

Feeling Rejected? Graduate Students and the Journal Article Review Process

Chair: Marcy Boynton
APA, San Francisco
August 19, 2007



APA Science Student Council

On behalf of Graduate Students
in Psychological Science

Members of the 2007 APA Science Student Council

Front row –
Marcy Boynton
Suzi Dean
Kelly Dunn
Janet Tomiyama
(chair)



Second row –
Paul Poteat
Jennifer Brielmaier
Camilla Hileman
Felix Thoemmes
Marc Berman

<http://www.apa.org/Science/apasscweb.html>



American Psychological Association

Join the APA Science Student Council

- Four (4) positions will be available on the Council for the 2008-2009 term.
- One person in each of the following areas of research will be elected:
 - Behavioral Neuroscience
 - Health Research
 - Clinical Science
 - Social/Personality

Applications are due by October 15, 2007.

<http://www.apa.org/science/apassc-nom.html>



Next Hour...

Conducting Interdisciplinary Research- A Guide for Graduate Students

Session Type: Discussion

Division(s) MEMBER, APA Board of Scientific Affairs

Building: Moscone Center:

Room Description: Rooms 252/254/256

Room Location: West Mezzanine-South Building

Date: 08/19/2007

Time: 4:00PM - 4:50PM



Our Speakers

- William Stoops – Postdoctoral Fellow in Behavioral Science at the University of Kentucky
- Matthew Lieberman - Associate Professor, UCLA Department of Psychology & Editor of *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience*
- Robert Kaplan - Professor and Chair of the Department of Health Services in the School of Public Health at UCLA & Editor of *Health Psychology*



Feeling Rejected? Dealing with the Journal Article Review Process

William W. Stoops, Ph.D.

University of Kentucky College of
Medicine, Dept. of Behavioral
Science

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It's not personal.

- The first reaction
- Decisions based upon science, not who you are
- Talk to your mentor

Use the rejection.

- Consider issues raised by reviewers
- What did the editor say?
- Make the changes and submit somewhere new

Avoid rejection.

- Sound rationale and design
- Understand the related issues
- Appropriate journal and publication type selection

