EDITORIAL

When the *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis* was first published in 1968 it was one of two journals devoted to what could be characterized as a behavioral approach to applied problems. Thirteen years later there are over 25. For what purpose was the *Journal* first published? Does this purpose still exist? If not, does the *Journal* aspire to new goals—are there new problems to solve?

In 1968 JABA followed its sister publication, the *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior*, into print as an outlet in the applied area for an approach and methodology that were not always welcome in other leading publications. As the first behavioral journal dealing with applied problems in the United States, it addressed a content area often neglected in leading applied and clinical journals. Conceptually, JABA published approaches to problems that reflected some of the philosophical foundations of behaviorism. These foundations and a methodology emphasizing detailed analysis of individual behavior were puzzling to some and heretical to others.

But JABA was more than policy and philosophy. Under the leadership of superb administrators and editors, as well as prominent scholars, JABA developed a reputation among contributors for detailed and thoughtful reviews, fair editorial policies, and a generally positively reinforcing experience whether the decision was favorable or unfavorable. New contributors were encouraged to pursue their efforts. Positive aspects of their work were highlighted and feedback provided on suggested improvements. Very few form letters found their way into the JABA editorial process and experienced investigators benefited as much as those who were new to the process. JABA served an educational as well as a communicative function. The enthusiasm and faith of many who were involved as Editorial Board members, reviewers, and contributors supported this effort and JABA flourished beyond all hopes.

In 1977 the *American Psychologist* reported that JABA ranked third out of 57 social science journals on mean citations per published article, topped only by the *American Psychologist* and the *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior*. Subscriptions outnumber all but the largest journals, and are distributed worldwide. Major advances in our science and our profession, first reported in JABA, have affected every aspect of our functioning.

But success breeds imitation, and rapid growth in any field leads to splintering. In addition to approximately 25 "behavioral" journals, investigators may now submit their behaviorally analytic work to any major educational, psychological, or psychiatric journal and expect a warm reception. Echoing the early and somewhat radical (at the time) policies of JABA, the current Editor of the *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* discourages submission of reports that do not demonstrate clear applied significance with well-defined clinical populations.

With this record of influence and leadership, JABA should not depart from the very principles that ensured such overwhelming success. What is needed is a reaffirmation of those principles in a manner that will be relevant during the 1980's. To this end, JABA will continue to publish major contributions on diverse topics that spark new development in existing areas or potentiate new subareas of applied behavior analysis. But in a field that tends to become shallow as it is reinforced for producing new technology, there is an increased need for further development of principles of behavior that advance our science in addition to solving a problem. Thus, we need to reemphasize our conceptual approach by publishing articles that develop new information on principles of behavior applicable to the field as a whole. JABA will continue to lead the area methodologically by publishing articles that assist us in discovering the various criteria for applied significance

as well as articles that develop new strategies for analyzing behavior. In addition, we will continue to provide pertinent and timely integrative discussions of major areas or trends in applied behavior analysis. Finally, JABA will also maintain its tradition of detailed and rich feedback in the context of the review process that benefits all concerned.

From its position of strength and influence,

and with its wide circulation and heavy citation record, JABA should continue to lead our ever-broadening field of science and practice. It is a privilege and an honor to be Editor of JABA and I will look forward to your help and advice in achieving our mutually shared goals during the coming three years.

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