

Editorial

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It has been my privilege over the past nine years to work with a number of our most senior and experienced colleagues in my role as Editor of this journal. I have learned a great deal from them about both Q methodology and publication. Their diverse interests and backgrounds have encouraged and inspired me to think about Q in ever-expanding depth and with increasing precision. In addition, with a genteelness and generosity already rare back then, Professor Robert Mrtek and Dr Marsha Mrtek provided me select advice as I assumed the editorship of this journal. Short on rules and sermons (the editor's role is best learned on the job), on one subject they were utterly clear: I was not to be merely an arm's length executor of judgments at an encrusted portal to publication, but I was to seek out, mentor and support those who in New Zealand we refer to as 'new and emerging researchers'.

As readers of this journal will know, both through its pages and through the online and conference activities of the 'Q community', Q is attracting increasing numbers of new users from a widening range of disciplines and nations. They are of course sought out, mentored and supported by many of the same colleagues whose knowledge and dedication continue to inspire me. Accordingly, it is with great pleasure that I offer this issue containing contributions whose first authors are in the early years of professional and academic careers. It is my further pleasure to acknowledge three Q-methodology mentors and co-authors on these papers—Steven Brown, Diane Montgomery and Susan Ramlo—each of whom has done so much to ensure students are able to learn about Q within their chosen study programs.

The first paper in this issue is the recipient of the 2012 Donald J. Brenner Outstanding Paper Award. The first author, Han Zhang, was supported by contributions from her fellow doctoral candidates Mayagul Satlykgylyjova and Merfat Almuhajiri and advice from Steven Brown. The Brenner award is named in honor of the first President of the ISSSS, and was established in 2010. Han Zhang is a doctoral student majoring in Evaluation and Measurement in the College of Education, Health and Human Services at Kent State University. In her first semester at Kent, she was introduced to Q methodology in Steven Brown's seminar. When

the College administration called for suggestions for improving international student life, Han Zhang saw a window of opportunity to apply Q methodology to a study in 'real life'. She writes, 'My personal academic focus is on instrument development and data analysis. There remains much about Q methodology that is a mystery to me, but with further study in other measurement technologies, such as factor analysis, I hope to deepen my understanding of this method'.

Two other papers were shortlisted by the Brenner award committee. Both sets of authors accepted an invitation to submit their papers for publication in *Operant Subjectivity*. The primary author of the first of these, Eric Baltrinic, is a doctoral student at Kent State University, in the Counseling and Human Development Services Program, as his is co-author Jennifer Waugh. Prior to entering his doctoral studies, Eric spent considerable time as a counselor, supervisor, program developer, and consultant focusing primarily on the treatment of adolescents with co-occurring mental health and substance use concerns. Like Han Zhang, Eric Baltrinic was introduced to Q methodology in Steven Brown's doctoral seminar. Similarly, he found a 'real life' context well-suited to investigation with Q. He relates that he learned that many doctoral students do not complete their programs and he didn't want to be one of them. He sees a place Q in his future plans for scholarship, which include mentoring junior faculty through co-teaching, the internationalization of counseling, and pedagogical strategies for counselor training.

It is not unusual for researchers find topics close to their personal interests, and for doctoral students that clearly includes the doctoral education experience. Nevertheless, when I received Baltrinic et al's study on doctoral completion in counselor education programs, I already had on my desk a paper submitted by David Burkholder and Christopher Janson that used Q to investigate the exact topic, also covering the perspectives of students and faculty. Nothing like a small mystery to enliven an editor's day! I knew there was more than coincidence and indeed, much of potential interest for Q methodologists. I am delighted that both sets of authors combined efforts in "Reflections on Parallel Studies of Doctoral Student Completion" which follows the two independently completed studies in this issue.

The second short-listed Brenner award paper was submitted by Krista Schumacher and Diane Montgomery. Diane teaches a regular Q-methodology course and assists significant numbers of students to present at conferences and publish. Krista Schumacher is completing a PhD in educational psychology, with an emphasis in research, evaluation, measurement and statistics (REMS), at Oklahoma State University. She teaches introductory statistics and research methods courses, and tutors students in all REMS statistics courses. Her research interests are in the areas of statistics anxiety and the use of statistics in

policy decision-making. She is currently a research assistant for the Oklahoma Department of Human Services Office of Planning, Research and Statistics and serves as an external evaluator for five federally funded higher education programs across the country.

Also interested in evaluation is Dr Bernard Afirik Akanpabada Akanbang, whose PhD was conferred in June 2013. His work was undertaken at the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research, University of Ghana, Accra. A summary of this work appears in this journal, accompanied by an open invitation to the Q community to consider working more closely with universities in Africa (outside South Africa, which has had Q practitioners for some time now). Dr Akanbang discovered Q methodology through the work of Dr Lennise Baptiste, whose paper was the first recipient of the Brenner award (Baptiste, 2011).

Operant Subjectivity is always interested in explicitly methodological articles. Chris Fluckinger and Michelle Brodke describe an experiment designed to investigate participant reactions to Q sorting compared with completing a Likert-scale survey involving identical statements in a simulated job-applications context. Chris Fluckinger, whose doctorate was awarded in industrial/organizational psychology in 2010 from the University of Akron, is now an instructor of psychology at Bowling Green State University, Firelands, where Dr Michelle Brodke is an associate professor of management.

Rounding out this issue is a paper co-authored by three quasi-generations of Q methodologists: Dr Katie Cerrone was introduced to Q by John Nicholas and his Q mentor, Susan Ramlo. Katie Cerrone's PhD is in Curricular and Instructional Studies with an emphasis on STEM education. She is Associate Professor of Technical Mathematics, and teaches undergraduate math in the Department of Associate Studies at The University of Akron. John Nicholas is an Associate Professor of Computer Information Systems at The University of Akron. John is also the managing editor of *Operant Subjectivity*, which brings me back to my starting point.

It has been a full and rewarding nine years as Editor, but now time to pass the baton. We also take this opportunity to shift the publication year to the calendar year. Volume 37 will appear quarterly, in January, April, July and October.

Reference

- Baptiste, L. J. C. (2011). What educators learn when they evaluate students. *Operant Subjectivity: The International Journal of Q Methodology*, 34(2), 104–123.