Mentoring Qualitative Research Authors Globally: *The Qualitative Report* Experience

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Authoring quality qualitative inquiry is a challenge for most researchers. A lack of local mentors can make writing even more difficult. To meet this need, *The Qualitative Report* (*TQR*) has helped authors from around the world develop their papers into published articles. *TQR* editorial team members will discuss the history of the journal, their philosophy of author development; manuscript development strategies; solutions for managing differences; challenges working worldwide; authors' feedback; and the collective global futures of *TQR* and qualitative researchers. Key Words: Qualitative Research, Mentoring, Peer Review, and *The Qualitative Report*

Authoring quality qualitative inquiry is a challenge for most researchers. A lack of local resources, especially mentors, can make writing even more difficult. Many would-be authors find themselves isolated and have to undertake this process without guidance from local experienced qualitative researchers. In these situations, students, faculty, and other professionals look worldwide through the Internet for resources and support. The good news is there is a growing availability of full-text qualitative research articles, papers, monographs, and reports that can become the virtual library for these researchers: The bad news is qualitative research is best learned through active engagement in research and writing processes; activities which usually require active guidance, supervision, and mentoring in order to produce quality outcomes. We are concerned that many qualitative researchers work without sufficient support and guidance to conduct and present exemplary qualitative inquiries, oftentimes contributing to negative evaluations and a general lack of appreciation of the value of qualitative work by the research community-at-large.

To address this concern and advance the quality of qualitative research worldwide, there must be opportunities for researchers, regardless of location, to work together, share expertise, and provide guidance. We, the editors of *The Qualitative Report* (*TQR*, ISSN 1052-0147, http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/index.html), an English language, online, open-access journal, help authors from around the world develop their qualitative research papers into published

articles. We uphold the journal's mission to mentor authors and to support them throughout the entire paper development process. In doing so, we have envisioned *TQR* as a learning environment dedicated to helping *all* authors produce papers of excellence and distinction.

In the *TQR* editorial system, all authors who submit papers are accepted as members of *TQR*'s community, which means that we create a context for the authors and the editorial team to work together, to improve the manuscripts for publication in *TQR*. The hallmark of *TQR* is not rejection rates; rather, it is to assist authors to improve their texts to the highest quality. Our success in meeting this mission is exemplified by a recent grant awarded from the Open Society Initiative in recognition of *TQR*'*s* editorial support of authors from developing and transition countries such as Mexico, Nigeria, South Africa, and Turkey.

In this paper the *TQR* editorial team will discuss our process of supporting and guiding global authors to produce and make accessible exemplary qualitative research articles. To this end we will (a) describe our journal's historical and philosophical foundation, (b) illustrate our manuscript development strategies from initial submission to final publication, (c) explore the challenges of working with global authors, (d) share feedback from authors, and (e) reflect on the collective global futures of *TQR* and qualitative researchers.

TQR: A Brief History

Ron Chenail started *The Qualitative Report* in 1990 (Chenail, 1990a, 1990b) in response to the emerging needs in the counseling, psychotherapy, social work, and marital and family therapy (MFT) communities, which were beginning to adopt ethnographic, phenomenological, and discursive research methods (Atkinson, Heath, & Chenail, 1991; Moon, Dillon, & Sprenkle, 1990, 1991). The editorial leadership of the journal came from Ron Chenail from Nova Southeastern University and Anthony Heath and Brent Atkinson from Northern Illinois University, academic homes to two MFT programs pioneering qualitative methods. The original editorial board consisted of faculty from these programs and papers were solicited from board members, colleagues, and students from these and other MFT programs.

From 1990 to 1994 the journal was published in paper form and had limited circulation: In 1994, *TQR* was published solely by Nova Southeastern University using an online format and its previous MFT, counseling, social work, and psychology communities were joined by colleagues from public administration, information technology, business, health care, human services, political science, geography, and a host of others who submitted their papers to the journal and who subscribed to the publication. In addition to papers submitted from a wider range of disciplines, there was also an increase in papers from international authors.

