



# Participatory Evaluation Up Close: An Integration of Research-Based Knowledge (Evaluation and Society)

*By J. Bradley Cousins*

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## **Participatory Evaluation Up Close: An Integration of Research-Based Knowledge (Evaluation and Society) By J. Bradley Cousins**

Empiricism provides the backbone of knowledge creation within social science disciplines (e.g., psychology, sociology) and applied domains of study (e.g., education, administration) alike. Yet, relative to such domains of inquiry, comparatively little empirical research on evaluation has occurred, and the research knowledge base been infrequently synthesized and integrated to influence theory and practice. The proposed book aims to fill this void with regard to participatory evaluation, a set of collaborative approaches to evaluation that is receiving considerable attention of late, including a growing body of empirical studies. The authors begin in Part 1 with the delineation of a widely known and familiar conceptual framework for participatory evaluation. They then use the framework in Part 2 as a guide to conducting an extensive review of the extant empirical knowledge base in participatory evaluation, culminating in a thematic analysis of what we know about the approach. In Part 3 the authors focus on methodological considerations of doing research on participatory evaluation through a critique of existing studies and an explication of design choices drawn from their own research program. The book concludes in Part 4 with implications for moving the field forward in terms of important research questions, methodological direction and evaluation practice. This book will be of central interest to evaluation theorists and to those who choose to conduct research on evaluation; appeal will be conceptual and methodological. It will provide excellent supplementary reading for graduate students, many of whom seek to develop empirical studies on evaluation as part of their graduate programs. Rife with examples of participatory evaluation in practice, and practical implications, the book will also benefit evaluation practitioners with an interest in evaluation capacity building and participatory and collaborative approaches to practice.

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#### **About the Author**

J. Bradley Cousins is professor of Evaluation at the Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa. Cousins main interests are in program evaluation including participatory and collaborative approaches, use, and capacity building. He received his PhD in Educational Measurement and Evaluation from the University of Toronto in 1988. Throughout his career he has received several awards for his work in evaluation including the Contribution to Evaluation in Canada award (CES, 1999), the Paul F. Lazarsfeld Award for Theory in Evaluation (AEA, 2008) and the AERA Research on Evaluation Distinguished Scholar Award (2011). He has published many articles and books on evaluation and was editor of the Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation from 2002 to 2010. Throughout his career, Cousins has had considerable experience planning, delivering, and evaluating evaluation training and capacity building in Canada and abroad. Internationally he led evaluation capacity building in Central and West Africa and a major three and one-half year project in India. He is currently leading a nation-wide evaluation of teacher in-service training in that country in collaboration with several of the people he had previously trained. Cousins completed a three and one-half year term as director of the Centre for Research on Educational and Community Services at the University of Ottawa in July 2015. He continues to be an active member of CRECS, which has a strong mandate for research and evaluation capacity building. For more information, visit [www.creecs.uottawa.ca](http://www.creecs.uottawa.ca).

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