New Possibilities and Chapters: Qualitative Research and the *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*

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New chapters abound. The *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* (IJQM) is now published by SAGE on behalf of the *International Institute for Qualitative Methodology* (IIQM). This exciting new partnership between IJQM, IIQM, and SAGE comes at a time of growth for each of “us,” and the qualitative methods that we are committed to reflecting, supporting, and shaping now, in, and for the future.

As we face this future, some of the older methodological arguments and difficulties are now past. Dichotomous and divisive paradigm tensions with quantitative methods have now almost disappeared, debate being fixed far more on similarity and compatibility (Newman & Hitchcock, 2011). Those who do qualitative research are now far less likely to have to plead base legitimacy for their work. In our professional roles chairing national peer-review funding committees, meeting clinicians about how qualitative research can help them, and in the many conferences and workshops we are involved in each year, we see genuine curiosity, respect, and openness to qualitative methods. There is more awareness and acknowledgment of qualitative methods by government, research-funding bodies, and journals too. Even traditional bastions of quantitative methods, like the Cochrane Collaboration, now support systematic reviews of qualitative research (Metin Gülmezoglu, Chandler, Shepperd, & Pantoja, 2013). While getting funding, doing, and publishing qualitative work are certainly not easy, many of the past challenges of doing so are much changed. Yet, we are surrounded still by new methodological challenges. Innovative technology raises basic questions about what constitutes qualitative data. Emerging methods, like realist and mixed methods, challenge us to better realize the benefits of qualitative with quantitative data together. Developments in knowledge translation and social media provide new possibilities for qualitative research to change the world. Even those challenges that we thought could be “developed away,” such as around rigor and reflexivity, evolve rather than disappear (Sandelowski, 2014).

Those who do qualitative work are changing too. Applied qualitative research is being carried out not only by academics but also more by practitioners and clinicians too. While qualitative research remains prominent in disciplines like teaching, social work, and nursing, it is growing in other disciplines such as psychology, finance, and even animal conservation (Drury, Homewood, & Randall, 2011) and anesthesia (Shelton, Smith, & Mort, 2014)

Support, mentorship, and development for all those doing this rich array of qualitative work have never then been more important or as difficult. The disciplines engaging with and using qualitative research methods are wider than ever. The cadre of skills successful researchers need is astonishingly broad and deep. IJQM, echoing IIQM’s vision, remains firmly fixed on being a vital, collaborative and transformative hub for all those who seek to use and advance qualitative inquiry for a better world.

To realize this vision, IJQM continues to be an international forum in and through which innovations, insights, and advances in qualitative research methodology can be shared with the global community of qualitative researchers. As the leading international publisher shaping qualitative research methods across disciplines, SAGE are the ideal partner to achieve this. While IJQM remains independent editorially from both IIQM and SAGE, the journal benefits invaluably from their support. In approaching this new chapter for IJQM, we recognize too the vital contributions the journal has had from

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its inception in 2002 through its founding editor Dr. Janice Morse and subsequent editors Drs. Jude Spiers, Karin Olson, Cindy Jardine, and Sarah Stahlke Wall. With a new team of Editors and Editorial Board in place, we now affirm and consolidate the values that have guided the journal to date and will continue to do so.

IJQM is interdisciplinary

The journal seeks to engage and support anyone who uses qualitative research methods irrespective of their discipline. Although many of those using qualitative research use it in different ways, it remains vital that we come together in a common methodological forum to share our advances, innovations, and insights across traditional disciplinary boundaries. Accordingly, prospective IJQM authors should write their articles to make their methodological advances, innovations, and insights accessible to readers from diverse disciplines and professionals. In line with this openness, we encourage submissions about how qualitative research is used in innovative ways, particularly in visual, video-based, and mixed-method designs. To reflect this, the journal will shortly be publishing the second of two special issues on mixed-methods research edited by Drs. Tony Onwuegbuzie and Cheryl Poth.

IJQM is open access

The journal retains its open-access status, providing all current and past content to readers at no direct cost. With the increasing volume of qualitative research being published and the broadening interest in qualitative methods, it is especially important that practitioners and clinicians outside academic settings and high-income countries can access articles published in IJQM. This democratizes knowledge, information, and innovation in an unequal world.

IJQM values diversity

Whether in methods, techniques, or philosophical approaches, we recognize that debate and disagreements are healthy and useful for recognizing our differences and improving our methods. IJQM has a wonderfully diverse and committed team of new Editors and an expanded Editorial Board to ensure that the journal is inclusive. As qualitative research continues to diversify, so too the journal will continue to evolve to reflect this. Its online status has allowed it to be one of the first social science journals to fully and readily embrace methods that use photography, video, and sound. IJQM now not only includes articles reporting methodological advances, insights, and innovations but also “Qualitative Study Protocols” of fully funded projects to illustrate how qualitative and mixed methods are incorporated into full study designs.

IJQM continues to employ rigorous double-blind peer review of articles submitted to the journal. It is vital that readers trust that the journal’s content has been reviewed by those best placed to ensure excellence. For this, it relies on committed peer reviewers, some of whom are now Editorial Board members. We continue to be thankful for the vital support these reviewers provide for ensuring that authors get the best feedback and support.

IJQM is influential

Articles published in the journal contain some of the most cited and well-known papers on key elements for qualitative research, such as rigor, analysis, reflexivity, and design. Over the past years, to raise its profile, IJQM attained an impact factor. Publishing with IJQM provides high visibility and wide reach for authors’ work via IJQM’s and SAGE’s international platforms. Each month, IJQM’s new content is disseminated through IJQM’s extensive international network, which extends across disciplines, career stages, and to over 60 countries. News of new publications will also be disseminated by SAGE and IJQM across social media via Twitter and Facebook with select authors even being selected for podcasts and vodcasts featuring their work.

We encourage you to submit your insights, innovations, and advances in methods and the studies in which they feature to IJQM. As qualitative research and the challenges faced by those doing it continue to evolve, so must IJQM. We look forward to doing this together with all the journal’s authors and readers, its Editorial Board, and Editorial team.

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