A call to practitioners: some advice on submitting pieces to *IJWOE*

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Biographical notes: Geraldine Lee-Treweek is Principal Lecturer in Applied Social Studies at the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies, Manchester Metropolitan University. Her most recent research has focused upon the sociology of Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) and CAM practitioners' beliefs about the body, disability and emotion. She has also published on the sociology of care and nursing work, abuse of older people in institutional settings, dangers and risks to qualitative researchers and patterns of trust and sociality in late modernity.

The *International Journal of Work*, *Organisation and Emotion* has much to offer diverse readers. The keywords *work* and *organisation* acquire new meaning when placed next to *emotion,* and in combination they prompt reconsideration of a host of different arenas. For this we thank Arlie Hochschild, who saw the 'emotional labour' in the work of as many as half of US female employees and in a quarter of male employees She also identified the unpaid 'emotion work' in the activity of US households, and finally, the 'care deficit' that a long-hours culture can create at home, and which migrant workers labour to ameliorate through therapeutic and other services to absent 'Moms and Dads'.

The journal, its associated conference, workshops and active research networks (EmNet, CREW) has drawn interest from several disciplines. However the immediate practical importance of Hochschild's *The Managed Heart* was seized on most rapidly by nurses and their tutors, because emotion is embodied – literally embodied – in nursing care and nurses' 'aesthetic labour'. It is now difficult to imagine how any model of nursing could fail to have acknowledged the therapeutic use of feelings and of the self. Managers now profess emotional skills while transacting with colleagues using 'emotional intelligence'. And police officers are also alert to the impact which they can have on the positive and negative feelings which govern our streets.

Given the powerful insights which Hochschild accords to all, the 'dividing practices' that separate emotion theory from emotion practice, emotion providers from clients, public from private contexts and academics from practitioners are of questionable value. Moreover, as a delegate to the international conference of September 2005, I was struck by the diverse backgrounds of those who attended, by the quality specifically of *cross-boundary* discussions and by the *easy* interdisciplinary kinship which was also felt there. It is unusual for a conference to accommodate a broad church and rare for a journal to create a publishing space that not only accommodates differences in approach, but

welcomes them. These discursive arenas offer opportunities for developing new forms of contribution, writing and engagement and scope for innovative forms of engagement.

Practitioners who know about emotions through the experience of using them have much to offer in terms of making their 'theories-in-use' explicit. Academics who can find useful ways to describe what is happening in an oncology ward, at a police station, at the theatre or among airport ground staff will find a warm welcome at such places. Indeed Emma Coats' contribution on the use of image theatre to embody organisational impasse, analyse impasse and generate creative solutions (*IJWOE* 1, 2) was an interesting pointer as to how *emotion* can come to the rescue of *organisations* which are failing to *work*. It also lays bare what sociologists of organisational conflict have tended to miss.

However a divide can not be overcome by imagining that it is gone completely. There is, for example, a language divide between academics and practitioners: often concerning similar phenomena, named differently, sometimes concerning phenomena that one party or the other has failed to perceive. But in this short piece I am mostly concerned with offering both an invitation and advice to practitioners rather than to academics, as to how to reach the readership of this journal. Many practitioners certainly have the academic experience that enables them to submit work that meets the conventional formats of academic enterprise. However, some practitioner's self-understanding of their work sits outside these formats, though meriting interest among readers of the journal. How might different forms of writing contribute to the journal? What ideas can be gathered from practitioners more used to other types of publication? How should the standard of practitioner contributions be reviewed? How should the peer reviewer be chosen? These questions need addressing so that we have some assurance as to the quality of practitioner offerings.

My experience is as a sociologist who has, in the recent past, worked with practitioners in the Faculty of Health and Social Welfare at the Open University. In this post I was involved with commissioning and editing the work of a broad range of practitioners from various backgrounds and professional affiliations. The OU has a well deserved reputation for producing direct writing without compromising the ideas it conveys or academic standards. I am presently a voluntary part-time practitioner in CAM and a full-time academic sociologist at the Manchester Metropolitan University. So, who would be qualified to judge my contributions, written as a *practitioner*? An academic, or practitioner, or both? And how should an editor read conflicting advice from referees? These are important questions to the discussion here.

