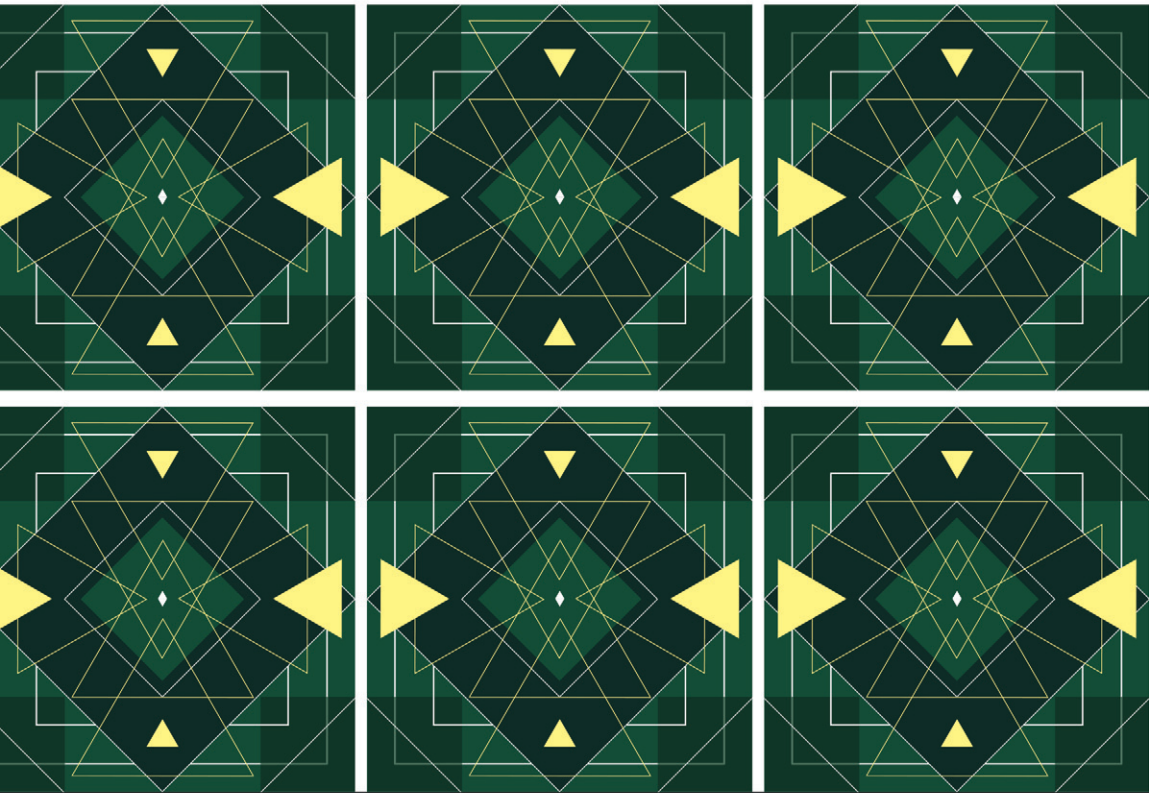


STUDIES IN EDUCATIONAL ETHNOGRAPHY

Cases Integrating Ethnography and Evaluation

Making Transformative, Intersectional,
and Comparative Connections



EDITED BY

**Melissa Rae Goodnight
and Rodney Hopson**

Cases Integrating Ethnography and Evaluation

The field of evaluation needs more empirical examples that illustrate how to conduct transformative work. This text delivers just that! It offers rich case studies that highlight how ethnographic methods can illuminate both individual and collective experiences, as well as the complex social systems and cultural contexts that shape them. The concrete examples of community engagement, participatory approaches, and the interplay of power and privilege make this book an invaluable resource for advancing more authentic, equitable, and transformative evaluation practice.

—**Jori N. Hall, President's Distinguished Professor of Educational Psychology,
University of Illinois Chicago**

Cases Integrating Ethnography and Evaluation: Making Transformative, Intersectional, and Comparative Connections is one of the most significant contributions to ethnographic approaches to evaluation since *Ethnography in Educational Evaluation*. This work elegantly and forcefully addresses equity and social justice issues. It is also international in scope. Goodnight and Hopson have produced a transformative, intersectional, and comparative tour de force that advances the field in profound and meaningful ways.

—**David Fetterman, Fetterman & Associates,
Claremont Graduate University, and Pacifica Graduate Institute**

Strongly recommended as a guide to ethical evaluations that honor participants' perspectives. Large and small models from several countries, curated by editors with deep understanding of ethnography as well as evaluation.

—**Kathryn Anderson-Levitt, Professor Emerita of Anthropology, University of
Michigan–Dearborn**

Goodnight and Hopson's book captures the dynamics of culture, democracy, justice, and reciprocity across diverse community and program contexts, interweaving transformative, intersectional and comparative themes and bringing them to life with rich case examples. Chapters focus on arts-based approaches informed by social equity, case-based pedagogy, Indigenous methodologies and critical collaborative ethnography, all of which foreground questions of positionality, power, democracy, and ethics. Scholars and practitioners will find much in these pages to inspire dialogue around reconceptualizing evaluation, and as a teacher of evaluation I will be including these readings in my undergraduate and graduate courses.

—**Jill Anne Chouinard, PhD, Director and Professor, School of Public
Administration, University of Victoria**

Studies in Educational Ethnography

Series Editor: Professor Rodney Hopson, American University, USA

Studies in Educational Ethnography presents original research monographs and edited volumes based on ethnographic perspectives, theories, and methodologies. Such research will advance the development of theory, practice, policy, and praxis for improving schooling and education in neighborhood, community, and global contexts.

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Racial Inequality in Mathematics Education

Authored by Thierry Elin-Saintine

Theories Bridging Ethnography and Evaluation: Making Transformative, Intersectional, and Comparative Connections (Volume 1)

Edited by Melissa Rae Goodnight and Rodney Hopson

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Cases Integrating Ethnography and Evaluation: Making Transformative, Intersectional, and Comparative Connections

EDITED BY

MELISSA RAE GOODNIGHT

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, USA

AND

RODNEY HOPSON

American University, USA



United Kingdom – North America – Japan – India – Malaysia – China

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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About the Editors

Melissa Rae Goodnight, PhD, is an Assistant Professor in Educational Psychology at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign with appointments in Global Studies and the Department of Education Policy, Organization, and Leadership. Additionally, Goodnight is a faculty affiliate of the Center for Culturally Responsive Evaluation and Assessment (CREA). Her transnational scholarship and teaching explore the synthesis of three areas: (1) research, monitoring, and evaluation; (2) education for communities who are stigmatized, underserved, or historically marginalized; and (3) social justice theorizing that draws on feminist, culturally responsive, anti-racist, and postcolonial concepts. Goodnight is particularly interested in qualitative methodologies and issues of equity, validity, and representation in social inquiry. Her publications include a 2023 article in the *American Journal of Evaluation* on researching the influence of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in India's education system; a 2022 article in the *International Journal of Educational Development* on the origins, goals, and political implications of India's Annual Status of Education Report, a groundbreaking citizen-engaged M&E effort; and, a 2017 article on the translation of critical race theory for analyzing inequity and discrimination in the Indian school system. She is also a co-editor of *Theories Bridging Ethnography and Evaluation: Making Transformative, Intersectional, and Comparative Connections*, which was published as the first volume of this two-volume work on the topic of ethnography-evaluation intersections for the Studies in Educational Ethnography series. Goodnight currently serves as an Associate Editor for the *American Journal of Evaluation*. In 2014, she conducted dissertation fieldwork in India as a Fulbright-Nehru student researcher funded by the governments of India and the United States. Previously, Goodnight served as a United States Peace Corps Volunteer in Kingston, Jamaica, where she was an HIV/AIDS and sexual health educator and counselor. She received a Master's in Social and Cultural Foundations of Education from DePaul University and a doctorate in Education from the University of California Los Angeles with concentrations in comparative education and evaluation.