The number of submissions to *TQR* has increased each year: From January 2002 to December 2006 we received 444 original manuscripts from authors in the United States, Puerto Rico, and 40 other nations including Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, China, Denmark, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Guyana, Hong Kong, India, Iran, Ireland, Israel, Jamaica, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mexico, Nepal, New Guinea, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Poland, Romania, Russia, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Taiwan, and Turkey.

A majority of these authors were submitting their initial qualitative research manuscript for publication. They were graduate students, post-doctoral fellows, new faculty who were converting their dissertations into articles, as well as senior faculty who were attempting to master the artistry of qualitative research reporting. As we read these manuscripts, we recognized

that these researchers had conducted credible and interesting studies, but they were having difficulty presenting their methods and findings in ways that were clear and credible in qualitative research publishing.

To address these challenges, the new *TQR* leadership team consisting of Chenail along with Sally St. George and Dan Wulff, from the University of Louisville, held a series of retreats in the late 1990s and early 2000s. These meetings consisted of intense reflections that focused on our work with authors. We noted that we were approaching authors and their papers in a way that was different from standard editorial procedures. All clinicians by trade, we saw that our clinical training was a major influence in how we approached the editorial process: We were positively and unconditionally accepting authors into a supportive and generative editorial relationship. We were working collaboratively with them to not only produce papers of high quality, but also to build a context in which we as editors and they as authors could together learn more about conducting and writing qualitative research.

During these retreats, we reviewed our reviews, looking for patterns in our communications with authors and editorial board members, and we learned that our reviewers and authors (along with us) appreciated the emerging editing style. Feedback indicated that *TQR* reviews were richly developed, extremely helpful, and respectful of authors and their ideas. Our efforts to establish a *TQR* "brand" predicated on author support and respect resulted in a steady flow of submissions (see Table 1). In response, over the last 3 years we have expanded our editorial leadership team by adding three new Managing Editors, Kate Warner and Martha Laughlin of Valdosta State University and Maureen Duffy from Barry University, and a Production Editor, Tarmeen Sahni from Nova Southeastern University.

Table 1

The Qualitative Report Submission Statistics from 2002 to 2006

Year	Submissions	Reviewed	Lack of Fit	Published	Published Percentage
2002	50	49	1	35	69%
2003	61	59	2	38	62%
2004	75	68	8	34	45%
2005	133	116	16	33	24.8%
2006	125	102	23	10	8%
Totals	444	394	50	150	33.8%

These numbers show that even though we accept more that 88% of the submitted papers, for inclusion in our manuscript development program, we end up publishing slightly more than 33% of those papers. This publication rate reflects the rigorous manuscript development program that each author must successfully complete prior to publication. Papers published in *TQR*

therefore are the result of exemplary effort and positive collaboration among authors, editors, and reviewers.

      The numbers also suggest *TQR* has evolved into an international journal based on both total submissions and published papers. From 2002 to 2006, global submissions accounted for 40.5% of the total submissions (see Table 2) and 43 % of the total papers published in *TQR* (see Table 3). The current editorial board also reflects the international emphasis of the journal with 32 of the 104 members (30.7%) living in countries other than the United States.

Table 2

The Qualitative Report Global Submissions from 2002 to 2006

Year	Submitted Papers	Global Total	Global Percentage
2002	50	16	32 %
2003	61	27	44.2 %
2004	75	30	40 %
2005	133	61	45.8 %
2006	125	46	36.8 %
Totals	444	180	40.5 %

Table 3

The Qualitative Report Global Published Papers from 2002 to 2006

Year	Published Papers	Global Total	Global Percentage
2002	28	12	42.8 %
2003	40	16	40 %
2004	40	20	50 %
2005	40	21	52.5 %
2006	40	12	30 %
Totals	188	81	43 %

      With increased interest from qualitative researchers and authors worldwide, we have experienced validation and encouragement leading to even greater commitment to our philosophy of editing, which is predicated on supporting and nurturing authors.

