

Editorial

Most incoming editors of psychological journals now write an editorial outlining their policies and procedures. As I thought about my approach, I realized that the most instructive introduction would include a brief description of the genesis of my views about editing and about *Memory & Cognition*.

When, as a neophyte researcher, I first began receiving comments from editors and reviewers, I was astonished. These people were deficient in a number of respects: They couldn't read; they didn't understand; they had no imagination; they were hopelessly hidebound by the theories and methodologies of the past! As time conquered my emotional reactions, I recognized that my prized contributions were not particularly earthshaking, after all. Indeed, I had to admit, after careful scrutiny of the manuscripts, that the editors' and reviewers' "misinterpretations" probably were induced by my lack of clarity, imprecise statements, and the like. I now think of reviews as a kind of valuable postdoctoral education, and I have come to look forward to hard-hitting, thought-provoking, challenging reviews. Perhaps I have been lucky, drawing excellent reviewers, but I now believe that most reviewers have these attributes. The least I can do for the profession is to try to offer similar service.

To be effective, reviews need to be based on a careful consideration of the manuscript by knowledgeable, conscientious, dedicated reviewers, experts whose commitment is to advancing science. These are the kinds of reviews that the Associate Editors, James Chumbley and Robert Proctor, and I seek for submissions to *Memory & Cognition*. They also are the kinds of reviews we intend to provide, continuing the tradition established by previous editors of the journal, George Briggs, Rudolph Schulz, Robert Crowder, Robert Bjork, and most recently, Alice Healy. In brief, our editorial policy is to make the reviews facilitative and educational, regardless of the final decision about publishability.

Consistent with its name, *Memory & Cognition* will emphasize articles pertaining to memory and to cognition. Relevant areas include human learning, memory, cognition, pattern recognition, attention, sensory memory, speech perception, information processing, concepts and categories, and forgetting. Other areas are human performance, motor learning and control, psycholinguistics, text processing and comprehension, reading, knowledge retrieval, thinking, reasoning, judgment and decision making, and problem solving. Some research may be social, developmental, neurological, or applied. Such articles are appropriate as long as their general points inform us about memory or cognition.

In general, we seek substantial reports of theoretically inspired research programs. Most articles, therefore, will

contain experiments whose results resolve an important issue and tell a tightly argued, persuasive story. Most articles will be principled and integrative, with compelling results. These emphases mean that we are interested in new models and methodologies, in simulations and networks, as well as in other types of theoretical papers, brief empirical notes, commentary, and literature reviews.

Negative outcomes and failures to replicate important studies may be acceptable if impressive efforts have been made to document the original results and to demonstrate the reasons for the different findings. Thus, in these cases, we seek demonstrations of when and under what conditions the target phenomena do and do not occur.

The main criteria for acceptance are the theoretical contributions and the methodological and interpretational soundness of the research submitted. Currently, the acceptance rate is about 20%, although revision often increases this rate. The acceptance rate is not surprising, for, like other major, thriving journals, *Memory & Cognition* receives many more manuscripts than it can publish.

Accepted manuscripts share many characteristics. In addition to the noteworthy conceptual and experimental contributions already noted, they are simply, concisely, and smoothly written. The articles present the central purpose at or close to the beginning of the introduction to inform, and, presumably, capture the attention of the readers. The articles contain a minimum number of abbreviations and other types of jargon that may confuse the readers. They focus on comparisons within or between conditions of single experiments and not on comparisons across different experiments. The latter are discouraged because they often are vulnerable to multiple problems of interpretation. The articles establish the generality of the effects across stimulus materials.

Statistical analyses are clear, with the principal results described in prose. The prose usually is supported by tables of means or other descriptive statistics, with estimates of variability included, as appropriate. For example, standard errors of the mean frequently accompany means and the mean square error terms accompany analyses of variance. Inferential statistics augment the descriptions. Typically, a single level of confidence (Type I error rate) for the inferential analyses is announced near the beginning of the first Results section. This single confidence level then is maintained throughout, with exceptions noted only for marginally significant results. When many statistical tests are conducted so that the danger of Type I errors is high, appropriately conservative statistical procedures are used. Finally, the reliabilities are reported for measures being correlated.

Submission procedures are standard. All manuscripts must be typed double-spaced, on standard-weight paper.

Five copies of each manuscript and all accompanying materials (e.g., tables, figures, appendixes) should be sent to Margaret Jean Intons-Peterson, Editor, Department of Psychology, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana 47405. Please include a cover letter that describes the procedures used to meet federal and local requirements for the treatment and protection of human subjects and any special instructions or requests. If a request is made for blind reviews, please put the author's name on the title page only. We acknowledge receipt of each manuscript immediately and give the author the name of the action editor (one of the associate editors or me, except in special cases) for the manuscript.

Tables, figures, and all other aspects of the manuscript should be prepared in accord with instructions given in the journal and in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, Third Edition (1983). If authors have questions about format, they should consult recent issues of the journal. All references should be listed accurately in the References list. It is the responsibility of the author to be sure that all citations in the text appear in the References list, that all entries in the References list appear in the text, and that the citations in the References list are accurate and complete.

The action editor assigns the manuscript to reviewers, usually to at least one member of the editorial board, and sometimes to occasional reviewers with special expertise

in the area. The action editor tries to inform the authors about the results of the reviews and the decision about publishing within 60 days of submission. The increasing use of electronic mail for reviews helps to facilitate this process. If there is a delay beyond 60 days, we notify the authors, explaining the reason for the delay. The action editor makes the final decision about each manuscript. This decision takes into account the advice of the reviewers, of course, but it is *not* based on a tally of the number of yea and nay votes. Instead, it reflects the action editor's assessment of scientific merit, as previously described.

We wish to acknowledge our debt to the previous editors and reviewers who have shaped *Memory & Cognition*. We hope that current members of the editorial board and our many ad hoc reviewers will continue to lend their expertise. The journal also welcomes new reviewers. I invite potential reviewers to send their names to me. Please include affiliations, regular and electronic mail addresses, telephone numbers, and areas of expertise.

We look forward to receiving your manuscripts and your offers of reviewing assistance. We invite your comments about the journal and our editorial policy.

Margaret Jean Intons-Peterson
Editor