# Module 1 – Your Primary Inquiry or Statement

## Introduction

Welcome to Module 1 of the on-line tutorial. In this module, we look at the big picture of graduate education at Goddard College, including Goddard's educational philosophy, as well as an overview of the Goddard Graduate Institute (GGI).

This module will help you to explore your primary question, inquiry, or statement: that which brings you to Goddard and will shape your studies as you move forward. Keep this inquiry in mind as you delve into the subsequent modules. Let's begin!

## Graduate Education at the Goddard Graduate Institute (GGI)

As are all studies at Goddard, graduate learning in GGI is inquiry driven and student centered. Rather than following a predetermined set of courses, students design their own learning trajectory, guided by their unique inquiry and its related questions and concerns. Often, this means that GGI students engage in interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary studies – combining the knowledge and methods of more than one field of inquiry or moving into new, unexplored territory to answer their questions.

As students design their learning paths, they are guided by holistic principles. Graduate students are expected to demonstrate their learning and mastery in the context of these general principles, often referred to in shorthand as Knowing, Doing and Being.

### Knowing (Theory)

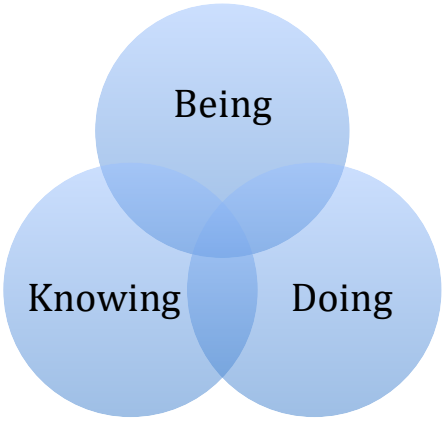
Students are expected to demonstrate mastery of theories about the matter studied; to be familiar with the relevant sources for theory and the differing points of view about it; to know, in broad outline, the historical development of that theory and the methodologies appropriate to work done in accordance with it; and to know and use the appropriate methods of presenting and documenting that theoretical knowledge. Knowing emerges from reading and thinking deeply, as well as engaging in critical discourse and writing critically.

### Doing (Practice)

Students are expected to demonstrate the ability to apply theory in competent practice. This will involve action research, qualitative research, experimental research, professional practice, etc. This involves getting out in the world, to learn experientially. For example, students might invite community members (stakeholders) to help design the projects by identifying their needs and goals. Or a student might put new skills to work in a creative project or facilitating a workshop.

### Being (Reflection)

Students are expected to cultivate self-knowledge, which includes reflecting on their location in their studies, understanding their context and practicing open-mindedness. Being involves considering such questions as "Who am I as a person in the world?" or "Who am I as an agent of social change, a scholar, or an artist?"




### They're all Connected

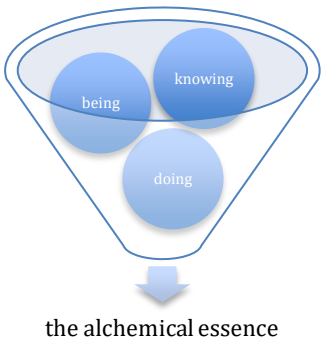
At Goddard, we understand that Knowing, Doing and Being (Theory, Practice and Reflection) are three aspects of a whole learning experience. They cannot be entirely separated from one another.

As a matter of fact, we can also see Knowing, Doing and Being as a **hologram** – where each part contains the elements of the whole. For instance, we can see that Being contains Knowing and Doing – as we embody our knowledge, our way of being changes and our capacity for practice deepens. We'll see this later as we move deeper into exploring these principles.

## The Alchemy of Graduate School

When we talk about *mastery* in GGI, we are talking about achieving a degree of fluency in the conversations and ways of practice that are common to one or more fields appropriate to our inquiry. We are also talking about the way that this level of fluency *deepens and focuses* our primary inquiry or question, so that we are engaging it at a deeper level than what might be possible for a general audience.

This deepening and focusing process, this process of moving into mastery at the graduate level, can be likened to an alchemical distillation.




Into the wide opening, we put the raw material of our ideas and questions.

