34

Mixed Methods and Dialectical Pluralism

TRES STEFURAK, R. BURKE JOHNSON, AND ERYNNE SHATTO

This chapter's focus is on applying dialectical pluralism (DP) and equal-status mixed methods research. We first provide an overview of (a) DP as a metaparadigm (that is, a paradigm that dialogues with multiple paradigms) and (b) equal-status mixed methods research, highlighting the central concepts and principles of both. This is followed by a case study illustrating the application of these concepts and principles to the evaluation of a community-based intervention program for juvenile offenders. We conclude with some reflections about the case study in particular and DP in general.

INTRODUCTION TO DIALECTICAL PLURALISM

DP is an approach to research that assumes there are many perspectives, paradigms, methods, theories, philosophies, and ethical systems in the world that deserve much respect. It provides a process philosophy and theory for engaging successfully with differences. At the level of ontology, it assumes that reality is plural (e.g., subjective, intersubjective, and objective realities all exist; different disciplines provide insights into different realities; and many additional sorts of reality can be identified). At the level of epistemology, DP states that dialectical and dialogical logics (including "epistemological listening") should be used so that we can engage with the many differences and produce new syntheses (socially agreed-upon wholes) that command respect. DP is a communication theory because it requires that one communicate dialectically/dialogically in a positive way to overcome the incommensurability of paradigms/theories/standpoints (Johnson, 2011, 2012; Kuhn, 1962); this is called "dialectical listening." In evaluations of interventions, DP provides a way to engage with differences among stakeholders.

Syntheses of differences are respected because of the process used in DP, specifically the use of deliberative democracy in teams. Background rules are set (e.g., equal power, listening to the other, setting superordinate goals), group process is facilitated by someone (e.g., the mixed methods researcher), and the democratic process is agreed upon as to be respected and followed. When this is the case, procedural justice is obtained because of the process. This results in findings and actions that are accepted as just, even when they do not fully follow one's personal perspective. DP uses social psychological principles to work toward win-win solutions or, at worst, compromise solutions in the face of conflict.

DP tells users to use a "both/and" logic when possible, rather than an either/or logic, because this is an effective route to overcoming conflicting differences. As a result, plural knowledge and outcomes are produced that include something for all key team members or stakeholders. DP allows one to agree on a set of values to be used in each evaluation or research study. Therefore, it can be "packed" with values to provide social justice in addition to its procedural justice. Any package of values can be incorporated; however, DP at its core always asks that John Rawls's (1999) two principles of justice be strongly considered and respected: (a) equality and (b) special consideration for the needs of the marginalized in society and micro situations.

DP is a metaparadigm because it provides a space beyond the paradigm wars, at a higher level, where one listens, respects, and learns from the other, including other paradigms. It also can

be employed to listen to knowledge produced at local and at national levels (Johnson & Stefurak, 2013) to produce a better knowledge system or science. In short, DP is used to engage with difference at the level of method, methodology, paradigm, and any other difference we might encounter in evaluation and research.

Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, Tucker, and Icenogle (2014) recently identified social psychological strategies for obtaining agreement in situations of difference. First, to capitalize on the strengths of DP, one constructs a heterogeneous group. Second, one uses team processes, such as encouraging and reinforcing member open-mindedness, working for shared development and understanding of shared goals, obtaining agreement on process, ensuring process transparency, encouraging epistemological listening and constructive cognitive conflict, ensuring that all team members express their views and reasoning, encouraging generation and examination of alternatives, and ensuring that the group articulates clear rationales for positions and decisions. Groups must avoid tendencies for groupthink, unequal power, social loafing, and premature closure. A talented facilitator is required if DP is to be successful; we believe that, in evaluation and research, mixed methods researchers are in an important position to dialogue with differences. Some additional and important strategies for bringing diverse ideas together are collaborative logic modeling (Kaplan & Garrett, 2005), appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987), identification of preconditions and assumptions with ladder of inference (Lewicki, Weiss, & Lewin, 1992), reciprocity (Cialdini, 2008), third space (Gutierrez, Baquedano-Lopez, & Tejeda, 2009), the 4-C model of team development (Dyer, Dyer, & Dyer, 2007), debriefing interviews throughout the group process (Collins, Onwuegbuzie, Johnson, & Frels, 2013), future search (Weisbord & Janoff, 2000), open space (Owen, 1997), collaborative creativity (Sawyer, 2008), data retreats (Sargent, 2003), complexity-based sense making (Snowden, 2005), Delphi method (Rowe & Wright, 2001), ecological systems models (Onwuegbuzie, Collins, & Frels, 2013), and diffusion of innovation theory (Rogers, 2003). In short, DP is a philosophy, a metaparadigm, and a theory for dealing with difference, with many social psychological strategies that can be employed for its success.