Rodney Hopson, PhD, is an accomplished scholar, academic leader, and thought partner who serves as Interim Dean and Professor, School of Education at American University. Most recently, Hopson served as a Professor of Evaluation in the Department of Educational Psychology, College of Education, with appointments in the Department of Educational Policy and Organizational Leadership and the Center of African Studies at the University of Illinois

Urbana-Champaign. Hopson received his doctorate from the Curry School of Education, University of Virginia, with major concentrations in educational evaluation, anthropology, and policy, and sociolinguistics. He was awarded a National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIH) postdoctoral fellowship at the Bloomberg School of Public Health, Johns Hopkins University. Hopson is an American Educational Research Association (AERA) Fellow and has affiliated previously in the Faculty of Education, University of Namibia, as a JW Fulbright Scholar and the Center of African Studies, Cambridge University (UK). Currently, he is affiliated with the School of Health, Victoria University-Wellington (Aotearoa New Zealand), is the Editor of the *Studies in Educational Ethnography* Book Series, Emerald Publishers, and the co-editor of *Educational Policy as/in Practice: Critical Cultural Studies*, Information Age Book Series. Additionally, he serves as the co-editor of the *American Journal of Evaluation*. Central to Hopson's research agenda over the last 25 years are questions that (1) analyze and address the differential impact of education and schooling on marginalized and underrepresented groups in diverse global nation states; and (2) seek solutions to social and educational conditions in the form of alternative paradigms, epistemologies, and methods for the way the oppressed and marginalized succeed and thrive despite circumstances and opportunities that suggest otherwise. He has co-authored and co-edited 10 books, including *Culturally responsive inquiry in education: Improving research, evaluation, and assessment* (Harvard Education Press, 2022), *Tackling wicked problems in complex ecologies: The role of evaluation* (Stanford University Press, 2018), *New directions in educational ethnography: Shifts, problems, reconstruction* (Emerald, 2016), *Power, voice, and the public good: Schooling and education in global societies* (Elsevier, 2008), and others.

About the Contributors

Martha Jailene Aguirre is a Senior Research Associate and 2025 Equity Scholar at NORC at the University of Chicago. She earned her Bachelor's degree from the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) and Masters of Science from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC). She previously served the Illinois 103rd District as a Center for Social and Behavioral Science UIUC Policy and Research Legislative Fellow in IL State Representative Carol Ammons' office, wherein she co-wrote IL House Resolution 453 to establish the Family Roots Genealogy Pilot Program that aims to help Illinois descendants of enslaved individuals trace their roots to their respective ancestral homelands. Her current research interests revolve around the experiences of historically marginalized individuals, particularly how immigrant-origin families within the US context access, exchange, and utilize resources (i.e. social safety net programs and social support) to support family well-being. She uses an ecological perspective to explore various contexts with the aim of understanding the impacts of racial-ethnic, socioeconomic, and immigrant status disparities and uplifting vulnerable communities.

Ted Amendt, PhD, has been working in Saskatchewan's provincial K-12 and postsecondary education systems for three decades. Ted's leadership has included areas of community education, Indigenous education, program evaluation, policy development, and board governance. In 2013, Ted joined the Saskatchewan School Boards Association where he currently is the Director of Board Development and Indigenous Education. From 2002 to 2013, Ted worked with the provincial Ministries of Education and Advanced Education. Ted started his career in education in 1996 as a Community School Coordinator at Princess Alexandra Community School in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Ted received his Master of Continuing Education from the University of Saskatchewan in 2008 and received his Doctor of Philosophy (Education) degree from the University of Saskatchewan in 2020. Ted's research is in the areas of family and community engagement in schools and School Community Councils. As part of his doctoral work, Ted conducted an evaluation of School Community Councils in the province, utilizing Indigenous methodologies within an evaluation research tradition. Ted is a proud citizen of the Métis Nation—Saskatchewan. Ted's previous publications and studies include (1) his doctoral dissertation at the University of Saskatchewan (2019) entitled "A Critical Analysis of School Community Councils in Saskatchewan", (2) a 2018 article co-authored with

Debbie Pushor in *School Leadership & Management* entitled “Leading an Examination of Beliefs and Assumptions About Parents”, (3) a Master’s thesis at the University of Saskatchewan (2008) entitled “Involvement to Engagement: Community Education Practices in a Suburban Elementary School and Inner-City Community School”, and (4) a 2006 research report co-authored with Yves Bousquet for the Dr Stirling McDowell Foundation for Research into Teaching, entitled “Creating a Culturally Affirming Learning Community.”

Cherie M. Avent, PhD, is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Educational Psychology and a faculty affiliate with CREA at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. She identifies as a Black woman, a wife, a mom, a researcher, and an educator. Her scholarship spans two areas: (1) evaluator practices for advancing equity and the associated impacts, and (2) reporting the experiences of students and educators participating in National Science Foundation (NSF)–funded projects for strengthening science, technology, engineering, and mathematics pathways, often for marginalized and underrepresented groups. She has published peer-reviewed articles and chapters in outlets such as the *American Journal of Evaluation*, *Evaluation and Program Planning*, *New Directions for Evaluation*, *Journal of Negro Education*, *Science Educator*, and *Handbook on Research and Evaluation*. Cherie teaches courses in research methods and program evaluation. She also serves as the external evaluator on several NSF projects. Cherie holds a BFA in Dance Choreography; an MS in Communication Studies; and a PhD in Educational Research, Measurement, and Evaluation from the University of North Carolina Greensboro.

Caroline Black, PhD, believes that research can be an effective tool for social and political change when envisioned and enacted by community. She is an associated faculty with the University of Arizona and Northern Arizona University. Dr Black holds a doctorate in learning sciences and human development (University of Washington), a Master’s degree in early childhood education (New York University), and a Bachelor’s degree in cultural anthropology (Whitman College). She has extensive experience in a variety of early care and educational settings. She has taught English to primary school students in Poitiers, France, worked as a first grade and preschool teacher in mixed- and low-income neighborhoods in Brooklyn, and co-led the United Nations Child Care Center in New York as the Assistant Director. Her research centers on (a) understanding linkages among family relationships, parenting, and children’s psychosocial and behavioral development in families with marginalized social identities; (b) identifying implementation and evaluation processes required of effective early childhood and family support programs serving under-resourced communities; and (c) engaging in community-based participatory research to understand how young mothers actively resist stigma and oppression. Her research has been co-led with a variety of partners, including the Summit High School Teenage Parent Program, United Way of Northern Arizona, Candelen, Grand Canyon Youth, Early Head Start, and Children’s Home Society of Washington and has been funded by the Administration for Children and Families Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities, and

Helios Education Foundation. Her work has been published in *Family Process*, *Family Relations*, *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, *Teacher's College Press* (forthcoming), and *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* (forthcoming).