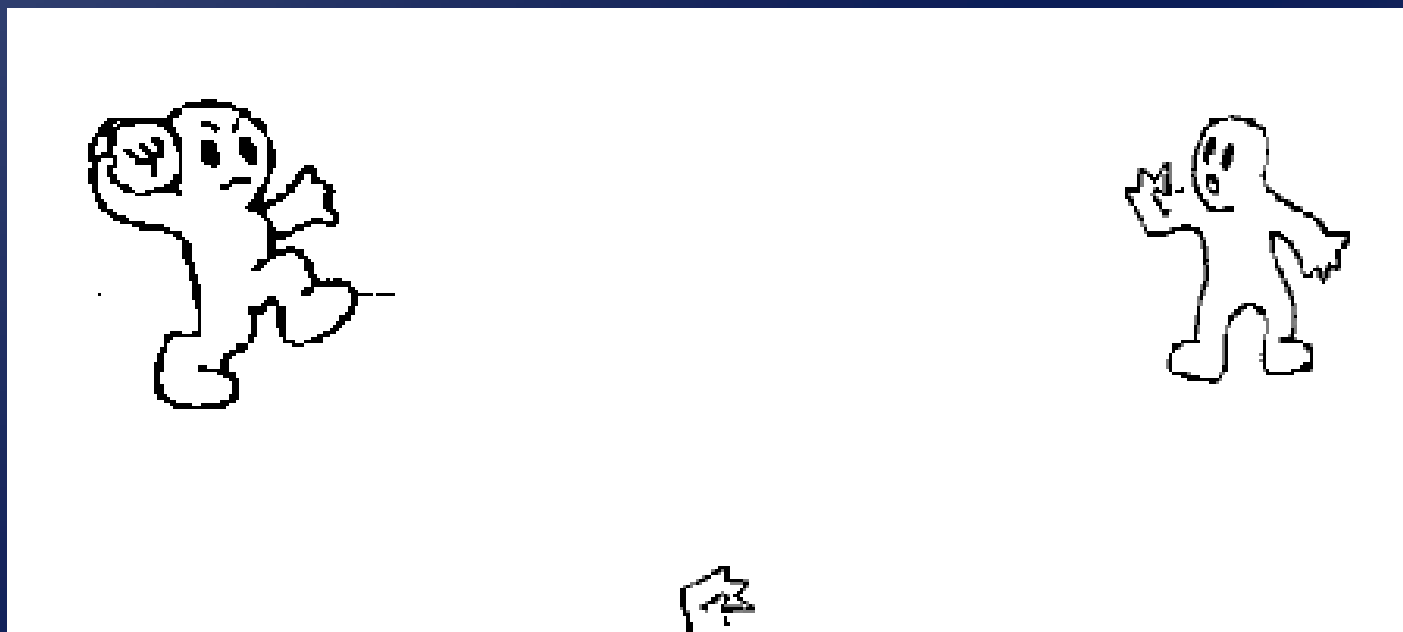


Getting rejected in the peer review process

Matthew D. Lieberman
University of California, Los Angeles



Cyberball