As we engage with theory, practice and reflection, we *cook* our ideas into a primary question, the question that guides our inquiry.

As we cook our question further, it becomes further refined, like an essential oil – the potent and powerful elixir of our study.

The process of "cooking" your ideas and questions may feel uncomfortable or foreign. It is not unusual to want to remain in a place of expansive exploration of ideas rather than delve into a more concentrated practice of articulation and mastery. Through refining and focusing, you may look at your question through a new lens, or let go of perspectives that no longer speak to you.

At Goddard we have a rather famous phrase called "trust the process." Think of an alchemist: always expecting and noticing subtle changes that are happening in the lab. The changes teach the alchemist about the nature of reality.

Throughout the next modules, you will begin to reflect on the ways that your ideas and questions are refined through theory, practice and reflection. You'll explore the scholarly practices of knowing, doing, and being, and articulate your relationship to these principles at the present moment and with an eye to the future.

**Activity #1 - What are your metaphors for the creative process? (distillation, gestation, digestion, exploration)? How does your process work? (slow and steady, fits and starts, procrastination)? What inspires you or terrifies you about the notion of focus, concentration and distillation?**

## Your Primary Research Inquiry or Statement

Since Goddard education is inquiry driven, it becomes important for students to have a strong sense of the question that drives their studies. In the beginning, this inquiry may not have coalesced. An inquiry might look like an intersection of topics: "I am interested in child development and parenting strategies."

Later, through an examination of literature, engaged practice and reflection, this question may become more focused: "I know that many parents engage in "time outs" as a form of discipline for children and I want to know how this practice affects emotional and cognitive development through looking at the neurobiology of shame."

As you'll see in this statement, there is a context that gives the inquiry relevance and meaning (cultural parenting practices) and there are several disciplines that are engaged to deeply understand the question: cognitive development, emotional development and neurobiology.

To engage such an inquiry, a student may travel into realms that are related but not directly attached to their primary question. For instance in this case, a student may study alternatives to "time out" parenting – such as non-violent communication (NVC) or other approaches. Trauma theory and the neurobiology of trauma may be explored as it relates to shame. A student may study shame from multiple lenses – several psychological lenses or even literary sources.

As you consider your primary question, you may find that you are interested in a cross section of scholarly conversations, and a new question may emerge from that exploration. You might find that a question arises naturally from life experiences that you've struggled with personally. Or you may have a question that comes from your work with clients.

You will be asked, as part of the admission process, to articulate your primary question, with the understanding that the question will be further refined. As you progress through the modules, you may find that your primary question becomes clearer or more focused.

**Activity #2**

**Write down several ideas or questions that interest you at this time. As you look at your list, notice which question has the most energy for you. Spend some time with your question or questions. What becomes clearer to you just by articulating them on paper? Keep in mind that you may become clearer on your question or questions as you move into the next modules.**

# Module 2– Being

Welcome to Module 2 of the online tutorial. This module will cover the "being" part of Goddard's "knowing, being and doing" model. At Goddard College, we ask you to reflect on your way of "being" in your learning – how your learning changes you, how your learning locates you in time and place, and how your learning highlights the relationships between self and others.

In this module, you'll write about your being as it relates to your intended learning at Goddard, and the work that emerges will become part of your admissions essay.

So let's begin!

## Being Overview

We all live in many contexts and our histories, experiences, capacities (both visible and invisible), and places in the world shape how we see, think and interpret experiences and knowledge. The ways in which we approach our studies hinge upon our values, biases, and social, cultural, and ideological roots. At Goddard we understand these larger contexts when we suggest that knowledge (knowing) and practice (doing) are not objective or neutral; rather they are affected by who we are as people in the world. Our perspectives and our expectations shape the choices we make when developing areas of inquiry and shape the way we interpret our findings.

In addition, as we learn we change. And as our learning grows, we come to embody that learning and hold our knowing as part of our presence in the world. Our capacity to understand and articulate the complexity of our learning lives not only in our words, in our "heads", but in our being. In the Goddard Graduate Institute, this embodied knowing becomes a node of *well-being* for ourselves and for our communities.