DP is usually conducted in heterogeneous teams and requires that users do the following (from Johnson, 2012):

> (a) dialectically listen, carefully and thoughtfully, to different paradigms, disciplines, theories, and stakeholder and citizen perspectives; (b) combine important ideas from competing paradigms and values into a new workable whole for each research study or program evaluation; (c) explicitly state and "pack" the approach with stakeholders' and researchers' epistemological and social-political values to guide the research (including the valued ends one hopes for and the valued means for getting there); (d) conduct the research ethically; (e) facilitate dissemination and use of research findings (locally and more broadly); and (f) continually, formatively evaluate and improve the outcomes of the research-and-use process (e.g., Is the research having the desired societal impact?). In short, DP is a change theory, and it requires listening, understanding, learning, and acting. (p. 752)

DIALOGUE AND THE INTERPERSONAL ASPECTS OF DIALECTICAL PLURALISM

As already mentioned, DP requires that evaluators intentionally and deliberately engage divergent stakeholders. The heart of the paradigm is to cherish and learn from "the other" (Buber, 1923) and to intentionally seek out the perspectives of marginalized stakeholders and include them in the dialogue about the processes to be used, as well as the goals to be achieved, by the program evaluation. This process is fundamentally an interpersonal process. It is important to form teams that engage in dialogue across the spectrum of ideas, with the members taking care to engage and combine anomalous and different values and positions into new working wholes.

Second, evaluators and researchers encourage teams to view conflict as not a regrettable necessity, but rather as a valued catalyst for the evolution of the team's intellectual and values positions that will lead to useful methods of investigation and analysis of data. There can be no change without

dissonance; therefore, constructive conflict is the engine of a team working within the DP paradigm. This requires that parties involved have equal power and a shared willingness to resolve conflict by gathering additional relevant information, learning from the other, and expanding and synthesizing positions (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, Tucker, & Icenogle, 2014).

Third, the group is more than the sum of its parts when it comes to creativity arising from collaboration. Groups allow for the creation of an intellectual space qualitatively different than any one member's contributions. For each member of the group the intellectual space created becomes novel and a source of innovation and creativity.

Last, the vision of the DP metaparadigm is to foster efforts that spur conceptions of larger systemic changes beyond the particular changes found in any given research or evaluation project. Evaluation and research teams following the DP model would, over time, become more focused on the broader systemic sources of the problems they are studying and engage in increasingly broader and deeper dialogues, maintaining the same pluralistic, egalitarian, and procedural justice values as they do so (Johnson et al., 2014).

The conclusions reached in an evaluation conducted through the DP lens are not based upon any monistic or absolutist metric of truth. Rather, the goal is to draw conclusions that find broad agreement across diverse stakeholders. Judgments about reality and data are to be made on the basis of what Scriven (2012) called *probative inference*. This concept refers to conclusions made based upon the best available evidence, given agreed-upon shared epistemologies, ground rules, and values. Working from a DP perspective requires acknowledging that values and philosophical assumptions form the ground for our questions, methods, and conclusions, and we need to accept and acknowledge this explicitly rather than implicitly. Results are "thick," that is, embedded with social and scientific values. Practical and working truths, rather than absolute truths, are obtained. Theory and practice are combined into practical theories.

