

PUBLICATION OPTIONS FOR QUALITATIVE RESEARCHERS

■ Mitch Allen

Note from the editor

"On May 21, 2010, I have met Mitch Allen, Publisher, Left Coast Press, Inc during the 6th Congress of Qualitative Inquiry at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. I found his presentation of the work shop, "Publication Options for Qualitative Researchers" would be beneficial for all the readers. This is part of that he had presented at the conference and he is willing to distribute"

Saratid Sakulkoo, Managing Editor

While the qualitative scholar once had difficulty finding outlets that would accept work from an interpretive paradigm or work using one of the many qualitative methods, this is no longer the case. Researchers in Southeast Asia and elsewhere have the opportunity to plug in to the broad international network of qualitative publications to have their work published and read by the global qualitative research community.

JOURNALS

Qualitative journals have existed for over a century but were primarily located within anthropology. In the 1960s and 1970s, this expanded outward first into sociology, then education, then into a variety of other academic disciplines and professional fields, so that there are now dozens of periodicals—refereed journals to magazines to newsletters-- that call themselves qualitative journals. And, even those that do not identify themselves as such often seek qualitative work, even in human resource development. There have long been directories of available journals for the scholar to scan, such as the Ulrich's Periodicals Directory (www.ulrichsweb.com) or the Cabell Directories in business and management (www.Cabells.com), both available by subscription in many university libraries. A list of almost 100 specialty qualitative journals is kept by The Qualitative Report (<http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/calls.html>) and available for browsing to the researcher interested in securing a publication home.

Even more recent has been the advent of on-line qualitative journals, which have the advantage of peer review, open access, and broad distribution across the web. Three on-line journals in particular should be of interest to subscribers of this journal: FQS (Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung), based in Germany, which publishes in various European languages; TQR (The Qualitative Report), out of Nova Southeast University in Florida; and the International Journal of Qualitative Methods, out of the International Institute for Qualitative Methodology at University of Alberta, Canada. These three can be accessed at <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs>, <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/>, and <http://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/IJQM/index> respectively.

For the scholar in Southeast Asia, while it is often difficult to contact the journal editor and determine the suitability of an article for publication within a specific journal, it is also true that the lack of publications out of this region in international journals makes a good qualitative article very attractive to many journal editors, who will often work with extensively the scholar to match the draft paper to the standards and orientation of the journal, more so than an article coming from a traditional source.

BOOK PUBLICATION

Book publishers can be divided by geography, market and subject areas. Those who are based in Bangkok

or Singapore generally will focus more on subjects of interest to the local audience in Southeast Asia than those based in New York or London. Publishers who specialize in creating introductory textbooks generally are not the same who publish research monographs or reference works. And those who have “lists” in health care but not in education are unlikely to agree to publish an education book for which they do not have marketing apparatus set up. For the scholar who wishes to have her book published, then, it requires some research of different publishers along those three dimensions before creating the list of likely publishers for her book.

In the qualitative research world, there are a small number of publishers who produce methodology books. There is a much larger group who will publish qualitative studies in substantive fields, such as human resource development, and may or may not include qualitative studies depending on the degree of fit to the rest of their publications program. Human resource specialists should be able to find those publishers who publish in this field by looking at their bookshelves, their bibliographies, the advertising flyers and emails they receive, and those presses attending conferences in this discipline.

Specialty publishers of qualitative research methods, and sometimes publishers of related studies, are few: Routledge, Sage, Guilford, and Left Coast. The first two have been active in publishing qualitative research since the 1980s. The latter two have begun publishing qualitative research only in the last decade, headed by editors who formerly were responsible for Sage’s methods publications. All four are actively seeking good methodology books for qualitative researchers, their enthusiasm for qualitative studies of a substantive nature varies from press to press. The scholarly fields in which they will accept substantive qualitative monographs varies from publisher to publisher as well.

LEFT COAST PRESS, INC.

All the above leads to an introduction to Left Coast Press, Inc., <http://www.LCoastPress.com>, which I founded in 2005. As a long term editor for Sage in the 1980s and 1990s, I launched Sage’s qualitative research list—both books and journals—then built a similar program for AltaMira Press, owned by Sage then by Rowman & Littlefield, between 1995-2005. Beginning my own company in 2005, there was no question that qualitative research would be central to our enterprise. We have moved forward on both the interpretive, cultural studies portion of the field and the more applied, practice-based component, through a rapidly growing set of books and journals. Authors include many familiar names in qualitative research—Norman Denzin, Harry Wolcott, Janice Morse, H.L. Goodall, Carolyn Ellis, and Laurel Richardson, among many others. Many younger scholars have had their initial works published with us as well. The corpus of books includes both methodological works and studies using qualitative methods. We have partnership relationships with the International Institute for Qualitative Methodology at University of Alberta and with the International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry at University of Illinois. For IIQM in Alberta, we publish a series of award-winning dissertations. For ICQI in Illinois, we publish the journal *International Review of Qualitative Research* and an annual plenary volume, which are official publications of the Congress.

In addition to these organizationally-sponsored publications, we publish a variety of other series on qualitative research. Carolyn Ellis and Arthur Bochner, two of the leaders in autoethnography and narrative ethnography, develop works in these areas in the *Writing Lives* series. Janice Morse edits two series for us, an elementary series of brief methodological guides called *Qualitative Essentials* and a more advanced series of methodological works, *Developing Qualitative Inquiry*. Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln extend their work from their various other projects in a series of monographs for Left Coast on the topic of Qualitative *Inquiry and Social Justice*. More information on these series and on our other qualitative publications can be found at www.LCoastPress.com

As a long-term publisher in this field, I have watched the growth of interest in qualitative research for over three decades. I have been able to track how it has expanded from its academic roots across a variety of academic and professional fields. I have also seen it developing from a largely North American phenomenon to the global interest in the topic that appears today. The development of a journal on human resource development in Thailand with an interest in qualitative work is yet another important



expansion of the audience for this set of techniques and studies. We welcome readers and writers of the journal to the global qualitative community. Please contact me with any questions about this community in general or Left Coast Press, Inc. in particular at mitch@LCoastPress.com.

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