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How calls for research can awaken self-reflexivity and latent interests in scholarly inquiry

James A. Bernauer

School of Nursing, Education and Human Studies, Robert Morris University, Moon Township, Pennsylvania, USA
bernauer@rmu.edu
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2480-5087

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Abstract

While we may think that we are well aware of our scholarly interests, calls for research can provide the spark that can transform latent and largely unconscious interests into written accounts. In this article. I describe how such calls can incite us to explore phenomena that, while there may have been no conscious interest to do so, serve to incite creative interest. Psychological perspectives are integrated with autoethnograhic experience with these calls in order to explore how they can spark creative responses. Suggestions for improving calls revolve around understanding to a greater extent the dynamic relationship among calls, creative inquiry, and subsequent transformation into written accounts.

Keywords: calls for research, constructivism, latent interests, subjectivity, tacit knowledge

Introduction

While academics and scholars appreciate monetary rewards and other extrinsic motivators as much as anybody else, we perceive ourselves primarily as intrinsically motivated and self-directed. However, I have found that calls for research can be timely and powerful motivators for awakening self-reflexivity in areas that I was not consciously interested in prior to a call. For example, when I (in addition to presumably lots of others) was emailed a call to explore objects, I honestly thought it was both odd and outside of my areas of interest. However, a few days later as I walked Rudy (our family Beagle) in our neighbourhood, I was struck by the wealth of what I then saw as data that lay all around me such as abandoned swing sets, benches, and garages. In fact, this current article was also spurred by a call because it awakened my awareness that I had been unconsciously ruminating about the impact that calls can have on both self-reflexivity and my latent interests. (I will return to this example

towards the end of the article.) Writing and publishing is of central concern to many of us and there are both internal and external incentives to publish. It is my intention in this current inquiry to explore how calls for research can bridge both types of motivation and to suggest ways to enhance their effectiveness.

The challenges of publishing and not perishing

It will come as no surprise to those of us who work as university faculty to be told that promotion and tenure depend heavily on scholarly productivity. Unfortunately, perceived pressure to publish can have unintended consequences including succumbing to invitations to publish in journals of questionable integrity and value such as those identified on Cabells's Blacklist.[1] Bok (2013) described this dual compelling requirement to improve continually as both teacher and scholar and, while, theoretically, this duality can inform both pedagogical practice and scholarly practice synergistically, theory and practice do not always mesh as well as we would like. In fact, in a yet unpublished study, I found that the challenge of trying to become a better teacher while at the same time trying to become a better scholar can cause both stress and feelings of unfairness especially among faculty who see themselves primarily as teachers but who are evaluated primarily in relation to scholarly publications.

Wolcott (2009) has pointed out that faculty recognise this pressure to publish especially "recent PhDs who accept university teaching assignments in professional schools or applied fields only to find—as they suspected all along—that advancement depends on sustained 'scholarly production' instead" (p. 3). Not only is there a need for faculty to identify appropriate research topics based on their interests and qualifications but there is also the challenge of finding and matching these topics with appropriate journals. Even though the digital revolution has now made searching for appropriate literature much easier than in years past, a considerable amount of time and effort must still be expended not only in transforming interests, passions, and ideas into articles but also in finding those journals whose criteria match the product of this complex transformation. Time and experience can serve to make this process easier but, based on my own experience and those with whom I work, it is a continual challenge that has impacts on both well-being and growth.

I have often thought about and actively try to reconcile and integrate my own teaching with my scholarly production and have found support in the work of Palmer and Zajonc (2010) that, while not directed exactly at this particular concern, struck me as especially cogent.

> The institution of higher education is notoriously slow to change. But many individuals within the institution have kept the vision of integrative practice alive in their hearts—using *heart* in its original sense, not just as the seat of the emotions but as that core place in the human self where all our capacities converge: intellect, senses, emotions, imagination, intuition, will, spirit, and soul. (p. 20)

[1] see https://www2.cabells.com/

This "vision of integrative practice" seems to speak of an environment in which each of our unique proclivities and potentialities for teaching, learning, and scholarly inquiry are both respected and nurtured. It is in that spirit that I now turn my attention to how calls for research can help faculty to publish while supporting integrative practice.