EQUAL-STATUS MIXED METHODS DESIGNS

DP can stand alone as a philosophy and theory in many settings. However, it works especially well in mixed methods research with equal-status designs. These are designs where the qualitative and quantitative components are treated equally. It is where high-quality qualitative and quantitative data are collected. It also is where the qualitative and quantitative research paradigms are given equal weight. Sometimes it is said that paradigms are incommensurable and cannot be mixed. However, they can be, using a dialectical and dialogical logic. That is why equal-status mixed methods designs are also called interactive mixed methods designs. In the following case study, the project team attempted to conduct an equal-status mixed methods evaluation.

CASE STUDY

The project presented here was an evaluation of a juvenile court program in which the investigators attempted to apply the principles of DP. The case study illustrates evaluation practice embedded in a multivalues system and conducted from a pluralistic epistemology using intentional collaborative dialogues. It demonstrates the importance of both scientific evidence and theory impacting practice. The evidence gleaned in practice should, as a general rule, according to DP, feed back into our science and scholarly viewpoint to produce a system of scientific knowledge that learns from practice and produces practical theory (Johnson & Stefurak, 2013).

Background of Juvenile Court–University Collaboration

This project was conducted as part of the Mobile Juvenile Court Collaborative (MJCC). The MJCC, formed in 2008, was a collaboration between the University of South Alabama and the local juvenile court and juvenile detention center. The project was founded upon a core value of mutual benefit to three distinct stakeholder groups: (a) youth and families served by the court, (b) court leaders and staff members, and (c) university faculty and trainees in the social service professions represented in the project. The project was also founded upon a shared value of sustainability. These common values helped produce some commonality across the stakeholders and could be resorted to when smaller values conflicted. Each stakeholder group still had its particular values of emphasis, many of which conflicted. The working toward shared and superordinate values in the conduct of evaluation research is at the crux of DP's paradigmatic vision.

As Johnson et al. (2014) noted, the creation of DP collaboration often requires effort far beyond what is required of an individual's job as an academic or professional working in the community. It requires continual dialoguing, listening, changing, and growing in order to produce a successful and sustainable whole.

The Transitions Program

Transitions was a new court intervention program established in 2012 that combined three tiers of intervention targeting youth whose offenses put them at risk of being sent to a state facility. The three intervention tiers included (a) increased monitoring, (b) intensive case management, and (c) in-home family therapy. Although not adopting a specific evidence-based practice (EBP) paradigm, such as multisystemic therapy (Henggeler, Schoenwald, Borduin, Rowland, & Cunningham, 1998), Transitions sought to embody as many EBP principles of intervention as possible and was created in close consultation with the university partners in the MJCC.

There were concerns on the part of court leadership regarding their organizational readiness and attitudes toward the changes represented by the Transitions program. The program required more intensive case management than had typically been practiced by probation officers or by previous intervention programs that the court had funded. Also, the program involved increasing the degree of collaboration and mutual holding of accountability across court probation officers, judges, and community-contracted program providers beyond what was previously the norm for these organizations. The professional workload would be higher than normal, and the program required an attitude shift away from the siloed and insulated culture of a court to a more open and accountability-oriented stance of a multiagency community intervention provider.

The MJCC faculty and graduate students were contracted to conduct a program evaluation of Transitions. The focus of this evaluation was not on program outcomes, as it was too nascent for these to be benchmarked effectively. Rather, the evaluation was to develop dialogical and effective procedures and processes for the Transitions program to be institutionalized. The court leadership team requested recommendations based on the conclusions of the evaluation as to how well actual practices in the program mirrored written procedural guidelines and how the administration of the program could be improved at the structural and interpersonal levels. All of this was in anticipation of the court having to show significant reductions in recidivism within 1 to 2 years of the program's onset.

Values-Based and Mixed Methods Program Evaluation

The conduct of this evaluation was complicated because the program did not involve merely the juvenile court but also the use of a local adolescent addictions agency to provide the tracker services and the local public mental health system to provide the in-home family therapy services. The program required that all three entities meet monthly to review the progress of each individual case. The evaluation's goals were constructed dialectically and dialogically through a series of discussions between the MJCC evaluators and juvenile court stakeholders. This process deliberately involved careful discussion of the values driving the goals of the court in general and the program in particular. Chief among these values were sustainability, mutual benefit, and accountability of all parties involved.