TQR Editorial Philosophy

      Our editorial philosophy is grounded in an appreciation of the important ideas and experiences put forth in all submitted papers. We believe this appreciative stance creates a context for generating new ideas and for encouraging qualitative authors. We resolve the issue of judging a paper by accepting each work with the proviso that the author(s) work with us to make the paper maximally clear and the qualitative research transparent. Our aim is not to alter the substance of the author's work, but to improve the presentation so that journal readers can benefit fully. We provide a site where authors can display their ideas to a worldwide audience, an inherently democratic process to disseminate ideas about qualitative research. A discerning

readership will evaluate the usefulness of the papers in the context of their own situation. Similar to the difference between generalizability and transferability, we do not control the substance of the paper in order to guarantee its generalizability to other settings or applications, but rather, rely on each reader to make that decision.

Our editing efforts are devoted to facilitating each manuscript's development rather than gatekeeping for the field (Harcum & Rosen, 1993). We do not need to judge papers as worthy/unworthy of publication based upon our reading of an initial submission: We do not attribute our journal's value and contribution by its rejection/acceptance rate. We do hold that our mission is to work with authors to find the diamond in the rough with each submission, and co-create a glimmering jewel in the form of a publishable qualitative research paper in our journal. By taking such a stance we overcome the usual quandary editors and reviewers face when they construct an "either/or" relationship between the author and the journal, and worry whether they need to be "advocates for journals or for authors" (Rojewski & Domenico, 2004, p. 44). In our model, we take a "both/and" posture by aligning our editorial mission with the needs of these authors, which allows us to advocate for them and our journal simultaneously.

To offer to publish authors who are in the early stages of their scholarly career or are in a locale or professional context, where publishing is inordinately difficult, validates these authors and serves as an encouragement and stimulus for them to continue to develop their ideas. Encouraging authors to pursue novel ideas and the stretching of disciplinary boundaries may lay groundwork for others, and stimulate innovation in a variety of fields/disciplines. Pushing ideas beyond current usage and credibility can add life to scholarly pursuits. Rather than securing the status quo or current standards, we claim our value to be in pushing qualitative thinking to new understandings, new connections.

In our working with authors, we express our feedback in respectful ways that validate their work and invite them to stretch their thinking. Our feedback is pointed and deliberate; it includes positive commentary as well as critical. When we suggest additional ideas, we often specify books, articles, or websites for authors to examine and include in their subsequent drafts. Working with authors may go through many revisions, evolving a text that is well-written and engaging. Our commitment to our authors is continuous and without limit.

Creating and fueling a "learning community" is another key component of our editorial philosophy. We employ a transparent manuscript reviewing system, in which all participants (authors, reviewers, and editors) are identified and made known to each other. We believe that openness is important in building helpful and respectful learning relationships between authors and reviewers, and between reviewers and editors. In this way, all parties involved in the process—authors, editors, reviewers, student reviewers—enter into conversation and as such, all benefit in terms of learning and collaborating. Each paper is the nexus of our coming together; the community coordinates around the submitted paper. Adopting a continuous learning posture by all participants de-emphasizes the traditional hierarchical arrangement of editor dominating the author. This learning stance facilitates the collaborative style that we prefer.

TQR Manuscript Development Program

The Manuscript Development Program (MDP) is a two-stage editorial review process. The first stage is a pre-review by an editor and the second stage is a full review done by a team of reviewers, headed by a managing editor.

A pre-review typically consists of identifying the following basic elements of research inquiry: (a) a well-organized abstract which outlines the content of the paper, (b) a clear purpose statement, (c) a literature review in which the uniqueness of the project is logically developed, (d) a description of the author's context, (e) a step-by-step description of the means employed to collect and analyze data, (f) the strategies used to ensure rigor and reader confidence, (g) a discussion of study limitations, (h) a discussion that flows directly from the data, and (i) comments regarding the contributions to the content discipline and to the field of qualitative inquiry.