The role of calls in igniting latent interests

In the introduction, I suggested that while academics value pay, tenure, and other types of rewards, they are more intrinsically motivated by their own curiosity and desire to inquire and learn. In the unpublished study mentioned above, for which I recently interviewed faculty at my own institution, I found that they (especially new faculty members) expressed varying degrees of agreement and disagreement that teaching and scholarly inquiry are complementary. In fact, some faculty members are intimidated by the challenges they face trying to publish while simultaneously honing their teaching craft. In line with both Bok (2013) and Wolcott (2009) as well as comments from my colleagues, my awareness of the high value placed on publishing increased as I reflected on my own past anxieties when seeking to be released from probationary status. Based on the central roles of subjectivity, self-reflection, tacit knowledge, and constructivism in scholarly inquiry and the challenges faced by faculty, I have found that calls for research can play an important role in creating a spark that can ignite the chain of connections among these elements and thereby tap into latent interests.

When we talk about something that is latent, we usually refer to those things that are beneath the surface whether they are emotional, physical, or psychological. In the case of latent research interests, if instead of envisioning ourselves and our lives in terms of verbs rather than nouns— living rather than life; growing rather than achievement; learning rather than knowledge—we recognise that we exist in a dynamic rather than a static milieu. While motion of any kind can sometimes be disquieting, it is the only way that we can get from here to there whether we are talking about physical or non-physical space as well as from our imaginings to published work. However, in order to set in motion the chain reaction that enables us to move on and to grow, especially in relation to our latent interests, we may need an external ignition device. This outside source can be the proverbial kick in the pants or more gentle words of encouragement that most of us have probably experienced at one time or another in our lives.

I have been the recipient of calls for research via email during the past few years primarily because of my membership in different organisations and, in some cases, it appears that I am sent calls because of previous publishing experience. While I found some of these calls relevant to my interests, most were not. Calls can be located using a Google search and doing so might be a good proactive practice to follow; a recent Google search revealed calls in education and the social sciences as well as other areas. I also found, however, that an online literature search offered little that was related to calls for research per se. It should also be noted that while calls can be viewed as invitations to publish, I have found no shortcuts

regarding the peer review process. As Egon Guba noted early on in the development of qualitative inquiry related to the trustworthiness of findings,

> it is important to know about the inquirer's training and experience in reaching a judgment about the trustworthiness of his or her data. This consideration has been omitted from the present paper since it has been assumed that the refereeing of journal papers will continue to be managed by a 'blind' method . . ." (1981, pp. 75–76).

Thus, because of blind peer review, there is no guarantee that responding to calls for research will result in article acceptance. However, compared to traditional approaches, calls can offer distinct opportunities to authors. In my case, perhaps the best way to illustrate the opportunities offered by calls for research is to describe more fully one of my own recent experiences (introduced at the beginning of this article) that engendered in me a new type of methodological inventiveness.

I was made aware of a call in 2018 for the *Educational Research for Social Change Journal* whose theme was "Not just an Object: Making Meaning of and from Everyday Objects in Educational Research for Social Change." My initial reaction to this call could be summarised via the private speech I had with myself and so I describe this encounter here.

> Self 1: Are these people crazy? They want potential authors to look at *objects* and somehow write something interesting and even useful by staring at them? Has the world gone mad?
>
> Self 2: I hear you.
>
> Self 1: I know that anthropologists and quasi-ethnographers like myself may use artifacts to inform a small part of their story based on interviews and observation and that makes perfect sense . . . but 'objects' . . . It just seems so weird!
>
> Self 2: Right.

This brief conversation in which Self 2 acted as nothing more than a yes man took place on the day that I received the call via email. That evening this call kept rolling around in my head. The next morning, as I began to walk Rudy, I felt a new kind of awareness of my surroundings that started to creep around within me, and which ignited round two of my private conversation.