As a degree criterion, "being" involves focused reflection on learning and experiences, and how they shift our thinking, the way we see ourselves in the world and in relationship with others. Learning changes our "way of being." As a degree criterion, "being" requires intentional mindfulness of the significance and use of knowledge, how it impacts the self and how it impacts others.

Through "being" you are asked to be mindful of your values, motives, biases, as well as biological, social, cultural, spiritual, political, and ideological roots, and to reflect on the ways that new learning contributes to your personal growth and your evolving sense of self. You are asked to synthesize your evolving self-knowledge with knowledge of the historical, cultural and epistemological dimensions of your study.

*The act of being means thoughtful consideration of these kinds of questions:*

- *Who am I as a person in the world?*
- *Who am I as an agent of social change?*

- *Who am I becoming in the context of everything that I am learning?*
- *What are my intentions for the impact that I want to have?*

## Being "Locates" You and Your Primary Inquiry

As we engage being, as you reflect on your position and location relative to your inquiry, you may refine your perspective: Who are you? What sort of life experiences do you have that informs your inquiry? What sort of life experiences do you *not* have and how does this inform your inquiry? How is your primary inquiry or statement unique because of who you are?

***Activity # 1: Reflecting on Being as a Context for Learning***
*Who are you as a person in the world? Reflect on your social context as well as your personal experiences and the relationship between them. How do your experiences and your intersecting identities shape your understanding of your areas of interest and the questions or wisdom that you bring to your studies?*

***Activity #2: How has your learning changed your "way of being?"***

*Reflecting on your knowledge and your practice thus far, who are you becoming in the context of everything that you are learning? What do you wish to embody as you grow in your understanding and practice in your chosen field(s)?*

# Module 3-Knowing

Welcome to Module 3 of the online tutorial. This module will cover the Knowing part of the Goddard's Knowing, Being and Doing model. Scholarship in Knowing involves understanding of the academic disciplines and traditions that inform your area of study and of the location of these perspectives among other ideas about the subject. Development of this knowledge takes the form of traditional reading and research, and may take less traditional forms as well. Some examples of the latter would be artistic/creative activities, case studies, internships, contemplative practices, and embodiment practices.

In this module, you will be bringing a variety of lenses to thinking about:

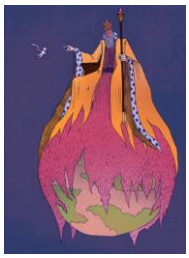
- what you now know and
- what you hope to learn with your studies.

The questions at the conclusion of each section are meant to help you to visualize, organize, and express what it is you know and wish to know. You will draw from this information to write your Educational Essay.

## Overview: Knowing and the Construction of Knowledge

Increasingly, knowledge is being accepted as an ongoing, dynamic, co-creative activity. Ideas draw from and build upon what is known at a given time and context, tacitly and explicitly. From this perspective, the elements of our world, including knowledge, are understood as responsive aspects of interrelated living systems, in which change in any part affects change in the others and in the whole.

This represents a shift from earlier perspectives which held knowledge as more fixed sets of truths imparted by the more knowledgeable to the less informed. Those with the power to define those truths often held power in many aspects of a culture, and debate and diminishment of another's point of view were methods of pursuing and maintaining that power.



From a more collaborative, egalitarian approach to knowing, multiple perspectives are brought to a question, enriching each person's perspective and the collective knowledge. While some people do have more knowledge in an area than others, and some perspectives seem sounder than others, each person carries unique experiences, perspectives, knowledge, and wisdom to contribute to collective knowing.

This does not imply that all perspectives are of equal value. Discernment about which theories and ideas seem most coherent and vibrant for a particular context will be a part of your study.

## Your Place in the Conversation

At Goddard College, we often refer to participation in the construction of knowledge as **conversation**. With your studies, you will contribute to the conversations in your fields of interest. You may contribute ideas, a unique way of approaching questions, and/or the particular style of engagement and experiences you bring. Your primary inquiry, discussed in Module 1, frames the place you wish to locate yourself in the conversations you are engaging.