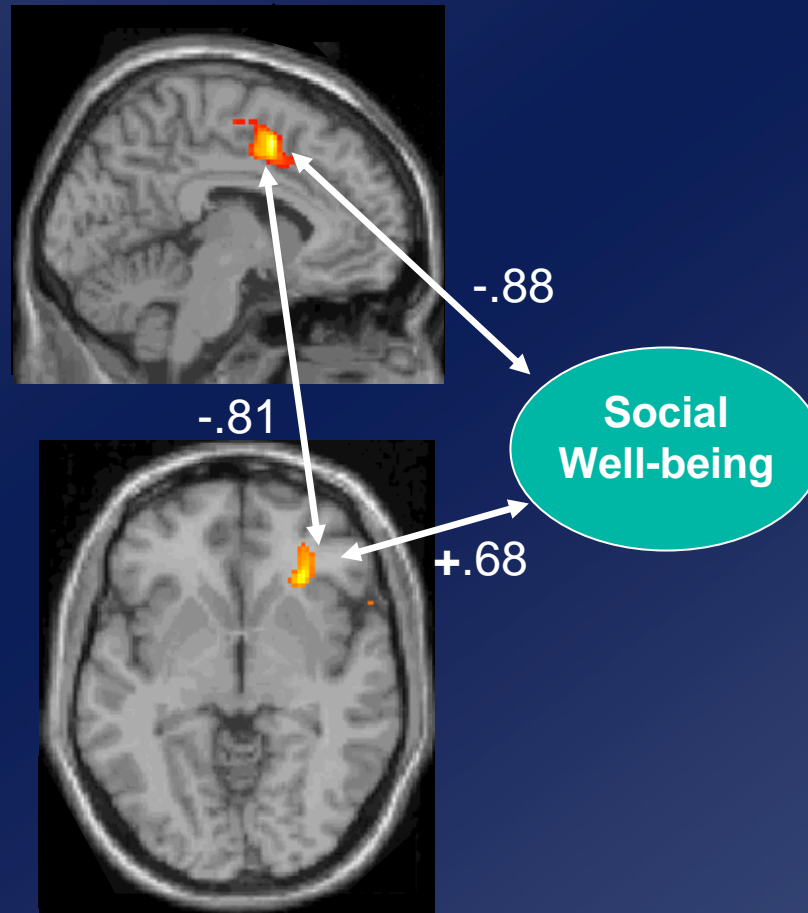


Exclusion

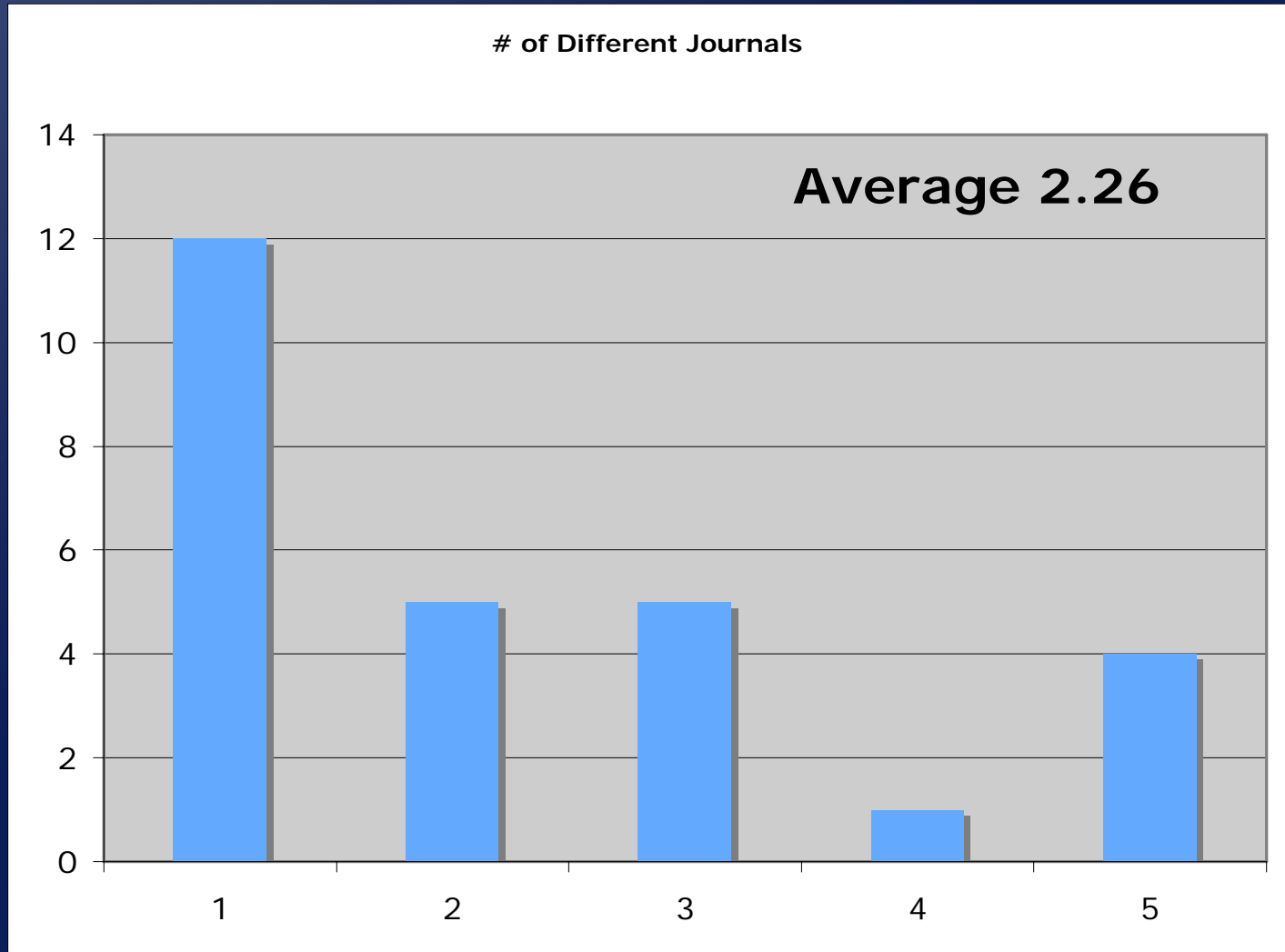


Social Pain

Cyberball



of Journals Submitted to (N=27)



