EDITORIAL

My predecessors, K. Daniel O'Leary and David H. Barlow, began their terms of office with editorials in which they reviewed the progress made by this Journal and the field that it represents, elaborated on the Journal's mission and editorial practice, and suggested several promising areas for future study. It is a privilege for me to serve as the *JABA* Editor for the next 3 years, and I would like to describe here the general path that *JABA* has taken and along which it will continue.

Articles published in the *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis* over the past 16 years have, in large part, defined both the method and content of a major scientific field. That field—applied behavior analysis—is difficult to describe precisely, yet three characteristics are readily identifiable: (a) it emphasizes the extension and application of principles derived from the experimental analysis of behavior toward the solution of social problems, (b) it uses a rigorous empirical approach in which direct observation of and experimental control over individual behavior are usually of paramount importance, and (c) it is not limited by problem area, subject population, or setting. In contributing to the development of the field, *JABA* has provided a rich data base to enhance our understanding of environment-behavior interactions, and it has had a significant impact on assessment, treatment, and program design and evaluation in every area of human services. Furthermore, the peer review system of *JABA* has served as a mechanism for direct interaction among over a thousand authors and reviewers each year, and it is unequalled in its provision of timely, thorough, and constructive feedback.

JABA will continue to publish research that significantly advances the field of applied behavior analysis. An examination of the Table of Contents for this issue suggests the diversity of subject matter that is now considered appropriate for *JABA*. The Journal accepts manuscripts on a variety of topics, whose focus may include but not be limited to: (a) the demonstration of a simple relationship between a well-defined variable and a novel response, which may lead the way to a new area of investigation, (b) the integration of behavioral methodology and theory with those of other major fields of science and practice, (c) the extension of previously developed methods and techniques to solve new problems, and (d) further analysis, refinement, and large-scale evaluation within well-established areas of behavioral research.

The criteria for publication have been and will remain exacting, although they will continue to be flexible. Single-subject experiments, analogue investigations, studies using simple A-B designs, between-group comparisons, correlational and assessment research, and even animal studies have been published in *JABA* and will be accepted occasionally. In our attempt to maintain the Journal's high editorial standards, we will try not to exclude critically important but unusual papers by losing sight of the fact that particular questions and problems just do not lend themselves to the type of analysis one would consider ideal. Thus, there is no "recipe" for a potential *JABA* study; the specific requirements for publication will vary according to the nature of the investigation, and they will change as new precedents are set.

In addition to considering research articles, *JABA* welcomes timely and thorough nonexperimental manuscripts that review major areas of research in applied behavior analysis, integrate findings from our field with those of related disciplines, and discuss

emerging issues that will affect the conduct of our research. Given the emphasis *JABA* places on the publication of original research, relatively few discussion articles will be published, and they must be exceptionally strong.

There is also a continuing need to keep our readership informed about the latest developments in methodology and instrumentation. This is especially true as computer technology and other advanced forms of control become more readily available for use in applied research. These refinements in technique can often be communicated within the context of an applied experiment. On occasion, however, the complexity of the technique and its evaluation will require singular attention. In anticipation of additional growth in this area, *JABA* will reestablish the category of Technical Articles.

The *JABA* review process will continue as it has, providing authors with detailed evaluations of their manuscripts and suggestions on how their research might be improved. There is no question that the nature of the editorial correspondence for a particular manuscript is just as important as the editorial decision for that manuscript. Because our reviewers as well as our authors indicate that they benefit greatly from being involved in the review process, we would like to promote active participation at all levels. With increasing frequency, members of our editorial board and other senior researchers will serve as guest associate editors on specific manuscripts. We will attempt to see that every submitting author later serves as a reviewer on another manuscript. Finally, we will provide beginning researchers with an opportunity to participate as guest reviewers. This opportunity has been available for years to advanced students and young colleagues of our associate editors, and we encourage others to express their interest. Of course, the most direct way to learn more about the Journal and the field, and to participate more fully in the future of both, is to take some data and submit a manuscript, because the author's behavior determines the content of the Journal and serves as the focal point for the entire review process.

The Journal will also venture beyond its editorial process to promote continued growth and development. For example, faculty in a number of universities now use *JABA* as a text on research methods and applications, and there are indications that many others would like to use *JABA* in such a manner but simply do not know how to begin. We have initiated a "*JABA* Users Group" to support this activity by creating a network for the sharing of experiences, suggestions, and materials. Other methods of shaping our individual and collective skills have been discussed among the editorial staff and will be implemented either formally or informally. We encourage additional input along these lines and we will consider seriously your suggestions.

One of my initial intentions in writing this editorial was to point out *specific* problems and issues that I hope that Journal will address in the future. I must refrain from doing so, however, because the list has grown to an unmanageable length. There is much to discover, there are many new problems to solve, and there are quite a few old problems that remain unsolved in spite of our best efforts to date. In short, there are limitless opportunities for applied behavior analysis to contribute to the betterment of our society, and toward this goal the Journal will provide its full and continued support.

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