

Editorial

Since January 1, 2004, our new editorial office and board have been processing submissions to this journal. This issue is the first product of our efforts. The introduction of an almost entirely electronic submissions process (submission portal accessible via <http://www.apa.org/journals/dev.html>) at the start of our term opened the door to receipt of a greater volume of submissions from all over the world.

As exemplified in the APA Centennial Series in Volume 28 of *Developmental Psychology* (Parke, Ornstein, Rieser, & Zahn-Waxler, 1992), and represented by and expanded on in the book *A Century of Developmental Psychology* (Parke, Ornstein, Rieser, & Zahn-Waxler, 1994), the field of developmental psychology has grown even as it has maintained many of the themes that formed it: social, cognitive, and emotional development; age periods from infancy to adulthood; and diverse theoretical, methodological, and explanatory orientations. There is no question that the explosion of work in the field has brought much sophisticated knowledge; yet this knowledge tends to reside in fragmented and isolated literatures that rarely inform each other in new or profound ways.

Developmental Psychology should not only reflect the latest advances in the field and provide an avenue for the integration of our accumulated knowledge, but it should also be a leader in promoting the development of new fields of inquiry. With that in mind, our editorial board will be generating periodic calls for papers to be published in special sections or special issues that will highlight new areas of investigation or will deal with controversies in need of attention. These topics will highlight burgeoning or controversial areas that reflect the breadth and depth of our field.

This attention to new fields of inquiry will provide an opportunity to cross disciplinary boundaries into other social and natural sciences. For example, contemporary biologists are making exciting discoveries about how environment plays a role in basic biological processes from the cellular level on up. Dialogues with cellular biologists, developmental biologists, geneticists, and neuroscientists should be represented in this journal's pages. We should bring the work of these scientists to the readership of *Developmental Psychology* with an eye to showing how their work informs controversies or unanswered questions in our field.

Innovation-promoting cross talk should also be fostered by urging developmentalists who employ mixed methods or methods not customary in our field (e.g., ethnography) to submit their work to the journal. For some fundamental questions in our field, the use of mixed methodology may bring about a deeper understanding of developmental processes. Methodological innovation is especially challenging to a leading journal's established procedures, because maintaining high standards is imperative, and standards do, to a meaningful extent, rest on following time-tested methodological prescriptions. If new styles of work are to be entertained, however, the essence of these prescriptions must be thoughtfully discerned and carefully adapted to work that uses new evidentiary and inferential modes, so that evaluative rigor does not produce investigatory rigor mortis.

Aside from fostering new areas of inquiry, attention to controversies, and cross-disciplinary talk in content and in methods, we would like to pay particular attention to a critical issue in developmental science: the role of context. We are particularly interested in articles that do justice both to the developmental phenomenon under study and to the context in which it unfolds. For example, we encourage the submission of cross-cultural comparisons in which cultural processes are examined and measured with the same sophistication that is apparent in the measurement of the developmental phenomena under study. Similar goals apply to characterizations of particular socioeconomic groups. Our hope is to spur the field well beyond treating social categories as explanatory constructs and toward illuminating the complex and diverse processes that underlie the manifest differences between those categories.

In addition, in our work we would like to address a serious limitation of our field—the segregation of research on “normal” versus “abnormal” processes along sociodemographic lines. Much of the extant data on normative developmental phenomena has rested on studies of middle-class samples of White Americans, whereas most high-risk, problem-oriented studies in this country have been conducted with poor populations of color. This strategy is problematic for several reasons. One, it assumes—without supporting empirical evidence—the universality of developmental processes found among a discrete (albeit large) subgroup of the population, the White middle class. Two, it ignores the possibility that some socializing influences can be both highly “normative” in and relatively unique to particular nonmainstream groups (as might, for example, strong kin networks or everyday experiences of discrimination among families of color). Three, it minimizes the problems that can and do exist among White, well-to-do families; epidemiological research often shows that the majority of individuals exhibiting the risk or problem in question are not people of color. In a related vein,

this scientific strategy contributes to the perpetuation of negative stereotypes of ethnic minority populations and contributes to public policies and practices based on deficit models.

For these reasons, we would like to urge the submission of studies that investigate, with a strong theoretical rationale, normative developmental processes within diverse populations in this country or abroad. In addition, theoretically driven replications of developmental phenomena that have previously been studied solely in one population will be welcome.

Introducing changes to the editorial policies of an existing journal requires careful thought and implementation. For that reason, we have carefully chosen an editorial board whose work is congruent with the vision and interests described here. The board members also, of course, reflect the diversity of the field of developmental psychology in terms of theoretical, methodological, and topical orientations and age ranges studied; we invited scholars from a variety of fields (e.g., anthropology, biology) and representing diverse methodologies (e.g., ethnography, survey) and theoretical perspectives in the interest of maximizing the fair review of manuscripts reflecting different scientific orientations and methods.

We are excited about the work that lies ahead, but we are a minimal part of it. We encourage our readers to become involved as authors or reviewers (see <http://www.brown.edu/CSHD/DP/accept.htm> to become a part of our reviewer data bank) or by suggesting topics for special sections. Our academic field will advance and remain vibrant and challenging as long as we all give it our best. We on the editorial team of *Developmental Psychology* are entirely committed to doing our part.—Cynthia García Coll, Editor

References

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