If a submitted manuscript contains all of these components, we send the paper directly on to the second stage for editorial review. However, if the author is missing any of these basic elements or needs to strengthen them, then the manuscript is assigned to our Manuscript Development Program (MDP). The author is notified with a letter and a copy of our comments, and asked if they would like to pursue this process. Most authors agree because we have promised that we will work to make sure that the manuscript becomes publishable; a few authors have declined.

Many of our manuscripts are assigned to our Manuscript Development Program. Once the author revises the manuscript, according to the suggested comments, then it is reread by the pre-reviewing editor. When all of the major concerns have been addressed, the paper is sent on to an editorial team, which normally consists of a reviewer and a managing editor, and sometimes a student reviewer. All of the reviews are sent to the managing editor who is responsible for writing a composite review which consists of organizing, integrating, and if necessary, editing the editorial comments received in order to give the author clear and non-contradictory advisement. The author is then sent the review.

In both stages, the author receives his/her manuscript and will see commentary located in balloons on the margins of the paper, which have been added by using the *Insert Comments* feature of Microsoft Word. In addition, an author will see editorial changes embedded in the manuscript with a contrasting color via the *Track Changes* function of Microsoft Word.

We have experienced much success in the *Track Changes* and *Insert Comments* functions. It allows us to specify the types and locations of the revisions that are needed. In some cases we also suggest didactic articles for the authors to read (e.g., Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002; Constas, 1992; Harry, Sturges, & Klingner, 2005; Sandelowski & Barroso, 2002) to help them with particularly challenging tasks such as transparency and clarity.

The use of these editing tools also allows us to focus on the manuscript which becomes the centerpiece of the entire reviewing, editing, and revising enterprise. Instead of producing separate reviews and response documents that could move us all away from the manuscript, we work together with the authors to weave all our collective comments and responses in the manuscript, to create an evolving audit trail that ultimately produces the published paper. In the submission of the revised manuscript to the journal, authors make their changes by using the *Track Changes* and *Insert Comments* features. This allows the editors to easily see what steps the authors have taken to revise their papers. Authors also use the *Insert Comment* tool to juxtapose their responses to the questions and observations made by the reviewers. Lastly, if authors have any questions of their own, they use the *Insert Comments* feature to include them in the revised text. By placing all of the edits and commentary in one document we eliminate the challenge of going back and forth from multiple documents (i.e., the initial submission, the initial review, and the revised submission). When it works well, the effect is similar to a chorus of multiple singers.

The individual singers' voices can still be heard, yet they all produce a coherent work in concert with each other.

In this way, our reviewers and editors act in the role of consultant and mentor. This process facilitates a transparency in which all contributors' identities and comments are visible to everyone, and creates a context whereby all become learners. In addition, using this technology speeds up the reviewing and revising process.

Reflections on the Manuscript Development Program

Although we can readily identify elements of a paper that need improvement, we have to be careful not to overwhelm authors with a barrage of helpful suggestions from multiple reviewers. Byproducts may be feeling frustrated with the immensity of the task and missing some of our comments due to the sheer volume of commentary. Based upon feedback from authors, we adjust the Manuscript Development Program from time to time. The following are some illustrations of changes we have implemented in our MDP.

- Use comments only**.** We sometimes only use *Insert Comments* during the initial revision rounds and use *Track Changes* for elements of writing style (American Psychological Association-APA, 2001) after the major revising tasks have been completed.
- Delete comments along the way**.** In some cases, papers can end up containing three to four editorial suggestions per page. In these instances, we delete comments once the changes have been made in order to help both the author and the editor to focus on what yet needs to be done.
- Editing the paper one section at a time**.** Sometimes there may be significant concerns with the paper (e.g., portions of the methodology missing, extraneous topics in the introduction and in the literature review, abstracts that are too "abstract"), which make comprehending the findings and discussion sections difficult. In these cases, we will approach the paper section by section and focus our attention on the portion in question, work through the editorial concerns before moving on to the next section.

