

EDITORIAL

School Psychology Quarterly: Onward and Upward

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I am honored to begin my tenure as Editor of *School Psychology Quarterly* (*SPQ*) with this issue. The list of distinguished names who have served in this role is formidable, and I am humbled by this editorial pedigree. Under the guidance of Thomas Kratochwill, Joseph Witt, Terry Gutkin, Rik D'Amato, Randy Kamphaus, and Shane Jimerson, *SPQ* has helped shape the science and practice of school psychology by publishing some of the most influential papers in the field. Thanks to their dedication, the number and quality of submissions/publications has increased tremendously, and *SPQ* is now ranked within the top 10 (of 57) educational psychology journals in Thomson Reuters's Web of Science, and has a 5-year impact factor of 3.29 (its highest rating thus far). Readers have long viewed *SPQ* as a primary source of information on important issues faced by youth, families, schools, and the larger community. It is now for me and my editorial team to pick up the mantle and to meet (and exceed) readers' expectations. It is a responsibility that we accept and embrace.

The title of this editorial reflects our pledge to adhere to the principles and mission of *SPQ* (the "onward" portion of the title), as they have been the reason for the journal's status today. We will still require that published papers have clear implications for the science and practice of psychology in schools. We will still require that work submitted and published will address the learning, psychological, social, and health needs of children, youth, and adults who serve them. We will maintain our policy of providing feedback to authors within 21 days of first submission (one of the fastest turn-around times in academic journals). Above all, we will always base our decisions on objective criteria that match the above principles, not ad hominem criticisms. Papers based on sound theory, that meet stringent statistical/methodological rigor, and whose findings potentially and significantly advance the literature on school psychology science, practice, and policy stand a very good chance of publication.

At the same time, we strive to move "upward," as maintaining the status quo is not in the best interest of *SPQ*. The publishing landscape has significantly changed since 1986 (the year *SPQ* was founded). New and existing journals within and outside the field all seek competitive advantage. To ensure that *SPQ* remains highly relevant in the academic marketplace, our goal is to improve *SPQ*'s visibility by expanding its outreach to other audiences. Changes to the design and structure of the journal (beginning with this issue) are but two of the most visible to enhance its visual "curb appeal" and to expand the scope of papers

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that would interest a wide group of readers-many of whom may not be aware of the overlap between their research and papers published in the journal. We have also added new sections to the journal, which are designed to appeal to authors who wish to contribute in other, equally meaningful ways. These new sections are outlined below.

Advances in Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Designs

Statistical and methodological designs have advanced and flourished over the past decade, many of them with potential application to research in schools. *SPQ* is interested in publishing papers on promising, innovative approaches that could be considered when examining complex issues facing today's children, families, and schools. Whether submissions focus on step-by-step illustrations on the applications of new statistical software packages, critical reviews of current approaches, or innovative ways to transform traditional methods, our goal is to make *SPQ* a primary resource for readers to understand innovative statistical methods and their applications.

Brief Reports

This new section is devoted to studies that contain small samples (e.g., single-case designs), a limited number of variables, or case studies. The text of brief reports is limited to 2,500 words (from the Introduction through the Discussion), a maximum of three tables and figures (total), and up to 25 references. Brief reports begin with a brief summary of no more than 100 words.

We call particular attention to authors who are interested in case studies, which illustrate step-by-step processes in innovative decision-making. Whether specific to an assessment, consultation, or treatment technique, information about the case is presented in stages to simulate the way such information emerges in school psychology practice. The author discusses each problem-solving stage, sharing his or her reasoning with the reader.

Reviews and Meta-Analyses

SPQ will continue to publish critical review articles, provided that they represent a new synthesis of information. We particularly see quality meta-analytic papers that advance the science, practice, and/or policy of school psychology. The journal is also interested in publishing reviews that formulate innovative frameworks with which to study learning, psychological, and/or social development (see Cicchetti, 2016 as one example).

Letters to the Editor and Perspective Articles

Letters to the Editor is designated specifically to articles or editorial comments published in *SPQ*, or concern important issues of general interest to school psychology. Authors will be given the opportunity to reply to accepted letters critical of their work. Conversely, perspective articles are not specific to articles published in *SPQ*. Rather, these are brief pieces covering a wide variety of timely topics of relevance to school psychology. Both types of submissions are limited to 1,200 words and may contain one figure or table. There is a maximum of five references.

