Qualitative Transparency Deliberations

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APSA drawing inferences from comment turnout?!

https://www.qualtd.net/viewtopic.php?f=10&t=110

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APSA drawing inferences from comment turnout?!

Posted: **Thu Jun 09, 2016 8:37 am**
by **dyanow**
Dear APSA, dear Colleagues:

I appreciate very much the time and effort that a couple of handfuls of people have put, and are putting, into this DA-RT project. Among these efforts are a couple dozen emails I've received over the last many weeks—including posts to the Connect pages of various APSA sections I belong to which also arrive in my emailbox—encouraging me to post to the QTD discussion pages. Several of these emails, along with other, private correspondence, have stated that "APSA" is watching the "turnout" and will judge, on that basis, whether the issue is of importance to membership. What "APSA" will infer, conclude or enact based on the numerical turnout is not clear, but there is an implied warning—if participation in QTD is low, it follows that APSA members are somehow indifferent to DA-RT.

I do not wish it thought that I, for one, do not care about DA-RT/QTD/CTS. But I take exception to the 'or else' underlying these communiques—as if APSA members should be "[a]shamed" if we don't post comments to this page; it feels as if my participation is being achieved through blackmail. **So I wish to address this post to APSA.** If 'you' are indeed watching these pages and toting up participation levels, might I suggest that you consider alternate inferences to the relatively low posting rates, other than a lack of interest? 'So much to do, so little time' would be one possibility: grades, student advising, committee service, mss. deadlines, reviews, research (!), family (!!), community (?!) – I could go on – and you want me to add what amounts to blogging? And at that, following and potentially posting to the couple dozen conversations [threads] all taking place on this one site?!

Many colleagues are simply burned out on the whole topic. Many of us find little reason to reproduce in comments here what we have written, or read, in methods sections, articles, parts of books, whole books. As Mala Htun [QMMR Newsletter] and Deborah Yashar [CP Newsletter] have noted so eloquently, many of us see DA-RT as drawing us away from other things we would, or should, put our attention to; Lee Ann Fujii [CP Newsletter and QTD comment] has pointed to a range of associational, professional, and political issues that DA-RT has diverted energy and time from. I see that whereas no thread has more than 23 replies as of the moment of this writing (and many are in the single digits, including 0), several hundred people have viewed many of them (from 43 to 849, double the latter for the opening post). I suspect that many more are tracking the debates (I just looked at several, without logging in, and the totals didn't change), among them Ph.D. students and junior faculty who may fear to post, even anonymously, for reasons we all know or can

imagine.

I urge APSA, QMMR, and others not to draw inferences from the numbers appearing on the site – or, perhaps better, not to act on whatever inferences you draw, without actually asking actual members why they didn't post. [And now, back to my students, colleagues, and deadlines….]

Dvora Yanow

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