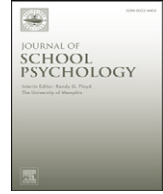




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School psychology publishing contributions to the advancement of knowledge, science, and its application: An introduction to the themed issue

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ABSTRACT

This introductory article briefly reviews the studies and commentaries making up this themed issue on the process and products of professional publications in school psychology. Each article highlights important considerations for advancing scholarly scientific publishing in the field of school psychology. A case is made that enhancing the quality of scientific publications, as well as accumulating scholarly findings over time, serve as the primary mechanisms for improving practice for children, families, and school professionals. This article highlights features of the studies and commentaries directly related to advancing knowledge, science, and its application in school psychology.

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As emphasized by Greenwood (2009), highly effective fields of study base their knowledge and application on long histories of experimentation and empirical experimental science. Although the field school psychology has rapidly evolved in terms of knowledge, science, and practice, it has a short history relative to other fields of study (Fagan, 2008; Fagan & Wise, 2007). However, recent professional initiatives and research advances have stressed the importance of identifying effective practices to improve the educational outcomes of children, families, schools, and society. For example, the 2002 Conference on the Future of School Psychology (Dawson et al., 2003/2004) articulated a shared scientific and professional agenda for the field (Kratochwill & Shernoff, 2003/2004). Further, within the last decade, advances in empirically-validated assessments, evidenced-based practices, and methodological and statistical approaches have positioned the field to provide more effective practice to address the diverse needs of

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children and youth in school settings (Burns, 2011; Eckert, 2010; Kratochwill & Stoiber, 2000, Merrell & Buchanan, 2006).

Germane to the science and practice of school psychology, the articles contained in this themed issue provide an important account of the process and products of professional publications. Not only does each article highlight important considerations for advancing scholarly scientific publishing in the field of school psychology, each article also has the potential to improve knowledge and science in the field. It is important to note that the articles contained in this themed issue of the *Journal of School Psychology* (JSP) were commissioned by the former Editor, Dr. Edward Daly III, and the proposal describing the series' introduction, its four full-length articles, and its two commentaries was approved in January of 2010. With Dr. Randy Floyd assuming the Interim Editor position soon afterward, the development of this series was delayed, and a system of peer review was developed to maintain the integrity of the review process while facilitating unbiased reviews of these manuscripts. To meet this goal, we served as guest editors and subjected all articles to masked peer review. In addition, all communications regarding the review of manuscripts were completed outside of the JSP manuscript submission portal, the Elsevier Editorial System. In October, 2010, a fifth full-length manuscript by Kranzler et al. was submitted for consideration in the special series. Once approved, it was subjected to the same review as the other manuscripts.

1. Publishing contributions: journal practices and peer review

Two of the articles in this themed series advance our knowledge of school psychology journal publication practices in significant ways. In the first article, Floyd et al. (2011) examined the impact, journal operations, and publishing practices of five school psychology journals (*Journal of School Psychology*, *Psychology in the Schools*, *School Psychology International*, *School Psychology Quarterly*, *School Psychology Review*) from 1997 to 2009. Floyd et al. provide the most comprehensive assessment of school psychology journal operations (e.g., submissions, rejection rates, editorial decision and publication lag, reviewer characteristics) and publishing practices (e.g., pages, issues, articles/pages per article, themed issues) conducted to date. A main finding reported in this study was the relatively low impact factors associated with the five school psychology journals. This is an important and timely consideration for the field, given that journal impact factors often serve as a proxy for assessing the scientific quality of publications and may be related to the advancement of science in a chosen field (Oh & Li, 2009).

In the second article, Albers, Floyd, Fuhrmann, and Martinez (2011) examined perceptions of the peer-review process used in school psychology journals. The results of this study provide important descriptive outcomes regarding the criteria related to perceptions of manuscript quality. Interestingly, there was a discrepancy between the key features identified by the authors and the individuals rendering publication decisions. For example, authors identified features associated with the journal (e.g., orientation, perspectives of editors). In contrast, the majority of features identified by editors, associate editors, and reviewers were related to methodological and statistical aspects of the study (e.g., correctly interpreting results, using appropriate and high-quality designs, obtaining sufficient sample sizes). These findings suggest that high-quality research is valued by editors, associate editors, and reviewers in the field of school psychology and potentially leads to favorable outcomes.

2. Publishing contributions: citation classics, research scholars, and research productivity

Three additional articles included in this themed series advance our understanding of scholarly research in school psychology and factors contributing to research productivity and scholarly impact. In the first article, Price, Floyd, Fagan, and Smithson (2011) identified the most highly cited articles appearing in five school psychology journals (*Journal of School Psychology*, *Psychology in the Schools*, *School Psychology International*, *School Psychology Quarterly*, *School Psychology Review*). The results of this study highlighted a number of important findings. First, the most highly cited articles contained a relatively equal proportion of quantitative and narrative works. The authors suggest that this finding may be related to an increased emphasis in the field to translate research to practice. Second, the majority of quantitative studies used higher-order methodology and analyses (e.g., causal-comparative, causal-experimental, meta-analytic; Bliss, Skinner, Hautau, & Carroll, 2008). Third, article characteristics, such as topical area

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