EDITORIAL: HALF A CENTURY

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The publication of this issue marks the golden anniversary of the *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior*. The first issue of this journal appeared in January 1958. Since then, the journal has published 88 volumes and over 3700 articles. To commemorate this milestone, this issue includes essays by five former editors of *JEAB*. These editors, whose terms span all five decades of *JEAB*'s existence, share their thoughts about the past, present, and future of the journal and the field of behavior analysis. Also included is an essay by John Wixted, whose broad interests and editorial experience put him in a unique position to reflect on the contributions of this journal to the field of psychology.

It is an honor and a privilege to begin my term as editor at this moment in *JEAB*'s history. When asked what I think the coming years of *JEAB* will bring, I can only respond that I share the attitude of baseball legend Yogi Berra, who supposedly once said, ''I hate making predictions, especially about the future.'' Nevertheless, I will try to describe what I hope and what I expect for the next several years of the journal. Of course, the main purpose of the journal will remain what it always has been. *JEAB* ''is primarily for the original publication of experiments relevant to the behavior of individual organisms.'' This is a very broad mission, and it can be accomplished in many ways. In his editorial as incoming editor, Michael Zeiler (1977) made it clear that *JEAB* would not require its authors to adopt any particular theoretical or metatheoretical approach to the study of behavior, and subsequent editors have taken this same position. I would like to add that there is nothing in the mission statement that demands any particular type of research design or methodology. The ''behavior of individual organisms'' can be studied in many different ways, and I believe that *JEAB* should be open to studies using various experimental designs, as long as they provide valuable information about factors that influence the behavior of individual organisms. Of course, the journal

will also continue to publish review articles, theoretical articles, special articles, and book reviews. I expect that *JEAB*'s high standards for articles of all types will be maintained.

When he began his term as editor four years ago, Leonard Green (2004) lamented that *JEAB* is perceived by some as narrow and limited in the types of research and theory it publishes, and one of his goals was to try to change that perception. During the last four years, through Len's expert leadership and dedication, *JEAB* has made some important progress toward that goal. One major accomplishment was the special issue on the relation of behavior and neuroscience (November, 2005), which included a wide variety of high-quality articles that one might not have expected to see in *JEAB*. Len subsequently established the position of associate editor for Behavioral Neuroscience, and because of these efforts I expect that *JEAB* will continue to receive and publish articles in this area. Bridging the gap between brain mechanisms and behavior is a very challenging task (Bechtel, 2005), but progress is being made, and because of its long history at the forefront of behavior analysis, I believe it is important for *JEAB* to participate in this endeavor.

Another innovation that Len introduced was a new category of article called ''Perspectives on Behavior,'' which are invited articles that review a specific topic or issue of current interest in the field. The purpose of these articles is to serve as resources that specialists in behavior analysis, researchers from other areas of psychology, and students all can refer to when they want a concise and current source of information on a particular topic. Four Perspectives have been published so far, and each one contains a wealth of information and unique insights on its particular topic (Fantino & Romanowich, 2007; Rachlin, 2006; Wright, 2007; Zentall & Singer, 2007). More of these articles are in the pipeline, and I expect the journal to continue to publish Perspectives on important topics in the experimental analysis of behavior.

One of my goals as editor will be to encourage variety—in the types of questions that are asked, in the research methods used

to try to answer them, and in the species of subjects used. Over the past ten years, about two-thirds of the research articles published in *JEAB* have involved just two species—pigeons and rats—and many of the remaining studies used human subjects. There is nothing inherently wrong with this type of specialization, and indeed one of its major advantages is that researchers can build on the extensive database that is already available for these species. But too much reliance on too few species can be risky, because one point that has been made repeatedly in the pages of *JEAB,* especially during the 1960s and 1970s, is that species differences cannot be ignored. As one example of the heavy reliance on a single species, consider the research on concurrent-chains schedules. The characteristics of behavior on these schedules have provided the impetus for several prominent theories of choice (e.g., Grace, 1994; Squires & Fantino, 1971). A recent search of ''concurrent chain'' in PsycInfo returned 190 research articles, and 79% used pigeons. Perhaps the behavior of pigeons is typical of what other species would show on these schedules, but we cannot be sure unless we check. Developing general principles of behavior with an *n* of one species does not seem prudent. As Nevin points out in his essay in this issue, the first decade of *JEAB* featured a greater variety of species, operant responses, and reinforcers. I believe that a return to this tradition would be both refreshing and scientifically advantageous.

I will also take this opportunity to encourage researchers to make full use of current technology and to collect their data in as thorough a manner as possible. In my past work as a reviewer and as an associate editor, I have seen quite a few cases where a reviewer asks an author to provide some additional data—on response latencies, on local response rates during different portions of the interreinforcement interval, on conditional probabilities of correct or incorrect responses after different types of stimuli, and so on. All too often, the author replies that, yes, that information would be quite informative, but no, that information was not recorded during the experiment and there is no way to go back and get it now. I realize that not all researchers have access to the latest technology, and for those

who do, it is never possible to record everything or to anticipate what data will be most valuable. But many who publish in *JEAB* conduct their studies with computers and software that are quite capable of keeping a complete record of the time of each experimental event—every stimulus onset or offset, every operant response, and every reinforcer delivery. I want to urge those who have this technology, even when they cannot imagine why storing all these data will be of any use, to record the data first and ask questions later.

While on the topic of technology, I will end with one prediction, which some might find surprising, but which I think is very likely: In the coming years, more people will have access to, will obtain, and will read *JEAB* articles than ever before. I make this prediction because of the availability of full-text articles on the Internet. Just a few years ago, you could not read a *JEAB* article unless you or your library had a subscription. Today, anyone with a computer and an Internet connection can go to PubMed Central (www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov) and read any article from *JEAB* dating back to the first issue from January 1958 (except for the three most recent issues, which are only available to those with current subscriptions). In recent months, the *JEAB* website has averaged over 10,000 visits per month, and statistics from PubMed Central show over 40,000 downloads of *JEAB* articles per month. The patterns of article downloads suggest that many of the users are not the usual readers of *JEAB* but others who probably discovered the articles through search engines while researching some specific topic. I find this to be a very exciting development, because it means that researchers both from other areas of psychology and from disciplines outside of psychology, who may know little or nothing about *JEAB,* will be led to some of the excellent work that has appeared in this journal over the past half century. It should also serve as a challenge to our authors, editors, and reviewers to do everything possible to ensure that these readers find *JEAB* articles that reflect the highest standards of rigorous research design and methodology, sound and creative techniques of data analysis, and insightful conclusions.

James E. Mazur
Editor

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