Taryn T. C. Brown, PhD, is an Assistant Professor in the Teachers, Schools, and Society program at the University of Florida (UF). Her program of research has three major foci: the intersection of gender, race, and class in the lives of Black women and girls in and out of school settings; amplifying Black women and girls' voices in prevention science; and the role schools and communities play in women and girls' socialization, literacies, and identity construction. With research at the nexus of Black girlhood studies and Black feminist thought, her work leverages various theoretical foundations (e.g., Black feminist theory, ecological systems theory; and critical race theory) and critical qualitative methodologies (e.g. youth participatory action research, photovoice, Black archival research, and oral storytelling). Dr Brown has been recognized through multiple UF college and university level-awards and is the recipient of the UF College of Education Undergraduate Teacher of the Year award, the Rosser Educator Excellence Award, and the UF College of Education Undergraduate Mentor of the Year Award. As an advocate for university–community–school partnerships, she is the founder of the Black Girlhood Collaborative, a learning lab for research, teaching, and service in Black girlhood. This collaborative space engages undergraduate and graduate students, community partners, university faculty, and P-12 educators and administrators from across the United States with interests in Black girlhood and Black feminisms in educational research.

Amy Christensen-McLean earned her BS in Elementary Education and an MA in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Connecticut. She then taught in an elementary school for 6 years in Title I schools in Alexandria, Virginia. There, she taught first, second, and fifth grade students. While in the classroom, Amy also earned an additional MA in Curriculum and Instruction with a focus on Literacy Leadership in Diverse Schools from George Mason University. Throughout her time in the classroom, Amy remained passionate about being a learner and researcher, engaging in reflective action research on equitable practices in the classroom. Her passion for social justice in schools led her to the University of Florida's Teachers, Schools and Society doctoral program, where she is currently in her third year. She is a Graduate Assistant who has taught courses in equity pedagogy, rethinking classroom management, and reflective teacher research. She has worked on a grant funded by NSF that works to expand the scope of culturally responsive and affective-focused teaching in science and mathematics classrooms. She has worked at Akwaaba Freedom School for two summers as a testing and research coordinator. Her current research focuses on equity-based teacher education programs, culturally sustaining and social justice mathematics education, as well as the sociopolitical and historical functions of whiteness in systems of education. She has presented her work at conferences including the National Council for Teachers of Mathematics, the National Council for Supervisors of Mathematics, and the American Educational Research Association conferences.

Edith J. Cisneros-Cohernour, PhD, graduated in 2002 with a PhD in Education from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, she holds a Master's in Higher Education, and a Law degree from the Autonomous University of Yucatán (UADY). She is as a member of the Mexican National Researchers System of the National Council of Humanities, Sciences, and Technologies (CONAHCYT). Her research focuses on evaluation for educational improvement and equity, specifically the evaluation and development of school organizational personnel, program evaluation, and the study of ethical and equity issues in research and evaluation. She has published her research in indexed journals across Latin America, the United States, and Europe. Her recent publications include *Equity, Diversity and Evaluation of Teaching: Critical Issues in an American University* (2024); *Women and Higher Distance Education: Rural and Urban Experiences Post the Confinement* (2024); *Teaching and Learning of Qualitative Research in Times of COVID-19 in Mexico* (2023); *Challenges and Experiences of Novice Educational Administrators in Southern Mexico* (2022); *the Key Role of Administrators in Supporting Teacher Leadership in Southern Mexico* (2021); *Trajectories of Teachers who Pass the Selection Examination for Teacher Career in Southern Mexico* (2021); *Case Studies* (2017), and *Social Justice and Inequity in the Scientific and Technological Preparation of Youth from Rural Communities in the Mayan Region of Mexico* (2020). She is currently the Head of Graduate Studies and Research at the College of Education at the Autonomous University of Yucatán.

Chonika Coleman-King, PhD, received her doctorate in Teaching, Learning, and Curriculum from the University of Pennsylvania. She is Associate Professor of Teachers, Schools, and Society at the University of Florida where she also serves as the Director of the Collaborative for Equity in Education, a university center that focuses on building collaborations that advance equity-centered initiatives and research endeavors. She also served as the Coordinator for Curriculum and Research of the equity-centered elementary teacher education program in the University of Florida's College of Education which won the Rose Duhon-Sills Multicultural Program Award from the National Association of Multicultural Education. Dr Coleman-King is also the Executive Director of Akwaaba Freedom School. The Akwaaba Freedom School site won the Children's Defense Fund's 2024 Ella Baker Award for Overall Excellence. Dr Coleman-King's research interests include the development of anti-racist teachers, culturally responsive STEM education, Black mothering, and the experiences of Black immigrant and Black American youth in US schools. Dr Coleman-King is the author of the book, *The (Re-)Making of a Black American: Tracing the Racial and Ethnic Socialization of Caribbean American Youth*, which documents the complex interplay between race, class, and immigrant status for Afro-Caribbean immigrant youth and the role of schools and families in their identity development. Dr Coleman-King has engaged in service at the local and national levels. She has chaired the Research Focus on Black Education Special Interest Group for the American Educational Research Association and was formerly the Co-chair of Division K: Teaching and Teacher Education. She has secured over

\$5M in funding from NSF, private foundations, and local entities to advance research and programmatic initiatives that pursue educational equity for Black children and youth.

Beth Giacalone serves as Faculty and Chair of the Educator Preparation Department at Northland Pioneer College. Beth has served as an Adjunct Faculty Member at Arizona State University, Northern Arizona University, and Yavapai College. She has more than 28 years of experience in the early childhood education field and 33 years of experience in management and administration. Beth has presented at many state and national conferences including the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), and the First Things First Early Childhood Summit. She is the co-author of *Surprising Destinations* published by Heinemann. She has worked in both the private and publicly funded arenas of early childhood education. She taught and was the Assistant Director at a small private school, supported the education component of a large Head Start grantee, and supported coaches, assessors, and trainers who supported the early childhood education field across Arizona. She earned an MEd in early childhood education from ASU, studied Clinical Psychology at Pepperdine University, and earned her BA in Psychology at the University of Texas at El Paso. Beth led the Elevate PreK pilot program and has been researching and advocating for universal PreK in Flagstaff and Coconino County. Her interests include program and project management, leadership development, preservice teacher preparation and ongoing professional development as well as a myriad of topics in early childhood education.

Roger J. González González, PhD, holds a doctorate in Social Sciences, a Master's in Educational Research, and a Bachelor's in Education from the Autonomous University of Yucatán. He is a university professor-researcher and an author of various research articles published in academic journals in Mexico, Spain, and Latin America. His research areas focus on educational inequality, social justice, the participation of Maya and rural youth in higher education, program evaluation, and the analysis of public policies in higher education, science, and technology. He is a member of the National Researchers System of the National Council of Humanities, Sciences, and Technologies (CONAHCYT). Among his recent publications are *Equidad, diversidad y evaluación de la docencia: Cuestiones críticas emergentes en una universidad norteamericana* (2024); *Teaching and learning of qualitative research in times of Covid-19 in Mexico* (2023); *Pobreza y desigualdades en la formación científica y tecnológica de jóvenes indígenas mayas: Estudio multicaso de dos institutos tecnológicos en Yucatán* (2023); *Pobreza, Migración Académica y Estereotipos de Género en la Educación Superior, la Ciencia y la Tecnología* (2020) and *Justicia Social e Inequidad en la Formación Científica y Tecnológica de Jóvenes Rurales en la Región Maya de México: El Caso de Mex* (2020). He is currently serving as a postdoctoral researcher at CONAHCYT.