> Self 1: The swings in that yard . . . don't they look as though they have not been used in a very long time? In fact, I have never seen any kids in this yard. Hmm . . . I wonder if the parents are just too lazy to take these swings down or if they keep them there as a memory of those sweet days of childhood that will never return.
>
> Self 2: Wait, didn't you do the same thing when your son got older? Didn't you look out of the window at those broken-down swings and think about that time many years

> ago when you and your wife worked for two days to put those swings up? Doesn't that image seem to have resurfaced right now?
>
> Self 1: Umm . . . well . . . yes, I guess I did . . . and yes, I guess it has.

Self 2 was now taking a more active and aggressive role in this second conversation that was more akin to the notion of Bakhtinian opposition (Bakhtin, 1981) compared to the first conversation and, frankly, I was a bit annoyed. However, I was indeed spurred to begin looking more reflectively at objects as Rudy joyfully walked ahead exploring these objects with me following along behind him. As Rudy carefully examined (principally through smell) the many objects that we came across such as benches, Christmas decorations, and even tombstones, I too began to take a deeper interest in these objects (I hope in a more esoteric sense) and both questions and thoughts began to arise in me: "I wonder what kind of conversations have taken place on this old bench over the past 50 years?" and "I'll bet that old garage holds clues about how life has changed from the 1940s till now."

As Turkle (2007) has reflected,

> We find it familiar to consider objects as useful or aesthetic, as necessities or vain indulgences. We are on less familiar ground when we consider objects as companions to our emotional lives or as provocations to thought. The notion of evocative objects brings together these two less familiar ideas, underscoring the inseparability of thought and feeling in our relationship to things. We think with the objects we love; we love the objects we think with. (p. 5)

It was these sentiments that had such a powerful effect on me and I now perceive that the call I received by email was the real igniter of my new awareness of the potential of objects to help illuminate my understanding of both life and the changes that occur as a function of time and experience. The surprising eruption of ideas resultant on this call led ultimately to the publication of an article based on my new appreciation and engagement with objects that I previously saw as simply a part of the landscape but that had now come to represent much more (Bernauer, 2019). This experience also led me to appreciate the admonition of Saldana and Omasta (2018) that data analysis should be emphasised "throughout the research endeavor rather than toward the latter stages of it" (p. xxiii). As I walked around the neighbourhood with Rudy during the fall and winter months, I now recognise that I began to analyse and interpret data that surrounded me almost concurrently with my observation of objects through an almost magical combination of self-reflection and tacit understanding. Later and more formal analysis and interpretation of data incorporated and built upon these initial analyses. I also now recognise fully that without this call for research, I would never have connected my life experiences and methodological proclivities to objects and the new insights that objects afforded me.

Why subjectivity and self-reflexivity are important in scholarly inquiry

My experience with the call for research just described furthered my understanding of why subjectivity and self-reflexivity are integral components in scholarly inquiry whether under the naturalistic/qualitative or rationalistic/quantitative paradigm. The criterion of objectivity has long been revered in research in education and the social sciences. Lagemann (2000) has described why and how objectivity and other aspects of scientific inquiry have come to have such a strong influence on education research and why generations of students have been trained to view any signs of subjectivity as red flags that may compromise the rigor of a study (Jansen & Peshkin, 1992). Even though we are into the third decade of the 21st century and believe that the "paradigm wars" of the title of Gage's (1989) article have ended, I work regularly with doctoral students who think that they must avoid any hint of subjectivity in their dissertations less their committee (or at least a member of it) will see this as an indicator of inferior quality. However, some argue that the presence of subjectivity in research is not only quite apparent but needs to be integrated into the very fabric of our writing. As Peshkin (1988) has so aptly put it,

> It is no more useful for researchers to acknowledge simply that subjectivity is an invariable component of their research than it is for them to assert that their ideal is objectivity . . . researchers should systematically seek out their subjectivity, not retrospectively when the data have been collected and the analysis is complete, but while their research is in progress. (p. 17)

