

## Editor's Introduction

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This issue of the *Journal of Personality Assessment (JPA)* marks several transitions. The most readily apparent transition, obvious to any long-term reader holding a copy of this issue, is a visual one. *JPA* has a fresh and colorful cover design. This design will remain constant across volumes and years, unlike the past when the *Journal's* color changed twice per year with each new volume. In addition, *JPA* is now being printed in an 8.5" × 11" size. For some this is likely to be an unpleasant change, as many people prized the former 6" × 9" format. Two pages fit nicely on a copy machine and at least some people (myself included) had bookshelves that perfectly accommodated the *Journal* in its old size. However, the new 8.5" × 11" format provides much greater flexibility for printing tables and figures and thus improves *JPA's* readability.

Other changes are likely to be less obvious, even though they are actually more substantial. First, on April 1, 2002, when the new Editorial Board officially began receiving manuscripts, the *Journal* adopted a new structure for processing submissions. Now both the Associate Editors and the Editor serve as Action Editors, taking responsibility for a portion of the 300 or so manuscripts that are submitted every year. Each manuscript is assigned to one of the Action Editors who is responsible for selecting appropriate peer reviewers, circulating the manuscript for review, carefully reading the manuscript and the reviewers' input once it is received, and making an editorial judgment about the manuscript's suitability for publication. Although the Editor continues to make final acceptance decisions, as a result of this change authors now receive a detailed editorial letter that integrates the reviewers' feedback with the Action Editor's perception of the manuscript to provide final guidance and direction for the manuscript.

As every author knows, reviewers often disagree with each other. For instance, a recent meta-analysis examined the extent to which scientific reviewers agreed whether a manuscript should be accepted or not (Meyer, in press). Across 13 samples and 4,807 paired judgments, the kappa coefficient for rater agreement was .21. When considering dimensional ratings of research quality, 24,939 pairs of reviewers drawn from 54 different samples produced an average intraclass correlation of .24. These are not high rates of agreement. By providing authors with an integrated final decision letter, the new editorial structure will bring a greater degree of clarity to

the review process at *JPA*. Fortunately, *JPA* has four excellent Associate Editors: Roger L. Greene, Linda S. Grossman, Mark J. Hilsenroth, and Robert E. McGrath. I believe our collective expertise reflects the diversity of content appearing in *JPA* and puts us in a good position to provide authors with sophisticated and helpful feedback that will enhance the quality of what is published in *JPA*.

Second, *JPA* now has three new sections. One addresses statistical developments and applications relevant to personality assessment, a second focuses on sophisticated case presentations, and the third provides reviews and announcements of new books, software, and tests relevant to personality assessment practice or research. As with the Associate Editors, *JPA* is fortunate to have an exemplary group of talented people who will serve as Section Editors for these new additions to the journal. In the following pages David Streiner and Geoff Norman provide an introduction to the Statistical Developments and Applications Section, Dave Nichols and Len Handler introduce the Clinical Case Applications Section, and Mark Blais and Charles Peterson describe the newly revamped Book, Software, and Test Reviews Section.

Third, as can be seen from the inside front cover, the *Journal* has an expanded Consulting Editor Board. These individuals volunteer their time and expertise to regularly review manuscripts submitted for publication. Although they work "behind the scenes" (unless they choose to sign their reviews), it is their efforts that largely shape and refine the articles that appear in the journal. As a result, we are all indebted to their service. Although *JPA* will continue to rely on the outside expertise of ad hoc reviewers, we now have a slightly expanded pool of Consulting Editors so most manuscripts will be reviewed only by members of this Board.

Several of our former Consulting Editors took the transition as an opportunity to retire from the long-term service they provided to the *Journal*. I extend a heartfelt thanks to them for generously giving their time, expertise, and guidance to *JPA* over the years.

### First Appointed to the *JPA* Consulting Editor Board

Joseph F. Rychlak	1966
Charles S. Newmark	1979

Peter B. Zeldow	1977
Charles D. Spielberger	1981
Nerella V. Ramanaiah	1983
Adelbert H. Jenkins	1986
Harrison G. Gough	1987
Louis H. Hsu	1987
Patricia B. Sutker	1987
Phillip Erdberg	1988
Jane Loevinger	1988
Guiseppe Costantino	1990
Glenn Curtiss	1991
Deborah Greenwald	1991
Margaret S. Gibbs	1994
Gloria C. Maccow	1996

A fourth important transition for the *Journal* is the electronic processing of manuscripts. As part of the transition, authors still must submit a paper copy of a manuscript. However, they now also submit a disk that contains a copy of their manuscript and any other correspondence, such as replies to reviewers. After removing identifying information, the electronic files are sent by email to reviewers, along with the necessary editorial feedback forms. Reviewers then submit their evaluations by email so in turn their review (with identifying information removed) and the Editor's letter can be sent to the authors by email. Although we have encountered a few glitches with this new process, overall it has been working in a remarkably smooth manner. And it has achieved its goal of reducing the time that it takes to process a manuscript. Over the first 5 months, the average lag between the arrival of a manuscript in Anchorage and the Action Editor's decision letter is a bit under 8 weeks.

Another important change to the *Journal* reflects the growing awareness in psychology that our traditional focus on the statistical significance of findings is limited and prone to misuse and misunderstanding. To contend with this, *JPA* is following the lead of the most recent *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (American Psychological Association, 2001) as well as the recommendations of Wilkinson and the American Psychological Association Task Force on Statistical Inference (1999). It is now *JPA* policy to publish measures of effect size (e.g.,  $r$ , Cohen's  $d$ ) in addition to statistical significance values. When this change took place, Bruce Thompson (2002), the Editor of *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, reported that *JPA* was the 20th psychology journal to adopt a policy that requires authors to report effect sizes.

Fifth, *JPA* anticipates having a variety of resources for authors and reviewers available on the Web. At this time (August 2002), it is not clear whether the main Web page will be hosted on the Lawrence Erlbaum Associates server (see [www.erlbaum.com/journals.htm](http://www.erlbaum.com/journals.htm)) or the Society for Personality Assessment server (see [www.personality.org](http://www.personality.org)). However, by the time this issue of the *Journal* is published, the *JPA* Web page will be available at one of those sites. The page will contain information on how to compute effect sizes, statistical and meth-

odological advice for authors preparing manuscripts, forms for reviewers, forms for authors of accepted manuscripts, as well as test-specific templates for tables or figures (e.g., for Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-2 profiles). I welcome suggestions from journal readers regarding materials that would be helpful to add to the site.

Finally, I encourage readers and authors to review *JPA*'s revised Statement of Scope, which can be found on the inside of the back cover. Although the *Journal*'s core focus has not changed, we now strongly encourage articles that address understudied areas in personality assessment. Three types of articles are particularly welcome. First, systematic reviews or meta-analyses that summarize a body of evidence would be quite valuable to further the evolution of knowledge. Second, it is rare to find articles that address the process of effectively integrating nomothetic empirical findings with the idiographic requirements of clinical practice, in which a clinician reasons through test and extra-test information to make individualized judgments and provide assessment feedback. Although the Clinical Case Applications Section is designed to illustrate these processes, research addressing the topic would be most welcome. Third, perhaps the largest gap in the literature concerns research evaluating the practical impact or utility of the clinical assessment process. Because almost no research has tried to determine whether clinical personality assessment helps the clients who receive an evaluation and/or the people who refer them for assessment, well-designed studies addressing these issues would be very substantial contributions to the literature.

In closing, I believe *JPA* is moving in very productive directions. I am confident that the *Journal* will continue its fine tradition of publishing top-quality articles that enhance the science and practice of personality assessment.

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