Following DP, through a series of meetings and dialogues an evaluation approach was agreed upon. The approach included evaluation targets that reflected the core values at work. It also included evaluation methods that focused on subjective/qualitative (e.g., stakeholders' perceptions of success in the program) and objective/quantitative (e.g., what predicted optimism and buy-in among court staff into the new procedures and philosophy inherent in the program) evaluation methods. The methodology selected emerged from the evaluators' valuing of equal-status mixed methods research, where neither quantitative nor qualitative methods are given a privileged status, as well as from an effort, in dialogues with stakeholders, to select methods best suited to answer the given evaluation questions. As noted earlier, DP perhaps fits best with the equal-status mixed methods research approach (i.e., better than with either qualitatively driven or quantitatively driven mixed methods research).

DP and equal-status mixed methods evaluation was a good fit for this project because the court stakeholders were concerned about both (a) the

"brass tacks" of how Transitions members were behaving and what measured attitudes objectively predicted greater buy-in to the program and its new procedures and (b) the phenomenological issues of how each Transitions stakeholder constructed meaning around the issues that were most pertinent in his or her role/job and in the lives of the youth being served. The goals became to not sacrifice one dimension for the other and to allow data from both domains to inform each other dialectically and dialogically.

The dialectical process allowed the evaluators to listen to different Transitions team members, whose roles and places within the collaboration structure became associated with divergent subjective views of what their job was, what youth needed to be successful, and what the program itself needed to be successful and sustainable. Qualitative evaluation methods were instrumental in gathering these diverse perspectives among stakeholders. In balance to the subjective views of Transitions stakeholders, quantitative observational and survey methods were necessary to assess whether stakeholders were actually behaving in ways that mirrored their purported values and subjective opinions, as well as to determine which stakeholder factors were the most salient in promoting buy-in and openness to adoption of the new procedures inherent in the program. What follows, to give the reader a sense of the project's scope and end results, are brief overviews of each evaluation question, methods, and basic findings.

Evaluation of Service Provision

The evaluators sought to accurately catalog the roles and procedures of the service provision activities of the program. To accomplish this, they directly observed and coded interactions at four consecutive Transitions staff meetings and analyzed the content of official marketing materials created for the program. The results suggested that the view of the program held by its stakeholders greatly undervalued many of the actual services being provided. In particular, case managers were performing far more duties than were formally documented in program materials and/or in the perspective of upper-level leadership.

Profile of Youth Served

The evaluators systematically reviewed 29 juvenile court files on youth who were sampled at random from the youth enrolled in the program during its first year. The evaluators used the quantitative Youth Level of Services/Case Management Inventory-2nd Edition (YLS/CSM-2; Hoge & Andrews, 2011) to code each file and identify risk, need, and responsivity to treatment factors for each youth. The results revealed that a vast majority of the youth had major risk factors in the areas of delinquent peer bonding and poor recreational/leisure activity options which were not being targeted by the Transitions program. However, there were other areas of malleable risk factors (e.g., family functioning) that were clearly being targeted by facets of the program. In general, the program did not appear to focus systematically on targeting individualized malleable risk and protective factors, which is a common deficit of delinquency intervention programs and almost universally found in analyses of evidence-based practice in delinquency interventions (Borum, 2003; Underwood, Sandor von Dresner, & Phillips, 2006).

Evaluation of Perceived Program Goals

The evaluators created a mixed questionnaire (i.e., a questionnaire that included open- and closed-ended items) to assess the program's perceived goals. A mixed questionnaire is a type of *intramethod* mixing, that is, mixing within a single method of data collection (in contrast to *intermethod* mixing, the use of different methods of data collection, which was also employed in the present evaluation). The questionnaire inquired into staff members' perceptions of (a) what constituted successful completion of the program, (b) concrete factors that mitigated the program meeting its goals with each youth, and (c) questions regarding the length of time necessary to complete the program successfully. The results, based on the responses of 19 staff members, indicated that each contributing agency had slightly differing values and goals for the program, but all agencies, through some subsequent dialogue, agreed that improving educational outcomes was a common goal. Stakeholders also came to agreement that cooperation of the youth and family was the most critical element to successful completion. All stakeholders agreed that provision of support, as opposed to punitive measures, was called for when cooperation from a youth and family was not present. From this dialogue, the evaluators recommended developing concrete

markers of success that were delineated in program materials and referred to at each staffing.

