The authors focus on the use of the qualitative technique of capturing and classifying critical events to provide context by discussing the academic voice to issues in higher education quality.

Critical Event Narrative Inquiry in Higher Education Quality

Patricie Mertova and Len Webster

Abstract

The paper is another one of a series of works describing a research study concerning the academic voice in higher education quality in England and the Czech Republic (Mertova & Webster, 2009). To investigate the academic voice in higher education quality, a critical event narrative inquiry method was employed, and that is the focus of this paper. A significant feature of the method was eliciting critical events related to higher education quality in professional practice of academics and higher education leaders. The research uncovered a number of similar issues and concerns in higher education quality voiced by academics and higher education leaders in both countries. Some culture-specific issues related predominantly to Czech higher education quality were also uncovered.

Quality in Higher Education

Quality has moved from a marginal to a central issue in higher education as a result of heightened political control combined with stricter control over financing the sector, the growth in the number of students in higher education, and changing stakeholder and student expectations. The migration of quality to the the center stage of higher education during the past 20 or so years, however, has brought with it particular perspectives regarding its approach and use. For example, quality assurance processes have become control-focused and management-driven (Lomas, 2000; Jones, 2003). In the literature, works by Barnett (1992), Harvey & Green (1993), Morley (1997), Lomas (2000), and Harvey (2004, 2005) make the case that monitoring in higher education disguises the emphasis on accountability rather than on enhancement even when scholars such as Birnbaum (2000) and Green (1994) point out the unsuitability of such approaches in higher education (Mertova & Webster, 2009). Missing is a generic understanding of the human-centered elements or "soft factors" that contextualize quality processes along with the academician's perspective on how to make universities even better, a voice that has had little impact in the development of these processes (Kogan, Bauer, Bleiklie, & Henkell, 2000; Blythman, 2001; Newton, 2002; Lomas, 2007; Cartwright, 2007). Studies by McInnis, Powles, & Anwyl (1995), Newton (2002), Anderson (2006), Lomas (2007), and Cartwright (2007) argue for the importance of the academic voice to be heard and for more research in this area.

This paper focuses on quality in two higher education systems: English and Czech. The choice of these particular two systems was guided partly by the lead researcher's familiarity with the systems but also by the fact that these systems are historically and culturally very different, and to see whether these differences would impact the approaches and main trends in quality. The emphasis of the discussion is on the qualitatively-based methodology used to capture the academic voice.

Education Division
ASQ The Global Voice of Quality™

asq.org/edu

Background

The data gathered through the methodology of critical events was based on research performed to capture the academic voice in higher education quality in the UK and Czech Republic. The UK system was selected because it was one of the first countries in the world to create a formal quality assurance system for its higher education system (Westerheijden et al, 1994). The study eventually only focused on the English system and not the whole of the UK higher education system that also includes the Welsh, Scottish, and Northern Irish higher education systems (Tapper, 2007). The Czech higher education as a system was selected because of its cultural and historical differences from the English system. First, the Czech higher education system was significantly influenced by the so-called Humboldtian tradition from the German system that places teaching and research as part of educational achievement (Rozsnyai, 2003; File & Goedegebuure, 2003; File, Hauptman, Herlitschka, Kristensen, & Weko, 2006). The second reason for selecting the Czech system was the impact that Communist rule had on its development (File & Goedegebuure, 2003).

Methodology

The research concerning the academic voice in higher education quality was conducted using a critical event narrative inquiry. Critical events in professional practice of academics and higher education leaders were elicited through semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with the individuals (cf. Mertova & Webster, 2009).

Narrative inquiry

Over the last two decades, narrative has gained momentum as both a phenomenon and a method across a wide range of disciplines from philosophy, education, theology, and psychology to economics, medicine, biology, and environmental science. Narrative inquiry is set in human stories of experience. It provides researchers with a rich framework through which they can investigate the ways in which humans experience the world depicted through their stories (Carr, 1986; Dyson & Genishi, 1994; Bruner, 1986).

