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The Politics and Ethics of Evidence: Extending the Conversation

Qualitative researchers are caught in the middle of a global conversation concerning standards and guidelines for conducting and evaluating qualitative inquiry. This conversation turns on issues surrounding the politics and ethics of evidence, and the value of qualitative work in addressing matters of equity and social justice. Within the global audit culture proposals concerning the use of Cochrane and Campbell criteria, experimental methodologies, randomized clinical trials, quantitative metrics, citation analyses, shared data bases, journal impact factors, rigid notions of accountability, data transparency, warrantability, rigorous peer-review evaluation scales, and fixed formats for scientific articles now compete, fighting to gain ascendancy in the evidence-quality-standards discourse (Thomas, 2004; Lather, 2004, p. 21; NRC, 2002, p. 47; Feuer, Towne and Shavelson, 2002).

With Atkinson and Delamont (2006) I am alarmed by “the absurd proposal” (p. 751) that interpretive research should be made to conform to inappropriate definitions of scientific research (Also Erickson and Gutierrez, 2002, p. 22). Equally disturbing is the argument that qualitative research should not be funded if it fails to conform to these criteria (p. 751). Indeed, As Morse (2006a, b) demonstrates, qualitative inquiry falls off the positivist grid, barely earning a Grade of C- on the Cochrane scale (Morse, 2006a, p. 396; Cheek, 2005, 2006).

How can this be? What is our place in this discourse? Must we hasten to create our own standards of quality, our own criteria? Can we turn our back on these pressures, and continue with business as usual? What can we learn from them? The interpretive community must mount an articulate critique of these external threats to our “collective research endeavor” (Atkinson and Delamont, 2006, p. 751). There is too much at stake. The outcome of this critique carries enormous consequences for the global qualitative research community (see St. Pierre and Rouleston, 2006; Lather, 2006). These consequences directly and indirectly impact the three major sites where qualitative work is produced; funding agencies and human subject review boards, universities and academic units, and professional associations and scholarly journals. Recommendations for reform involve matters of political economy, that is the control of scarce resources surrounding the process of knowledge production.

The term politics (and ethics) of evidence is, as Morse (2006a) observes, an oxymoron, and this in more than one way. Evidence “is something that is concrete and indisputable, whereas politics refers to ‘activities concerned with the ... exercise of authority [and power]’” (p. 395). Evidence in a countable or measurable sense is not something that all qualitative researchers attend to. Few critical ethnographers (Madison, 2005) think in a language of evidence, they think instead about experience, emotions, events, processes, performances, narratives, poetics, the politics of possibility.

And evidence is never morally or ethically neutral (Lincoln and Cannella, 2004; Maxwell, 2004a, b; Preisle, 2006). But, paraphrasing Morse, who quotes Lerner (2004, p. 20), the politics and political economy of evidence is not a question of evidence or no evidence. It is rather a question of who has the power to control the definition of evidence, who defines the kinds of materials that count as evidence, who determines what methods best produce the best forms of evidence, whose criteria and standards are used

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to evaluate quality evidence?

At the Third International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry scholars from around the world will review and debate these and related discourses. There will be efforts to chart a path of resistance for qualitative researchers. This will involve discussions of ethics, science, causality, trust, reiterations of moral, political and ethical criteria for judging qualitative research. These are among the topics we will debate in Urbana in May 2007. Please come join in the conversation.

Norman K. Denzin
Congress Director

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Conferences

IAQI Advisory Committee

Members of the committee request from the executive committee a charge for next year.

Advisory Committee/Subcommittees

12 members of the advisory committee attended the Friday, May 5 meeting.

The opening discussion focused on the committee structure and the use of subcommittees. There was a general agreement that for the subcommittees (regional, disciplinary, and organizational) to work, they would need to a.) be in touch with each other in order to maintain a cross-disciplinary/international effectiveness and b) have a large enough active group of members in order to make the sub-committee structure meaningful. Because of the small number of advisory committee members who were able to attend, we did not elect chairs of the subcommittees.

In the future, using the subcommittee structure, we would work toward defining the connections among regional, organizational, and disciplinary subcommittees:

- Chairs stay in touch with each other in regions; chairs of disciplinary stay in touch with each other across regions, etc. for organizations
- Chairs facilitate communication and networking among members

Members of the committee volunteered to write a draft of the mission and the guideline papers. These papers will be distributed to the committee members and after their approval it will be posted in the newsletter.