Collaboration Effectiveness

The MJCC evaluators used the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI; Mattessich, Murray-Close, & Monsey, 2001) to assess collaboration effectiveness. The resulting quantitative scale scores were analyzed to identify places of relative collaborative strength versus weakness in the program. The evaluators also created a separate, nonverbal coding instrument based on the work of Kurien (2010) and Goman (2012). The researchers/observers coded qualitative data from this instrument for various nonverbal behaviors and quantitatively determined the frequency of contributions to staffing dialogue by specific team members. Thus, mixed methods were used.

The results from the WCFI suggested that stakeholders often perceived the collaboration as being successful, with half of the domain scores indicating perceived effectiveness. The strongest area of perceived effectiveness was in the domain of communication among collaborators, while areas of perceived collaboration weakness involved the domains of perceived disrespect and trust among members, inclusion of a representative cross-section of individuals, and willingness of members to compromise. This appears to mirror what is found in research on group process where groups, early in the process such as here, enter a "storming" phase in which norms and ways of relating are worked out. The results also suggested that the participants believed that the collaboration could improve its ability to adapt to changes in the community but were concerned as to whether the program could maintain an appropriate pace of development. The only factor that fell into the serious problem area was related to sufficiency of resources to implement the program.

The analysis of the behaviors during staffing indicated that there were more negative than positive disruptions observed. This was a strong and robust trend. Despite this, there was in the aggregate more positive than negative nonverbal behavior across meetings. This suggests that a civil tone was maintained and that the Transitions team was attempting to conflict productively. In its involvement in the project, the MJCC researchers had attempted to cultivate communication patterns endorsed by DP. Mostly, the Transitions team's early struggles were classified as positive conflict (i.e., group situations where conflict is viewed as normal and good for team growth), which is exactly what is called for in the ideal type of DP.

Organizational Readiness to Change

DP is a change theory, and it was used to gauge and facilitate organizational readiness to change. The evaluators put together a battery of quantitative instruments to gauge individual probation officers' perception of their job roles, perception of the needs of the youth and families that they served, perceived readiness for organizational change, and measures related to their own personality traits and values. The 36 probation staff participants were invited to complete the battery anonymously, with 21 completing it.

The quantitative results suggested that probation staff primarily viewed family factors, the youth's attitude, and substance abuse as the areas on which they focused the most in their work. They also reported a moderate degree of willingness to use a more formal, structured process to identify malleable needs of the youth and indicated a moderate degree of confidence in their individual ability to use the structured process. The staff members who were most willing and confident in themselves to utilize a structured approach with youth assessment were also those who reported the highest degree of perceived accomplishment in their work. Of the occupational burnout indicators of decreased personal accomplishment, depersonalization, and exhaustion, the last two factors were unrelated to willingness or confidence to use a structured evidence-based approach. Also, the results indicated that when probation staff perceived more support from supervisors and coworkers they were more likely to report less cynicism about organizational change and were more favorable to instituting new practices.

The evaluators also used qualitative methods to assess probation officers' perceptions. Individual semistructured interviews were conducted with nine individuals representing both front-line probation officers and probation officer supervisors. The questions focused on their perceptions of (a) the purpose and philosophy of probation services, (b) the methods by which the probation officers identified youth needs and made recommendations, and (c) contextual factors that affected how they went about their work. They also

were asked what changes they recommended. The following broad themes emerged as desired organizational changes:

1. Adoption of more formal, but efficient, methods of assessing youth and family needs
2. Increased efficiencies in time management, paperwork, and referral practices
3. Increased options for diverting youth from probation, juvenile court, and state juvenile justice facilities.

Across these three themes, probation staff reported a consistent desire and readiness for change. Consensus was clearly present about the needed changes, but significant cynicism existed in perceived organizational self-efficacy to make the changes. Last, the results pointed to the need to reduce probation officers' duties in some areas in order to free up time to engage in the improved assessment and case management practices the court was implementing in the Transitions program.