I do not want to imply that objectivity should be ignored or demeaned. Rather, as Phillips (1990) concluded, after first critically evaluating the work of those who promote subjectivity, "it turns out, then, that what is crucial for the objectivity of any inquiry—whether it is qualitative or quantitative—is the critical spirit in which it has been carried out" (p. 35). It is also important to note that Phillips does not equate "critical spirit" with mean spirited although it is sometimes challenging to discern this distinction among some reviewers who have been entrusted with evaluating academic work in a forthright yet caring way but instead seem to view themselves primarily as bastions of academic rigour. (I describe an example of an enlightened process of article review practiced by *The Qualitative Report* at the end of this article.)

Intimately connected to subjectivity is the concept of self-reflexivity that not only accepts subjectivity as an integral part of research but embraces it as part and parcel of how we as human beings actually go about learning and living. Schwandt (2001) defined reflexivity as "the process of critical self-reflection on one's biases, theoretical predispositions, and preferences" (p. 224). And, because it is a "process" there is a necessary time and experience dimension required in order to learn how to embrace our reflexivity. For example, Manfra (2019) has described teachers going about seeking to change their instructional practices using action research, so that "as they engage in systematic reflection, teacher action researchers improve their PCK [Pedagogical Content Knowledge] as they reflect on practice,

modifying and 'fine tuning' the knowledge base" (p. 166). These reflections require that we step back and allow ourselves the luxury of finding our own ways of understanding and making sense of things. Martin (2010) described the development of self-reflexivity delightfully through the notion of "learning by wandering" in the title of her article as part of an old Irish tradition that illustrates why we need to embrace this kind of practice while not forsaking a simultaneous appreciation of objectivity in a digital world.

While subjectivity and self-reflexivity are important for changing practice, it is just as important for scholarly inquiry. After I had traversed careers from academe to corporate and back to academe and from quantitative to qualitative researcher, I felt the need to reflect on this journey which resulted in an article in which I explored these transitions and, as indicated in the title, my new "methodological identity" (Bernauer, 2012). This article seemed to flow out of my very being although it is only now as I am writing and reflecting on these prior reflections that I realise that this article was a watershed of sorts for me. Having been trained as a quantitative researcher, the use of reflection and of the pronoun "I" rather than "the researcher" was indeed a turning point in my methodological awareness. I was not fully aware at the time of this epiphany of the three competing assumptions underlying the so-called rationalistic and naturalistic mindsets as described by Guba (1981) that can be thought of as preceding, concurrent with, and following the implementation of an inquiry. These assumptions are respectively: the nature of reality where the rationalistic paradigm sees reality as amenable to partitioning into variables whereas the naturalistic paradigm sees reality as more of an integrated whole; the nature of the relationship between inquirer and participant where the rationalistic paradigm requires distance in order to not contaminate data whereas the naturalistic paradigm accepts and takes account of inquirer-participant interaction; and the nature of what is called truth where the rationalistic paradigm focuses on nomothetic knowledge and generalisability while the naturalistic paradigm focuses on idiographic knowledge and the context surrounding participants and settings and where context-free generalisability is seen as neither possible nor desirable. (see Guba, 1981). In fact, it would not be too far a stretch to conceive of generalisability as more of an illusion than a reality (see Lincoln and Guba, 1985). After reflecting on these assumptions, it became clear to me that the emergence and appreciation of my newly-acquired sensibilities offered new and exciting ways to inquire about phenomena that were of deep interest to me, including learning, teaching, and discovery that simply eluded me prior to writing this article. If writing is another way of thinking, it also enables us to bridge the gap between thinking and feeling which can be quite an experience!

