

LETTER

Journal club — a forum of discussion for scientific dialectics

In the sometimes hectic routines of daily academic work, it can be difficult to find opportunities for naturally creative encounters with our colleagues, where we can jointly focus methodological issues in research. Where do we find the time and place for constructive discussions on published research? And how can we foster such meetings?

As a senior lecturer and researcher, I have a strong interest in research seminars in the field of clinical activity, as well as long-standing experience of coordinating and leading such seminars. I also gained extensive knowledge of seminar dynamics from my doctoral studies at the University of Linköping.

Over the years, I have developed a particular way of working with seminars, aiming to contribute to the establishment of interdisciplinary research groups at the School of Health and Social Science, at Halmstad University. One of my ideas was to take advantage of the privileged position of our university, and the fact that it hosts a scientific journal and its Editor-in-Chief, Professor Lillemor Hallberg. This is why I started the Journal Club in 2006—the same year that the *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being* was launched.

Initially, I simply sent an invitation to my fellow researchers at the School of Health and Social Science, explaining the purpose of the meetings. The idea was to use the Journal Club to discuss selected articles from the *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being*, and critically examine them.

It is essential that the articles are distributed to participants well in advance, and that participants have had time to read the contents, so they are prepared to critically examine the aims, methods and results of the discussed articles.

My vision with the meetings at the Journal Club was to give added impetus to scientific dialectics at the School, to develop a critical approach and deepen methodological understanding. We need a

continuous reflection concerning qualitative research approaches and various standpoints with respect to research ethics, in order to increase methodological awareness in our research. In this way, the monthly seminars contribute to developing our competencies as researchers, as well as keeping our knowledge up-to-date.

Another aim of the Journal Club is to be a discussion forum for interdisciplinary research issues, relating to health, life-styles, well-being and the quality of life. Uniting a critical mass at our school, and bringing about an engaging discussion, allows us to test our ideas in a stimulating dialogue with colleagues. It also provides an opportunity to widen and deepen our understanding of current issues.

The Journal Club has met since the autumn term 2006, always on the same day of the week, at the same time and place, at the School of Health and Social Science. The objective is to give these encounters a “club feeling”, and to shape a tradition of a recurrent event at the School. Before each seminar at the Journal Club, an invitation is sent to all teaching and research staff at the School.

The availability of the most recent articles from the *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being*, combined with the Editor-in-Chief’s contribution to the seminars, gives the meetings an additional dimension, and strengthens the impact that the Journal Club has at Halmstad University. The role of the Club is also strengthened by the important position that the *International Journal of Qualitative Studies* occupies on our own nursing programmes, both at junior and senior levels. The articles are widely used and discussed on our Nursing science and Methods courses.

Kristina Ziegert, PhD
School of Health and Social Science
Halmstad University
Halmstad, Sweden
Email: kristina.ziegert@hh.se