The Transitions Program Evaluation in the Context of Dialectical Pluralism

This project was conducted soon after the initial formulation of DP as a metaparadigm in 2011 (Johnson, 2011). The idea of dialoging intentionally with broad stakeholders was on the minds of the MJCC evaluation team, as was the concept of identifying evaluation questions and methods that could find broad consensus among stakeholders and, in theory, yield results that would be reasonable and acceptable to all parties. Although many aspects of the evaluation are in line with the DP model, some aspects were not, and these also are discussed.

At the methods, methodology, and paradigm levels, the Transitions evaluation embodied the equal-status mixed methods position because both quantitative and qualitative data and approaches were treated equally. Equal-status mixed methods research approaches sit within a multidimensional continuum between rather dogmatic positions. On one pole of the continuum sits the position of Guba (1990) and Lincoln and Guba (2000), which posits that qualitative research is the best form of evaluation inquiry about humans and doubts that any objective reality exists. For these qualitative methodologists, all reality is mentally constructed, which yields the concept of validity, as typically conceived, impotent. On the other pole of the continuum is the positivist position that an objective reality does exist and that research methods should be evaluated based on the objective reliability and validity of the measurements used and on the replicability of findings.

In opposition to these polemic/dogmatic viewpoints is the position of Greene (2007), who searched for dialectical syntheses between the positivist and constructivist positions on a project-by-project basis. DP (a) directly builds on Greene's (2007) work in the philosophy of social science methodology, (b) provides a metaparadigm that enables paradigms and worldviews to dialogue, and (c) conceives reality as plural. The methods used in the case evaluation reflected (a) attempts to target "objective" realities (e.g., behaviors of staff in meetings) and (b) subjective or phenomenological realities (e.g., each team member's perceptions of his or her individual roles and responsibilities). At the most basic level, the program evaluation attempted to use an equal-status mixed methods approach to target the same question with both quantitative and qualitative methods and determine both how the results triangulated and how they were different.

As mentioned, the mission of the ongoing project, the MJCC, was in line with the concepts found in DP. The project that this evaluation emerged from was a product of consensus building and a deliberate dialogue between academic/researchers and juvenile justice officials over a period of time. The evaluation of the program was an organic outgrowth of a longstanding relationship between the two collaborative partners. Our evaluation emerged from collaboration and had a well-established baseline value of collaboration and dialectical consensus building as an end unto itself, as well as a means to such other ends as conducting research with at-risk youth and juvenile offenders and assisting in broad-based community change and social justice. According to DP, evaluators and researchers must be engaged in genuine, congruent, and transparent efforts to share power and decision making with other stakeholders.

Another feature of DP is an admonition for evaluators to deliberately seek out and listen in a deep and intentional way to all parties involved, particularly marginalized and less visible stakeholders. This goal is to garner all perspectives involved, include those perspectives in the construction and execution of the evaluation, and produce results

that take into account a breadth of perspectives. Our evaluation partially met this DP aspiration. The Transitions evaluation included a deliberate attempt to seek out stakeholders *within* the network of providers collaborating to deliver the intervention program for juvenile offenders. The evaluators/moderators initially helped the various stakeholders (i.e., judges and court administrators, service providers, and trackers and case managers) identify consensus around goals of the evaluation and methods of data collection and analysis. With respect to the first goal, we believe that we achieved a strong degree of success. Stakeholders appeared to have a strong investment in and awareness of the goals of the evaluation. Achieving methods consensus proved more challenging. Many stakeholders had low levels of knowledge about the relative strengths of one evaluation method versus another. Although the stakeholders had an intuitive positive view of the mixed methods approach that ultimately comprised the final evaluation, the evaluators had to engage in much education about both the merits of different uses of data and which types of data stakeholders most valued. Many stakeholders brought methodological pluralism with them, but the stakeholders ultimately viewed choice of methods and data as a matter to be left to the expertise of the evaluators.