***Activity 1:*** *Return to your primary inquiry. Are there revisions you want to make as you consider:*

- *What is the concern you wish to address with your studies?*
- *What problem are you hoping that your studies will offer an alternative to?*
- *What do you want to find out about it?*
- *What experience and approach to this question are you bringing to the conversation?*

## Academic Disciplines or Areas of Inquiry

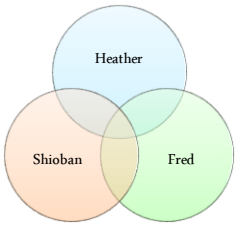
Given the dynamic, interdependent, co-creative nature of knowing, doing, and being, students' studies at Goddard often draw from multiple academic disciplines and fields of study. Each brings unique lenses to exploring the questions of the time. As such, each discipline or area of inquiry is engaged in a particular kind of conversation about a subject. Each frames the issues in a particular way, selecting and leaving out aspects based upon:

- Assumptions held
- Questions posed
- Information and aspects of an issue considered most relevant
- Language used to define and describe perspectives
- Tools and methods of research employed

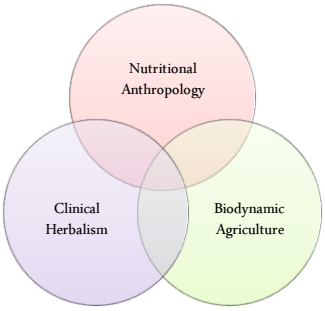
Inquiries into such questions as how to restore one's health, how to prevent violence, how to address climate change, or how to live a meaningful, fulfilled life will benefit from an understanding and integration of a variety of ways of examining multiple interpretations of causes, motivations, effects, and restorative remedies.

In recognition of this, students' work at Goddard is usually collaborative and interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary. They bring the lenses of multiple perspectives to enriching their knowledge in an area. They do this through:

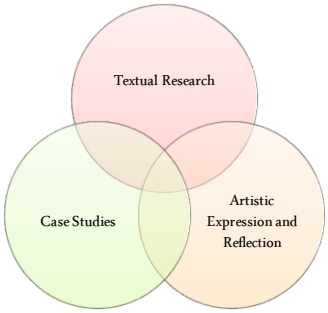
- Open, curious, and mutually respectful dialogue:




- Interdisciplinary/transdisciplinary research:




- And multiple methods for conducting that research:



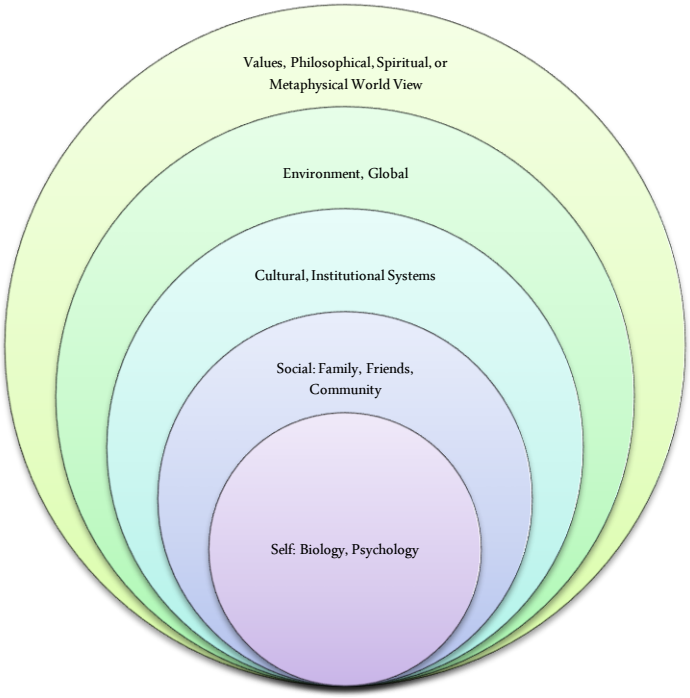

***Activity 2:*** *You may find it helpful to use Venn diagrams, as above, or mind maps in sketching out your areas of study and their relationship to one another. Again, do not expect yourself to know the answers*