Shared Vision/Manifesto

The committee members expressed an interest in conceptualizing a shared vision/manifesto of the IAQI; this shared vision will express the mission of the organization. This document will be a statement that is the basis for the organization's actions; it is the principles on which we function as an organization dedicated to promoting qualitative research internationally and interdisciplinarily. This document will be used to help potential/new members and other research organizations that want to collaborate with the IAQI to understand the vision, mission, ideology of the organization.

One of the aims of the organization will be to promote

qualitative inquiry in countries who don't have a rich, solid tradition of qualitative inquiry and to promote and make visible research that is being conducted in these countries in international settings. This will be done through various ways, including scholars' exchanges. Networks of resistance. To make policy informed by qualitative inquiry and to make qualitative inquiry visible and legitimate in broader academic circles, such as for example NIH.

Guidelines of the Advisory Committee

The committee expressed an interest in writing a document for the operation of the Advisory Committee.

Suggestions that were not discussed in advisory committee that were brought to us.

1. structure of conference allow for longer sessions or alternative formats for creative / innovative work that does not fit the standard paper session.

2. create time for special interest groups (such as regional groups, disciplinary groups, or organizational groups) to have free time / space for discussions and networking. For example, on Friday p.m., at the 3:30 or 5:00 slot, do not schedule papers sessions. Include these in the program.

3. Constitution

2.3 Open to all members of IAQI: what does it mean? Attending, voting, etc. what can they do when there if they are not members of the executive committee

3.6 Do the ex officio President and VP vote?

4.1 Text goes from process to qualifications to process again

How does the executive council decide on the short list (vote/consensus)

- 4.2 c. cast for each office (gender, ethnic)
- d. how does the short list get made
- e. VP: why not a membership vote

4.3 Sec/Treasury--why longer term appointments

The Illinois Qualitative Dissertation Award

The International Center for Qualitative Inquiry is pleased to announce the second annual Illinois Qualitative Dissertation Award, for excellence in qualitative research in a doctoral dissertation. Eligible dissertations will use and advance qualitative methods to investigate any topic. Applications for the award will be judged by the following criteria: clarity of writing; willingness to experiment with new and traditional writing forms; advocacy, promotion, development, and use of qualitative research methodologies and practices in new fields of study, and in policy arenas involving issues of social justice.

There are two award categories, traditional (Category A), and experimental (Category B). Submissions in both categories address social justice issues. Submissions in Category A use traditional qualitative research and writing forms, while Category B submissions experiment with traditional writing and representational forms.

An award of USD \$250 plus a book credit of USD \$150, courtesy of Sage Publications, will be given to each winner. All doctoral candidates are eligible, provided they have successfully defended their proposals prior to January 1, 2007, and will defend their final dissertation by April 1, 2007. Receiving or being considered for other awards does not preclude a student from applying for this award. Applications are due February 1, 2007. The 2007 award will be made at the annual International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry meeting in May, 2007. This will be an annual award.

Applicants should submit four (4) copies of the following:

- * A letter indicating interest in the award that includes the applicant's name, address, university, telephone number(s), e-mail address, department, date of dissertation proposal defense, and current status of the dissertation.
- * A letter from the applicant's dissertation advisor/ chair recommending the applicant's work for the award and verifying the date of the dissertation proposal defense.
- * A research description of no more than five (5) double-spaced pages: approximately two pages of introduction and theory, two pages on the methodology, and one page on the significance of the work. Finalists may be asked to submit their full proposal or additional information at a later date.
- * One chapter and a table of contents from the dissertation.
- * Finalists may be asked to submit their full dissertation after the first round of adjudication, closer to the competition closing date.

Applications are now being accepted. Submissions should be sent to:

Illinois Qualitative Dissertation Award Committee
The Center for Qualitative Inquiry
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Gregory Hall, Rm 103 (mc-462)
810 South Wright St.
Urbana, IL 61801

For further information, please visit <http://www.qi2007.org>, or <http://www.c4qi.org/award.html>. Direct all emails to dissertationaward@c4qi.org

DEADLINE: February 1, 2007

5th Biennial Conference of ISCHP

The deadline for abstract submissions for the 5th Biennial Conference of the International Society of Critical Health Psychology is February 1st, 2007.