A key deficit, from the perspective of DP, was the failure to successfully include the voices and perspectives of the youth and families that were participating in the Transitions program. One paradigm in mixed methods research is *transformatism* (Mertens, 2007). This paradigm argues that the goal of research and evaluation is to achieve social liberation and empowerment for stakeholders, particularly stakeholders who are oppressed and disadvantaged. Our instantiation of DP emphasized this perspective. The goal of the evaluation was not just to obtain answers to evaluation questions but also to obtain answers that would lead to changes that improved the lives of those receiving the services of the Transitions program. Generally speaking, DP helps accomplish this social justice goal because it advocates genuine, ongoing dialogue with stakeholders in research and evaluation, including those with the least power. In the context of the evaluation, the evaluators needed to engage in real dialogue with the youth and families involved in the program. However, this did not occur—a glaring weakness, we believe, of the evaluation.

The goal of meaningful dialogue with the youth and families was a challenge throughout the evaluation. Challenging agencies to include the perspectives of the people they serve, who are often socially and politically marginalized, is a difficult task for a number of reasons. The task was made difficult in our case because of the presence of institutionalized racial, economic, and political privilege, as well as the current structure of the relevant organizations. The juvenile court sits at the tension point between empowering and developing youth and their families, on the one hand, and ensuring public safety, on the other. The court was largely staffed by members of the majority culture and middle-class stratum and they often struggled to take an empathic stance toward the individuals they served. A punitive stance was not uncommon. The presence of conservative political pressures that emphasized cost reduction and viewed criminal behavior as "chosen" rather than "caused" meant that the juvenile court often was unable to consider a pluralistic array of perspectives in making its decisions and structuring its programs. Although the formation of the Transitions program, the desire for more structure and evidence-based assessment methods, and the move toward interagency collaboration were progressive steps, much work in terms of building equitable social structures in this community was still left to be done.

We were able to build into the evaluation such methods as reviewing files and interviewing stakeholders regarding specific cases. These, however, hardly lifted up the voices of the youth and parents in the program. Our experience was that the stakeholders' objection to such data was partially due to perceived logistical difficulties of interviewing and tapping client perspectives. Therefore, evaluations like this should include data from transcripts of counseling sessions and other points of contact with the youth and family and through other naturalistic qualitative data collection methods.

The more insidious obstacles to collecting data were the political and cultural obstacles. Agencies providing social services need to measure and understand the authentic subjective experiences of recipients of their services. Too often, however, because of patriarchy, service providers ignore such perspectives. They may fear that these perspectives will cast doubt upon the legitimate authority of the court and its services. As a result, youth and parents experience both overt and subtle forms of

racism and classism. Program recipients are viewed as corrupted or impaired, and their perspectives as having little practical value. Our use of DP in this project did not eliminate this lack of understanding and respect for the other, but we hope that mutual understanding will continue to grow over time.

CONCLUSION

DP requires that evaluators and researchers work toward the construction of a balanced synthesis of the values of all stakeholders and toward superordinate goals in a deliberative, democratic way. This requires open and equal participation and the giving up of some power. DP also advocates a participatory approach involving all stakeholders at all stages, including forming questions, collecting data, interpreting results, and constructing conclusions and recommendations. DP asks evaluators not to stand behind a veil of ignorance in which values do not exist or are seen as "threats" to the integrity of inquiry. The case study presented here illustrates the application of DP toward the promotion of community-based programs that are sustainable, beneficial to all parties, and delivered in ways that promote accountability. We encourage others to similarly apply the DP paradigm in their settings and to disseminate their research findings and experiences.

REFERENCES

Borum, R. (2003). Managing at-risk juvenile offenders in the community: Putting evidence-based principles into practice. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice, 19*, 114–137.

Buber, M. (1923/2000). *I and thou*. New York, NY: Scribner.

Cialdini, R. B. (2008). *Influence: Science and practice* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Collins, K. M. T., Onwuegbuzie, A. J., Johnson, R. B., & Frels, R. K. (2013). Practice note: Using debriefing interviews to promote authenticity and transparency in mixed research. *International Journal of Multiple research Approaches, 7*, 271–283.

Cooperrider, D. L., & Srivastva, S. (1987). Appreciative inquiry in organizational life. *Research in Organizational Change and Development, 1*, 129–169.

Dyer, W. G., Dyer, W. G., Jr., & Dyer, J. H. (2007). *Team building: Proven strategies for improving team performance*. San Francisco, CA: Wiley.