Melissa Miller, PhD, is a recent doctoral graduate in Interdisciplinary Health from Northern Arizona University with a focus on psychosocial health. She has more than eight years of research experience in topics such as early childhood education, program development and evaluation, and traumatic experiences. Her doctoral training is rooted in psychology and intersectionality, and her dissertation work focused on sexual violence disclosure in queer college students. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Health and Society and in French Language and Literature from Beloit College in Beloit, Wisconsin, before undergoing 2 years of graduate studies in Switzerland at Universität Luzern with a concentration in health behavior and management as well as an internship at Swiss Paraplegic Research. A budding scholar, Melissa has research published in *Spinal Cord and Dignity: A Journal of Analysis of Exploitation and Violence* and is a collaborator on several studies in preparation for publication. She has presented work at many regional and national conferences, including Society for Research on Child Development, Association for Psychological Science, and Midwestern Psychological Association. Melissa most recently served as a research project consultant with the Institute for Child Success for Elevate PreK, an equity- and community-based pilot preschool program serving marginalized families in Northern Arizona, after nearly 3 years as Graduate Research Assistant and Research Co-Lead. Her research interests include program evaluation, neuroscience and bioinformatics, ecological anxiety and reproductive concern, and sexual violence.

Paapa Nkrumah-Ababio is a PhD student in Education Policy, Organization, and Leadership, concentrating in Global Studies in Education and Evaluation. With a background in Petroleum Engineering and Higher Education, he brings an interdisciplinary lens to his research on culturally relevant education and evaluation in sub-Saharan Africa, particularly Ghana. His work explores how higher education can cultivate innovative, community-rooted problem-solvers to advance sustainable development. Paapa teaches and applies human-centered design, integrating strong quantitative and evaluation research skills with expertise in mixed methods, qualitative inquiry, curriculum development, organizational learning, and strategic communication. He approaches community engagement through an asset-based lens that prioritizes local knowledge, contextual relevance, and community strengths. He has worked with community-based organizations and interned with international development firms, supporting teams in assessing programs, procedures, and policies. By surfacing community insights and improving internal processes, he helps organizations develop evidence-based strategies aligned with their values and long-term goals.

Tanis Sawkins, PhD, recently completed her doctorate at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia, Canada. She used an arts-based approach to research and evaluate one of the programs she managed in her workplace. Tanis is a faculty member at Vancouver Community College (VCC) where she has taught, developed, and managed language and employment related programs for over 20 years. Her current research interests include incorporating culturally responsive approaches into language and literacy teaching and instructional

design. As part of her role as the Director of Partnership Development at VCC, Tanis and her team conceptualized, proposed, designed, implemented, and evaluated multiple employment programs for those from underrepresented or marginalized communities. She has supported language and literacy programs for Deaf migrants seeking to enter employment programs, developed entrepreneurship programs for migrant women using sewing and cooking skills, and managed early childhood education programs in indigenous communities. These employment-related programs were adapted and modified from conventional programming to better meet the needs of participants facing barriers. Tanis has also taught as a sessional instructor at the University of the Fraser Valley (UFV), in the Adult Education department for several years. Throughout her career, Tanis has viewed her program evaluation within a community college context as a catalyst for collaboration, learning, and social equity.

Michael A. Scofield completed his Bachelor of Arts in English Education at Purdue University, and in 2021, he completed his Master of Science in Higher Education Administration at Southern New Hampshire University. As a second-generation educator, Michael's passion for teaching was cultivated when he moved to Florida and taught at a Title I high school for 10 years and served as the English Department Head, school-wide writing coach, and AP Capstone Coordinator. Now a doctoral candidate at the University of Florida in the Teachers, Schools, and Society graduate program, he is a Graduate Assistant that teaches Equity Pedagogy courses in the Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education Program. He has also spent multiple years working at Akwaaba Freedom School, where he served as the testing and research coordinator. His research focuses on understanding educational policies that impact minoritized student groups, LGBTQIA+ educational experiences and histories, how to utilize teacher education programs to dismantle social barriers for students, and how advanced academic programs can support long-term educational success for minoritized groups. His dissertation examined the relationships between college success and secondary advanced academic coursework through narrative. He has presented multiple projects about Black Joy, LGBTQIA+ histories, and Equity in Education at the American Education Research Association and the History of Education Society. Due to his dedication to teaching and research, he was a multiple-year winner of the Florida High Impact Teacher Award, University of Florida Graduate Student Teaching Award, and the University of Florida College of Education Professional Practice Award.

Sara Sprague has experience researching facets of sociology, teaching, and program evaluation, including quantitative and qualitative methodologies and data analysis. Sara received her MA in Applied Sociology from Northern Arizona University and her BA in Applied Sociology from the University of Northern Colorado. She has presented at conferences, such as the Arizona Food Systems Network, the Association for Humanist Sociology, and Pacific Sociological Association. Sara served as a collaborator for the Department of Educational Leadership at Northern Arizona University evaluating the equity-based preschool program Elevate PreK while also teaching in the Department of Sociology. Sara's

work is now focused on applied quantitative and qualitative research to ameliorate the local food systems in Northern Arizona, such as collaborating with the City of Flagstaff on their Community Food Systems Assessment and being part of the Hunger Action Partnership with the local food bank. This work is aligned with her commitment to uplift the voices of those often not heard and to act toward work that gets to the root of health disparities among communities facing food insecurity. She is passionate about grassroots movements, education, collective action, and enacting intentional practices, which cultivate access, equity, and resilience. Her actions are embedded in a discourse of system change leveraged at both the local and regional scale, especially change that addresses the capitalist, racial injustices contingent on the current food system.

Shiyu Sun, PhD, obtained her doctorate from the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Her work investigates college students' sense of belonging in different contextual settings. More specifically, she is interested in exploring international students' sense of belonging in university settings and understanding how different cultural and social factors affect students' belonging experiences. She hopes to promote a more diverse and inclusive environment in higher education for students from minoritized backgrounds through her studies. For her current work, she mainly employs a neo-racism approach to understand international students' experiences in higher education, hoping to promote a more diverse and inclusive environment for those students.

Jalea Turner is a doctoral candidate at the University of Florida (UF) in the Curriculum and Instruction program, specializing in Teachers, Schools and Society. A two-time Florida Gator, she attended UF for her undergraduate and graduate studies. Jalea earned a BA in Elementary Education and wrote a thesis entitled "Integrated Play into the Early Childhood Science Curriculum." In 2017, she completed her Master's in Special Education with an emphasis on reading education and intervention through UF's Dual Certification ProTeach Program. Upon graduation, Jalea accepted a full-time teaching position at PK Yonge Developmental Research School (PK) as a K-1 learning community instructor, where she currently works as a seventh-year teacher. As an educator deeply committed to social equity and breaking systemic barriers for historically marginalized students, Jalea co-founded PK's subcommittee focused on the hiring and retention practices for teachers of Color and Racial Equity Council to transform institutional practices with the goal of optimizing the school learning environment to benefit diverse learners. Supported by a grant from Learning for Justice, Jalea incorporated research on culturally responsive pedagogy to create a K-1 social studies curriculum prioritizing critical conversations on identity, diversity, action, and justice utilizing high-quality children's literature. Her research interests include equity-focused teacher education, sociopolitical influences on Black educators, teacher professional learning, and early childhood literacy education. Her 2024 co-authored publication in *Teaching and Teacher Education*, "It's a form of psychological warfare against educators: Protective factors for sustaining social justice education in contentious times," reveals how

teachers with self-identified commitments to equity in education remain steadfast, while navigating a highly polarizing political landscape.

