

# Eyes Wide Open

## Contemplative Approaches to Research Methods

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# The Purpose of Contemplative Practices in the Research Process

## **Address Questions Such As:**

- ▶ Have we as educators sufficiently turned the lens on ourselves when we plan research?
- ▶ What values and assumptions are embedded as we determine measures and questions?

## What Did We Learn?

- ▶ We can focus our attention (internally and externally) on objects or events in different ways.
- ▶ The “data” doesn’t change, how we organize it does.
- ▶ Each way we focus creates different meaning for objects, events, and our experience.

## The Goals for Contemplative Researchers

- Open-mindedness and inquisitiveness
- Prudence in suspending and forming judgments
- Honesty in facing one's own biases, prejudices, stereotypes, and egocentric or sociocentric tendencies
- Willingness to reconsider and revise views
- Flexibility in considering alternatives
- Understanding the narratives of other people
- Fair-mindedness in appraising reasoning
- Self-confidence
- Concern to be generally well-informed

(based on Facione, 1990, p. 13)

### How Do We Do This?

# Experiment 1: What Do You See?



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## The Need for an Interdisciplinary Approach

- Philosophy
- Psychology
- Education
- Religious Studies
- Anthropology
- Sociology
- Humanities
- Political Science, etc.

No single academic research discipline addresses the issues around compassion, intersectionality, and justice comprehensively.

# Contemplative Practices that Support the Research Process

## ■ Individual

- ▶ Mindfulness Meditation
- ▶ Guided Contemplation on specific questions
- ▶ Journal Writing on specific research issues

## Interactive

- ▶ Active Listening with research partners and participants
- ▶ Reflective Inquiry with research partners and participants
- ▶ Facilitated Dialogue to derive fresh meaning



# Awareness and Self-Awareness



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Source: U.Lab: Reinventing the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

# A Reflective Methodology

## an Iterative Process of Interpretation

Aspect/Level of Interpretation	Focus
Interaction with empirical data (What are you looking for? Why? What did they say?)	Data: Accounts from interviews, questionnaires, etc. (transcripts, text, recordings)
Interpretation (What does the data mean?)	Underlying meanings (personal, interpersonal, cultural)
Critical interpretation (What assumptions and dispositions guided the data collection and interpretation?)	Ideologies, political purpose, normative views from established disciplines
Self-reflection (language use, gender bias, power dynamics with participants, etc.)	The researcher's own subtext, claims to authority, selectivity of voices represented, etc.

Adapted from Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000, p.250



## Reflective Interaction Exercise

- Considering the challenges in your research, how might you apply contemplative practices to your research?