Editorial

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APAQ was born 8 years ago and has rapidly become the major vehicle of scholarship devoted to persons with a disability within a physical activity milieu. Founding editor Dr. Geoffrey Broadhead must be pleased to realize that the journal has attracted a significant theoretical framework (Wall, McClements, Bouffard, Findlay, & Taylor, 1985), a host of thoughtful reviews (e.g., Block, 1991; Davis, 1984; Fernhall, Tymeson, & Webster, 1988; Hoover & Wade, 1985; Tripp & Sherrill, 1991), viewpoints targeted at adapted physical activity research (e.g., Reid, 1989; Reynolds, 1984; Watkinson & Wasson, 1984), and statements on integration (e.g., APAQ Vol. 2 no. 4, 1985), legislation (Churton, 1988), professional preparation (e.g., Dunn & McCubbin, 1991; Hogan, 1990), as well as numerous data based papers touching upon a myriad of topics. Quite clearly, APAQ has made an enormous professional contribution. Ideas expressed in its pages are analyzed and debated in graduate classes, professional meetings, and workshops. Related journals and textbooks are sprinkled with citations to APAQ publications.

It is appropriate that we celebrate the journal and express our collective thanks to the outgoing editor, Geoff Broadhead. As an editorial board member and later as associate editor, I was always impressed with Dr. Broadhead’s objective and professional manner. He cares deeply about the profession and challenged us to share our ideas and extend our thinking in APAQ. Also, his superb editorial pen has improved the clarity of countless articles. Moreover, Dr. Broadhead possesses an excellent breadth of knowledge and was capable of encouraging and evaluating submissions on a wide range of topics. Through his efforts, each of us has become a more effective researcher, administrator, or teacher. I hope that Dr. Broadhead will be pleased with APAQ in the years to come. We all owe him an enormous debt of appreciation. Thanks, Geoff.

There are three thrusts that I foresee for APAQ in the coming years. First, there is a need for more theoretically driven papers. Second, APAQ should become a forum of exchange, debate, and dialogue. Third, we must write our manuscripts with person-first terminology.

Theory

The foundation of science is theory. A theory relates concepts and variables with the goal of understanding and predicting phenomena. A theory explains why the manipulation of certain variables influences behavior. Systematic advances in the knowledge base of fields occur through theory development. Papers published in APAQ must become more theoretically based.

The call for more theoretically rich papers in adapted physical activity echoes similar pleas by sport psychologists (Landers, 1983) and motor learning specialists (Adams, 1971). The fact that researchers in our field have adopted very applied perspectives is not surprising, given the quintessential interest most of us have in the people we serve and advocate on behalf of, rather than theory per se. Yet research that is conceptually strong will ultimately reap greater benefits for these
same people than will random and unsystematic investigations that sometimes appear driven by subject availability. We must also be cognizant of the theoretical assumptions of our measurement techniques. For example, we can no longer assess balance by most norm-referenced tests without a clear understanding that such tests carry considerable theoretical implications and limitations. By the same token APAQ must continue to promote papers that translate theory into practice (e.g., Davis & Burton, 1991), recognizing that our audience includes many who are concerned with the effectiveness of their instruction.

Increasing our theoretical bases need not occur at the expense of applied research. In fact, as I have argued previously (Reid, 1989), our applied questions and answers can emerge as the foundation of a profession if they exist in the context of theory. In this manner we will effectively develop a sound body of knowledge that is germane to instructors. In the present issue, Burton and Davis explore balance carefully from a clear theoretical stance. They outline the “action systems” perspective and discuss its relationship to balance deficits and assessment. Previously, Ulrich and Collier (1990) reported the development of a perceived physical competence scale from competence motivation theorizing. APAQ must of course remain open to a variety of theories and methodologies. However, we will increasingly be challenging authors to articulate the rationale and methodology of their research in clear conceptual terms.