Special Topic Sections

The Special Topic Section aims to bring awareness of and education on the nature and correlates associated with a variety of topics of interest to researchers and practitioners. The special topic sections featured in *SPQ* are developed specifically to enrich, invigorate, enhance, and advance science, practice, or policy particularly relevant to the contemporary context of school psychology. Each of these special topic sections emphasizes contemporary methods, analytical strategies, and conceptual foundations aimed at providing substantive advancements in knowledge relevant to school psychology. Forthcoming special topic sections will focus on trauma, grief/loss, and pediatric mental health.

The above changes are part of a larger strategic plan designed to advance *SPQ*'s tradition of excellence. Four components of this plan are briefly discussed. First, there is a continued recognition by academic researchers that cross-disciplinary collaboration is necessary to solve the most pressing educational, individual, and/or social problems. School psychology can and should be a keystone in these efforts. There are many disciplines outside of school psychology with an equally vested interest in school-based practice, and whose unique perspectives could be informed by papers published in *SPQ*. Likewise, innovative, well-reasoned, and empirically based contributions from sociology, medicine, law, developmental science, systems science, education policy, and neuroscience (to name just a few) may stimulate new ways of understanding and solving seemingly intractable issues faced by youth, families, schools, and the greater community. It is our belief that *SPQ* should be a forum to solicit and disseminate cross-disciplinary, innovative ideas pertaining to all aspects of child/adolescent development, family functioning, and school-family-community relationships.

Second, a strategic plan adopted by the American Psychological Association (APA, 2009) emphasizes the need to expand psychology's role in health promotion and disease prevention. My own history of working in traditional and non-traditional academic institutions epitomizes the idea that school psychology should be defined as a specific approach to solving problems-not by any particular setting (see also D'Amato, Zafiris, McConnell, & Dean, 2011). Our unique approach allows us to fully explore, understand, and communicate how complex health issues negatively impact students' learning and functioning, and our information is highly coveted by health-care professionals and the public. *SPQ* thus welcomes papers that encourage cross-disciplinary research on health and well-being (broadly defined). Whether specific to prevention and treatment studies or to those that promote health/well-being, the inclusion of such studies will highlight school psychology's contributions and value to this area.

Third, *SPQ* welcomes papers that focus on underrepresented groups. As a profession, school psychologists have long been acknowledged for appreciating the importance (and challenges) of diversity in students, families, and schools. Certainly, the changing demographics of schools, and emerging issues related to these changes, dictate a renewed focus on papers on groups that have not often received enough attention (e.g., youth of different sexual orientations, youth with physical or mental disability). In a related way, a concerted effort was made to recruit individuals on the Editorial Board who are nationally and internationally known for their work in multicultural studies. We are proud to have some of the leading experts in multicultural school psychology on the Editorial Board, which will stimulate interests from authors to consider *SPQ* as a primary source for cutting-edge cross-national research.

Finally, as the world becomes more interconnected, it is essential that readers be aware of work that is happening in other parts of the world, and how this applies to their own. *SPQ* will continue to seek multinational papers, which illuminate similarities and distinctions of issues faced by researchers and practitioners, and also create opportunities for cross-fertilization of ideas and future research collaborations. Much credit is given to Shane Jimerson (who will transition to Senior Editor of *International Science*) for his role in increasing the number of cross-national studies published in *SPQ*.

It is a privilege to be surrounded by a team of outstanding associate editors (in order, Kathryn Fletcher, Shane Jimerson, Nancy Leech, Matthew Mayer, and Gilbert Parra), who were chosen for their unique expertise, their history of providing exemplary reviews and guidance to authors, their esteem in their own particular fields, and their own publication history. We are joined by a group of highly talented, diverse, and international board members who have agreed to give much of their time to ensure that the papers published in *SPQ* meet the highest quality standards.

These are exciting times for *SPQ*, and I am ready to begin this adventure. The strength of the *SPQ* journal rests entirely on the quality of papers that are submitted, and thus it is paramount that prospective authors view *SPQ* as their first choice to submit their research. We are keenly aware of our roles and responsibilities to readers, and we very much welcome your frank and honest feedback about how to make *SPQ* even better. I invite those with ideas for papers or special sections to contact me at the following e-mail address: Richard.Gilman@cchmc.org.

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