

Operant Subjectivity

The International Journal of Q Methodology

Foreword

Sue Ramlo

University of Akron

Pragmatically, concourses are empirically grounded. They may be collections of "statements" from people in a community sense, with certain commonality... our theory of communication, and of meaning as its core, begins with concurrence theory...

William Stephenson (1978, p 25).

Stephenson (2014) described Q technique as beginning with a Q sample drawn from a concurrence where these represented the population and the universe (of items), respectively. In fact, Stephenson published a number of articles (e.g., 1978, 2014) that stressed the importance and details of concurrence and Q sample. Yet Kenward (2019) reported that few Q studies provide much if any detail about how the concurrence was drawn and the Q sample selected, a view which had already provided the foundation for this special section of *Operant Subjectivity* (OS).

Thus, the goal of this special section of OS is to share the various ways Q methodologists develop concurrence and select the Q sample. Within this set of articles, some authors draw on Stephenson's work while others bring new tactics to collecting concurrence and selecting the Q sample. Within typical Q publications, the concurrence development and selection of the Q sample may consist of a paragraph or two with a significantly greater focus on the other aspects of the study (including general explanations of what Q is and the study's results). Here, our goal is to focus reader's attention on concurrence development and Q sample selection such that new insights might be revealed concerning how Q methodologists approach these important aspects of any Q study.

The result is a set of articles that offer new ways to develop concurrence including anecdote circles (Richardson & Ramlo, 2019) and software tools (Lee, 2019). Additionally, Sylvester (2019) and Mohr (2019) discuss the difficulty of selecting Q samples within very different contexts. Bass and Balkema (1999) revisit the notion of nominal groups first introduced by Kinsey and Kelly (1989), Brown and colleagues trace the development of a Q study from the collection of the concurrence, selection of the Q sample, to the testing of theory. Ramlo et al. (2019) provide insight in developing a concurrence within an environment where the participants may struggle because of poor literacy skills. Shearman (2019) outlines the challenges of concurrence development and Q sample selection in a domain - mastery in mathematics education - not previously studied using Q methodology.

I would like to express my deep appreciation to James Good, Editor of *Operant Subjectivity: The International Journal of Q Methodology*, the contributors, and those who provided helpful and timely reviews.

References

- Bass, L., & Balkema, R. (2019). Subjective experiences in a community-based student learning project. *Operant Subjectivity, 41*, 83-92.
- Brown, S.R., Baltrinic, E., & Jencius, M. (2019). From concourse to Q sample to testing theory. *Operant Subjectivity, 41*, 93-109.
- Kenward, L. (2019). A literature review to guide novice researchers using Q methodology in the development of a framework for concourse management. *Nurse Researcher, 27*(1), 17-21. doi: 10.7748/nr.2019.e1616/
- Kinsey, D., & Kelley, T. (1989). Mixing methodologies: An aid in developing Q samples. *Operant Subjectivity, 12*, 98-102.
- Lee, B. (2019). Tools for collecting a concourse and selecting a Q sample. *Operant Subjectivity, 41*, 17-47.
- Mohr, S. (2019). Assembling concourse material and selecting Q samples on the sociolinguistics of tourism discourse in Zanzibar. *Operant Subjectivity, 41*, 65-82.
- Richardson, L & Ramlo, S. (2019). Views of obesity: Generating a concourse using anecdote circles. *Operant Subjectivity, 41*, 3-16.
- Shearman, J. (2019). Meanings of "mastery" in Mathematics education: Creation of a concourse for a research study. *Operant Subjectivity, 41*, 121-133.
- Stephenson, W. (1978). Concourse theory of communication. *Communication, 3*, 21-40.
- Stephenson, W. (2014). General theory of communication. *Operant Subjectivity, 37*(3), 38-56. doi:10.15133/j.os.2014.011.
- Sylvester, J. (2019). Stephenson: Defining concourses and selecting statements using Fisher's balanced block design and Newton's Fifth Rule. *Operant Subjectivity, 41*, 48-64.