*to all these questions. They are an invitation to clarifying and discovering what you know and what you would like to know:*

- *What are some of the ways people have understood and addressed the primary inquiry that brings you to Goddard?*
- *What academic disciplines or areas of study have been explored to answer your question(s)? By which writers/theorists and in which key texts? What are the differing schools of thought or practice that have developed in response to the question?*
- *What are the ways each discipline approaches the question (such as their focus, the questions they pose, the language/terminology used, methods, and assumptions)? How has this influenced what they see and how they interact with their subjects?*
- *Who and/or which perspectives currently have the power to define our understanding, practices, and responses in the cultures you are considering?*

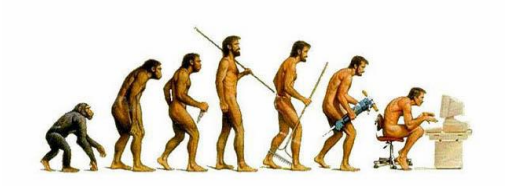
## Context

Individuals shape and are shaped by their contexts, such as family, community, culture, and physical environment. We influence each other's ideas, values, assumptions, perceptions, beliefs, qualities of being, and practices. Some influences are readily apparent, while others are difficult to identify, often embedded in our assumptions about *the way things are*. All of the contexts indicated in the following diagram are in constant interaction with one another, and, as holistic theory suggests, they are not as distinct from one another as a diagram suggests.

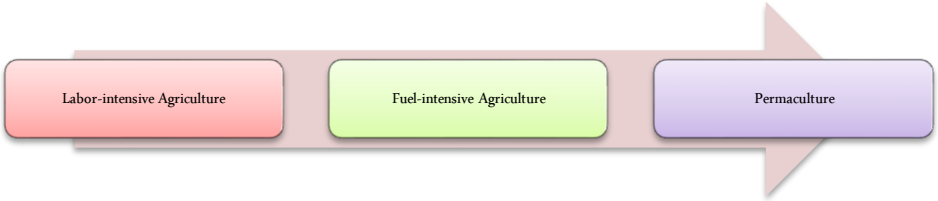



And this occurs in an historical context made up of institutions, values and assumptions, power structures, economies, faith systems, traditions, and roles—to name a few—which form and give form to those who live in its midst.

e.g. shifting paradigms:

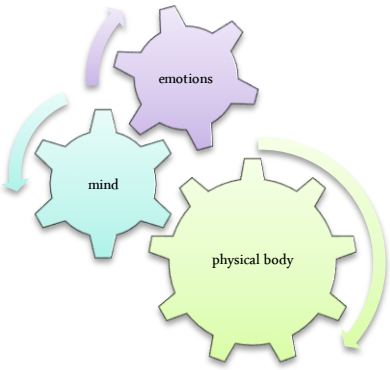


e.g. changing agricultural systems:

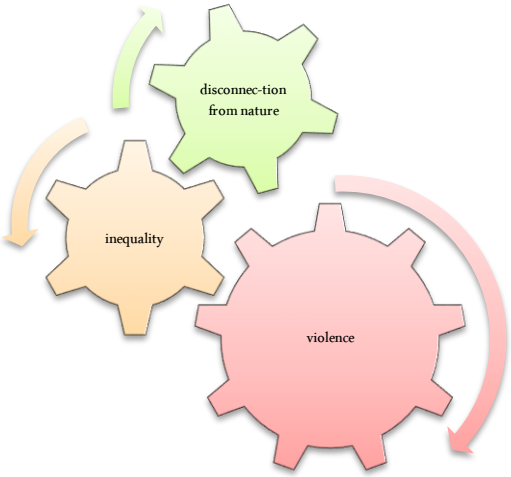



And change in one context affects change in the others:

e.g. human response




e.g. sources of violence



***Activity 3:*** *In considering the contexts affecting the focus of your area of inquiry, choose those that seem most pertinent to your study. It can also be illuminating to examine a context you have not considered before. However, at this time, your focus is on what you now know and want to know.*

- *What are some of the root causes of the problem or concern that you wish to address? How does one cause affect another?*
- *What influences from its contexts have affected your area of interest?*
- *How has the way it has been understood changed over time?*
- *Where are your approaches, authors, schools of thought located in the wider cultural contexts?*

