

## Emerging Scholar Best Article Award, 2011

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The *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* has a long history of supporting emerging scholars. That history continues very nicely with the *Emerging Scholar Best Article Award*. To be eligible for the award, the article's first author must be an "emerging scholar," which we interpret as being non-tenured (e.g., a graduate student, post-doctoral scholar, research scientist, or assistant professor). The recipient is selected by a random group of editorial board members (with potential recipients excluded). The winner receives a plaque as well as a small financial award generously provided by Springer, the journal's publisher.

The 2011 winner is Lisa Kiang, for her article entitled "Change in Ethnic Identity across the High School Years among Adolescents with Latin American, Asian, and European Backgrounds" (Kiang et al. 2010). Given that the journal publishes 12 issues per year, each containing from 10 to 14 manuscripts, the editors view the award as a considerably distinctive accomplishment. The "best" article for 2011 was selected from a large pool of very strong articles. Those articles are important to review, albeit briefly, to highlight their competitiveness, which also happens to showcase the type of research being conducted by the next generation of researchers studying the adolescent period.

The final pool of twelve articles (one per journal issue) included eight that the editors viewed as quite strong and worthy of recognition. Vervoort et al. (2010) examined the relationships between ethnicity, peer-reported bullying and victimization, and whether the ethnic composition of the schools' classes moderated these relationships. Her study involved 2,386 early adolescents from 117 school classes

in the Netherlands. She found, for example, that victimization was more prevalent in ethnically heterogeneous classes and that ethnic minority adolescents bully more in ethnically heterogeneous classes. Jennings et al. (2010) examined whether, and if so how, parental suicidality serves as a risk factor for delinquency. Their study used data from a longitudinal study of 2,491 Hispanic (Puerto Rican) youth and found that, while traditional risk/protective factors, including parental mental health issues, relate to delinquency in expected ways, youths engaged in more frequent and varied delinquency over time if their parents had attempted suicide. Lee and Hahm (2010), focused on acculturation's role in the manifestation of sexual risk behaviors among Latina adolescents transitioning to adulthood. In her longitudinal study of over 1,000 Latina adolescents, she found that those who were more acculturated to the US (e.g., spoke English at home) were more likely to exhibit sexual risk behaviors and have STDs. Sullivan et al. (2010) studied high school youth (n = 2,549, 38 schools) to identify subgroups of risk behavior and found distinct patterns of risk activities relating to youth's characteristics and socio-environmental factors. Willoughby (2010) examined the relationship between longitudinal changes of three marital attitudes to family structure, educational aspirations, race and gender in a sample of 1,010 (47% female) high school students followed for 4 years from ages 14 until 18. He found that adolescents placed a higher priority on marriage as they prepared to transition into young adulthood but that gender, race and educational aspirations all altered the degree to which marital attitudes changed across the time period. Kenny et al. (2010) examined 477 students' prepartying and drinking game playing's association with excessive alcohol consumption and alcohol-related negative consequences as well as risk activities during high school and the

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transitional first month of college. Brown Urban et al. (2010) explored the role of intentional self regulation, neighborhood ecological assets, and activity involvement in youth developmental outcomes. Using longitudinal data from the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development (PYD) (545 youth, with 50% female), she found that, within lower asset settings, youth with the most positive person-level factors, in this instance, intentional self regulation, benefit the most from proximal processes such as extracurricular activity involvement. Bauermeister et al. (2010) explored the relationship trajectories of 350 youth (55% male) between the ages of 15–19 years and who were recruited from three GLBT drop-in centers in the New York City area. They investigated the influence of participating in a same-sex relationship or an opposite-sex relationship on sexual minority youths' psychological well-being and found, for example, that involvement in a same-sex relationship was positively associated with changes in self-esteem in males, and negatively correlated with changes in internalized homophobia in females. As can be seen, the articles identified as worthy of special recognition addressed a broad array of important topics and did so by offering analyses from impressive data sets, many of which had longitudinal components. Although it is difficult to highlight all of these manuscripts' many strengths, it is notable that each had results that had important practical implications for diverse groups of youth.

Although the above articles were deemed quite strong, editorial board members ranked three others somewhat more highly. We originally had no intention of recognizing semi-finalists, but the reality is that these three may be considered as such. Indeed, each one was ranked at the top by at least one board member. One of the articles was by Crespo et al. (2010). Their study explored the longitudinal links between perceptions of family connectedness and body satisfaction in 1,774 (52% female) adolescents and found bidirectional effects between perceptions of family connectedness and body satisfaction for girls, but not for boys. The second article was by Weiss et al. (2010). His study used a nationally-representative dataset of tenth graders ( $n = 10,946$ , 46% female) to better assess a generalizable relationship among school engagement, academic achievement and school size with a specific focus on cohort size. The findings revealed that, as with school size, moderately sized cohorts or grade-level groups provide the greatest engagement advantage for all students and that cohorts beyond 400 students raise the risk of harmful consequences. They conclude, however, that the ability to prescribe an ideal cohort or school size remains unlikely given that each group size affects different students differently, a conclusion of significance for the widespread adoption of school and cohort size reduction reforms. Lastly, the third frequently ranked article was authored by

Medvedeva (2010), an article that examined the relationship between perceived discrimination and self-reported proficiency in English and non-English languages among 2,826 (53% female) adolescents of immigrants. Adolescents who felt discriminated against by school peers were more likely to report speaking and reading English less than “very well” while those who felt discriminated against by teachers and counselors at school or reported perceived societal discrimination were more likely to report speaking and reading English “very well.” The results suggest that youth's English, as opposed to non-English language, serves as the primary venue in which perceived discrimination influences youth's linguistic adaptation. Although all in many ways different, these articles evince strengths that mirror those published by the emerging scholars mentioned earlier. They all address issues of practical significance, and they do so by engaging sound theoretical paradigms, developing incisive hypotheses, impressively analyzing rich data sets, and expertly crafting compelling narratives.

Finally and as noted earlier, Lisa Kiang was the lead author of the editors' most highly regarded article published by an emerging scholar in 2010. Her article (Kiang et al. 2010) explored changes in ethnic identity over the 4 years of high school of 541 adolescents (51% female) from Latin American, Asian, and European backgrounds. She found that individual adolescents exhibit substantial fluctuation in ethnic identity across their high school years. Further, she found that the fluctuation linked with concurrent changes in family cohesion, the proportion of same-ethnic peers, and ethnic centrality. Yet, as a group, the adolescents reported no developmental changes in their ethnic identity over time. As with the other articles noted above, this study reflects the strength of articles published in this journal and the rigor of emerging scholars' contributions. Her longitudinal study makes use of exceptional data, addresses an important topic from a developmental lense, and fine-tunes our understanding of factors that contribute to (and support) adolescents' sense of self and place in a diverse society. I join my colleagues in congratulating Professor Kiang, her colleagues, as well as the other authors considered for this award, for their outstanding scholarship relating to the study of adolescence and for their support of our journal.

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### Author Biography

**Roger J. R. Levesque** is Chair and Professor of Criminal Justice, Indiana University. He serves as Editor of the *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*.