Copyediting and Publication

Papers accepted for publication with *TQR* undergo a detailed copyediting phase in order to ensure that manuscripts meet established guidelines. The copyediting process involves three rounds of editing, which include the initial, revision, and final phrases. In the initial phase authors are sent an introductory email in which the production editor is introduced, and the available email address is confirmed. In the revision phase, the manuscript is proof-read for grammatical errors and APA (2001) style compliance. Due to the development of many online resources, authors have begun to use website links in their references. While this is a great source of information, problems can arise when website addresses become inactive and a reader cannot access them. Therefore, website links are checked and replacements of website addresses are made if necessary. This does not ensure that at the time the article is read the website will still be available. In this phase, all communications take place by using the *Insert Comments* function.

A second email is sent out with an attachment of the article in Microsoft Word. Along with this, the authors are sent a set of instructions, which provide guidance in addressing the revisions and provide a timeline. Technological differences make it important to provide specific

instructions in editing the revised manuscript and using the comments function to address any information or changes that may be requested. Most authors reply to the emails in a timely manner, however there are occasions when it is difficult to locate an author and have revisions sent back in time for publication. This may slow the process of uploading all the articles on to the website once all changes have been completed, but we still work at publishing the manuscripts in a timely fashion. If there is more than one author listed on the manuscript it is sometimes helpful to contact all authors and keep them up to date with the editing process. Global authors as well as local authors often inform us of any travel plans that may prevent them from responding to our emails. Other issues involve the lack of a translator's accessibility. This causes the production editor to work accordingly, and provide revisions at an earlier or later date.

Once the manuscript is emailed back, the responses to the comments are added into the final draft as well as any changes the author may have requested. It is then reviewed by the editor and the document is converted into an Adobe Acrobat file. The editor provides the table of contents and hyperlinks for each article with the abstract and a pdf. file. Once this is done the articles can be uploaded to the website and linked to the table of contents.

Influence of *TQR*'s Editorial Processes

Even though this editorial philosophy and manuscript development process is a work in progress, it has begun to grow in influence among academic journals. For example, *Family Relations: Interdisciplinary Journal of Applied Family Studies*, one of the premier journals of family studies published by Blackwell on behalf of the National Council on Family Relations, has adopted our system using the *Track Changes* and *Insert Comments* features. *Counselling, Psychotherapy and Health* (*cphJournal*), the official research journal of the Australian Counselling Association, has embraced our philosophy and editorial procedures.

Working with International Authors

We have found similarities and some interesting differences between United States authors and those from around the world. The range in quality of papers and experience levels of authors are similar across both US and international authors. Another similarity in our authors is their tendency to exclusively focus on their discipline and context, presuming understandings that an interdisciplinary and international audience may not possess. The most apparent differences are that many international authors (a) have limited access to research libraries, (b) use diverse writing formats (e.g., citing and referencing, paper organization), (c) use English as their second language that results in translation issues, and (d) have a different response to our editorial process.

Access to Resources

Access to resources is often different for United States and international writers. We have found that international authors tend to use older sources as literary support, and they tend to rely on web-based resources such as open-access journals. Access to full text resources, either through hard copy journals/books or electronic scholarly resources, is often limited due to the prohibitive expense of subscriptions and acquisitions, since many academic resources are produced in the United States and Great Britain (Alasuutari, 2007).

Writing Formats

Some of the writing style differences are due, in part, to difficulty in accessing scholarly works. For example, we have learned that there are different orientations to citing and referencing. One international scholar came to the United States to do doctoral work after receiving his master's degree in Guatemala. He reported that in Guatemala paper was a valued resource and photocopying machines were expensive, scarce, or non-functional. Even when there was access to print materials or Internet-based resources, there was rarely money for printing and copying. As a result, the convention was to write about what he had learned, not from an examination of the original work, but rather from professional lectures, workshops, or discussions; often using the names of scholars or theorists in his written work, but not citing the actual works. Quoting authors to support a point was not done as frequently, since that required direct exposure to a book or acquisition of printed articles.