1 Some alternative formats of writing and presentation

It is clear that some forms of writing can provide insightful accounts of emotions at work that are traditionally invisible and writers in what has become known as the 'sociological poetic' achieve this. That said, academic standards of writing and presentation must be maintained and suitable topic and focus kept within the confines of the journal's remit. I have contacted numerous colleagues who are practitioners in different fields and asked for their ideas on forms of writing that would be of benefit to an academic audience, but that would allow a broader range of practitioner perspectives to be heard. Some forms of writing that may be considered include the following:

- *Autobiographical pieces.* There is precedent in the use of autobiography in journal papers, as the multidisciplinary journal *Auto/biography* demonstrates. The key here would be to provide guidance as to the nature of the autobiography. An example of areas that might be included in this type of writing might be a practitioner's account of learning to work with emotions in psychiatric nursing and of course, of catastrophe. Likewise, a practising psychotherapist might contribute a discussion of their own experiences of transference and its emotional effects (believed by many practitioners to be *essential* to the 'talking cure'). Autobiographical approaches that provide candid and insightful discussion and which interlink with theory can generate accounts that bring emotion to life. *And* new theory.
- *Case studies*. Case studies of emotion work with a particular individual or group would be welcomed. These may offer readers an insider's view of how emotion and emotional issues impact upon the course of a treatment, process or therapeutic setting, or organisational dynamic. However, ethical issues about using a case study approach would need to be fully addressed (below).
- *Dialogues.* In some cases joint papers that utilise both the practitioner and a user's voice may be interesting for situating emotion work as a joint enterprise. Again, this will need ethical evaluation (below) and steps taken to be sure that both parties take responsibility for authorship and understand what this means. Other forms of dialogue might bring two different practitioners accounts together to compare, for instance, approaches to emotional labour. Or bring practitioner and academic into discussion through close co-listening.
- *Forms of co-writing or collaborative writing*. It may be that the journal could encourage some fruitful collaborative writing that brings together practitioners with others who have orthodox writing skills. Written pieces could be the product of a writing workshop.
- *Policy papers.* These might consider particular aspects of practice as they are embodied in official policy and in the tracts of particular interest groups and then dissect their implications in terms of emotions and emotional working. For example, nursing policy, and indirectly, nursing practice, is embedded easily in at least three and probably more narratives, none of which sit easily with the others. (Should nurses care, fight disease or promote health awareness?) Accounts that excavate and analyse such disparities within policy would make fascinating reading for the journal.

Indeed, in future conferences and workshops we should run discussion tracks through which well-established writers can advise those contemplating their first practitioner piece.

2 Ethical issues

Inviting different forms of writing necessarily leads to the need to apply more ethical scrutiny as to how such writing is produced and, for instance, whether all parties had provided informed consent. Pieces co-written by practitioners and users of services raise concerns about anonymity and the possible consequences of disclosure of information.

Again, careful scrutiny would need to be applied and authors would need to explain the ethical codes that underpin the work they are submitting. Suitable codes might be that of the *Social Research Association*, *British Psychological Association*, *British Sociological Association* and so forth. These problems are not insurmountable and provision of an ethical framework and checklist system may help here.

3 Length, style and content

And lastly how much is enough? The orthodox academic paper is around 6,000 words. I suggest that each of the formats I have described probably have different natural lengths, most of which would come in at well under 6,000 words. Indeed, some of the tightest expositions benefit from very tight word limits. In any case, surely the point of writing is not to be definitive but to prompt debate that, in due course, will affect the practice and understanding of others. I suggest that there is considerable value in position statements of as few as 2,000 words; though most formats might be worth trying out at around 3,500. Those of you who wish to advance your writing, please feel free to contact me at Manchester Metropolitan University, perhaps as a first step. I am confident that the conference convenors, the members of EmNet and CREW and the *IJWOE* editorial board would welcome a practitioner track that leads to workshops, proceeds through the journal and ends where it began, in your own practices.