Hannah Valdiviejas Cohn, PhD, obtained her doctorate in Educational Psychology at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. She is an interdisciplinary social scientist that pulls from education, psychology, policy, evaluation and assessment, and data science to advocate for underserved learners and their families. She has published in the *Online Learning Journal*, *National Association of Bilingual Education (NABE) Journal of Research and Practice*, *Journal of Higher Education Theory and Practice*, *International Educational Data Mining Society* and the *Online Learning Journal*, where her work is centered on the educational experiences of Black and Latine STEM students, specifically in predominantly white spaces. She is interested in issues of measurement and uses paradigms like QuantCrit to develop critically conscious research, policy, and practice that provide access to quality education. Hannah began her academic career as a research fellow for the center for Technology Innovation in Educational Research (TIER-Ed) in 2022 where she compared racialized stress for Black and Latine university STEM students between online and in-person settings. Hannah has spent time as a federal policy fellow for the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) sponsored by the Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD) where she worked in Congress working on legislation that supports Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, and Tribal Colleges and Universities. The fellowship also brought her to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services under the Administration for Children and Families in the Office of Child Care working on Tribal childcare policy, regulation, and implementation.

Cecilia Vaughn-Guy is a doctoral candidate in Education Policy and Organizational Leadership at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign with dual concentrations in Human Resource Development and Diversity and Equity in Education. She completed a graduate certificate in evaluation through the Evaluation Program within the Quantitative and Qualitative Methodology, Measurement, and Evaluation (QUERIES) division of Educational Psychology. Cecilia is also a graduate of the American Evaluation Association's Graduate Diversity Internship Program (GEDI). Her research interest centers on amplifying the voices of Black women who are frontline healthcare workers using an intersectional lens, reimagining equitable and sustainable organizational hierarchies in healthcare organizations, and creating and sustaining cultural change through participatory evaluation. Prior to matriculation into her doctoral program, she worked as an occupational therapist in clinical, hospital-based and academic settings. Cecilia is also a graduate student researcher in CREA. Cecilia completed a legislative fellowship with the Women's Congressional Policy Institute (WCPI), working in the office of the Honorable Robin L. Kelly as a health legislative fellow, focusing on policy to engender health equity through increasing educational pathways, clinical trial diversity, and reduction of gun violence in schools. Cecilia has presented nationally and internationally about her findings and personal learnings from participating in culturally responsive research and

evaluations. She has existing and forthcoming publications in the *European Journal of Training & Development* and *New Horizons in Adult Education and Human Resource Development*.

Deandra West earned a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Education in Elementary Education from the University of Florida. She began teaching in 2015 and taught for six subsequent years. During her years as a practitioner in the elementary context, she taught first, second, and third grade at Title 1 schools. It was during these years that she became well acquainted with the disparity in the education system and thus strived to enact a culturally responsive, relevant, and sustaining pedagogy in order to meet the needs of her students. Literacy, specifically the infusion of texts by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) writers helped bridge this gap. In witnessing the positive impact that diverse texts had on her students, she knew she wanted to further her work within the realm of literacy education. At present, she is a doctoral candidate at the University of Florida in the Curriculum and Instruction program, specializing in reading and literacy education. She also works as a graduate research assistant, where she has taught courses in emergent literacy, beginning reading, and reading in the intermediate grades. Her research centers on highlighting the literacy practices of students from historically marginalized communities, interrogating the power structures in institutions, censorship of diverse texts, teacher autonomy, and BIPOC infusion. Her passion for literacy and social justice has involved her in multiple research endeavors and projects, culminating in both national and international conferences. She has presented her work at the National Council of Teachers of English, the Literacy Research Association, Florida Reading Association, and the International Board of Books for Young People.

Preface

The edited book, volume 21 in the *Studies in Educational Ethnography's* book series by Melissa Goodnight and Rodney Hopson, is the second volume of a set. This volume, *Cases Integrating Ethnography and Evaluation: Making Transformative, Intersectional and Comparative Connections*, follows last year's book, *Theories Bridging Ethnography and Evaluation*, with the same subtitle. Just as the previous volume brought together scholars and students who seek to interrupt, transform, and facilitate educational and social change, so does this current volume.

This volume carries on the volume set by focusing on cases in the United States, Mexico, Canada, and India while relying on the traditions of ethnography and evaluation throughout. Through rich accounts of evaluation and ethnographic practice, the 8 chapters highlight dilemmas and tensions that reveal the complex and complicated nature of doing transformative work with intersectional analyses and comparative insights and groundings. Where the *Theories Bridging* volume revealed important philosophical, relational, and ethical dimensions of the interconnected practice of ethnography and evaluation related to notions of positionality, criticality, authenticity, and reciprocity, the *Cases Integrating* volume weaves timely narratives and stories based on scholars' practices. These narratives of worth and belonging among students and communities of color on critical topics of civic engagement, on the importance of lived experiences to locate homeplaces and sanctuaries of support, reveal ways to ensure our methods and practices are more humane and more humanizing. An epilogue at the end of the volume highlights why these cases are vital in an era of surveillance and assault on education and other democratic institutions.

The Goodnight and Hopson volume continues the extension of the book series to the School of Education at American University in Washington, DC (2023–present) from the College of Education at University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign, where it has been from 2018 to 2023. Inspired by and based on conversations with Prof. Geoffrey Walford (Oxford University), we continue to use this book series as a catalyst for ethnographic research, perspectives, and methodologies that will extend our understandings of sociocultural educational phenomena and their global and local meanings.

The primary objective of *Studies in Educational Ethnography* is to present original research monographs or edited volumes based on ethnographic perspectives, theories, and methodologies. Such research will advance the development of theory, practice, policy, and praxis for improving schooling and

education in neighborhood, community, and global contexts. In complex neighborhood, community, and global contexts, educational ethnographies should situate themselves beyond isolated classrooms or single sites and concern themselves with more than narrow methodological pursuits. Rather, the ethnographic research, perspectives, and methodologies featured in this series should extend our understandings of sociocultural educational phenomena and their global and local meanings. Studying classrooms and educational communities without concomitant understanding of the dynamics of broader structural forces renders ethnographic analyses potentially incomplete.

Rodney Hopson, Series Editor

Acknowledgments

In the Acknowledgments of Volume 1, we expressed that books are large projects that require many minds, hearts, and hands. Volume 2 was no less of an undertaking. In reflecting on its completion now, our first thanks go to the contributing authors who trusted us with their scholarship. We also acknowledge their vital community and educational collaborators who have shared their knowledge and experiences with us. The following chapters depict the centrality of their collaborations and the depth of the relationships they have formed, which are undoubtedly the core of these cases illustrating transformative work. May the book be of benefit to many people.

