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# Journal of School Psychology

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## Editorial

# The state of the *Journal of School Psychology*: Promoting science



I am honored to be writing this editorial for the first issue during my editorship at the *Journal of School Psychology* (*JSP*). I wanted to take this opportunity to share my vision for the journal. As I prepared to write this editorial, I spent time thinking about the current “state of the journal” and its future potential. In preparing, I reread the history of the journal by [Fagan and Jack \(2012\)](#) and Randy Floyd’s prior editorials ([Floyd, 2012, 2013, 2014](#)) and reflected on the objective of the journal. I also reread many of the prior published articles over the past couple of years including the qualitative study by [McIntosh, Martinez, Ty, and McClain \(2013\)](#) that focused on the state of scientific research in the field of school psychology by surveying leading researchers in the field. In my opinion, the current state of the journal is strong because the prior leadership and the content of the journal have been focused on one major objective: promoting science.

### The state of the journal: promoting science

When I was being interviewed for the editor position, two questions posed to me by the search committee were, “What is science? And how would you advance science as the editor of *JSP*?” Albeit daunting during an interview, what great questions to ask of a potential future editor of a scientific journal! How does one quickly define science? I gave an answer to the search committee that I thought might be a bit simplistic. From my recollection, I conveyed that science is using theory and/or prior research to pose research questions and predictions/hypotheses. Good science then uses well-developed methodology (with reliable and valid measurement) and solid statistical analyses to answer those questions. The results are interpreted with prior theory and research in mind with acknowledgments of the research limitations and needed future research. Basically, I was attempting to define “the” scientific method. According to [Lilienfeld, Ammirati, and David \(2012\)](#), the fact that individuals even talk about “the” scientific method may be considered a myth of science because there are probably many different scientific methods used to answer numerous different scientific questions. Upon reflection, “the” scientific method is not what defines good science – the scientific method needs to be upheld to rigorous standards to truly advance science. Upholding rigorous scientific standards is what *JSP* does best!

The [Oxford Dictionary \(2014\)](#) defines science and the scientific method much more eloquently than I did in my interview. Science is, “The intellectual and practical activity encompassing the systematic study of the structure and behavior of the physical and natural world through observation and experiment and the scientific method.” The [Oxford Dictionary \(2014\)](#) defines the scientific method as, “A method of procedure that has characterized natural science since the 17th century, consisting in systematic observation, measurement, and experiment, and the formulation, testing, and modification of hypotheses.”

Simply because a paper is published by a peer-reviewed journal does not indicate that the science is strong ([Lilienfeld et al., 2012](#)). My goal as the Editor of *JSP* is to promote science via upholding rigorous standards for research published in the pages of the journal. Below are some ways the current *JSP* editorial team and I will continue to promote science at *JSP*:

1. We will require manuscripts published at *JSP* to thoroughly review the relevant literature and theory related to their respective area of study. An advantage *JSP* has over many journals is that there are no page limits to submissions. Thus, authors can and are expected to provide comprehensive reviews of the relevant literature and theory in their study.

Although *JSP* does not publish many unsolicited review manuscripts, I welcome review papers if they are systematic, thorough, and advance science or theory in their respective area. For example, a recent systematic review of recommendations and research surrounding curriculum-based measurement of oral reading fluency decision rules was published in *JSP* by [Ardoin, Christ, Morena, Cormier, and Klingbeil \(2013\)](#). I believe this review paper will guide many researchers in future studies regarding CBM. In addition, I encourage the submission of meta-analytic reviews as they are excellent resource to systematically summarize and advance research. A recent example of a meta-analysis published by *JSP* focused on the oral reading CBM diagnostic accuracy supporting use for universal screening ([Kilgus, Methe, Maggin, & Tomasula, 2014](#)).

2. We will require solid methodological designs to answer research questions. Method sections should be detailed and utilize measures that are reliable and valid. *JSP* has high standards for measurement tools that possess strong evidence of reliability and validity. Typically, *JSP* publishes quantitative research studies but high quality qualitative studies are encouraged if they are upheld to rigorous standards of qualitative research designs. Qualitative studies by Moy et al. (2014) and McIntosh et al. (2013) are two exemplary qualitative articles published in *JSP*.

Recent examples of quality methodological designs published recently in *JSP* include the use of (a) randomized controlled trials (Abry, Rimm-Kaufman, Larsen, & Brewer, 2013; Britton et al., 2014; Hutchings, Martin-Forbes, Daley, & Williams, 2013; Leflot, van Lier, Onghena, & Colpin, 2013; Sheridan, Ryoo, Garbacz, Kunz, & Chumney, 2013); (b) longitudinal research designs (Bergmann, Van De Schoot, Schober, Finsterwald, & Spiel, 2013; Darney, Reinke, Herman, Stormont, & Jalongo, 2013); and (c) multi-level modeling (Galla et al., 2014; McCormick, O'Connor, Cappella, & McClowry, 2013).

3. We will promote research using advanced analytic techniques that are well suited to answer the proposed research questions. For example, for several years *JSP* has been promoting more advanced methods to handle missing data and multi-level data. It is my goal that *JSP* continues to promote best practices in analytic techniques. I believe that one of the greatest strengths at *JSP* is our Statistical and Methodological Advisors (SMAs). The SMA's involvement in reviewing manuscripts helps ensure that the journal is using best-practice and cutting-edge statistical techniques. An advantage to authors is the constructive feedback they receive from one of our SMAs.