Narrative inquiry has depicted human experience and endeavors from ancient times. It records human experience through the construction and reconstruction of personal stories. It is well-suited to address issues of complexity and cultural and human centeredness because of its capacity to record and retell events that have been of most influence on us. Such issues play a significant role in many areas of human activity, including higher education (Webster & Mertova, 2007).

People make sense of their lives according to the narratives available to them (Dyson & Genishi, 1994; Webster & Mertova, 2007). Stories are constantly restructured in the light of new events because stories do not exist in a vacuum but are shaped by lifelong personal and community narratives. Narrative allows researchers to present experience holistically in all its complexity and richness. It illustrates the temporal notion of experience, recognizing that one's understanding of people and events changes (Herman, Manfred, & Ryan, 2005; Conle, 2000; Riessman, 1993).

Connelly and Clandinin (1987, 1988, 1990, 2000) have been prominent in adapting narrative inquiry for educational purposes. Their work offers an introduction of the field to teachers and teacher educators. They have also pioneered narrative inquiry as a research method, and it appears that they have coined the term narrative inquiry.

Even though the original methodological resources for narrative inquiry were provided by literary theory, Webster and Mertova (2007) found no single narrative inquiry method that predominates, but rather a number of methods dispersed into individual disciplines. Webster and Mertova suggested that the most likely reason was the fact that the individual narrative inquiry approaches have been impacted by other theoretical underpinnings of the various disciplines. They outlined a critical event narrative inquiry approach, which arguably would be applicable in a wide range of disciplinal settings. The research described in this paper further refined the methodology by applying to an investigation of academic voice in the area of higher education quality.

Critical events

The essence of the critical event narrative inquiry method is in the identification of critical events in professional practice of individuals (Webster & Mertova, 2007; Mertova, 2008); in the case of this research it was the academics. Consistent with Mertova and Webster (2009), a critical event is defined as an unplanned and unstructured event that significantly impacts the professional practice of an academic (Webster & Mertova, 2007; Mertova, 2008). The event can be internal or external in nature and can be either as a result of professional practice or from other personal experiences. The impact of this type of event on an academic's perception of their professional practice might have entirely or considerably changed his or her perception of what he or she does or even the lens through which the world is seen. Consequently, a critical event can only be identified retrospectively (Webster & Mertova, 2007; Mertova, 2008) and has a unique, illustrative, and confirmatory nature regarding the identified phenomenon. As an example of how

data of this type can be collected, for this study, critical events in the professional practice of academics were elicited through semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with the individuals.

Critical events in professional practice of academics were further distinguished as critical, like, and other events in accordance to the degree of significance and uniqueness characteristics. Stories that were collected through narrative inquiry interviews were then analysed accordingly. A more detailed description of the criteria is described in detail in Mertova (2008).

A critical event was an event which was unique, illustrative, and confirmatory in nature in relation to the studied phenomenon. An event which had a similar level of significance as a critical event, however, not as unique as the critical event and which further illustrated, confirmed, and/or repeated the experience of the critical event was labelled a like event.

A review of the like events was useful in confirming and/or broadening issues arising from the critical event (Webster, 1998). Further, confirmatory events that may or may not have taken place at the same time as the critical and/or like events were referred to as other events. Typically, such events related to other background information which may have revealed the same or related issues. These other events were interwoven in the analysis of the critical and like events (Webster, 1998). Critical, like, and other events may have occurred within the narrative of a single interview, but more often would have occurred across a number of different interviews.

Distinguishing critical, like, and other events provides a way of approaching the complexity and extent of data that might be collected using a qualitative research method. A common question in qualitative research is how to manage the amount of collected data. Identifying and distinguishing individual events provides one way to assist the researcher in this (Webster & Mertova, 2007).

