STASIS AND CHANGE

LEONARD GREEN

WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

I never have fully understood the wisdom in the adage, “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.” After all, if everyone took the adage literally, then how would new approaches, new directions, and new knowledge ever be developed? At best, obedience to adages, homilies, and biblical directives may serve the function of encouraging thoughtful consideration before instituting changes; at worst, blind resistance to change simply because things appear to be working adequately stifles creativity and advancement. Certainly change for its own sake is not a compelling goal, but neither is complacency even in the face of success. Science advances not only because researchers try to fix that which is “broke,” but also because scientific alternatives arise, risks are taken, and change is implemented.

With the lofty goals of furthering our science, broadening our impact and influence, creating new insights into our understanding of individual behavior, and expanding our audience, I am excited and privileged to announce three major changes—advances, I hope—in the *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior*.

Behavioral Neuroscience

The November 2005 special issue of *JEAB* was entitled *The Relation of Behavior and Neuroscience*. The breadth of the topics in that issue, the techniques used, and the species that were studied all varied widely. Articles ranged from the neurobiology of simple associative learning in eyeblink conditioning to the brain correlates of decision making over time; the articles examined effects of drugs, genetic differences, and brain lesions; techniques involved single-unit recording, event-related potentials, and neuroimaging; and the species under study included rats, mice, pigeons, rabbits, monkeys, and humans. The diversity is impressive, but not to be lost in the multiplicity of the articles in that issue is the

homogeneity of its underlying theme, namely that a synthesis of the experimental analysis of behavior with neuroscience may be feasible.

It is our belief that neuroscientists must be informed about basic research in the science of behavior. So, too, behavioral researchers should be familiar with advances in neuroscience. But, importantly, my goal is not simply that of having each discipline become more aware of the work of the other. Rather, my goal is to see a coming together of behavioral and neurobiological research, and *JEAB* should be a principal venue for the publication of such work. Toward this end, I am pleased to announce the appointment of David W. Schaal as the inaugural *Editor for Behavioral Neuroscience*. Dave brings his considerable expertise and knowledge in both neuroscience and the experimental analysis of behavior to serve both our readers and our authors, and by doing so, to advance our understanding of the determinants of individual behavior.

I realize the task of publishing work in behavioral neuroscience that satisfies both scientific camps will not be an easy one—steering between the Charybdis of those who see a strictly behavioral approach as narrow and limiting, and the Scylla of those who view the search for neurobiological underpinnings of behavior as futile and misguided. But there is no “either/or” in which one must either study behavior or study neuroscience. As Timberlake, Schaal, and Steinmetz (2005) noted in their Introduction to the special issue, there are independent sciences of behavior and neurobiology, and there is some research that combines aspects of both, but what appears to be missing is a broad conceptual integration. They went on to say that “It might be argued that the time is not yet right because neuroscience has yet to account for the fine-grained dynamics of operant behavior (or because operant conditioning has yet to resolve the majority of the behavioral problems...). But such objections, however reasonable they may appear, ignore research that

already has begun to integrate neuroscience and behavior.” We want *JEAB* to serve as a vehicle for that integration.

We welcome your submissions, and your understanding.

Perspectives on Behavior

JEAB is introducing a new category of articles, *Perspectives on Behavior*, that is meant to provide “mini-reviews” on contemporary or emerging topics in behavioral analysis. A *Perspective* may focus on a topical issue, update an area of empirical research, or point out problems that need to be addressed. A *Perspective* may serve to introduce new ideas or provide a guide to help us understand what it is we already know (or do not know). Undergraduate and graduate students, along with established researchers, are likely to benefit from the mini-review nature of such articles.

The paper is to be prepared according to standard *JEAB* requirements (see the January issue for *Preparation of Manuscripts for JEAB*). That is, there is to be the standard cover page, an Abstract, body of the text, followed by References, Author’s Note, Tables (if any), Figure Legends, and Figures. Perspective articles are to be on the order of 4,000 to 5,000 words.

Submissions are by invitation, but we welcome and encourage your suggestions for topics and contributors. Please submit suggestions to the Editor.

Electronic Access

Without dissemination of the scientific work being conducted, little is gained from the conduct of research. Ease of access increases

the likelihood that one’s work will be read, thereby increasing the potential benefit to both the individual researcher and the scientific community. Toward the goal of improving access to the work published in *JEAB*, we have linked with PubMed Central (PMC) of NIH’s National Library of Medicine to make all past articles available electronically. Towards this end, *JEAB* articles published since 1996 already are available at PMC, and PMC will soon make available every article published in *JEAB*, beginning with Volume 1, January 1958, when the journal began.

In addition, beginning with the January 2005 issue, each article will be available as a PDF and also in full-text HTML format, featuring links from references to the PubMed abstracts. However, issues will be made freely accessible from PubMed Central 6 months (three issues) after their publication. Subscribers to the journal will have access even to the three most recent issues via a passworded login page or, where possible with the individual’s institution, via the subscribing institution’s domain addresses. We believe that this arrangement will maintain the viability of the journal while at the same time ensuring easy and wider access to and dissemination of the published work.

The direct link to the PMC site for *JEAB* is: <http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/tocrender.fcgi?journal=299&action=archive>

One thing is certain: these three initiatives represent change. It is to be hoped that the change will prove to be an advance, and one that will benefit not only our readers and our authors, as practicing scientists, but our science of behavior, as well.