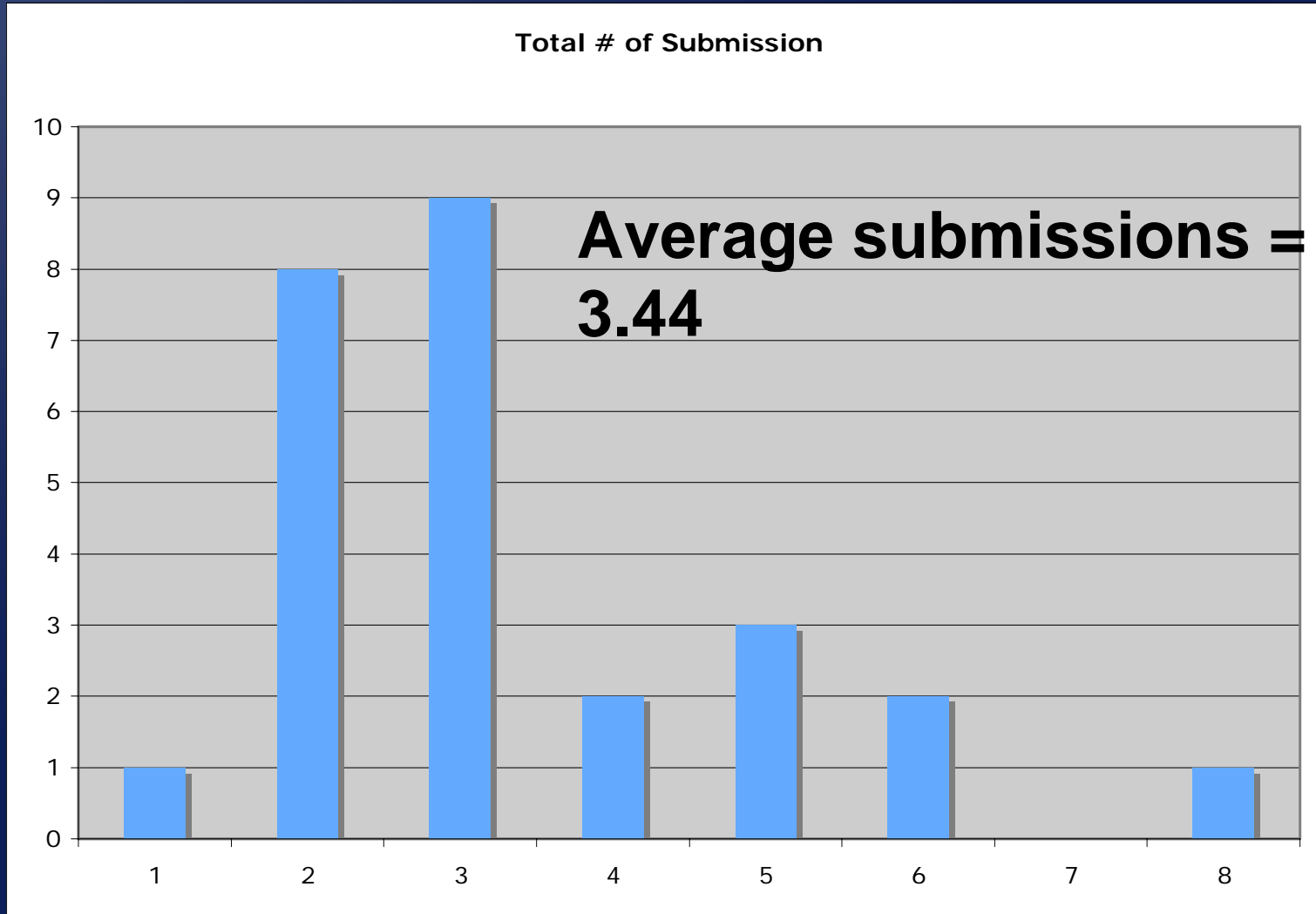
Rejection

- **Fact of life**
- **It is personal (sort of)**
 - Not intentionally personal
 - A good reputation leads to positive reading
 - Editors & reviewers are afraid to reject powerful people

Rejection

- **Fact of life**
- **It is personal (sort of)**
- **Its not whether you get rejected (you will!), but how you respond to it**
 - **Any hint of R&R? Correspond with editor**
 - **Aim for R&R, not acceptance**

of Journals Submitted to (N=27)



Rejection

- **Fact of life**
- **It is personal (sort of)**
- **Its not whether you get rejected (you will!), but how you respond to it**
- **Plan your paper's path**
 - **Science, Proceedings, Nature Neurosci, J Neuro, Psych Sci, Biological Psych, Neuroimage, JPSP, PSPB, JESP**