Design

Per Mertova and Webster (2009), six pilot interviews were conducted initially in Australia (four interviews) and England (two interviews) to refine the methodology and interview questions. Three of the interview participants were female and three male. Four of the pilot interviews were conducted at three large research-intensive universities in Australia, and two at one "old" university college (so-called old universities gained university title before 1992) in England. The pilot interview participants represented the disciplines of education, political science, and law. Five of the interview participants were senior leaders with at least 15 years of experience in higher education while one interview participant was less senior with six years of experience.

The pilot stage of interviews was followed by the main set of interviews. The total number of main interviews conducted was 30: 11 in the Czech Republic and 19 in England. Seven of the main interview participants were female and 23 were male.

Interviews in England were conducted at two old university colleges and four "new" universities (new universities gained university title after 1992). In the Czech Republic, interviews occurred at two large research-intensive universities. The decision was made to concentrate on interviewing academics from the social sciences and humanities: education, higher education, law, history, English, English literature, Russian, Slavonic studies, Australian studies, political science, sociology, medicine, psychology, media studies, geography, quality, and management. Twenty-two interview participants were senior academics and/or higher education leaders with at least seven years of experience to more than 20 years; the remaining eight interview participants had fewer years of experience in higher education. Interviews, on average, took between 30 and 45 minutes. They were recorded, transcribed, and line-numbered to allow tracking of particular issues back to the original transcripts), and analysed to extract the critical events in the interviewees' professional practice. Interviewees were given pseudonyms to protect their identities.

Face-to-face interviews were augmented by extensive literature and documentation reviews concerning the nature of English and Czech higher education systems and quality practices in English and Czech higher education to provide additional context to the stories interviewees were providing. Short surveys were also conducted to gather biographical information and to identify the academic/professional backgrounds of the interviewees.

Findings

Critical Events in Professional Practice of Academics and Higher Education Leaders

Looking for critical events in professional practice of academics and higher education leaders in Czech and English higher education quality identified at least one type of critical event in each interview with Czech and English academics and higher education leaders. The individual events were distinguished according to their level of criticality, using criteria of criticality for critical, like, and other events.

This paper presents examples of each of the event type to give an idea of the kind of events related to higher education quality that the study identified. Due to the limited space, only examples of the different event types described in the Czech context are provided. Examples from the English academic and higher education leaders are reported in Mertova and Webster (2009).

Example 1—"Critical" Event: Tomas

Tomas was an associate dean for education in a faculty of a research-intensive university in the Czech Republic and an associate professor in political science with more than 10 years of experience in higher education. Tomas' story referred to the changes in higher education instigated by the political change-over related to the so-called Velvet Revolution in November 1989 in what was then Czechoslovakia. The event had a significant impact on Tomas, Czech higher education, and the entire Czech society. This event brought considerable interest and motivation into Tomas' academic life (then a student), providing an example of the kind of qualitative changes happening in Czech higher education after 1989. Tomas was a student of Russian and history, and he related:

> "I remember the first lectures by people I might have heard of, but who could not lecture until 1989. All of a sudden, you were 'confronted' by these people who really had the knowledge and the ability to 'pass' it on. But even those who could lecture under communism, but perhaps were lecturing just on Soviet literature or something like that, suddenly liberated themselves and started lecturing on, e.g. Classical Russian literature, or on the 'forbidden' authors… (VII/CR/Tomas: p. 4, 158-164)

> At the same time, we managed to get rid of those who had no place in the university environment. I remember, for instance, one compulsory seminar we had in history run by the deputy of the Communist party regional committee, who was a professor, of course, but who had never published a single academic piece. But [after 1989], luckily, he very quickly realized that he had no place in the university." (VII/CR/Tomas: p. 4, 168-172)

The event was identified as critical because of its unique, illustrative nature of the issues concerning higher education quality within the Czech context. The issues were also highlighted as critical by the interviewee, and they were distinguished as critical by the criteria of criticality (described in detail in [author], 2008).