During his doctoral program in the United States, he learned that not fully citing scholarly ideas was regarded as plagiarism, a kind of intellectual theft. While he understood that robustly cited texts allow scholars to follow the intellectual threads of ideas, and to conduct more detailed inquiry, to him these activities seemed more like a privilege or a sign of excess. He likened it to enjoying a ride in a Cadillac, while in his native country, the Ford had to do. (A metaphor that we observed as distinctly American!)

Through further conversation with him, we learned that in his native Guatemalan experience, ideas, once in the public sphere, belonged to a community of scholars. Consequently, the necessity of crediting an originator of an idea (which is a foundational citation principle in the United States) was foreign to him, because within his experience, ideas were viewed as the product of collaborative, community efforts.

Translation

In translation between languages, there is always potential for misunderstandings in capturing and conveying the precision and nuance of meaning. Some authors do their own translations or do the original work in English, some use computer translation devices, and some hire a translator. Because of the language differences, we tend to do more finely detailed editing than we would do in editing manuscripts written in English as a first language.

Response to the Mentoring Process

From our perspective, international authors, as a group, have tended to express their appreciation to input and suggestions, and see the process as an opportunity to learn. US counterparts tend to be very focused on the need to publish quickly due to institutional expectations. Consequently, US authors are more likely to become frustrated with requests for more depth, rigor, detail, or other editorial input.

One way of making sense of these differences was suggested to us by a Japanese-American author, who commented on the difference in educational orientation between her US and Japanese colleagues. In her native educational system, students are expected to learn the knowledge that is given to them by their professors. Rote memorization is central to the learning process, and it is nearly unthinkable for learners to challenge their teachers, who are the absolute holders of truth. On the other hand, in her educational experiences in the United States, students

are encouraged to question authority, to question the information that is offered; in short, to be critical thinkers.

    While it might take some adjustment for those educated in systems that encourage passivity *and* those that encourage an adversarial stance towards new ideas, we have found that once authors adapt to the collaborative posture of the *TQR*, the results can be very rewarding.

Author Feedback to *TQR*

    Much author feedback is unsolicited. Without a doubt, the feedback from authors with whom we work is overwhelmingly (although not 100%) positive. We provide the following sample of comments to illustrate author experiences with our process.

> Thanks for your work, it makes my text better. I hope these clarifications are enough, because I'm not able to do more for the explication of the methodological plan of this qualitative research. I'm sorry for the delays; it's now the beginning of the academic year. (Senior academic researcher)

"Thanks for your assistance. It's been a pleasure working with you. All the best for the new year." (Lead author, experienced professional)

"I made all of the changes, making sure that I followed your suggestions. The only thing I changed on my own is the title of the manuscript." (New academic faculty member translating dissertation research into scholarly article)

"I have done whatever you have mentioned—page numbers as headers, keywords near abstract and removal of unwanted comments from text. Hope it is fine. Let me know of anything further. File is attached with this mail." (Experienced researcher eager to negotiate completion of the submission)

"Thank you so much. And thank you all (the two of you) for reviewing and giving such wonderful recommendations." (New academic faculty member translating dissertation research into scholarly article)

> With each round of editing more attention to detail was given. I could really see how my work was evolving into something I could feel proud of and that I knew would mean something substantial to the reader. The process reminded me of working on a piece of art. It gave me more confidence in writing – even while English is not my first language. I feel motivated to work with you again – going on the journey of learning to formulate my work in such a way that is accessible to others. I want to conclude in the spirit of my manuscript about the self-esteem of the psychotherapy patient. You definitely succeeded in boosting my confidence in the writing and producing of manuscripts, by not breaking me down, facilitating the editing process in such a way that I gained positive labels and not negative labels concerning myself as an author of manuscripts. I thank you for facilitating growth. Although I don't know you in person, it really feels as if I know you through our work together. (Researcher for whom the nature of the

relationship with the editor was extremely significant and, dare we say, therapeutic)