As noted above, Phillips (1990), who made a strong case for recognising the crucial role of objectivity in research and criticising the position of those who champion subjectivity, came to define objectivity in terms of a "critical spirit" (p. 35) that applies equally to *both* qualitative and quantitative inquiry. While this conclusion offers a welcome rapprochement, I think it is still challenging for those who embrace concepts and experiences including intuition, insights, and gut feelings as legitimate types of knowledge as Polanyi (1958) has reminded us, to be able to define, think about, and communicate these experiences with a critical spirit. Rather, it seems (at least to me) that each of us comes to simply appreciate

those feelings and insights that we experience with subjective wonderment. Perhaps trying to objectify the subjective is like asking children to critically consider the existence of Santa Claus which just ends up ruining both the joy of childhood while it is being lived as well as those memories of childhood that we cherish in later years and that often translate into actions that serve to make our existence and those around us more joyous. Of course, joy is also one of those feelings and emotions that is difficult to explore with a critical spirit; it must simply be experienced to be appreciated and understood. I certainly found that to be the case as I explored objects in the company of Rudy the Beagle.

Tacit knowledge and constructivism

Another reason why subjectivity and self-reflection are integral to academic writing in education and the social sciences is that an honest appraisal of how we live and learn will readily reveal our use of both tacit and propositional knowledge (Guba, 1981; Polanyi, 1958). While propositional knowledge can be communicated in a linear manner through speech or writing, tacit knowledge is more like an inward sense that can manifest itself in feelings, hunches, gut feelings, and premonitions. When we consider that our emotional, moral, physical, and social selves are often guided by tacit knowledge that reflects our upbringing, life experiences, beliefs, and values in concert with cognitive capacities, we are again confronted by the fact that our lives are neither orderly nor linear; in fact, they are often quite the opposite. If that is the case, should not education and research into education also reflect this reality? Unfortunately, what we think of as scientifically based research is still touted as the gold standard in education research (see No Child Left Behind Act (2002) in which the very term scientifically based research appears 110 times as Woolfolk (2014) has pointed out. As I found while exploring and reflecting on the objects in my neighbourhood, I began to recognise that opportunities for learning surround us and that schooling should try to capitalise on these opportunities.

Just as we need to fuse objectivity and subjectivity when we are conducting scholarly inquiry, there is a similar need to fuse the concepts of propositional and tacit knowledge. One theory that seeks to do just that is constructivist learning theory that is typically described as having an individual and sociocultural strand. While many have contributed to the development of the individual strand of constructivist theory (including Jerome Bruner, John Dewey, Jean Piaget, and Lev Vygotsky) this strand essentially conveys the message that until we come to construct our own versions of facts, ideas, and concepts we cannot fully understand them or move beyond existing knowledge in order to contribute our own unique interpretations and perspectives and thus achieve the oft-cited goal of adding to the knowledge base. Piaget and Vygotsky are perhaps the two pillars of this theory and while Piaget (1954, 1985) examined how individuals go about making sense of their environments through the lens of developmental stage theory, Vygotsky (1978, 1986) focused more on a sociocultural perspective. For him, “every function in a child’s cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level and later on the individual level; first between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological)” (1978, p. 57).

In addition to this individual or personal strand of constructivism, there is also a sociocultural strand that promotes a similar transformation of existing knowledge into new versions through collaboration and other types of interactions that build on the work of Vygotsky (Gergen, 1997; Phillips, 1997). This ability to go beyond existing knowledge under both the individual and social strands of constructivism is intimately connected to subjectivity, reflexivity, and propositional and tacit knowledge although a satisfactory explanatory model of these connections has yet to be developed among and between the cognitive, non-cognitive, and emotional dimensions of human learning. The essential point, however, is that when we think about the process of scholarly inquiry beginning with conceptualising and then moving on to design, implementation, and thence to the final step of writing up findings and implications, it seems foolhardy to view this process without genuine wonder and the realisation that we probably cannot fully understand how we got from there to here. It is no wonder then that replication criteria like generalisability may also be more illusion than reality. The call for research described earlier and my subsequent investigation of objects based on this call resulted in my fusing the concepts of constructivist learning theory and tacit knowledge and thus helped me to grow in the understanding of how we learn and how we might be able to reconceptualise schooling.

