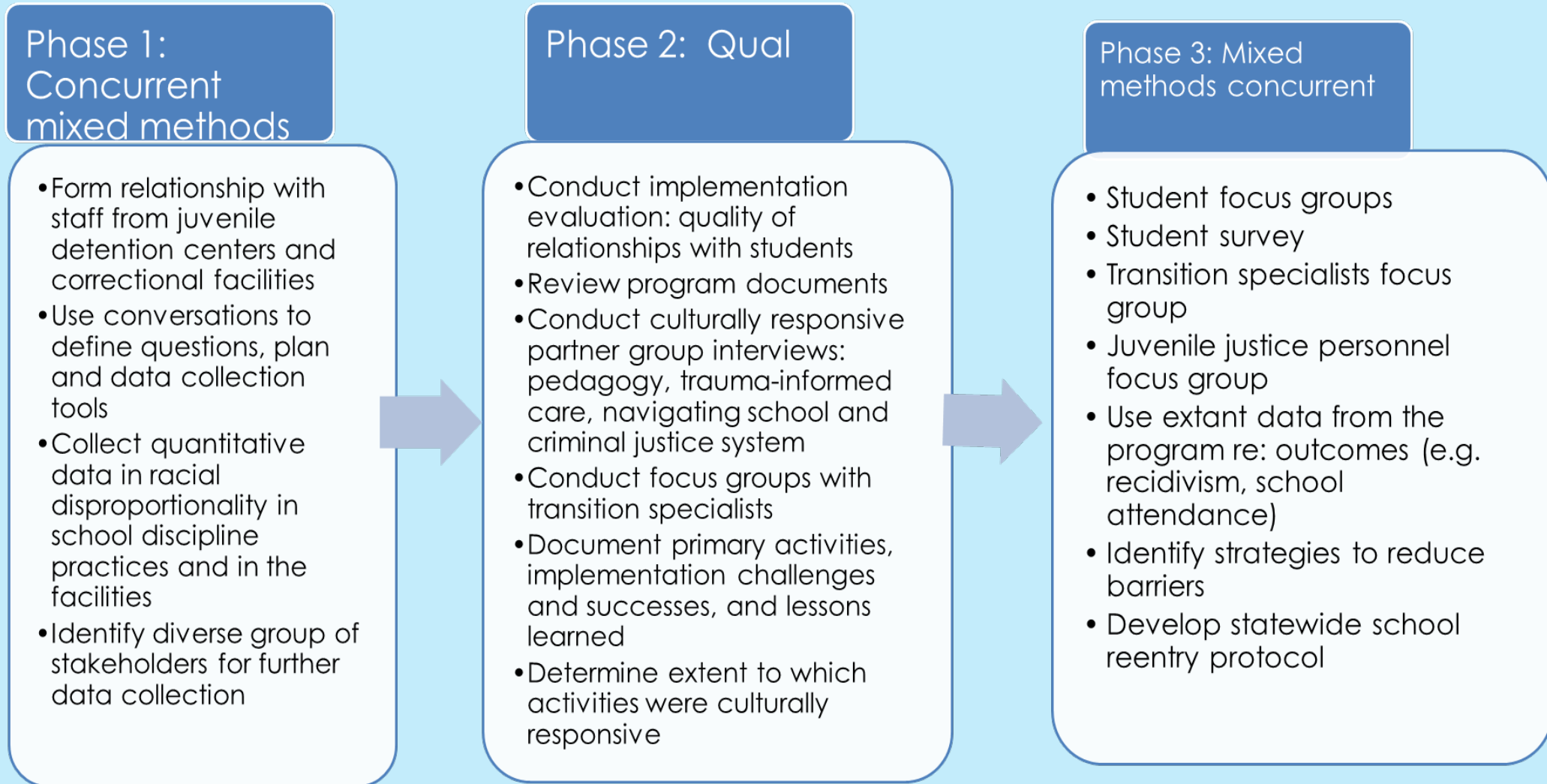
Example: Transformative Qualitatively Driven Mixed Methods



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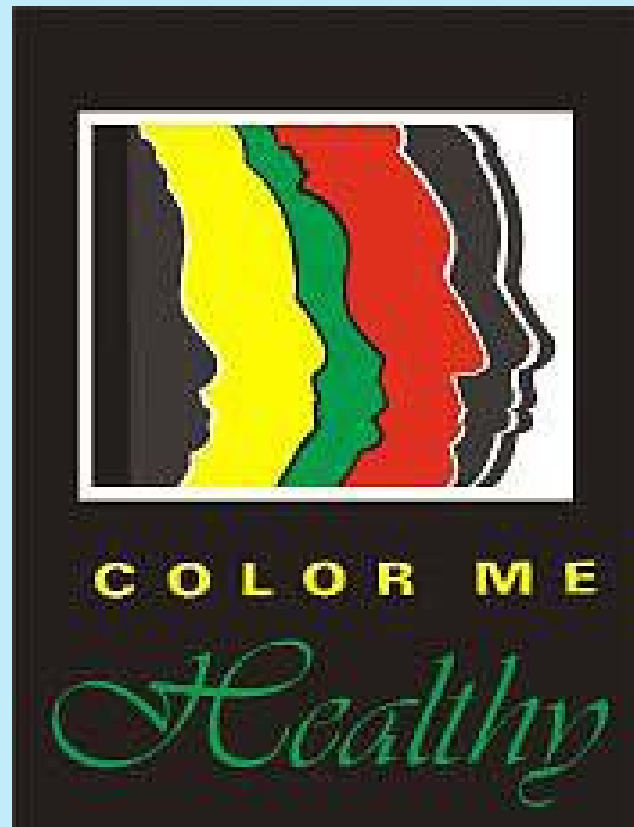
- Coalition built
- Power issues
- Context
- Data collection
- Action-oriented
- Attention to persons

