

PRINCIPLES OF INTEGRAL INQUIRY: PRAXIS AND POSSIBILITIES

The research approach outlined in this chapter is called *integral* because its aim is to be as whole and inclusive as possible. This inclusivity applies to the overall approach and to each of its stages, as well.

The Focus of the Research

In following this approach, the researcher begins with a question of burning interest and importance—an area of inquiry that is heartfelt and significant. The meaning may derive from the relevance of the inquiry to important human or social issues, problems, challenges, or concerns. Often, the inquiry is directed toward something that has been directly experienced by the researcher—an important experience about which the researcher wishes to learn more. “How common or rare is my experience?” the investigator asks. “How is my experience similar to and different from those of others?” “What might have led me to have such an experience?” “Which factors are favorable to the experience, and which interfere with it?” “What has the experience brought with it; what were its outcomes?” “How might I have changed as a result of having had such an experience; how might others have changed?”

Depending on the interests of the investigator—and also on the personal and logistical resources available for the research project—one or more of these questions becomes the focus of the research. The researcher then seeks to find as complete an answer as possible to this burning question or set of burning questions using all relevant methods, approaches, information, and means of knowing, understanding, and expressing what has been learned. Contributing to the choices of question, methods, and modes of

From: William Braud and Rosemarie Anderson, *Transpersonal Research Methods for the Social Sciences: Honoring Human Experience*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. 1998. Page 58.