Making calls more effective

If we accept the premise that research is not complete until it is written up and disseminated, it follows that there needs to be a publication outlet that determines upon examination that the written report is of potential interest to its readers. While peer-review and editorial oversight would seem to satisfy this criterion, what is missing is how the actual production of scholarly work and its publication can be facilitated. In other words, what might we do to help both stimulate scholarly inquiry and support its dissemination? My argument in this article has been that calls for research can fulfil this role. However, if this is indeed the case, what can we do to make these calls more effective?

My purpose here is to inquire to what degree calls for research can serve as powerful ways of tapping into the research interests of authors, whether these interests are amenable to qualitative or qualitative inquiry, and whether they awaken latent interests as with the “Not Just an Object” call. I would be remiss if I did not reiterate that I had an awakening that resulted from the call and that this led to writing the article that you are now reading and whose theme is the exploration of possibilities through methodological inventiveness in self-reflexive educational research. This call could not have come at a better time since I suppose I had become sensitised to the potential of calls after my experience with “Not Just an Object.” When Eisner (1998) wrote about the “enlightened eye,” he introduced this metaphoric title by saying that it “is intimately related to my life as a painter, and my life as a painter is intimately related to the ways in which I think about inquiry” (p. 1). While I have never been a painter, I, too, have thought imaginatively that painting can convey what we might think of as data in a way that graciously invites both analysis and interpretation and that cannot easily be conveyed using language forms except perhaps by great actors, musicians, novelists, playwrights, or, in the case of quantitative data, mathematicians and

physicists who create elegant equations to represent complex variables. However, what is common to all these crafts can be likened to a fallow field that has already been tilled and fertilised through self-reflection and thus is quite susceptible to the slightest effort that might result in a creative endeavour. Such was the case with this current call because having been just recently sensitised to the power of calls, it just seemed to me that it was important to share this awakening with others.

In addition to providing a necessary spark that can ignite latent interests, calls also help authors to circumvent the time-consuming and often disappointing experience of submitting an article to a journal whose website may seem to invite topics of various kinds, but that might not be accepting some during a particular period of time. Having an article rejected because of its being out of phase with a journal only compounds the emotional turmoil of being told in a kind way or sometimes in a not-so-kind way that your work is inadequate (Brookfield, 2011). Just as important, calls provide timeframes for both the submission of abstracts and proposals as well as the completed article that can help authors allocate their time and efforts more productively and, therefore, further facilitate the creative effort.

Getting the message out to those scholars and researchers who are most likely to be interested in a particular call for research would seem to be the first order of business. This appears to be a marketing issue since prospective customers are identified and matched based on demographics and past proclivities, which is, frankly, becoming a bit scary in today's competitive and technologically savvy environment. However, as described earlier, if this fine-grained matching process had been used for the call regarding "objects," I doubt that I would ever have been identified as a potential contributor since I had never previously exhibited any interest in this topic. The reason that I was not filtered out of the call was that a third party (in this case the Qualitative Special Interest Group (SIG) of the American Educational Research Association served as an additional disseminator and, because I am a member of this SIG, I was a recipient of the call. Looking back, I am so gratified that I did receive this call because it was only after a creative urge had been tickled that juices began to flow and my latent interest in objects began to emerge.

In addition to professional organisations and SIGs, another potentially powerful way to disseminate calls is through our highly trained librarians at university libraries. These professionals are in a unique position to evaluate calls and the journals and publishers who initiate them and to disseminate these calls to faculty based on their academic areas as well as the personal knowledge of faculty members whom they have come to know as members of the university milieu. Because university librarians are aware of the breadth of scholarly inquiry and knowledgeable about the technological innovations that connect scholarly inquiry to publishing outlets, they are in a unique position to serve as powerful conduits for connecting scholarly interests to potential publishing opportunities. Because of this role, university librarians can also help alleviate the anxieties caused by what has become known as the publish or perish syndrome as well as promote the academic reputation of their institutions making this a win-win situation. As part of the local academic community, librarians are more aware of both departmental and individual interests and strengths and one

can envision many ways in which the university library could serve as a clearinghouse for matching and disseminating calls to both departments and even specific individuals including newer faculty who would be most grateful to hear about calls that may just be the spark they have been waiting for.

