



# Program Evaluation Theory and Practice: A Comprehensive Guide

*Donna M. Mertens PhD, Amy T. Wilson PhD*

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This engaging text takes an evenhanded approach to major theoretical paradigms in evaluation and builds a bridge from them to evaluation practice. Featuring helpful checklists, procedural steps, provocative questions that invite readers to explore their own theoretical assumptions, and practical exercises, the book provides concrete guidance for conducting large- and small-scale evaluations. Numerous sample studies—many with reflective commentary from the evaluators—reveal the process through which an evaluator incorporates a paradigm into an actual research project. The book shows how theory informs methodological choices (the specifics of planning, implementing, and using evaluations). It offers balanced coverage of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods approaches.

Useful pedagogical features include:

- \*Examples of large- and small-scale evaluations from multiple disciplines.
- \*Beginning-of-chapter reflection questions that set the stage for the material covered.
- \*"Extending your thinking" questions and practical activities that help readers apply particular theoretical paradigms in their own evaluation projects.
- \*Relevant Web links, including pathways to more details about sampling, data collection, and analysis.
- \*Boxes offering a closer look at key evaluation concepts and additional studies.
- \*Checklists for readers to determine if they have followed recommended practice.



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