Melissa would like to wholeheartedly thank colleagues and collaborators who contributed ideas, advice, and labor to this work recently and in the past: Cecilia Vaughn-Guy, Hui Xie, Ketan, Rebecca Taylor, Cherie Avent, Osly Flores, Ananya Tiwari, Ramya Kumaran, Mariana Barragan Torres, Taiko Yusa, Audrey Harris, Kathy Carbone, Nathan Kish, Karen Kirkhart, Nick Smith, Jennifer Greene, Stafford Hood, Melvin Hall, Jose-Felipe Martinez, Akhil Gupta, Katie Anderson-Levitt, Mike Rose, Karen Monkman, Edith Mukudi Omwami, and Tina Christie. Rodney Hopson has been an enthusiastic champion of these volumes' scholarship, which he has inspired through decades of inquiry, advocacy, and writing. Melissa wants to highlight that the book has been possible only because of the friendship and generosity of Nandita Banerjee and family, Karthika Anthony and family, Surbhi Batra and family, Ashok Mutum and family, and Savitri Bobde. Special thanks to Suman Bhattacharjea, Wilima Wadhwa, Rukmini Banerji, Madhav Chavan, Gunjan Sharma, Venita Kaul, and Ajit George for their kindness, openness, mentorship, and wisdom. Additionally, much appreciation goes to ASER Center and Pratham staff, partners, and volunteers who shared so much of their work, knowledge, and themselves during the fieldwork contributing to this book. The staff of the United States-India Educational Foundation (USIEF) and the Fulbright-Nehru program facilitated Melissa's fieldwork via funding, housing, logistical support, professional development, and guidance. Finally, Melissa's family—Amol Naik, Ashok Naik, Elaine Goodnight, Michael Goodnight, Minal Naik, Bharat Naik, Philip Goodnight, Nancy Goodnight, Savannah Goodnight, Joshua Goodnight, Haley Naik, Aneesh Raman, Isha Raman, Maha Raman, Ami Naik, Sushil Jacob, Sathyan Jacob, Suhani Jacob, Chris and Christine Burroughs, Jessie and Billy Thompson, and Gary and Laurie Edemann—have been consistent champions of her work and sources of support, humor, and love through its challenges and milestones.

Rodney invokes the first stanza of the poem, *The Invitation*, by Oriah Mountain Dreamer, as an expression of the fulfillment of this book volume on the journey that this first volume represents.

It doesn't interest me what you do for a living.

I want to know what you ache for and if you dare to dream of meeting your heart's longing.

As described in Volume 1's Chapter 7 ("Sankofa Reflections on Bridging Ethnography and Evaluation") and this volume's Epilogue, much of what he thought he was doing over 25 years ago was finding ways to bridge theories and practice in his emerging academic career, between finishing doctoral work, postdoctoral training, and new faculty member in the late 1990s. In many ways, this is a dream imagined and fulfilled.

Thank you, Melissa (Goodnight), for co-partnering and realizing a dream deferred, for your grace and compassion in lifting up ideas to explode! To Kirsty (Woods) and the incredible Emerald Team for the encouragement, direction for seeing how to make our dreams real, and the belief in what we imagined could occur in print.

Rodney dedicates this book to the late greats: Dell H. Hymes (1927–2009), Michael H. Agar (1945–2017), and Stafford L. Hood (1952–2023), all who nurtured and modeled the passion and commitment to the bridging life work he aspires.

Chapter 1

Doing Ethnography and Evaluation: Cases Illustrating Transformative, Intersectional, and Comparative Work

Melissa Rae Goodnight

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, USA

Abstract

This chapter describes scholarship integrating ethnography and evaluation to transform educational inquiry and educational entities (programs, systems, and policies). The central question explored is, *how do we best pursue work connecting evaluation and ethnography to fulfill our commitments to diversity, justice, and cultural responsiveness in educational spaces to make tangible transformative change?* With 40 years of literature on ethnography-evaluation connections as a foundation, this chapter describes three coalescing themes: transformative, intersectional, and comparative. These themes are proposed as valuable for guiding contemporary educational inquiry that serves social justice. The transformative theme denotes educational inquiry in which the researcher or evaluator ethically collects data, makes defensible interpretations, *and* facilitates social change in collaboration with others. Doing transformative work that meaningfully fuses ethnography and evaluation rests on essential factors like time, values engagement, collaboration, and self-work. The intersectional theme describes intersectionality as an evolving analytical framework that promotes social problem-solving and learning via investigating the significance of intersecting social identities in (a) how people's lives are shaped, (b) their access to power across circumstances, and (c) their everyday experiences of subordination and discrimination. Finally, the comparative theme refers to sensibilities and practices gleaned from the interdisciplinary and transnational field of comparative education, including developing comparative cultural understanding and analyzing complex systems in one's inquiry projects. This chapter concludes with descriptions of the cases comprising this volume, which exemplify these

themes and leverage ethnographic concepts and practices in doing transformative evaluation work in educational spaces.

Keywords: Transformative; intersectionality; comparative education; social justice theories; comparative case study; culturally responsive evaluation; values-engagement; collaboration

An Overview of Volumes 1 and 2: Connecting Evaluation and Ethnography

This introductory chapter aims to orient readers to the second of two edited volumes, published in the Studies in Educational Ethnography book series, on the possibilities between ethnography and evaluation. In both volumes, authors explore ethnography-evaluation connections in their work as they pursue transformation of educational inquiry and entities (programs, systems, and policies). The authors contemplate the boundaries of ethnography and evaluation to make compelling arguments about how each can be conceptualized and practiced within particular contexts and with specific communities. The question that guides these compilations is, *how do we best pursue work connecting evaluation and ethnography to fulfill our commitments to diversity, justice, and cultural responsiveness in educational spaces to make tangible transformative change?* While investigating multiple connections between ethnography and evaluation, authors in Volumes 1 and 2 address the moment—wrestling with pressing justice issues within educational programs, systems, and policies in today’s societies across the world.

Volume 2, entitled *Cases Integrating Ethnography and Evaluation*, presents seven chapters that use ethnographic methods to conduct evaluations or to research aspects of evaluation across different contexts. Several authors describe evaluations that emphasize the use of fieldwork and participant observation as a means of learning about educational entities’ cultural and contextual specificity. Such evaluations pursue greater democracy, equity, and justice in educational policy, programs, and systems through forging trusting and reciprocal relationships with individuals and groups (e.g., communities). These relationships are the crucial foundation for generating information, interpreting its meaning, and acting on it collectively. Drawing upon the conceptual rooting of ethnographic-evaluation connections in Volume 1, the authors of Volume 2’s chapters describe application: the conduct of contextually and culturally responsive work (e.g., Hood et al., 2015) tackling the localization, enculturation, and refinement of ethnographic methods and evaluation practice.

Volume 1, entitled *Theories Bridging Ethnography and Evaluation*, examined the theoretical ties between ethnography and evaluation in educational spaces. Its five chapters principally explored concepts (e.g., positionality, transparency, authenticity, and reciprocity) that facilitated opportunities for evaluators’ and researchers’ connected practice of ethnography and evaluation. The chapter authors analyzed various dimensions of ethnography and evaluation—philosophical, methodological, relational, and ethical—respectively and connectedly. Authors also highlighted

their experiential learning—how these concepts were forged not only from literature but also from the lived experience of doing this connected, transformative scholarship.

Previous publications provide a historical and intellectual foundation for these volumes (see Appendix, [Table A1](#)). The publications are multidisciplinary, representing writing from academic fields like anthropology, education, and public health. They offer unique understandings of how culture, politics, and social issues operate in educational or social entities (e.g., programs) and can be studied. These writings also illuminate how a holistic, naturalistic, and phenomenological orientation paired with the employment of ethnographic methods in evaluations greatly influences evaluations' validity, usefulness, and ethics.¹ The ethnographic methods referenced across these sources include researcher reflexivity, fieldwork and participant observation, immersion, cultural interpretation, and prolonged relationship-building. Scholarship from the 1980s to the early 2000s is indispensable in establishing the present volumes' purpose and subsequent chapters. The progress made over roughly 40 years in envisioning ethnographic-evaluation connections (from [Fetterman, 1980](#), to [Butler, 2016](#), to today) should have a venue for extended discussion. These volumes are created in acknowledgment that such discussion of ethnography-evaluation possibilities is fruitful and ongoing. The discussion's objectives are twofold: one, to make these ethnographic-evaluation connections visible in the context of doing transformative work in education and two, to hold this dialogue across different scholar-practitioners whose work incorporates various critical and liberatory ideas (e.g., intersectionality, antiracism, criticality). In both volumes, the concept of education is engaged as it is intrinsically embedded in authors' ethnographic and evaluation work in formal or nonformal educational contexts.