While organisations such as AERA and the extension of the role of university librarians may help to disseminate calls to a wider audience, these changes do not address tapping into the potential of individuals to create their own call for research whether for a book, book chapter, or themed journal. While some journals and publishers including *The Qualitative Report* and the publishing house SAGE offer these kind of opportunities, it might be helpful if, as part of their website, publishing outlets prominently display a suggestion box feature that invites scholars to present their ideas for calls perhaps through an abstract, proposal, or some other type of standardised format so that suggestions can be evaluated in a timely manner. While conference presentations are usually well-publicised to members of a particular organisation and usually provide wide latitude in relation to an announced theme, here, too, suggestion boxes that give members an opportunity to offer ideas related to conference themes may promote greater member engagement that results, in turn, in a greater number of creative presentations.

Because technology is an area in which I claim little expertise, I hesitate to venture into this realm. However, I do think that some type of electronic call clearinghouse might enable us to expand our reach to potential contributors across academic disciplines. In fact, clearinghouses might also promote cross-disciplinary collaborations that may result in viewing phenomena from different angles that may then facilitate not only new perspectives and solutions for existing problems but also identify new problems and areas of research that may not have been considered previously. Clearinghouses could incorporate both responding to calls as well as suggesting new calls and while a Google search can help locate calls, it simply does not offer the kind of support I envision here. Again, while the development of such clearinghouses is beyond my expertise, I am sure that given the opportunity, there are literally thousands of individuals who could design and implement quite marvellous and creative technological sites with features not yet thought about in order to spur scholarly creativity.

Although not restricted to calls per se, another feature of an exemplary call system would be the ways in which proposals, abstracts, and suggestions are evaluated. While peer review in conjunction with editorial overview is probably the best way available for making decisions regarding acceptance, revision, and rejection, it would seem wise to have to undergo some kind of certification process as a prelude to becoming a reviewer. What might be envisioned is something like certification training to meet the requirements of Institutional Review Board compliance. At many universities, including my own, students and faculty must pass assigned online modules from a recognised body such as the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative before they can begin to collect data. Why not develop some type of online certification process for reviewers in which modules are developed in line with the specific assumptions and practices of quantitative and qualitative inquiry? If reviewers and researchers share a common base of agreed-upon criteria of what constitutes quality research

including research significance, design, analysis, validity, and ethics, it could facilitate scholarship in a more transparent manner. It is critically important to note that I am not suggesting a system whose goal is to homogenise reviewers to the detriment of the unique perspectives that each reviewer has to offer but, rather, I am suggesting a common foundation upon which to build this uniqueness.

Authors might also benefit if journals considered implementing a practice that is used by *The Qualitative Report*. If a submitted article is judged by reviewers as having potential significance but needing additional work, it is placed in a Manuscript Development Program and authors receive a letter something like the following.

> Congratulations, your paper, [Title of Article] has been accepted into the Qualitative Report's Manuscript Development Program (MDP). Your acceptance into this program means that the editorial team members assigned to your paper have dedicated themselves to work with you to revise your manuscript until it is ready for publication in *The Qualitative Report* (TQR). As a result, when you complete the MDP successfully, your completed paper will be published in *TQR*.

This kind of welcoming approach serves to encourage and inspire authors to work collaboratively with the editorial team to identify those areas of the manuscript where improvements can be made in light of reviewer comments. By incorporating a similar protocol into calls for research in addition to other ideas, some of which have been suggested here, it may further serve to expand and enrich reflexivity, latent interests, as well as methodological inventiveness in scholarly inquiry.

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