

## Editorial

I am pleased to begin a term as Editor of *Memory & Cognition*. Throughout my professional career, the journal has maintained its reputation as one of the top publication outlets for cognitive psychologists. Some very influential work has appeared in this journal over the years, and manuscript quality remains high. It is a place where one consistently finds excellent research, reported well. Thanks are due the previous editorial teams for their fine work. It is a distinguished intellectual lineage, one that includes my own PhD advisor Robert G. Crowder.

My editorial philosophy is rather simple. First, I think an editor's job is to act primarily as a gatekeeper. Acting in conjunction with reviewer comments, I try to determine whether the experimental designs are proper, the results clear cut, and the theoretical conclusions pithy and clear. I do not try to reinterpret the theoretical import of the results. Authors should be allowed to tell their own stories, as long as the experimental designs and results rise above the methodological threshold and the results are of theoretical interest. I will not force an author to adopt a particular theoretical position (although, admittedly, I may gently suggest alternative ways to interpret the results).

Second, ours is an empirical science; as such, I think it is very important to focus on the data first. I believe in "Results and Discussion" sections, not "Discussion with Occasional References to Results" sections. Results sections should always begin with "results," meaning the actual data rather than statistical tests. Descriptive statistics should tell the main story; inferential statistics are critical, but in a supporting role. When in doubt—replicate.

Third, I like to see theoretical discussions kept short and simple. Most empirical papers today are too long, and the discussions travel far beyond the data. I think length restrictions are a good thing and I have imposed them on manuscripts submitted to *Memory & Cognition*. Articles for *Memory & Cognition* should not exceed a maximum of 8,000 words. The word count applies to the main text and footnotes only, excluding the title page, abstract, references, figures, tables, and appendices. Word limits force authors to write concisely and not to speculate unnecessarily. Short articles are also easier to read and digest, which, in turn, increases their potential impact. Word limits also shorten the review process and associated publication lags.

Fourth, articles should contain appropriate scholarship. Too many authors today are trapped in a "task bubble" and make no attempt to place their work in its appropriate historical context. With the sophisticated search engines now available, there is really no good reason for a lack of scholarship. Reviewers can play an important role here, and that is why it is important to pick good ones. Our team has already compiled a fine list of Consulting Editors, but the bulk of our reviewers will still come from the field at large. Please say "Yes" if we ask you to review for the journal.

Finally, I will be inviting progress or accountability reports from the readership. These will be targeted assessments of mature phenomena (e.g., the generation effect; the mirror effect) and/or paradigms (e.g., DRM; process dissociation)—not literature reviews per se. What exactly have we learned from using particular paradigms, or from studying specific effects? Have there been any resolutions of the major issues, and so forth? More information on these reports will come later in a "Call for Papers" editorial.

To close, I want to thank the 10 Associate Editors who will be working with me. Each is a fine scholar, and I have already learned much from reading their editorial actions:

Erik M. Altmann, *Michigan State University*  
Markus F. Damian, *University of Bristol*  
David E. Huber, *University of California, San Diego*  
Bradley C. Love, *University of Texas, Austin*  
Kathleen B. McDermott, *Washington University*  
Klaus Oberauer, *University of Zurich*  
Katherine A. Rawson, *Kent State University*  
David Waller, *Miami University*  
Geoff Ward, *University of Essex*  
Deanne L. Westerman, *Binghamton University*

Any journal rises and falls on the quality of its authors. I invite all of you to send us your best work.

James S. Nairne, Editor  
*Purdue University*