Goman, C. K. (2012). Body language. *Sales and Service Excellence, 12*, 3.

Greene, J. C. (2007). *Mixed methods in social inquiry*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Guba, E. G. (1990). The alternative paradigm dialog. In E. G. Guba (Ed.). *The paradigm dialog* (pp. 17–27). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Gutierrez, K. D., Baquedano-Lopez, P., & Tejeda, C. (2009). Rethinking diversity: Hybridity and hybrid language practices in the third space. *Mind, Culture, and Activity, 6*, 286–303.

Henggeler, S. W., Schoenwald, S. K., Borduin, C. M., & Rowland, M. D., & Cunningham, P. B. (1998). *Multisystemic treatment for antisocial behavior in children and adolescents*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Hoge, R. D. & Andrews, D. A. (2011). *Youth level of services/case management inventory 2.0 (YLS/CMI 2.0)*. North Tonawanda, NY: Multi-Health Systems.

Johnson, R. B. (2011, May). *Dialectical pluralism: A metaparadigm to help us hear and "combine" our valued differences*. Paper presented at the Seventh International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry, Urbana, IL.

Johnson, R. B. (2012). Dialectical pluralism and mixed research. *American Behavioral Scientist, 56*, 751–754.

Johnson, R. B., Onwuegbuzie, T., Tucker, S., & Icenogle, M.L. (2014). Conducting mixed methods research using dialectical pluralism and social psychological strategies. In P. Leavy (Ed.). *The Oxford handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 557–578). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Johnson, R. B., & Stefurak, T. (2013). Considering the evidence-and-credibility discussion in evaluation through the lens of dialectical pluralism. *New Directions for Evaluation, 138*, 103–109.

Kaplan, S. A., & Garrett, K. E. (2005). The use of logic models by community-based initiatives. *Evaluation and Program Planning, 28*, 167–172.

Kuhn, T. S. (1962). *The structure of scientific revolutions*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Kurien, D. N. (2010). Body language: Silent communicator at the workplace. *IUP Journal of Soft Skills, 4*(1 & 2), 29–36.

Lewicki, R. J., Weiss, S. Ed., & Lewin, D. (1992). Models of conflict, negotiation and third party intervention: A review and synthesis. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 13*, 209–252.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (2000). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 163–188). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Mattessich, P., Murray-Close, M., & Monsey, B. (2001). *Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory*. St. Paul, MN: Wilder Research.

Mertens, D. M. (2007). Transformative paradigm: Mixed methods and social justice. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research, 1*, 212–225.

Onwuegbuzie, A. J., Collins, K. M. T., & Frels, R. K. (2013). Foreword: Using Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory to frame quantitative, qualitative,

and mixed research. *International Journal of Multiple Research Approaches*, *7*, 2–8.

Owen, H. (1997). *Open space technology: A user's guide* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.

Rawls, J. (1999). *The law of peoples*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Rogers, E. M. (2003). *Diffusion of innovations* (5th ed.). New York, NY: The Free Press.

Rowe, G., & Wright, G. (2001). Expert opinions in forecasting: Role of the Delphi technique. In J. S. Armstrong (Ed.), *Principles of forecasting: A handbook of researchers and practitioners* (pp. 125–144). Boston, MA: Kluwer Academic.

Sargent, J. (2003). *Data retreat participant's guide*. Naperville, IL: Learning Point Associates.

Sawyer, K. (2008). *Group genius: The creative power of collaboration*. Cambridge, MA: Perseus Books.

Scriven, M. (2012). The logic of valuing. *New Directions for Evaluation*, *133*, 17–28.

Snowden, D. J. (2005). Multi-ontology sense making: A new simplicity in decision making. *Informatics in Primary Care*, *13*, 45–54.

Underwood, L. A., Sandor von Dresner, K., & Phillips, A. L. (2006). Community treatment programs for juveniles: A best-evidence summary. *International Journal of Behavioral Consultation and Therapy*, *2*, 286–304.

Weisbord, M., & Janoff, S. (2000). *Future search: An action guide to finding common ground in organizations and communities* (2nd ed.), San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.