Example 2—"Like" Event: Ivo

Ivo was a vice-chancellor's executive officer at a research-intensive university in the Czech Republic. He had seven years of experience in higher education, which included his experience as a student representative in the university senate. He was responsible for organizational and legal affairs in the vice-chancellor's office and for an internal audit of the university. Despite his young age, Ivo held a senior leadership position in the university.

The like event described by Ivo concerned the unification of a credit system throughout his university. Ivo believed that the like event (related to unification of study rules throughout his institution) described by him was key in terms of making the university environment more transparent and responsive to student needs and subsequently to academics' needs. The event was identified as like because its level of significance was comparable to a critical event, except it repeated the experience outlined in the critical event.

Example 3—"Other" Event: Richard

Richard was a director of an office for international studies in a research-intensive university in the Czech Republic. He was previously a senior lecturer and also head of the English department at the same university. Overall, he had more than 25 years of experience in Czech higher education.

The other event concerned the process of internationalization that was being debated in Richard's institution. Richard outlined it as an ongoing process or debate in the institution. To him, the process of internationalization was closely related to quality, and there were a number of issues associated with the possible approaches to internationalization with underlying implications for quality. Richard pointed out one specific aspect of quality enhancement related to internationalization in the Czech higher education culture, which was the introduction of programs taught in English. The event was identified as other because it provided further information on the range of measures of quality enhancement, which Richard saw gradually being introduced into Czech higher education, in particular to his university.

Emergent Issues and Concerns in English and Czech Higher Education Quality

The research uncovered a number of significant issues identified by both English and Czech academics and higher education leaders (Mertova & Webster, 2009, p. 149):

- focus on innovation and change in higher education;
- collegial approach and sharing of opinions and values;
- value of research in teaching practice;
- quality in higher education stemming from personal involvement of the academic in the educational processes;
- hierarchical approach to research and teaching; and
- benefit of exposure to different worldviews (within different disciplines).

Identifying a narrative based on critical events showed a disconnect between current higher education quality enhancement practices in both countries and what academics in the UK and the Czech Republic considered important. Some of the issues uncovered in this research were highlighted by the academics as

having a negative impact on the quality enhancement processes in their respective higher education systems. The similarity in identified themes suggests a potential for wider relevance of such trends among a broader range of higher education systems worldwide.

Based on the common issues identified by this research, Mertova (2008) proposed a framework for a human-centered approach to quality enhancement in higher education. This framework featured:

- attention to human-centered aspects of higher education quality;
- a need for a collegial approach and reflection on the purposes of quality evaluation processes;
- an effort to afford equal value to teaching and research; and
- a focus on innovation and change.

There were also culture-specific issues uncovered, primarily in regard to the Czech higher education system. These culture-specific issues may have reflected certain trends and features commonly found in other higher education systems in the Central and Eastern European region. In this respect, applying Mertova's (2008) framework to the identified culturally-specific Czech issues may have provided insights of potential relevance to other Central and Eastern European higher education systems (cf. Mertova & Webster, 2009). What the methodology suggested was a quality framework for these countries that needs to concern itself with:

- the significance of transparency in educational processes;
- the need for a fundamental change in the style of pedagogy in higher education institutions (to focus more on thinking processes and reasoning);
- the need for a more systematic move toward a student-centered approach across the whole higher education system;
- the need to address the factor of pressure on Czech academics to publish mainly in English to receive international recognition; and
- the need for education of Czech academic staff to enable a broader and better understanding of the concept of higher education quality in the context of the Czech higher education system.

The only aspect that might be considered as culture-specific to English higher education quality "is the lack of regard for the academic voice in English higher education quality policy development, which was highlighted by the English academics and higher education leaders" (Mertova & Webster, 2009, p. 150). This issue was practically not raised in the Czech interviews.

This was probably because higher education quality policies in the Czech Republic were typically government driven (Van der Wende & Westerheijden, 2003). However, because of their experiences under the Communist regime, Czech academics and higher education leaders probably would not let their autonomy and voice to be undermined.

