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Critical Research Questioning Guide

This guide is meant to serve as a check/reflection on your research process, from motivation & vision through communication & dissemination. The answers don't necessarily need to result in change, and the guide can be re-visited throughout the research project. Not all questions will be applicable to every research context. For instance, some questions may be more relevant for qualitative research and some more applicable for quantitative research. The guide is organized by stages in the research process, but many questions are applicable to multiple stages.

Questions to ask yourself while reading the Critical Research Questioning Guide:
- To what extent are you already engaging with these questions in your own research?
- Which questions do you find most challenging to address adequately?
- Which areas would you like to focus on refining/improving upon moving forward?
- How can you use these questions in the context of collaborative research?
- What would you add to this list?

The Guide

Motivation & Vision
a) What are your/the researchers' positionalities and identities, and how does a recognition of those positionalities inform the ethics behind the study? What are your motivations, and how should those motivations be explored to ensure that you should be embarking on this study?
b) Who identifies the research problem? Why is that relevant?
c) How were the research question(s) constructed? Whose voices were at the table? Whose voices were not, and why? What are the implications of those choices?
d) What are the intended outcomes of the research? How were they envisioned? Why is that meaningful?
e) What might be unintended outcomes of this research project? How can you mitigate negative impacts on the participants and the community? How will you/the research team prepare to respond to unintended or unforeseen outcomes/consequences of the research?
f) Does the research grapple with/make visible/combat/address structural systems of oppression?
g) How does your research challenge dominant ideologies, such as objectivity, meritocracy, colorblindness, and equal opportunity?
h) Who is cited in the literature review? Who is not? If the literature review does not represent an identity-diverse group, what potential biases exist? How will you attempt to mitigate that bias moving forward? What research findings are being emphasized within the literature itself?

Project Design
i) Who are the individuals on your research team, and how are roles and decision-making distributed? Are you cognizant of power dynamics within the group, and are you working to challenge existing hierarchies through an equitable distribution of roles?
j) What individuals/communities will be impacted by your research? How do you identify them? What are your plans to engage impacted communities? To what extent does the timing/method of engagement create a considerable burden on communities?

k) Is there a distinction between researcher and research participants (how involved are participants in the entire research process)?
l) Does this research incorporate trans/interdisciplinary perspectives?
m) How will your budget allow for compensation of participants? How can the budget be adjusted to accommodate participant support? What other sorts of currencies are available to compensate participants/community members?

Data Collection
n) To what extent are you building data collection instruments with community knowledge and participation?
o) How will you handle issues of confidentiality and protecting participant identities?
p) How is data collection done? How can it be co-driven by community stakeholders?
q) Is there a possibility of re-traumatization through research? What are you doing to mitigate trauma and create "brave spaces"?

Analysis & Interpretation
r) How do you understand the data? What data are you choosing to report, and what data are omitted/are not being emphasized?
s) How are you involving participants or members of impacted communities in conducting the analysis? Are participants involved in verifying/validating findings?
t) Do you incorporate member-checking so that participants can make sure they are not identifiable in your reports/manuscripts?
u) How are you incorporating participants' voices or those of impacted communities into the story you tell?

Communication & Dissemination
v) How are data shared between you and the research participants or members of impacted communities?
w) How are you disseminating the research and making it useful for participants? How do your research presentations examine next steps for participants/communities? Is the language used in research presentations accessible to a lay audience?
x) How are you inviting participants to help share the results from the research?
y) In what ways are you inviting participants to weigh in on implications of the research and directions for future investigation and practice?
z) How might your research results be shared in a way that is respectful/generative for the community/ies involved rather than hyper-critical? To what extent are your findings and results honoring participants and helping them find meaning?

References
- Lewis, A. A. & Bryan, M.L. (2018). Bridging Culturally Responsive and Critical Race Evaluation Approaches. 2018 American Evaluation Association Annual Conference. Cleveland, OH.
- Solórzano, D. G., & Yosso, T. J. (2002). Critical Race Methodology: Counter-Storytelling as an Analytical Framework for Education Research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *8*(1), 23–44. https://doi.org/10.1177/107780040200800103