Miller, R.L., Rutledge, J. & Ayala, G. (2021). Breaking down barriers to HIV care for gay and bisexual men and transgender women: The Advocacy and Other Community Tactics (ACT) Project. *AIDS and Behavior*, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10461-021-03216-w>



Power and Sustainability: Drill, K., Stack, E.E. Qureshi, C., & Lahoff, R. (2017). *Oregon's African American/Black student success plan*. Salem, OR: Oregon Department of Education, Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

Interventions: Culturally Responsive and Transformative



Conclusions: Transformative Qualitatively Driven Mixed Methods

- Raises new kinds of questions
- Innovations to address complexity in addressing wicked problems
- Focuses on relationship building with agencies, policy makers and members of marginalized communities
- Cautions us to consider how to support constructive change and avoid introducing additional harm

Final Words

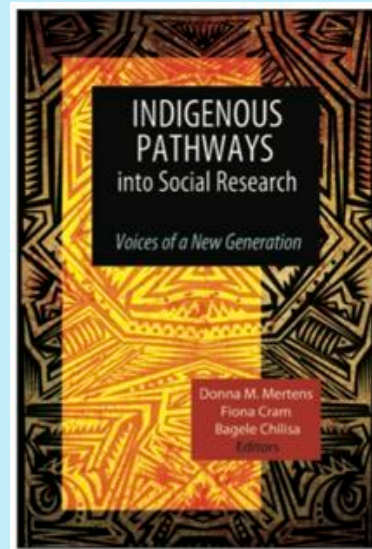
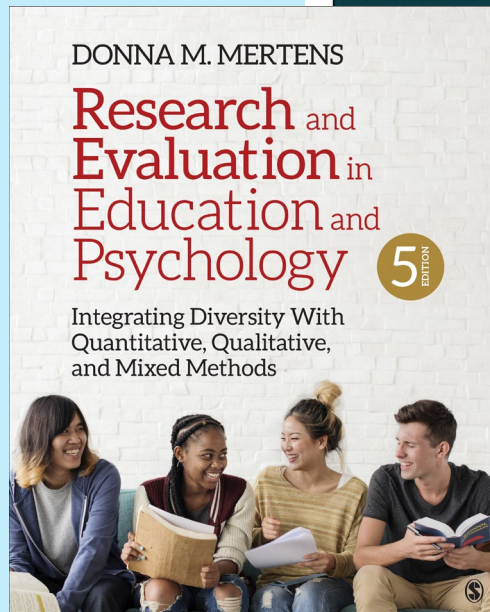
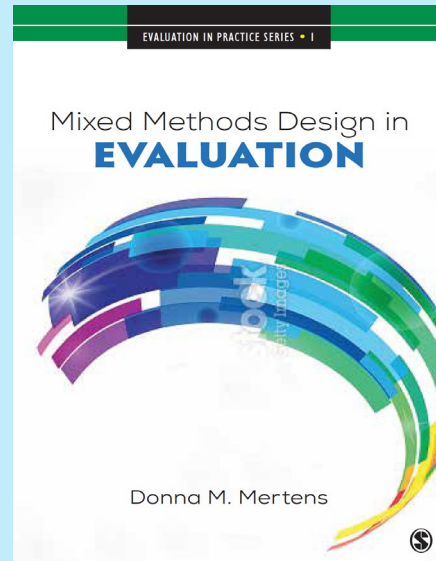
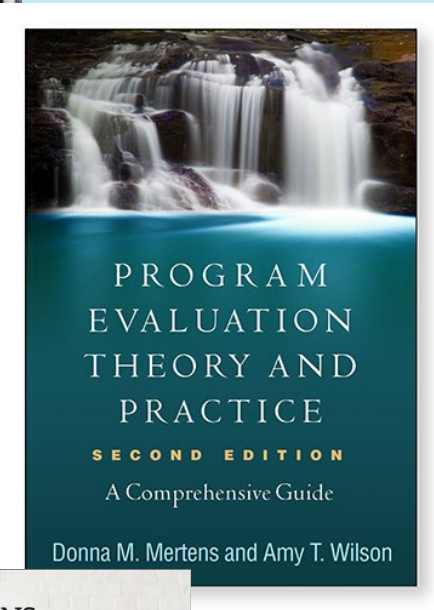
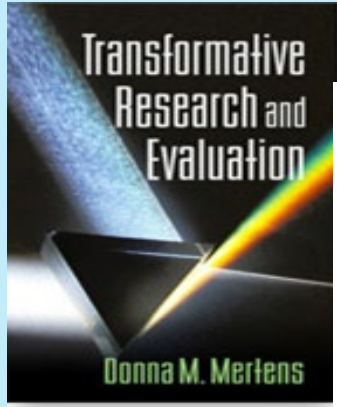
- Courage
- Mixed Methods: Capture complexity, address social justice, and ethics
- Teams – researchers and coalitions
- Capacity development



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Resources



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Contact information

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**Transformativeresearchandevaluation.
com**

Future of Transformative Research: If not now, when?

“The pandemic response reveals with stark and sobering clarity that current paradigms of global health equity are insufficient in counteracting structural oppression.” (p. 4)

Büyüm A.M., C. Kenney, A. Koris, L. Mkumba, and Y. Raveendran (2020), ‘Decolonising global health: if not now, when?’, *British Medical Journal Global Health*, e003394. doi:10.1136/bmjgh-2020-003394