## Essay

Drawing from the notes as you write your admissions essay. Consider what you currently understand about your proposed study, including:

- your areas of interest for graduate study
- the academic disciplines or areas of study you wish to bring to it
- theorists/writers/practitioners and key texts you studied in your current practice
- your contribution to the conversation
- what you know and what you hope to learn

*CONGRATULATIONS!!*

*You are now ready to move on to Module 4*

# Module 4 – Engaged Practice

Welcome to Module 4 of the on-line tutorial. This module will cover the "doing" part of Goddard's "knowing, being and doing" model. In the Goddard Graduate Institute (GGI), we talk about *engaged practice*, or *transformative practice*, or simply, *practice*. This practice is a key degree requirement.

In this module, you'll be guided to reflect on and write about your current field or professional practice. This will become part of your admissions essay.
So let's begin!

### Practice Overview

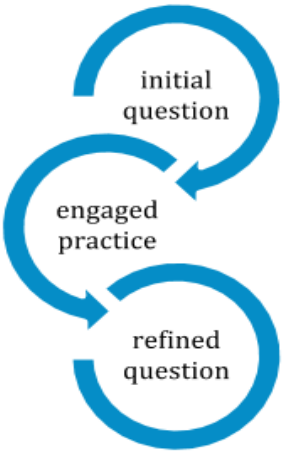
John Dewey and other progressive educators have talked about the importance of learning through experience, and the general purpose of practice is for you to live out your area or areas of study through a personal, social, spiritual or other practice that is an expression of your core inquiry.

We'll be talking about the many ways to learn through doing, and the many ways of engaging in practice. First, let's revisit some familiar themes.

### Practice Refines the Primary Inquiry or Statement

As we've seen in earlier modules, the primary inquiry – that which lives at the core of your studies and which guides your learning – spends some time "cooking" in the crucible of knowing, being and doing.

Your initial interest becomes focused and refined through your engagement with knowing, being and doing.



You have seen that as you engage knowing, as you engage the scholarly conversations that are relevant to your inquiry – the literature and the theory, the disciplinary, interdisciplinary and perhaps transdisciplinary knowledge – your primary question or inquiry becomes refined and clarified.

Similarly, you have seen that as you engage being and reflect on your position and location relative to your inquiry, this also refines your perspective. You have considered who you are, as well as life experiences you've had and those you've not had. Doing so has helped you to view your inquiry and / or research questions from your unique perspective.

Doing also helps to refine your inquiry. Sometimes we engage in a practice in order to deepen our understanding of an issue. A personal practice or contemplative practice may serve this function. Sometimes we engage in a practice (for instance qualitative research) expressly to answer a question. And we may discover as we do that research that the question gets clearer.

***Activity #1: What have you learned from actually doing your practice that has changed how you understand the work?***

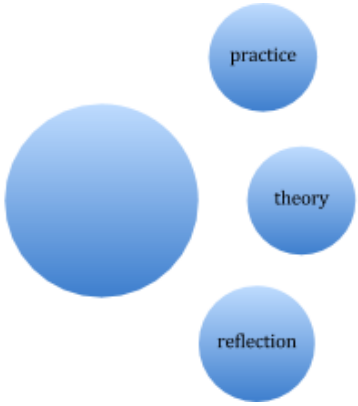
### Praxis

One more thing that we want to acknowledge together, and this will feel familiar, is that knowing, being and doing are, again, aspects of one whole experience of learning. They inform each other, yes, but they also live within each other. Remember the metaphor of the hologram that we used in Module One.

We can see that practice contains elements of knowing and doing.
**Praxis** is a term that you will hear at Goddard to signal the relationship between theory, practice and reflection.

Sometimes we say that praxis refers to "putting theory into action" – but a more complete understanding of praxis is that it is the *unity* of practice, theory and reflection.

Practice – can take many forms;
Theory – the shared, contextual knowledge;
Reflection – on the value and effectiveness of the practice, on its potential for development, on how we are changed and grow in our learning.