The comments above reveal a variety of authorial standpoints in relationship to the manuscript development process. The more experienced and senior professional researchers and/or faculty members more freely express their reactions to our editorial comments, sometimes disagreeing with us. The more junior researchers and new faculty members tend to reveal their excitement that their paper is moving towards publication, and are eager to make adjustments and modifications. These different authorial standpoints represent various locations in professional and academic careers.

Managing Time

Everyone involved in the publication process is interested in progressing with efficiency, promptness, and integrity. When a paper is submitted to *TQR,* we believe that the author has invested substantial intellectual effort, time, hope for publication, and a degree of apprehension borne of experiences with more traditional editorial processes. We also find that some papers require a much greater investment of time and energy than do others. Sometimes this can be frustrating for the editors whose professional responsibilities are already overscheduled. Our Manuscript Development Process, which involves a pre-review of a submission as we have outlined earlier, has been an editorial time-saver because authors receive feedback expeditiously, provides authors with a clearly defined road map for readying their work for the review and revision process, and avoids sending papers to reviewers prematurely. Consequently, we think the Manuscript Development Process reduces frustration around time for editors, reviewers, and authors.

Author-Editor Relationship

As editors, we are mindful of the importance of setting the stage for a collaborative relationship with our authors from the outset. To accomplish this, we carefully word our feedback to communicate support and encouragement, without sacrificing rigor by including what we appreciate and value about their work as well as what we think needs to be clarified or strengthened. Our relationships with authors are very important to us, and we are sensitive to feedback from authors that indicate they are becoming frustrated. Humor, quick responses, and encouragement are some of the ways that we respectfully persist with necessary editorial changes, while maintaining an appreciative stance with authors. As the authors' comments earlier suggest, sensitivity and collaboration are not simply philosophical ends in themselves. They have real consequences for authors; usually in the direction of increasing self-confidence as a researcher and a writer and increasing motivation to publish again.

Negotiating Differences and Impasses

Unfortunately there have been a few instances in which the author and editor have come to an impasse. Impasses are usually the result of an author thinking that the editor is missing the point of his/her paper and/or the editor thinking that the author is unwilling or unable to see what needs to be done to make the paper publishable. In these cases, the editors have enlisted each

other for consultation on the manuscript and asked for opinions on the impasse and potential remedies. The remedies typically have been offered by adding more points of view via *Insert Comments* and email conversations. At other times, a new editor has taken the lead on the paper in order to move the process forward. Another avenue for addressing impasse has been a conference call, during which the parties discussed the knotty issues with the paper in order to work out a mutually agreeable solution.

Despite all of these strategies used to handle impasses, in rare instances the outcome has been for the author and editor to discontinue the manuscript development process. Although such an outcome can be discouraging, we also recognize that not all papers submitted will be published. Following such an occurrence we hold a post-session consultation to reflect upon what worked and what did not work during the manuscript development process. The results of these reflective conversations often lead to the development of new solutions for working with future authors.

Supporting Each Other

The work of leading a global qualitative research journal like *TQR* requires that we extend the same spirit of encouragement and support to each other as we do to our authors. We, too, communicate from a distance and when there are questions about a technical editing issue, a delay in responding to an author, a difference with a reviewer's input, challenging authors, or any of a number of other possible questions and concerns, we use email communications. The "backline" emails among the editors are written with the same care and attention to the language of encouragement that we use in our "frontline" emails to authors. Remaining effective mentors, of course, requires ongoing conversation and reflection with ourselves individually as editors, with the other members of the editing team, and with the authors. The fruits of those ongoing reflective conversations show up in the openness to change that is characteristic of *TQR*.