Exchange

APAQ should also become a vehicle for dialogue. Our editorial policy states that the journal is “designed to stimulate and communicate scholarly inquiry.” One way to achieve this goal is to encourage scholarly debate and exchange of ideas. We hope to identify major themes and invite authors to contribute manuscripts presenting different philosophical or methodological positions. Also, articles that are critical of a methodology will be sent to the proponents of said methods, who in turn will be invited to respond. The original author will of course be given the opportunity for a rejoinder. Moreover, we expect that scholars will spontaneously send us carefully referenced papers that are critiques of previously published work in APAQ. The critique will again be forwarded to the original author for a counter response. Finally, we encourage experts of a new research technique or methodology to prepare a tutorial for APAQ. These are additional ways in which our journal will stimulate scholarly inquiry. While articles will be peer reviewed, the healthy exchange of ideas will foster our knowledge base.

Terminology

Languages are evolving rapidly in the areas of gender equality, multiculturalism, and disabilities. The changes convey respect, hope, and self-empowerment while reflecting a society struggling toward equality and dignity for all citizens. It is true that language changes have not been without controversy, and a bandwagon or two has infiltrated an otherwise positive societal movement. It is also true that language is a dynamic system and we must expect that contemporary terminology may be replaced in time. We must adapt to meaningful changes, being vigilant of phrases and labels that reflect only transient fashion. In this context, APAQ will move to person-first terminology.
APAQ has generally avoided the use of disabilities as nouns, for example the disabled, the mentally retarded, and so forth. Such phraseology remains unacceptable. The more debatable issue, particularly in a scholarly journal that values succinctness, is whether to use disabilities as an adjective or a prepositional phrase, for example cerebral palsied persons or persons with cerebral palsy, respectively. While the latter is more cumbersome, it nonetheless is the preferred terminology of 100 organizations in the United States (Research and Training Center on Independent Living, 1987) and an additional 200 in Canada (Active Living Alliance for Canadians With a Disability, n.d.). Person-first terminology implies that all individuals need love, friendship, nutrition, respect, and challenge, yet some happen to have a disability. It is a reminder to all of us to view the person first and the disability second.

Using “the individual with cerebral palsy” or “the person with mental retardation” repeatedly throughout a manuscript will increase the word count of articles, a concern for publishing companies. This can no doubt be minimized in several ways. For example, in experimental studies, designs often include nondisabled persons as well as those with disability. After a careful description of the individuals with a disability, it would be appropriate to refer to them as the experimental group and to those without disabilities as the control group throughout much of the manuscript. Also, close scrutiny of the manuscript will often reveal an unnecessary repetition of the label since the context is already clear regarding the individuals to whom we are referring. Despite the writing challenges involved, the editorial board members of APAQ were almost unanimous in their support of person-first terminology.

An exception to this policy can be found in the example of deaf education. The deaf community itself appears quite at ease with the term “deaf” as an adjective. Our editorial policies must be flexible enough to accommodate terminology that is acceptable to major groups that traditionally have encouraged input from their constituents. While debate on this important issue of terminology will continue, authors are encouraged to obtain a copy of “Guidelines for Reporting and Writing About People With Disabilities” or “Positive Images” to help their writing.

Conclusion

APAQ is the research lifeline regarding people with disabilities in a physical activity context. By increasing theoretical input, facilitating an exchange of ideas, and using dignified person-first language, APAQ will continue to be a highly respected journal. It is a journal created and supported by many people. We need contributions from scholars who want to publish their very best work in APAQ, reviewers who provide timely and constructive critical commentary, and associate editors who offer wise counsel concerning the acceptability of manuscripts. I am prepared to accept the responsibility of final decisions and to work with authors,

1 Available from Research and Training Center on Independent Living, BCR/3111 Haworth, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS 66045, USA.

2 Available from the Active Living Alliance for Canadians With a Disability, Suite 312, 1600 James Naismith Drive, Gloucester, Ontario, K1B 5N4, Canada.
reviewers, and the energetic staff of Human Kinetics. There will be some disagreements, and time for committed debate. But all professionals in adapted physical activity can make a contribution to the well-being of APAQ. Be committed, be involved.

References


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