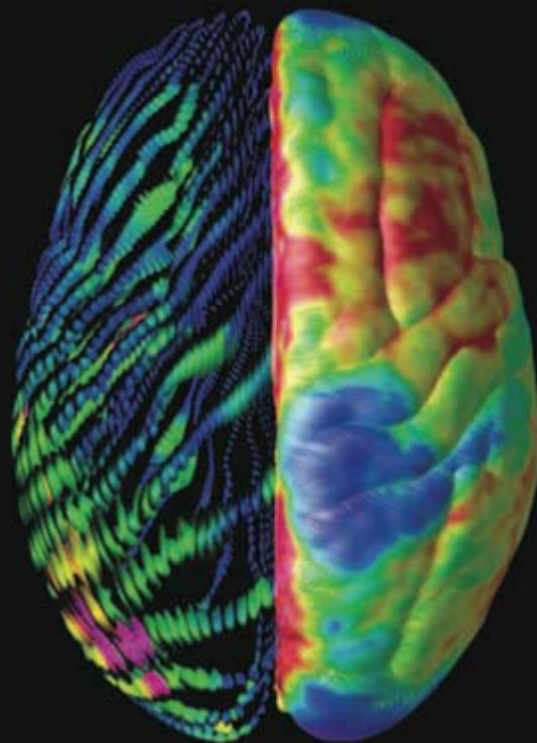
The End

ISSN 1000-100X

Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience

VOLUME 1 NUMBER 1 JANUARY 2006

www.scan.oxfordjournals.org



OXFORD JOURNALS
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Career Development Through Publishing Original Research

Robert M. Kaplan

University of California, Los Angeles

Prepared for:

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APA, San Francisco

August 19, 2007

Why Publish?

- Publication of peer reviewed original research remains the primary currency for academic employment and advancement
- Publication offers the best opportunity to gain recognition among peer scientists and clinicians

Are all publications given equal weight?

- In many academic environments, particularly schools of medicine, original research papers are given the most weight
 - Systematic literature reviews may be given high weight
 - Book chapters, editorials, non-systematic reviews, and case reports often are given less weight

Health Psychology

- Unique among APA journals because it is published jointly by APA and Division 38
- Although responsible to the APA Publications Board, the HP editor reports to the Division 38 Board

Factoids About Health Psychology

- Among over 100 psychology journals considered in one recent review, HP had the largest number of individual subscribers (comparison excludes *American Psychologist* and *Psychological Science*)
 - Papers in HP reach more psychologist readers than competing journals
- It is hard to get papers accepted by HP
 - Last year HP had the second highest rejection rate among all psychology journals (92%)

We want shorter, more sharply focused papers

- Most space will be used for original research reports, but there will be a small number of reviews, editorials, and letters to the editor
- We will no longer review papers longer than 30 pages
 - Most leading journals in the health and medical fields require that manuscripts be less than 4000 words, NEJM limits papers to 2700 words
 - We understand that it is harder to write a short than a long paper, but
 - The number of pages allocated to HP is fixed. Keeping papers short allows us to publish more high quality papers

What Happens When Manuscripts Are Submitted?

- Preliminary review in editorial office
 - All papers are discussed in a preliminary conference involving about dozen peer reviewers
 - About half of submissions are rejected within 2 weeks
 - About half of remaining papers assigned to associate editors and half handled by the Editor-in-Chief
 - Decisions are based on reports from at least two peer reviewers

Expect to Revise

- In the last three years, no paper has been accepted without revisions
- Response to reviewer criticism is a skill. Be sure to
 - Take criticism seriously
 - Respond to each concern
 - Clearly describe how you have responded in your cover letter
 - Don't hide data

Common Problems That Harm the Chances of a Paper Being Accepted

- No conceptual basis cited for research
- Causal inferences from cross-sectional data
- The paper is not directly related to our content area
- Research seen as “old hat”
- Technical problems
 - Poor grammar
 - Spelling and formatting errors

Should I contact the editor to get a commitment in advance of submission?

- **No!**
- All manuscripts go through blind peer review
- Editors should want to give each author an equal chance of having work reviewed impartially

Please

- Accept all changes in the track changes feature of MS Word prior to submission.
- We commonly get manuscripts that include:
 - Banter between co-authors shown in the track changes mode (“Joe I don’t care if you keep that statement in but I think it is BS”)
 - Incomplete and missing references

Nobody enjoys having papers rejected, but it happens to all authors

- It is not personal
- Authors are most unhappy when
 - They feel reviews have been unfair
 - The process takes too long
 - We are working on promptness and have shortened the average review time
 - However, the process bogs down when reviewers are non-responsive
 - Often it takes as many as 15 requests to get two reviews completed

Remember

- Virtually all authors have papers rejected
- A characteristic of the most successful authors is that they know how to work with feedback
- Don't get angry-- get published

Questions?



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