

defended than effort expended that does not even result in improved capacity and confidence for the next venture. Even for negative or negligible findings, the result may be important and one may be able to recognize and report learning with regard to the processes used. Also, an important point to recognize is that, if early steps can be settled sufficiently to get started, help will be found more readily available in later stages.

Title and Sub-Title, Definitions and Decisions

First steps in the conduct of inquiry include but are not limited to decisions concerning terms of reference, scope, purpose(s), building theoretical foundations and connections, finding and defining researchable problems(s), generating questions to be answered, formulating hypotheses as appropriate and so on.

These, of course, cannot be resolved even in a preliminary way without some concern for research design, selecting a population or sample, assuring the validity of the instruments to be used, data collection, analysis, interpretation and all the rest. Subsequent steps must be anticipated sufficiently to suggest that problems as initially defined may be researchable or, at least, that initial definitions and subsequent modifications may lead to researchable alternatives and eventual outcomes.

The conduct of inquiry entails these and many other decisions in no way given or automatic and subject to variation from case to case. Instead, the many decisions involved are likely to be tentative, interdependent and risky right up to the final stages in some projects. One might add, the more pioneering, the more risky. If there were certainty from the start, inquiry would not be justified.

That decisions are involved all the way is often glossed over, yet critically important explicitly to recognize and record. Some of these might