A goal of Volume 2 is to provide readers from different disciplines and practice areas (e.g., evaluation, anthropology, education, and social work) with rich accounts of evaluation and ethnographic practice.² Chapter authors provide orientations to evaluation's varying features: its differing purposes, diverse methodological and interpersonal strategies, and multifaceted consequences. For example, in Chapter 2, Coleman-King, Brown, Turner, West, Christensen-McLean, and

¹[LeCompte and Goetz \(1982\)](#) describe the ethnographic approach in evaluation in the following way: *phenomenological*, as in representing “the world view of the participants being investigated”; *empirical* and *naturalistic*, as in acquiring “first-hand sensory accounts of phenomena as they occur in real world settings”; and *holistic*, as in seeking “to construct descriptions of total phenomena within their various contexts and to generate from these descriptions major variables affecting human behavior and belief toward the phenomena” (p. 388).

²Readers interested in a longer orientation to evaluation (especially from the anthropology perspective) or to anthropology (especially from the evaluator perspective) would be well served by reading [Butler's \(2016\)](#) book that presents each in separate accessible chapters. Butler offers a *cultural systems approach* to evaluation—i.e., *evaluation anthropology*—drawing on anthropology's cultural interpretation and methodology (e.g., ethnography) to conduct evaluation.

Scofield are evaluating their own Freedom School in the Southern United States to better understand the ways it creates a *homeplace* for Black students and other students and how it cultivates their love for learning. Meanwhile, Sawkins (Chapter 5) uses arts- and ethnography-informed methods to evaluate the consciousness-raising and overall efficacy of an employment program for migrant women in Canada. In the cases that comprise Volume 2 chapters, the traditions and practices of ethnography are interwoven throughout. Coleman-King and co-authors describe using critical collaborative ethnography to conduct their evaluation of their Freedom School; Sawkins weaves together collage-making, ethnographic *placemaking* via gallery walks (Lee & Ingold, 2006; Pink, 2008), facilitated participant discussions, and fieldwork to center the perspectives of the migrant women who participate in the workforce preparation program.

Before moving on, it is important to highlight that some of these chapters clearly differentiate educational evaluation from educational research while others more readily blur the lines. Evaluation is a process primarily focused on collaboratively and systematically generating information for people's decision-making about educational entities (programs, systems, or policies). The generated information is supposed to be practical, facilitate action, and emerge from the questions of people who are connected to the educational entity. In other words, the evaluation pursues information wanted by people who have "a stake" in the evaluated program, system, or policy. Thus, unlike traditional forms of research, evaluation is *not* principally driven by researcher interests or by the desire to create broader knowledge (e.g., generalizable) for a disciplinary or professional audience. Because of its relationship to making judgments about the merit, worth, and continuation of vital educational entities, evaluation is a form of inquiry and a profession that carries immense power and privilege (e.g., Hall, 2020). The field of evaluation is concerned with the *theory, methods, practices, and profession* comprising evaluation work (see Smith & Brandon, 2008). With all that said, the boundaries between evaluation and research are not crisp or seen the same way across evaluation scholars and practitioners (Wanzer, 2020). The connection between evaluation and ethnography can be understood in part through evaluation's reliance on social research methodologies like ethnography and data collection methods like participant observation to produce information about the evaluated entity (i.e., the *evaluand*). Such methodology decision-making is not neutral but rather "represents the myriad of political, social, and cultural implications behind methodological selection and choice of methods" (Chouinard, 2014, p. 337), which are dilemmas discussed in the chapters of this volume.

The remainder of this introduction is organized in the following sections: the next section describes both volumes' vision and themes; the third section describes the key priorities unifying chapters; the fourth section relays the story of how these two volumes came into being; and finally, the last section summarizes each of the authors' seven chapters and the epilogue for Volume 2.

The Vision and Coalescing Themes of Volumes 1 and 2

The subtitle for Volumes 1 and 2, *Making Transformative, Intersectional, and Comparative Connections*, highlights three coalescing themes of the books, which

illuminate opportunities to connect ethnography and evaluation work. These interweaving themes—transformative, intersectional, and comparative—largely substantiate the vision for the two volumes. In situating their importance, Rodney Hopson's previous (2002, 2005) scholarship provides insight, particularly in its moral clarity on the responsibilities of the *ethnoevaluator* to be critical, self-reflexive, and aware of power and important histories (Hopson, 2002, 2005). Each of the responsibilities Hopson emphasizes is described within the themes' sections that follow. Hopson's ethnography-evaluation ideas—infused with a postmodern perspective—strongly foreshadow the volumes' blending of constructivist sensibilities with critical and liberatory theories. The following snippets illustrate his wisdom on the fusion of these ideas, beginning with an analysis of the constructivist worldview's significance:

I too suggest that too little attention has been paid to the role of the ethnographer in evaluation and to the connections between evaluation and ethnography. Using Fetterman's conceptual underpinnings of ethnographic evaluation (1984, 1989) and Stake's (1991) appeal to fourth-generation evaluation, I suggest that the historical development of ethnography and evaluation contribute to timely conceptual, methodological, and epistemological interdisciplinary possibilities for ethnoevaluation. The social constructivist perspective of evaluation from which the ethnoevaluator operates promotes a blending of traditions that values the cultural interpretation of ethnography with the judgment-framing and description-forming of evaluation. Merging multiple roles, the ethnoevaluator helps uncover complex social realities and contexts of programs and policies through formative or process evaluative decisions and by promoting holism and cultural interpretation of events and activities by program beneficiaries and other stakeholders.³ (Hopson, 2005, p. 209)

Ethnographic-evaluation connections have constructivist underpinnings and rely on the strengths of a constructivist orientation that emerged in evaluation work (e.g., fourth-generation evaluation). These strengths can be observed particularly in the quality of evaluators' cultural interpretations and the insightfulness of their reflection on the socially constructed nature of reality—for example, when establishing criteria for evaluating an educational entity's merit or worth. Yet, postmodernism compels something more: an ongoing attentiveness to issues of power, oppression, and justice that constructivism does not.

³See Guba and Lincoln (1989) for their description of the constructivist paradigm in evaluation theorizing and practice, which they characterize as *fourth-generation evaluation*. See Hopson (2002) for his more detailed interpretation of Stake's reconsideration of the ethnoevaluator's role in evaluation, particularly to cultivate "anthropological sensitivity to culture, kinship, and ritual" (p. 48).