Global Futures of *TQR* and Qualitative Researchers

In 1990, we launched *TQR* as a paper journal in order to give writers and researchers an outlet for publishing qualitative research. The world of research at that time was not so qualitative-friendly as it is today. It was difficult to find journals totally dedicated to qualitative approaches or ones open to publishing research utilizing such methods. We envisioned the journal as a safe haven for authors and readers to explore these new and "strange" approaches to discovery and exploration.

A couple of years later, we took *TQR* online and reached out to a worldwide audience. Since then we have seen our readership and paper submissions increase dramatically. We have seen a decided improvement in the position of qualitative research as an accepted family of approaches to research as well as the overall quality of qualitative research projects. From our perspective, *TQR* has contributed to this trend, particularly on a global scale. With the advent of online bibliographic resources such as Google Scholar (http://scholar.google.com) the articles in *TQR* are reaching an ever-wider audience.

The approach we have taken with our authors and their papers is also having an effect on why authors submit their papers to *TQR*. We think the following email captures the essence of how we have been able to communicate who we are and what we represent as an editorial home for qualitative researchers and their work.

Date: Wed, 31 Aug 2005
Dear Dr. Chenail:
Greetings.

I am familiar with your work and have used one of your articles about presenting qualitative research in the research course I teach at the American University of Beirut
and feel that I somehow know you enough to write this email.

I would like to publish a paper I have written in The Qualitative Report. The paper is called: Power, Politics and Ethics in Community Research Practice: Lessons from Research in Beirut. I have read the Editorial Statement and think it is an exciting new approach to sharing experiences and learning.

In brief, my paper discusses and reflects upon my research team's experience in a community in a low income suburb of Beirut, which is controlled by a powerful political party. The argument I try to make is that despite all the guidelines we know from various texts and previous research studies about access, entry, ethics and process in qualitative research, there remains a lot to be learnt when dealing with such gatekeepers.

I hope you have the time to respond to my query and maybe advise me as I am applying for promotion and I have this article to submit and I would like to try this journal.

I look forward to your kind response.
Sincerely
Jihad (Judy)
Jihad Makhoul, DrPH
Assistant Professor
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Professor Makhoul's paper was the first one we have ever received from Lebanon in our 15 year existence. For us, she and her work represent another step forward for *TQR* and present us with a new opportunity to mentor another author, and to grow as editors as we learn from her as well.

Conclusion

The continued globalization of the authors who submit their papers to *TQR* is a testament to the journal's strength. We have worked diligently and reflectively to build an inviting, scholarly community, which welcomes authors and reviewers from around the world to engage in a supportive and rigorous editorial system.

Our journalistic community's international diversity can also be seen as a possible shortcoming. We are an open access journal in many ways; we make our published articles available free of charge to all readers with Internet access, we share article copyrights with our authors, and we use a transparent manuscript development system. However, we do remain an

English language publication with a decidedly US outlook. This posture can make the pages of the journal seem less than open to many potential authors and readers around the world.

To address this concern the journal's editors have embarked on the next period of self-reflection to discern ways in which we can challenge our own cultural biases and English-language limitations, and create greater access for those global qualitative researchers who currently are unable to join our virtual community. Strategies currently under consideration include recruiting more non-Western qualitative researchers to join *TQR*'s editorial board; accepting papers written in languages other than English into our manuscript development system; creating bi- and multilingual manuscript development teams; expanding our current cooperative relationships with journals like *Biograf* (http://www.biograf.org/) and/or forging new, mutually beneficial associations with other non-English language journals; and launching a full blown multi-language version of *TQR*.

Whether we embark on one or all of these strategies, one thing will stay the same with the journal, we will persist in building an inclusive scholarly community where qualitative researchers can learn the pragmatics and aesthetics of writing and reviewing qualitative research manuscripts. If successful with this course of action, *The Qualitative Report* will remain that supportive resource helping the world of qualitative research improve in quality, one author and one paper at a time.

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