Conclusion

The main aim of this paper was to outline a critical event narrative inquiry method and illustrate how the method was utilized in a study of academic perspectives in English and Czech higher education quality. It was argued that this narrative inquiry method is particularly well-suited to investigations of complex, human-centered, and culture-specific environments, such as quality in higher education. Due to space limits, only one example of each type of event—critical, like, and other was provided and only from the Czech higher education context. For a more detailed explanation of what the respondents had to say, please refer to Mertova & Webster (2009). Using narrative inquiry to identify and categorize the importance of critical events helped identify a range of issues common to both the English and Czech higher education systems as well as issues that were more culture-specific, particularly in the case of the Czech system. These issues were summarized as the main research findings. To paraphrase Connelly and Clandinin (1990), the central task of the methodology was to grasp the perspectives of people who are both living their stories and reflecting upon their experiences by listening to themselves talk through and explaining these events. In so doing, what was found were themes on how quality is a contested issue (Newton, 2002) from the point of view of those who are responsible for making quality happen within the university environment. There was a range of perspectives on quality (from antagonism through to support), although the dominant concern was one of appropriateness.

Critical event narrative inquiry method is currently proposed for research conducted outside of the domain of higher education. There is a potential for capturing important evidence within different types of complex environments (such as business, government, and public sectors) that would otherwise be lost. The findings from this research encourage this point of view because of its emphasis on the participant's perspectives.

References:

Anderson, G. (2006). Assuring quality/resisting quality assurance: Academics' responses to quality in some Australian universities. *Quality in Higher Education,* 12(2), 161-173.

Barnett, R. (1992). *Improving higher education: Total quality care.* Buckingham, UK: SRHE/Open University Press.

Bennes, J., & Sebkova, H. (2001, January). *Tertiary education in the Czech Republic. Report, for Department of Education, Youth and Sports.* Prague: Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.

Birnbaum, R. (2000). Management fads in higher education. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Blythman, M. (2001). Academic staff and the process of subject review: some experiential qualitative accounts from "backstage" and "under the stage". 6th QHE Seminar: End of Quality, 25-26 May 2001, (p 3). Birmingham, UK: EAIR/SRHE.

Brown, R. (2004). *Quality assurance in higher education: The UK experience since 1992.* London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Bruner, J.S. (1986). *Actual minds, possible worlds.* Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press.

Carr, D. (1986). *Time, narrative, and history.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Cartwright, J.M. (2007). The rhetoric and reality of "quality" in higher education: An investigation of staff perceptions of quality in post-1992 universities. *Quality Assurance in Education,* 15(3), 287-301.

Clandinin, D.J., & Connelly F.M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research.* San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.

Conle, C. (2000). Narrative inquiry: Research tool and medium for professional development. *European Journal of Teacher Education,* 23(1), 49-63.

Connelly, F.M., & Clandinin, D.J. (1987). On narrative method, biography and narrative unities in the study of teaching. *Journal of Educational Thought,* 21, 130-139.

Connelly, F.M., & Clandinin, D.J. (1988). *Teachers as curriculum planners: Narratives of experience.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Connelly, F.M., &Clandinin, D.J. (1990). Stories of experience and narrative inquiry. *Educational Researcher,* 19(5), 2-14.

Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA). (2000). *Quality assurance and accreditation in Australian higher education: An assessment of Australian and international practice.* Report prepared by D. Anderson et al (Centre for Continuing Education, Australian National University), Commonwealth of Australia.

Dyson, A.H., & Genishi, C. (1994). *The need for story: Cultural diversity in classroom and community.* Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

File, J., & Goedegebuure, L. (Eds.). (2003). *Real-time systems: Reflections on higher education in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia.* Brno, Czech Republic: Vutium.

File, J., Hauptman, A.M., Herlitschka, S., Kristensen, B., & Weko, T. (2006). *Thematic Review of Tertiary Education, Czech Republic, Country Note.* Paris: OECD, Directorate for Education and Training Policy Division, Retrieved August 2008: http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/8/32/37730231.pdf.

