Farewell Editorial

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By the time this issue of the *Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly (APAQ)* is published, my 3-year 10-month term as Editor will have come to an end. I have been a member of the *APAQ* Editorial Board since 1993, became an Associate Editor in 2007, and have observed the evolution of the journal since 1984. I am honored to have had the opportunity to continue the tradition of excellence established by my predecessors, Geoffrey Broadhead, Greg Reid, Claudine Sherrill, David Porretta, and Terry Rizzo.

Although the Editor is typically the most visible person associated with a journal, we must remember that a journal is the result of the contributions of hundreds of people, most of them volunteers, who work behind the scene. A most sincere thank you to the Associate Editors, who read numerous manuscripts and made comments and recommendations about submissions to the journal. I also have benefited tremendously from the input of our Editorial Council (Associate Editors and Emeritus Advisory Editors) when faced with complex and difficult decisions. Although I did not always heed to their recommendations, I carefully considered them and their rationale. The reviews and advices of the Editorial Board members have helped me tremendously during the completion of my term. Finally, I acknowledge the contributions of my colleagues at the University of Alberta, Leanne Baudistel and Jen Leo, and the staff at Human Kinetics, who made my job a great deal easier.

I extend my appreciation to the authors who submitted manuscripts from around the world. Given that *APAQ* accepted a low number of manuscripts during my term, I have had to write hundreds of painful and disappointing letters. I recognize how discouraging it can be to receive a rejection letter. When making decisions, I endeavored to be as fair and equitable as possible to all the stakeholders. Ultimately, decisions were always made based on the contribution to the body of knowledge and the broad relevance of manuscripts to the field.

Thank you to the reviewers who took time from their busy schedules, put their hearts and heads into their efforts, and repeatedly provided authors with thorough, thoughtful, helpful, respectful, and scholarly reviews. Although authors and reviewers often disagreed on issues, the critical dialogue between them improved the quality of the final products. In the case of fundamental disagreements between authors and reviewers, I made decisions based on the strength of the arguments presented by both parties. Of course, my own reading of the manuscript was also

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a key factor. When making decisions, I was not a “vote counter.” I believe that rational arguments must be presented to support a position. Writing a manuscript for publication, or evaluating a manuscript, demands the presentation of a clear, sound, and scholarly argument for the position or knowledge claim being made.

Although many of my colleagues on the Editorial Board expressed to me that the journal is doing well, I submit that we must remain vigilant. We have been, and will continue to be, confronted with a number of fundamental and complex issues. During my period as Editor of *APAQ*, I have witnessed some unsettling trends. I have elected to share some of these with you here in the spirit of collegiality, with the hope of challenging our thinking, creating opportunities, and ultimately contributing to the advancement of adapted physical activity. I will address issues of communication in our multidisciplinary field.

The journal is a home for diverse intellectual traditions. *APAQ* is a multidisciplinary, international journal and the field relies on multiple disciplines to produce its body of knowledge. Submissions to the journal are typically guided by disciplines (or domains of inquiry) such as biomechanics, motor control/neuroscience, exercise biochemistry, exercise physiology, sport and exercise psychology, sociology, critical theory, poststructuralism, or philosophy. Although the field is multidisciplinary, some prefer to say cross-disciplinary (Hutzler & Sherrill, 2007; Sherrill, 1998), *APAQ* rarely receives interdisciplinary submissions (see Repko, 2012). Consequently, our body of knowledge is fragmented and I submit that the field would benefit from more interdisciplinary work. Although I do not believe that complete integration across disciplines is possible (researchers often use different and incompatible ontological and epistemological assumptions), the study of fundamental issues from different perspectives is likely to provide interesting and relevant insights.

Although I think that more interdisciplinary conversations are likely to benefit the field, these types of conversations are not always easy (Strober, 2011). Habits of thought are often acquired during our education (Margolis, 1993; Strober, 2011). These habits of thought contain disciplinary assumptions (ontological, epistemological, methodological, ethical), about how research ought to be conducted, and ideas about how research results should be interpreted (Kuhn, 1962). Researchers are often unaware of the assumptions they make (Slife, 1998). Other key factors that hinder interdisciplinary conversations include an inability, or unwillingness, to carefully listen, the perceived superiority of certain types of inquiry, and issues of power (Szostak, 2014).

The potential benefits of more frequent interdisciplinary conversations include, but are not limited to, a deeper appreciation and understanding of different ways of thinking, an expansion of the traditional boundaries of inquiry, creativity, and the inclusion of different insights into our body of knowledge and practices.

Of course, a willingness to engage in interdisciplinary conversations is a prerequisite to the conduct of interdisciplinary inquiry. Failure to communicate can occur when a nonlistening attitude is adopted toward people who have a different worldview. I am convinced that *APAQ* should remain a place for unfettered debate. However, sound debate can only occur if all parties communicate really well. On one hand, speakers and writers must express themselves using simple language without becoming simplistic. On the other hand, listeners must be willing to enter into a world of different ideas, a world that is unfamiliar and that might be
uncomfortable. It is probably prudent to remember the perceptive observation of Francis Bacon who wrote “Man [sic] prefers to believe what he wants to be true” (Bacon, 1994, p. 59). Closing the mind prematurely is a dangerous attitude that limits the possibilities of our journal and the field. Let us all work together to make this world a better place.

I conclude this farewell Editorial by extending a warm welcome to the next Editor, Dr. Yeshayahu (Shayke) Hutzler. APAQ will be in good hands with him at the helm of the journal. Like me, and the former Editors of APAQ, he will need your support to produce a journal that continues to be the flagship of our field.

It has been my honor and pleasure to serve as the Editor of APAQ.

References