## Forms that Practice May Take

In the Goddard Graduate Institute, engaged practice usually takes one or more of the following forms. As you contemplate this list, consider what resonates with you, what is familiar and what is unfamiliar, and what intrigues you.

Also, know that this list is not exhaustive. You may be working with more than one practice.

- Working in a particular modality;
- Engaging in some sort of community work
- Engaging in a personal practice
- Designing and implementing qualitative research
- Inventing a New Practice

In all these cases, the practice becomes a source of questions, inspiration and deeper understanding of the context of the inquiry.

Let's look at each of these in detail.

Community Work as Engaged Practice

Many learners come to Goddard engaging in work in and with their communities. They may have a community practice or they may be inspired to expand into one.

Personal Practice as Engaged Practice

Some learners have been engaged for some time in rigorous and ongoing practices, including body practices, contemplative practices, art practices, among many others. These practices tend to cultivate and draw on new "ways of knowing" that can lead to new understandings of self and world.

Qualitative Research as Engaged Practice

Learners may sometimes design and implement qualitative research studies using a variety of methodologies – ethnography and fieldwork, participatory research, heuristic research, arts-based inquiry – and using a number of methods – fieldwork, interviews, case studies, collaborative projects.

A Specific Modality as Engaged Practice

Sometimes learners come to Goddard already trained and practicing in a modality - for instance as yoga teachers, nurses, coaches, body workers, fitness trainers. In these cases, they want to use their work as a location for deeper reflection and learning.

**Activity #2: Describe your practice: Think in terms of the number of years you've worked in the field and how involved you are in your practice.**

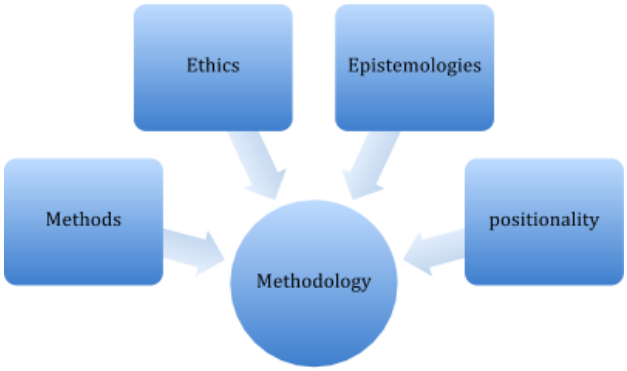
## Methodology

### How a practice fits into academic work

- At Goddard College, learners are asked to pay attention to the complexity of questions that arise when they design and articulate their practice in the context of their studies. What am I doing? How am I doing it? With whom? What are the risks or benefits? For me? For others? How will I share what I learn? These are a few questions.

Our questions, and the answers to our questions, lead us toward the articulation of our *methodology.*

Methodology is a term that refers to the "logos" of our methods, the principles that are the ground of our methods, or (more simply) their logic. So the term methodology actually involves several components.




**Methods** – methods are the actual things you do.

- In qualitative research (QR), the methods may be case studies or interviews
- In personal practice, the method may be journaling
- In community practice, the method may be workshops or organizing

- In you were considering health modalities, your method may include coaching, delivering babies, writing herb formulas.

**Epistemology** – refers to how knowledge is constructed.

- In a community practice or QR project, is knowledge co-constructed?
- In a personal practice, how do we describe multiple ways of knowing?
- In a clinical practice, who holds the knowledge and power? How is knowledge shared?

**Positionality** – refers to where you are located in your practice; for example, your relationship to your community or the community you want to study.

**Ethics** –How do you protect and respect others in your practice?

- Who speaks and who is spoken for in my practice?
- What sort of reciprocity exists between my research participants and myself?
- Am I professionally qualified to engage in this particular modality?
- How will I protect the confidentiality and privacy of participants?
-

This is just a beginning. Lots of questions to ask.

**Activity #3:**

As you write the admissions essay, consider the practice that will be an integral part of your Goddard studies. How does this practice inform your primary question? How might it inform your inquiry? Using questions asked in this module, write about your current understanding of your methods, your epistemology, your positionality and your ethics.