The very nature of postmodernism implies a changing state of knowledge and reaction to claims about truth, ideology, representation, authority, power, and identity. The postmodern condition revisits and rethinks cultural phenomena and assumptions typical of Western European universalisms and rationalism, with an eye toward new cultural and political orientations. . . . The “progress” of the West is also rooted in a history of subjugation, exploitation, and enslavement. . . . The emphasis on critique, questioning, multiplicity . . . are important characteristics of the postmodern condition, all applicable and timely notions in current and future discussions in evaluation. Postmodern evaluation deliberates on these same notions of shifting power, ideology, truth, identity, and presentation. (Hopson, 2005, p. 291)

Postmodernism promotes deconstruction—analyses of politicized knowledge systems and the human realities that they form. Hopson (2002, 2005) outlines a liberatory, socially just evaluation practice using ethnography that is no less valuable today than it was 20 years ago. It is a practice aware of how ideology, representations, and claims about truth relate to tangible uses of power right now and throughout the related histories of the communities affected by the evaluation. He envisions ethnographic-evaluation possibilities that experiment with participation and methodology to “study up” into the societal layers of power (referencing Nader, 1999) and that engage down to the ground—working with people deeply in healing, learning, and “reinventing” how evaluation and social inquiry are done (Hopson, 2005, p. 293). With these ideas as jumping-off points for the two volumes’ explorations, the three coalescing themes—transformative, intersectional, and comparative—draw on substantial bodies of literature and social theory. The themes are presented in succinct summaries in the following sections to initiate conversations that are sustained in the chapters throughout this second volume.

Transformative Work

The transformative theme denotes educational inquiry in which the researcher or evaluator ethically collects data, makes defensible interpretations, *and* facilitates social change in collaboration with others (e.g., students, teachers, community members, and civil society workers). As a primary goal for inquiry, this change is supposed to affect the quality and justice of education for all people that it is meant to serve. In the case of evaluation, inquiry is often viewed as a professional and “market-based activity” with economic and feasibility concerns dominating evaluators’ decision-making, yet evaluators who seek to do transformative work may decline lucrative contracts because those evaluations would not accommodate goals for “societal improvement” or “the public good” (see Smith, 1998, pp. 177, 184). In all situations, evaluators cannot negotiate what is needed for transformative work: the resources, evaluation questions, evaluation methodology, participatory

approach, or inclusion of all individuals and communities needed to evaluate responsibly, i.e., to “do something that moves the needle forward on the social justice scale” (Hood, 2019). In response, some culturally responsive evaluators may opt to take on evaluations that funders want while also conducting a “second evaluation” that *comes out of their hide*—that is, doing substantive additional evaluation work that depends upon their consistent advocacy and free labor (Hood, n.d., in Frazier-Anderson et al., 2023). This second evaluation is a manifestation of these evaluators’ social justice commitments to produce information that actually benefits communities of people who are least well served, excluded, or marginalized.

Importantly, transformative refers not only to the social justice goals of a research or evaluation project but also to the researcher’s or evaluator’s *worldview* (Creswell, 2014). The transformative worldview or *paradigm* describes an orientation to being in the world that comprises understanding reality (*ontology*), constructing knowledge (*epistemology*), making ethical choices (*axiology*), and pursuing information (*methodology*) in ways that directly advocate equity and human rights (Mertens, 2009). The inquiry projects of researchers and evaluators who operate from a transformative worldview are usually guided explicitly by critical and liberatory theories—such as anti-racist and critical race, feminist, queer, Indigenous, and postcolonial—some of which have roots in contemporary interpretations of Marxist philosophy and standpoint social theories (Hall, 2020; Mertens & Wilson, 2019). As one example, a key aspect of employing decolonizing theory frameworks is *deconstruction*, which “involves taking stories apart, revealing underlying texts, and giving voice to experiences and realities often glossed over in traditional scholarship” (Hopson, 2009, p. 436). Drawing insights from critical and liberatory theories, transformative inquiry projects analyze “asymmetric power relationships,” and they center the “lives and experiences of communities pushed to society’s margins” (Mertens, 2009, p. 48). In doing so, transformative researchers and evaluators may not stop at seeking to change the educational entities that they study; rather, they can seek to change the norms, criteria, and practices of inquiry itself in collaboration with other people, especially those from historically marginalized groups and excluded social positions (see Amendt, Chapter 6; Sawkins, Chapter 5; and Validviejas et al., Chapter 4). As one example, a key criterion of inquiry requiring ongoing scrutiny is validity—how validity is conceptualized and pursued. Specifically, the goodness of an evaluation, as seen through a transformative worldview, is influenced by the extent to which validity’s conceptualization centers cultural context, respectful relationship-building, and social justice in guiding an evaluation’s design, implementation, and consequences (see Kirkhart, 1995).

Doing transformative work that meaningfully fuses ethnography and evaluation rests on essential factors like time, values engagement, collaboration, and self-work.

- *Time*: Regarding the first factor, earlier writing about using ethnography in evaluations underscored the issue of time: time influenced the quality or feasibility of ethnographic work and its support from evaluation funders (Fetterman, 1987; Hess, 1991; Hopson, 2002). To facilitate expedient

decision-making, funders can expect evaluations to be done efficiently, with quality data produced and interpreted quickly across many sites and people (Hess, 1991). The value of time efficiency may be pursued at the cost of relationship-building, mutual learning, and collaborative work, yet these things are central to critical ethnography as well as participatory and culturally responsive evaluation (CRE) approaches (Chouinard, 2013; Hood et al., 2015). While all evaluations operate within certain constraints and require clear-eyed assessments of resources in their design, time investment reflects not only funders', organizations', and evaluators' constraints but also their values. Just as certain equity commitments are “non-negotiables” in the pursuit of doing transformative work (Hood, 2018, p. 70), so too must be the commitment of adequate time. The amount of time required necessarily depends on the evaluator's prior knowledge of the context, the evaluation's diversity and scope of beneficiaries or communities, and the complexity of the entity being evaluated.

- *Values engagement:* The second factor in transformative work unifying evaluation and ethnography is the transparent engagement of values, including negotiating the complexity of conflicting values (Hess, 1991). *Values engagement* requires explicit, frequent dialogue between different people connected to the evaluation (e.g., funders, educators, beneficiaries, government officials, and evaluators) about the values that they hold and how these values inform their priorities for evaluation (Greene, 1997; Greene et al., 2004). “Values are present in virtually all aspects of evaluation”—detectable in the evaluation questions asked, the purposes and audiences served, the criteria used for judging quality, and the conception of the evaluator's role, responsibilities, and ethics (Greene, 2012, p. 195). To be equitable, evaluations must not operate under the guise of value-neutrality but rather create opportunities for negotiating values. In transformative evaluations—including culturally responsive and democratic approaches—the values advanced by evaluators include equity, diversity, inclusion (e.g., *democratic pluralism*), and deliberation (Goodnight et al., 2023; Hall et al., 2012).
- *Collaboration:* Time investment and values engagement directly influence collaboration, the third factor. Collaboration in transformative evaluation and research draws on participatory models of inquiry, which value contextualized, democratic, relational, and learning-oriented strategies over standardized, technocratic, and instrumental- and accountability-driven approaches (Chouinard, 2013, 2014). Within the transformative paradigm, collaboration entails not only high levels of participation by a representative group of various people who have a stake in the educational entity but also power-sharing in deciding what information is important, how inquiry is pursued, how data will be valued and interpreted, and who will have access to findings produced and for what purposes (Chouinard, 2013; Hood et al., 2015). Adopting a collaborative or participatory approach for evaluation in “multiethnic and multicultural settings” carries important benefits aligning with doing transformative work: “1) it increases the validity and relevance of research findings; 2) it builds the cultural competency of evaluators; and 3) it builds local capacity, community knowledge and empowerment” (Chouinard, 2014, p. 341). To realize