Concluding Notes to an Editorial Term

Barbara Rogoff

This is the last issue of *Human Development* to appear in my 6-year post as Editor. Finishing the job is accompanied by some relief – it is an enormous job. However, in the process, I learned some things about editing, writing, and the field.

One thing that I learned, which made the job easier, is that an editor is not merely a gatekeeper of what gets published, shaping the field by such decisions. Editorial work also can provide colleagues with the kind of feedback and guidance that contributes to the clarity and impact of their work. When I began to notice that my editing shared some similarities to advising graduate students – looking for the contribution of the work and how to enhance it – the job became more rewarding.

It has also become clear to me what a contribution anonymous reviewers make to all of our careers and publications. As authors, our reaction to reviewers is often frustration that they ‘didn’t get it.’ However, reviewers’ suggestions and confusions provide precious information regarding where (and sometimes how) we can improve our ideas and communication. My own work has been greatly improved by reviewers and editors who gave me straightforward feedback that challenged me to clarify my thinking and writing. I have come to see reviewers as (usually) thoughtful and constructive representatives of the readers of the journal – the people to whom our work is intended to make sense.

The idea that the journal serves the readers has been clarified for me while serving as Editor. The journal is a place for communication, beyond publication and documentation. This sounds like common sense – but if we all paid attention to it, our work would be greatly improved. The goal of scholarly work is not to publish (i.e., to make public), but to enter into a conversation with others by means of the publication. My job as Editor was often to help authors clarify ideas in a way that would communicate with the wide interdisciplinary, international readership of *HD*, so that the journal could serve as a means of broadening the education of all readers. The effort to communicate broadly also improves communication with colleagues within one’s particular area of scholarship, enhancing an article’s contribution.

During my editorship, we instituted an innovation that seems to have helped reviewers focus on whether a submission makes a substantial contribution. We

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gave reviewers the option of writing a brief informal review within a few days of receiving the manuscript, using a set of prompts beginning with whether the submission made a sufficiently substantial contribution. (See *Human Development*, 1997, p. 6, for a reproduction of the format.) Focusing on whether the submission makes a substantial contribution seemed to be enhanced whether the reviewer took the Quick Advice option or provided a regular review. (The reviews were not very different in the two formats, and the innovation also encouraged quick turnaround of reviews.) Greater consideration of the extent of contribution of articles to understanding human development would improve the publication outlets of our fields, in general.

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I am very pleased that Geoff Saxe is the next Editor – I am confident that he and his editorial team will sustain and enhance the unique contribution of this journal. An informal committee of dedicated scholars offered their advice for seeking candidates and selecting Geoff as the next editor. Thanks to Renee Baillargeon, Paul Baltes, Joe Campos, Rachel Clifton, Anne Colby, Doris Entwisle, Marshall Haith, Paul Harris, Giyoo Hatano, Claes von Hofsten, Annette Karmiloff-Smith, Deanna Kuhn, Jack Meacham, Andy Meltzoff, Peggy Miller, Esther Thelen, Mike Tomasello, Jim Youniss, Jim Wertsch, and Shep White.

The form and work of the journal during my term as Editor has been greatly enhanced by the contributions of Associate Editor Claes von Hofsten. I am grateful to Claes for his good ideas and advice and for the manuscripts that he handled so well. Thanks also to former Editor Deanna Kuhn for her advice and aid in getting me started on the job.

The Editorial Board and many other colleagues who have advised me and given feedback to authors deserve deep appreciation. The Editorial Board is listed in each issue, and the other reviewers are acknowledged in an annual listing. Here I would like to especially thank several colleagues who were steadfast in their availability to give excellent advice and write reviews, whom I relied on extensively: Anne Colby, Alan Fogel, Jackie Goodnow, Giyoo Hatano, John Modell, Larry Nucci, Martin Packer, Jaan Valsiner, Jim Wertsch, Shep White, and Jim Youniss.

I am grateful to the authors for their interesting papers, as well as for their constructiveness in handling the suggestions for improvement of their manuscripts. When I took on the editorship, colleagues warned me that there would be a lot of unpleasant correspondence with upset authors. However, this has not been my experience – the authors have almost without exception been collegial in their correspondence.

A number of the authors have contributed photos that illuminate the cover of the issue in which their article appears, a contribution for which I and the readers are appreciative. In addition, Tom Dalton provided several illustrations of Myrtle McGraw's work that have found homes on covers of issues. I also appreciate the fine illustrations by Valerie Magarian that have appeared on several covers.

Two people contributed enormously to the journal's efficient functioning, fast turnaround, and good communication between the editorial office, the authors and

reviewers, and the press: Editorial Assistant Karrie André, and before her, Cindy White. Great thanks are due to them for their competence, dedication, and good ideas.

The journal's functioning has also been graciously supported by the University of California at Santa Cruz Division of Social Sciences Dean, Marty Chemers, whose office has financed some of the day-to-day operating expenses. The Department of Psychology has provided me with release time to be able to take on this job; thanks to Ray Gibbs, Dom Massaro, Craig Haney, and Maureen Callanan.

The publisher, S. Karger AG of Basel, Switzerland, has been providing the field of human development with this most important forum for discussion and reflection for many decades. It has been a pleasure to work with Thomas and Steven Karger, and their colleagues Esther Bernhard, Michelle Biedert, Angela Gasser, Gaby Karger, Thomas Nold, Anke Rogal, and Rolf Steinebrunner, among others. The quality work and integrity of this family-run publishing house make a tremendous contribution to research and scholarship.

Human Development is nearing a half-century of publication, and continues its illustrious role in providing a forum for reflection on ideas, research, and the connection between theory, research, and methods in the study of human development. I am honored to have had the privilege of serving as its Editor for the past 6 years.