If We Build It, They Will Come

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My colleagues and good friends know how passionate I am about baseball. I use baseball analogies all the time. When I tell a student, “you hit a home run with that presentation,” it is one of the best compliments they can receive from me. Twenty years ago, as editor of Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport (RQES), my editorial—“Who’s on first, what’s on second?”—was my playful attempt to convey how components of a Method section can be likened to players in the classic Abbott and Costello skit. And when asked to reflect on my programmatic line of research for the C.H. McCloy lecture and article in RQES, I gravitated to the natural title, “Field of Dreams: Sport as a Context for Youth Development.” As I take over the editorship of Kinesiology Review, the phrase, “If we build it, they will come,” is a twist on a line from the baseball movie Field of Dreams that appropriately depicts my optimism in elevating the visibility and increasing quality of submissions for a relatively new journal of less than three years.

By “they” I imply a double meaning. “They” refers to the types of critical, evaluative, and insightful scholarly reviews that Kinesiology Review seeks to publish, and “they” also refers to authors that range from accomplished scholars (e.g., National Academy of Kinesiology [NAK] Fellows, American Kinesiology Association [AKA] leaders) to up-and-coming, promising scholars (i.e., doctoral students and assistant professors). Having conducted studies and written reviews on observational learning as a source of confidence, motivation, and performance, I am certain that successfully achieving both they goals will have a powerful modeling effect and that others will come.

In this editorial, I elaborate on the plans for how we will “build” Kinesiology Review into a journal to which authors of diverse sub-disciplines “will come” to showcase critical thinking of significant issues as well as a journal to which readers will come to consume offerings about these issues. The innovative focus of Kinesiology Review is conceptual essays, integrative reviews, and evidence-based position papers pertinent to kinesiology. I am especially excited about the potential to publish in-depth reviews that develop connections among multiple areas within kinesiology. Multidisciplinary approaches are essential for understanding many current and complex topics, such as physical inactivity and health outcomes of specific populations, concussion management in sport, and rehabilitation science and its professional applications. Addressing complex topics that warrant a multi-layered and diverse disciplinary lens offers a provocative examination in a journal that embraces this niche.

Continuing with a multidisciplinary focus, my most immediate initiative is to pursue several themed issues in the next three years on significant and timely topics in which kinesiology knowledge plays a critical role. Imagine, for example, a journal issue consisting of papers on youth sport injury and safety that draw from historical, philosophical, biomechanical, psychological, and motor development perspectives. The unique ideas stemming from empirical evidence on topics of mutual interest to researchers, the public, and the media have the potential to draw visibility to the field of kinesiology, in general, as well as to Kinesiology Review as a source for the latest scientific evidence and recommendations from an integrative approach.

To assist me with envisioning timely topics for themed issues and identifying authors to represent multiple perspectives, I have assembled a small Executive Board, distinct from the Editorial Board, with members comprising scholars from different sub-disciplines within kinesiology. I am happy to announce that Scott Kretchmar, David Perrin, Catherine Ennis, and Russ Pate have accepted my invitation to serve on the Executive Board. In addition to dialoguing about themes for upcoming issues, this group will also collaborate with me to develop a strategic plan to enhance the visibility and reputation of the journal, offer guidance for modifying the mission and vision of the journal, and promote the journal by informing members at their disciplinary society meetings about Kinesiology Review as a source for submitting theoretical papers and critical reviews.

Another forthcoming initiative is to foster a more diverse and global Editorial Board in an effort to broaden the reach and visibility of the journal. Being inclusive of an international membership on the board diversifies our thinking about solutions and is consistent with the ideals of NAK and AKA. Having top scholars from around the world represent Kinesiology Review will assist in casting out a wide net and capturing the best thinking about issues pertinent to kinesiology.
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Marketing is key to enhancing visibility of the journal and accomplishing the “build it” and “they will come” objective. I am working closely with the staff at Human Kinetics to explore multiple ways of getting the word out. Having Executive Board members increase awareness of the journal at their annual society’s business meeting will be one way. A second method is distributing flyers at national and international conferences alongside Human Kinetics’ prominent role as a vendor at these venues. Third, we are in the process of ensuring that all subscribers are notified via email when a new issue of the journal is published. Presently, individuals can sign up for this service but we believe an automatic email to all subscribers will be more effective.

To ensure the journal will thrive, collectively we need to enhance its visibility, volume of submissions, and quality of publications. Only with the latter can the journal move forward with being indexed and receiving an impact factor. This is a classic chicken-and-egg situation. Aside from being unaware of the journal, perhaps some individuals have not submitted to Kinesiology Review because it isn’t indexed or doesn’t have an impact factor; but to achieve these landmarks top scholars and first-rate reviews need to be published in its pages. My goal in establishing an Executive Board and broader membership on the Editorial Board is to reach out and solicit authors for themed and non-themed issues that will leap over the chicken-and-egg barrier. In so doing, I am hopeful that we can move Kinesiology Review forward as the go-to journal for submitting in-depth reviews and conceptually oriented papers. The niche for the journal is there—and the challenge is evident. If you are preparing to write a manuscript that fits within the mission of Kinesiology Review, I invite you to accept my “pitch” and submit your paper for review!

The mission of Kinesiology Review for “publishing evaluative, insightful, and integrative scholarly reviews of kinesiology research” provides authors with a unique outlet for manuscripts that are not a good fit for specialty journals focused on empirical data from a particular study. Many mid-career and senior scholars are invited to give a presentation at a university or conference that entails synthesizing a body of literature, conveying a line of research, or sharing reflections on the research process. Often these presentations do not get translated into an associated manuscript for publication. Kinesiology Review provides a “home” for such manuscripts. A case in point is an article in the current issue—Jennifer Etnier’s (2014) review of the literature (her own studies and those of others) on the effect of physical activity on cognitive functioning across the lifespan. This paper was based on her Senior Scholar Lecture at the annual meeting of the North American Society for the Psychology of Sport and Physical Activity and is a perfect fit for Kinesiology Review. Others giving similar talks might enjoy the opportunity to translate a presentation customized for selected audiences into an enduring article for a broader readership. How many of you have given talks that could have been—or could be—translated to manuscript form and submitted for publication? Consider doing so and sending it to Kinesiology Review!

I hope I have intrigued many of you by expressing the possibilities offered by Kinesiology Review as a source for your conceptual papers, critical reviews, position papers, and integrative essays. Circling back to my theme, I intend to do my very best to help “build” Kinesiology Review so “they will come”—“they” being you, the authors, and your reviews of significant issues in the field. I invite you to transform theoretical ideas and convert slides from appropriate presentations to lasting reflections in print.

To conclude, I invoke the words of James Earl Jones, a powerful storyteller and actor in Field of Dreams: “People will come, Ray... People will most definitely come.” Help me build Kinesiology Review and together let’s elevate its presence and impact—be one of the authors who will come to the playing field.

References