Green, D. (Ed.). (1994). *What is quality in higher education?* Buckingham, UK: SRHE/Open University Press.

Harvey, H., & Green, D. (1993). Defining quality. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education,* 18(1), 9-34.

Harvey, L. (2004). War of worlds: Who wins in the battle for quality supremacy? *Quality in Higher Education,* 10(1), 65-71.

Harvey, L. (2005). A history and critique of quality evaluation in the UK. *Quality Assurance in Education,* 13(4), 263-276.

Herman, D., Manfred, J., & Ryan, M.L. (Eds.). (2005). T*he Routledge Encyclopaedia of Narrative Theory.* London: Routledge.

Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). (1995). *Developing quality assurance in partnership with the institutions of higher education.* London, HMSO.

Jones, S. (2003). Measuring the quality of higher education: linking teaching quality measures at the delivery level to administrative measures at the university level. *Quality in Higher Education,* 9(3), 223-229.

Kogan, M., Bauer, M., Bleiklie, I., & Henkel, M. (2000). *Transforming Higher Education: A Comparative Study.* Higher Education Policy Series 57, London, Jessica Kingsley.

Lomas, L. (2000). S*enior staff member perception of organisational culture and quality in higher education institutions in England.* Unpublished Ph.D. thesis. Canterbury, UK: University of Kent.

Lomas, L. (2007). Are students customers? Perceptions of academic staff. *Quality in Higher Education,* 13(1), 31-44.

McInnis, C., Powles, M., Anwyl, J. (1995). Australian academics' perspective on quality and accountability. *Tertiary Education and Management,* 1(2), 131-139.

Mertova, P., & Webster, L. (2009). The academic voice in English and Czech higher education quality. *Quality Assurance in Education,* 17(2), 140-155.

Mertova, P. (2008). *Quality in higher education: Stories of English and Czech academics and higher education leaders.* Unpublished Ph.D. thesis. Melbourne, AUS: Monash University.

Morley, L. (2003). *Quality and power in higher education.* Maidenhead, UK, Society for Research into Higher Education/Open University Press.

Newton, J. (2002). Views from below: Academics coping with quality. *Quality in Higher Education,* 8(1), 39-61.

Riessman, C.K. (1993). *Narrative analysis.* Newbury Park, CA, Sage.

Rozsnyai, C. (2003). Quality assurance before and after "Bologna" in the Central and Eastern region of the European Higher Education Area with a focus on Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Poland. *European Journal of Education,* 38(3), 271-284.

Saarinen, T. (2005). "Quality" in the Bologna Process: From "competitive edge" to quality assurance techniques. *European Journal of Education,* 40(2), 189-204.

Shattock, M. (2006). Policy drivers in UK higher education in historical perspective: "Inside out", "outside in" and the contribution of research. *Higher Education Quarterly,* 60(2), 130-140.

Tapper, T. (2007). *The Governance of British higher education: The struggle for policy control.* Dordrecht, Netherlands, Springer.

Van der Wende, M., & Westerheijden, D. (2003). Degrees of trust or trust of degrees? Quality assurance and recognition. In J. File, & L. Goedegebuure. (Eds.), *Real-time systems: Reflections on higher education in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovenia.* Brno, Czech Republic: Vutium.

Webster, L. (1998). *A Story of Instructional Research and Simulation in Aviation (Air Traffic Control).* Unpublished Ph.D. thesis. Melbourne, AUS: Monash University.

Webster, L., & Mertova, P. (2007). *Using narrative inquiry as a research method: An introduction to using critical event narrative analysis in research on learning and teaching.* London, UK, Routledge.

Westerheijden, D.F., Brennan, J., & Maasen, P.A.M. (Eds). (1994). *Changing Contexts of Quality Assessment: Recent Trends in West European Higher Education.* Utrecht, Netherlands: Uitgeverij Lemma B.V.

