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## Editorial

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# “I THINK IT WOULD BE FUN TO EDIT A NEWSPAPER.”

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With these words, Charles Foster Kane began his career as an editor. Things turned out to be a little more complicated than he thought. Still, I think he was more right than wrong. At least I hope so.

With this issue, *Psychological Science* (*PS*) enters its 6th year of publication, and passes into new editorial hands. Readers should expect little change in format. The journal will continue to offer a mix of General Articles, Research Articles and Research Reports, Commentaries, and Letters to the Editor. Ideally, these papers will appeal to a broad range of interests within scientific psychology and be accessible to nonspecialists.

Within this mix, I hope to give Research Reports special attention. The most prominent psychology journals have gradually evolved a preference for the multiple-experiment report with all the methodological *t*-dotting and *t*-crossing in place. On the one hand, this has been a positive development compared with older practices of piecemeal publication. On the other hand, there still remains a place for the single experiment (or short series of experiments) that makes new observations, opens a new line of inquiry, demonstrates an innovative approach or method, or ties up a loose end in existing research. That place is *PS*, and I encourage authors to use its pages for this purpose.

*PS* will also feature reviews of new books, with an emphasis on research monographs and books written by researchers to interpret psychological science to general audiences. Here readers can expect to see some experimentation. Sometimes a single book will be reviewed by several commentators. Sometimes a single commentator will offer an overview of several related books. When a book is interdisciplinary, the reviewer may well be drawn from a field other than psychology. Still, the space available in *PS* is limited. The editorial office receives several new books every week, but the journal has room for less than a dozen reviews a year. Accordingly, this issue inaugurates a new feature, Books Received, which will provide capsule descriptions of new books that have arrived in the office, even if they cannot be scheduled for featured treatment.

A word is in order about the process of manuscript review and selection. *PS* will make every effort to provide authors with expert and expeditious reviews of their submissions. To this end, authors are strongly encouraged to suggest reviewers who are appropriate for their

manuscripts. In addition, I will encourage (but will not require) reviewers to sign their reviews.

When an article targets a particular finding or theoretical position, I will most likely seek an opinion from the colleague whose work is at stake. In the case of a Commentary or Letter to the Editor concerning an article published in *PS*, I will invariably ask for comments from the author of the target article. In this way, I hope to iron out misunderstandings and misrepresentations before publication: I see little point in using precious journal pages to air a dispute that can be settled in private. Sometimes, of course, public airing of a disagreement will benefit the field as a whole. In that case, the author of the original article will be given the last word. After that point, in my view, the appropriate rejoinder comes in the form of new data.

I will make every effort to give authors a straight up or down decision on their submissions. Partly this policy is to fulfill the journal's pledge of expeditious editorial action. But at another level, for a journal like *PS*, the decision category of "revise and resubmit" makes little sense. In most cases, "revise" means that the author should add new analyses if not new experiments, or provide more detailed discussions of various points (especially the reviewers' own work). However, the constraints established for articles in *PS* will rarely permit authors to make such changes: 2,500, 4,000, or 5,000 words does not give an author much room to elaborate. On the other hand, my view is that the manuscript that cannot be improved through the review process does not exist. Therefore, authors of articles that have been provisionally accepted will be expected to be attentive to the reviewers' comments, as a condition of ultimate publication.

It is no cliché that *PS* does not have room to publish all the good material that is submitted to it: I get only 384 pages per year to do my job, and that calls for difficult decisions. So far, my acceptance rate is running at 30%, with a review lag of approximately 90 days. Both figures are competitive with the field's leading journals. Of course, barring an increase in pages, the acceptance rate will necessarily drop as the number of manuscripts submitted increases; and as I get used to this job, I hope to decrease the review lag considerably.

The reasons for acceptance are simple: The article makes a distinctive theoretical or empirical contribution

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that promises to be of wide interest across specialties, and it is written to be accessible to a wide range of readers. The reasons for nonacceptance are varied. Sometimes a manuscript simply does not come up to conventional publication standards, but these easy calls are in fact rare: The vast bulk of the material received by the editorial office deserves publication somewhere, in some form. More often, a manuscript requires revisions that take it beyond the scope of what can be published here, and such papers have to be redirected elsewhere. It also happens that a paper is simply too specialized for a general-interest journal.

Sometimes, however, I simply get too much of a good thing. Because *PS* is a journal for all scientific psychologists, I must pick and choose among the submissions in order to ensure some balance among the various subdisciplines of psychology. As a natural result, some excellent work in one field has to be directed elsewhere in order to make room for excellent work in another. This problem can be ameliorated by adding extra pages, and I hope that this will happen as the journal, and the American Psychological Society, continues to grow. But as

long as the amount of excellent work exceeds the number of pages available, which it does and will continue to do, this is a problem that will always be with us.

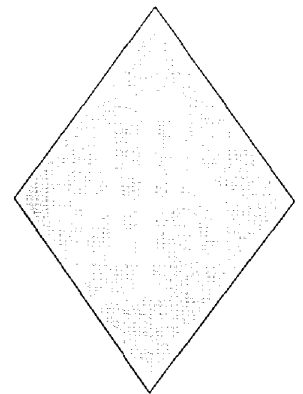
Over the past 5 years, with Bill Estes as Founding Editor, *PS* has come to occupy an important niche within organized psychology: It is one of the very few journals that publish primary research reports covering the entire range of scientific psychology. In this sense, the journal seeks to buck the trend toward increasing specialization in our field. As the flagship journal of the American Psychological Society, an organization defined by the commitment of its members to scientific research on mind and behavior, rather than to any particular subdiscipline, *PS* seeks to promote a sense of solidarity and connectedness within the field. To this end, the journal tries to provide a bimonthly "snapshot" of new research. Every psychologist should find something in every issue that touches on his or her primary research interests; and every psychologist should find most of the remaining articles worth reading. At least I hope so.

—JOHN F. KIHLMSTROM

### American Psychological Society

The American Psychological Society was founded in 1988 as an independent, multipurpose organization to advance the discipline of psychology, to preserve the scientific base of psychology, to promote public understanding of psychological science and its applications, to enhance the quality of graduate education, and to encourage the "giving away" of psychology in the public interest.

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