I encourage the submission of manuscripts that are focused solely on analytical techniques. *JSP* is an excellent source for manuscripts focused on the "how-to" of methodological and statistical techniques that are being used by researchers. Occasionally, these papers stand on their own as general manuscripts such as the following recently published articles focused on (a) mean phase differences and generalized least squares for analyzing single-case design (Manolov & Solanas, 2013); (b) reliability of multi-category ratings scales (Parker, Vannest, & Davis, 2013); (c) single-case effect size calculation (Ross & Begeny, 2014); and (d) a practical guide to generalizability theory (Briesch, Swaminathan, Welsh, & Chafouleas, 2014). As an author, if you are considering submitting a paper focused on methodological and statistical techniques, please feel free to contact me to discuss your idea.

Another way *JSP* advances methodological and statistical techniques is through special issues. Historically, *JSP* has not published many special issues. However, in 2014 a special issue was published on analysis and meta-analysis of single-case design (SCD) with leading researchers in this area to guide and advance single-case design research (Shadish, 2014). Currently, another special issue is being developed for publication in 2015 focused on methodological and statistical techniques.

4. We encourage content that advances the science of school psychology. In the sections that follow, I have summarized recent topics that have been published in the journal across the past several years and addressed areas of future research. Recent work published in *JSP* has focused on broad topics that influence the field of school psychology. I scanned the prior couple of years of articles and came up with nine broad categories of work *JSP* has published. This list is not exhaustive or mutually exclusive, but in general, *JSP* has published significant work in the following areas:

- a. empirically-validating academic interventions, including reading, vocabulary, spelling, writing, and math (Clemens, Oslund, Simmons, & Simmons, 2014; Hindman & Wasik, 2013; Nelson, Burns, Kanive, & Ysseldyke, 2013; Peterson et al., 2014; Sullivan & Field, 2013; Truckenmiller, Eckert, Coddling, & Petscher, 2014);
- b. empirically-validating behavioral interventions (Blaze, Olmi, Mercer, Dufrene, & Tingstom, 2014; Briesch, Chafouleas, Neugebauer, & Riley-Tillman, 2013; Chafouleas et al., 2013; Folino, Ducharme, & Greenwald, 2014; Fosco, Frank, Stormshank, & Dishion, 2013; Imeraj et al., 2013);
- c. advancing the science of curriculum-based measurement (Ardoin et al., 2013; Christ, Zopluoglu, Monaghan, & Van Norman, 2013; Cummings, Biancarosa, Schaper, & Reed, 2014; Kettler & Albers, 2013; Nese et al., 2013; Shapiro, 2013);
- d. investigating the importance of teacher-student relationships (Chan et al., 2013; Hughes, Im, & Wehrly, 2014; McCormick et al., 2013; Roorda, Koomen, Spilt, Thijs, & Oort, 2013; Roorda, Verschuere, Vanraeyveldt, Van Craeyevelt, & Colpin, 2014; Rudasill, Niehaus, Buhs, & White, 2013; Zee, Koomen, & Van der Veen, 2013);
- e. understanding and reducing bullying and victimization (Batanova, Espelage, & Rao, 2014; Goldweber, Waasdorp, & Bradshaw, 2013; Haataja et al., 2014; Pronk, Goossens, Olthof, De Mey, & Willemen, 2013; Saarento, Kärnä, Hodges, & Salmivalli, 2013; Valiente, Swanson, Lemery-Chalfant, & Berger, 2014);
- f. understanding how school/class climate and instructional practices impact students (Benner, 2013; Bottiani, Bradshaw, & Mendelson, 2014; Curby, Rimm-Kaufman, & Abry, 2013; Mitchell & Bradshaw, 2013; Reddy, Fabiano, Dudek, & Hsu, 2013);
- g. advancing the science of assessment (Kilgus, Riley-Tillman, Chafouleas, Christ, & Welsh, 2014; McDermott, Watkins, Rovine, & Rikoon, 2013; Norwalk, DiPerna, & Lei, 2014; Reynolds, Keith, Flanagan, & Alfonso, 2013; Wiesner & Schanding, 2013);
- h. validating the roles of parents and peers in social and academic competence (Anthony, DiPerna, & Amato, 2014; Goldberg & Smith, 2014; Moorman-Kim, Sheridan, Kwon, & Koziol, 2013; Ogg, McMahan, Dedrick, & Mendez, 2013; Rispoli, McGoey, Koziol, & Schreiber, 2013; Zhang et al., 2014); and
- i. data-based decision-making on grade retention, school absenteeism, and drop out (Burton, Marshal, & Chisolm, 2014; Goos, Van Damme, Onghena, Petry, & de Bilde, 2013; Im, Hughes, Kwok, Puckett, & Cerda, 2013; Kieffer, Marinell, & Neugebauer, 2014; Lynch, Kistner, & Allan, 2014; Reschly & Christenson, 2013).

I encourage authors to continue submitting work that falls in these broad categories of school psychology where *JSP* is actively contributing. I also want to promote future research in the areas identified by leaders in the field of school psychology. The qualitative

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