Submission information is available on www.ischp2007.org

Confirmed Key Note Speakers:

Lesley Doyal, University of Bristol, UK

Living with HIV: the Experiences of African Women and Men

Elliot Mishler, Harvard Medical School, US

Critical Theory & Social Justice: Macro-, Meso-, and Micro-Contexts of Health Disparities

Michael Murray, Keele University, UK

Health and the Arts

Catherine Riessman, Boston College, US

Narrative Analysis and Bob Dylan: What's the Connection?

The Conference will take place at the Endicott College Campus, Boston North Shore, MA.

We look forward to seeing you in Boston!

ISCHP2007 Conference Organizers

info@ischp2007.org

Annual Meetings of SSSI

Call For Papers

Annual Meetings of The Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction

New York City, August 11, 12, 13, 2007

As the new editor of Symbolic Interaction, Carol Rambo has been designated by the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction as a special representative to ICQI. As such, she has been invited to chair a session entitled:

Showcase: Studies Using Cutting-Edge Methods of Qualitative Inquiry

If you are interested in having your work featured, please submit contact information and an abstract for consideration to carol.rambo@memphis.edu <<mailto:carol.rambo@memphis.edu>> . The deadline is February 18, 2007.

For information about other paper sessions at the SSSI, click this link <http://sun.soci.niu.edu/~sssi/sssiasa/annconf/annconf.html>

4th International Qualitative Research Convention, Malaysia

Qualitative Research Association of Malaysia (QRAM)
3-5, September, 2007, PJ Hilton, Malaysia

Call for Participation / Papers

The Association of Qualitative Research Association of Malaysia is pleased to host the 4th International Qualitative Research Convention in 2007 (QRC2007).

QRC2007 is held biannually and the theme for this 2007 convention is "Doing Qualitative Research: Processes, Issues and Challenges". The objective of the QRC2007 is to provide a better understanding of what really constitutes qualitative research and enhance researchers' knowledge on qualitative inquiry. The growing interest of researchers in using qualitative methods has resulted in many practitioners and academicians who equate using qualitative techniques, such as interviews and observations, to doing qualitative study. We invite you to join us as participants as well as presenters.

For more information please go to: <http://qrc2007-gram.um.edu.my> or email to marohain@um.edu.my or qrc2007@gmail.com

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

Second call: October, 2006

Deadline for proposal submissions: 30th March, 2007

Proposal reviews announced: April, 2007

Third Call: 28th February, 2007

Deadline for early registration 30th June, 2007

Deadline for submission of full papers: July, 2007

Deadline for registration for inclusion in the programme: 15th August, 2007

Final Programme 30th August, 2007

Journals

Call for Manuscripts

October 2007 Special Issue
Teacher Education in Ethiopia

The International Journal of Progressive Education, a peer-reviewed journal, is soliciting manuscripts for a special issue in October 2007. The special issue will focus on the trends and issues in Teacher Education in Ethiopia.

Preference will be given to original research manuscripts. Manuscripts should be submitted to the guest editors, no later than April 15th, 2007 for consideration.

****Submission Guidelines****

All English manuscripts should be prepared in accordance with the form and style as outlined in the American Psychological Association Publication Manual (5th ed.). Manuscripts should be double-spaced, including references, notes, abstracts, quotations, and tables. The title page should include, for each author, name, institutional affiliation, mailing address, telephone number, e-mail address and a brief biographical statement. The title page should be followed by an abstract of max 200 words. Tables and references should follow APA style and be double-spaced. Manuscripts should not exceed 35 pages (double-spaced), including tables, figures, and references. Manuscripts should not be simultaneously submitted to another journal, nor should they have been published elsewhere in considerably similar form or with considerably similar content.

All submissions will be reviewed initially by the editors for appropriateness to IJPE. If the editors consider the manuscript to be appropriate, it will then be sent for anonymous review. Final decision will be made by the editors based on the reviewers' recommendations. All process -submission, review, and revision- is carried out by electronic mail. The submissions should be written using MS-DOS or compatible word processors and sent to secretary@inased.org.

****Special Issue Guest Authors:****

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IAQI NEWSLETTER

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