Woodhouse, D. (2004). The quality of quality assurance agencies. *Quality in Higher Education,* 10(2), 77-87.

Acknowledgements

Dr. Patricie Mertova, University of Oxford

Dr. Patricie Mertova *is currently a research fellow in the Department of Education at the University of Oxford, UK. Her current research focuses on internationalisation and quality in higher education. Her Ph.D. research investigated academic perspectives on higher education quality. She has research expertise in a broad range of education settings, including the fields of higher education, higher education quality, sociology of education, adult education, educational development in law, and linguistics. Her previous background is in the areas of linguistics, translation, cross-cultural communication, foreign languages, literature, and cultural studies. For more information, contact Mertova at patricie.mertova@education.ox.ac.uk.*

Dr. Len Webster, Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency

Dr. Len Webster *is currently a director, Regulation and Review, Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), Australia. Prior to this he was an audit director with the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA). He has experience in teaching and learning in higher education in areas of quality development, e-learning, distance education, educational development research, educational strategic policy and planning, qualitative research methods, and academic staff development. He has also played an active part in the learning design and development of the Future Research Leaders Program, an initiative of the Group of Eight universities and the Commonwealth Government, Australia. For additional information, you may contact him at leonard.webster@teqsa.gov.au.*

Quality Approaches in Higher Education

CALL FOR PAPERS

The American Society for Quality's Education Division has launched a bi-annual, online, double-blind peer-reviewed journal called *Quality Approaches in Higher Education.* The editorial review team actively encourages authors to submit papers for upcoming issues.

The purpose of this publication is to engage the higher education community and the ASQ Education Division membership in a discussion on a broad range of topics related to improving quality in higher education and identifying best practices in higher education and to expand the literature specific to quality in higher education topics. *Quality Approaches in Higher Education* welcomes faculty from two- and four-year institutions, including engineering colleges, business schools, and schools of education to consider submitting articles for review. The journal also welcomes professionals from the student services arena, institutional research, professional development, continuing education, business affairs, and other aspects of the higher education campus to consider submitting articles for review. We encourage evidence-based analysis using quality approach-driven improvement of higher education.

The following types of articles fit the purview of *Quality Approaches in Higher Education:*
- Case studies on how to improve quality in a college or university using evidence-based analysis.
- Conceptual articles discussing theories, models, and/or best practices related to quality in colleges and universities.
- Research articles reporting on survey findings such as a national survey on students' attitudes toward confidence, success in college, social networking, student engagement, access and affordability, etc.
- Case studies or conceptual articles providing institutional perspective on process development and maintenance methodology at colleges or universities.
- Case studies or conceptual articles addressing issues such as the role of faculty and administrators in quality systems.
- Case studies, research studies, or conceptual articles focusing on accreditation issues.
- Case studies demonstrating best practices using the *Baldrige Education Criteria for Performance Excellence* or other national quality models, standards from the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS), or national frameworks and protocols.
- Case studies, research studies, or conceptual articles on scholarship of teaching, enhancing student learning, learning outcomes assessment, student retention, best practices for using technology in the college classroom.
- Case studies research studies, or conceptual articles on how student service units and intervention programs impact the quality of student experience and student learning.
- Studies or conceptual articles on how higher education practices impact the quality of student life for different student populations.
- Case studies on the type, use, and analysis of data to help improve teaching and/or services.

NOTE: We are looking to dedicate one of the two bi-annual issues to a special topic to highlight areas of high interest in the field of higher education. We may also ask authors submitting articles that stand out in this area to consider inclusion of their paper in this issue.

Articles generally should contain between 3,000 and 4,000 words and can include up to four charts, tables, diagrams, illustrations, or photos of high resolution. For details, please check the "Author Guidelines" at **http://www.asq.org/edu/2009/09/best-practices/author-guidelines.pdf**

Please send your submissions to Dr. Fernando Padró at qahe@asqedu.org.

Education Division
The Global Voice of Quality™
ASQ