2-1-2011

Bits and Pieces

Stephen J. Langendorfer

Bowling Green State University, slangen@bgsu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/ijare>

How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!

Recommended Citation

Langendorfer, Stephen J. (2011) "Bits and Pieces," *International Journal of Aquatic Research and Education*: Vol. 5: No. 1, Article 2.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25035/ijare.05.01.02>

Available at: <https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/ijare/vol5/iss1/2>

This Editorial is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at ScholarWorks@BGSU. It has been accepted for inclusion in International Journal of Aquatic Research and Education by an authorized editor of ScholarWorks@BGSU.

Bits and Pieces

Well, I guess it was bound to happen after four volumes and sixteen issues of the journal: I find myself unable to identify one abiding issue on which to write my entire editorial. A sports journalist and columnist in a local newspaper occasionally titles his columns as “random thoughts from an idle mind” when apparently he has no particular topic around which to focus his column. I figured that I could take advantage of a similar approach in this short editorial, hence my title. As you will discover, I have several topics as well as one ethically-related theme on which I comment in this short essay.

Editorial Board Changes

For a scholarly peer-reviewed journal, having a solid group of experts serving as an editorial board is one vital and important ingredient to success. Editorial boards are variously comprised and serve for various periods of time, depending on the journal. When we first identified our Editorial Board members for the *International Journal of Aquatic Research and Education*, we never explicitly detailed their intended length of service because, frankly, we had no idea what the needs of the journal would turn out to be or how responsibilities might evolve. As inaugural members of the Editorial Board, obviously we could not have everyone serve the same length term or the whole Editorial Board potentially would turn over simultaneously. Therefore, several members of our initial board are rotating off the board after four years with our sincere thanks and gratitude. Several new board members, including several with important international ties, will be joining the *IJARE* Board. All of the departures and arrivals have not been finalized as I compose this piece, so I urge readers to check out the back cover of this issue of the journal to see who our newest board members are!

Using APA 6th Edition

Another timely change for the *International Journal of Aquatic Research and Education* as we begin the fifth volume involves a shift in the appropriate organizational, citation, and reference format for the journal. We will continue to employ the American Psychological Association (APA) publication style. We will, however, transition to the latest, or 6th Edition of APA's Publication Manual as of this issue. I will be editing the author and reviewer checklists appearing on Manuscript Central as well as those appearing on our newly-revamped Human Kinetics website (<http://journals.humankinetics.com/IJARE>) to assure they all refer to the 6th edition.

Readers will find the latest edition of APA's manual actually is shorter than its 5th edition predecessor and the changes in style are neither dramatic nor extensive, but evolutionary. There is a very nice online audio tutorial describing how the 6th edition has changed (<http://flash1r.apa.org/apastyle/whatsnew/index.htm>).

I do strongly recommend authors and prospective authors to purchase a copy of the 2010 Publication Manual (6th ed.), but I caution to make sure you purchase a second or later printing because of some errors in the initial printing that were corrected (<http://supp.apa.org/style/pubman-reprint-corrections-for-2e.pdf>). I also can suggest that there are a number of excellent online sources, particularly from large academic libraries such as Purdue University, which summarize the APA format in a concise and clear fashion (<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>). In the absence of owning your own copy of the 6th Edition APA manual, please be certain to take advantage of the online information. This will save editorial time as well as revision time and effort for authors.

Ethical Considerations in Publishing

One of the key changes reflected in the APA's 6th Edition is an expanded Chapter 1 that focuses on ethical considerations in publishing (<http://flash1r.apa.org/apastyle/whatsnew/index.htm>), including avoiding self-plagiarism and protecting the rights of research participants. It is fortunate, I believe, for *IJARE* that to this point in our short history we have not experienced any serious ethical breaches and we certainly hope that continues. I think one contribution that editorials such as this can make to the journal is to emphasize some of the basic ethical considerations to which all research studies and published manuscripts must adhere. Aside from some more obvious elements such as academic honesty with respect to adequately citing one's own and other authors' works, there are some unique requirements or suggestions that I think bear reemphasizing.

Protecting the Rights and Welfare of Research Participants.

The history of the rights and welfare of humans participating in research dates back to the 1947 Nuremberg Code and 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The need for the Code and Declaration stemmed from the atrocities committed during World War II by National Socialists (Nazis) who experimented on prisoners without their explicit permission or consent. Unfortunately, the abuse of humans in research was not limited to Nazi wartime experiments, but extended to the now-infamous Tuskegee Syphilis Studies conducted on unsuspecting African-American men in the U.S. Following the adoption of the human rights articles within the 1975 Helsinki Accords, all research in the U.S. was expected to comply within standard operating protocols. All research institutions are required to establish Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) responsible for reviewing and providing oversight on any and all research conducted with humans.

One requirement of all research reported in APA journals (such as *IJARE*) is that authors indicate in the Method section (note that Method is singular, not plural, by the way) that the study had been reviewed and approved by an appropriate IRB and that the prescribed informed consent procedures have been followed. It is the responsibility of reviewers and the Editor to make sure that all manuscripts are in compliance with this ethical requirement. There are exceptions IRBs allow to the requirement that informed consent must be obtained from all research participants such as instances where the data result from educational settings, naturalistic observations, or anonymous archival records.

Participants vs. Subjects in Human Research. For almost 100 years, it has been traditional to use the term “subject” to refer to human participants in research. Unfortunately, although using the term “subject” is a strong tradition in describing research, APA emphasizes that researchers should primarily manipulate the treatments or independent variables, not the research participants. It is strongly preferable to identify the research participants using active voice and to refer to them as “participants,” or “students,” or “children,” as appropriate, rather than as “subjects,” which implies a passive, manipulated role. In line with the previous section about the rights and welfare of research participants, humans have the innate right to actively and knowingly provide permission to participate in any research.

Conflicts of Interest Statements. An important assumption underlying all research results is that they have been obtained and interpreted objectively and with as little bias as possible. There are several types of potential conflict of interest situations that should be avoided as well as reported in order to maintain the highest level of integrity of published research. Authors need to report any potential conflict of interest situations such as where monetary interests in the topic involved in the research could either positively or negatively impact an author’s perception or interpretation of the research. In any cases where the existence, potential or appearance of conflict of interest exists, it is critical that authors provide that information in their work to enable readers to appreciate the possibility, regardless of how remote, that the results may be influenced by some type of bias.

Likewise, reviewers of papers should report and excuse themselves from reviewing any manuscript from collaborators, mentors, or recent students in order to avoid the reality or appearance of a conflict of interest. Finally, reviewers of manuscripts are expected to maintain the confidentiality of that work and not share it with colleagues or take advantage of the work prior to publication.

The topic of ethical considerations in research is broad and complicated. I strongly recommend that researchers, authors, reviewers, and other interested readers investigate the many implications of research ethics by starting with a careful reading of Chapter 1 in the APA *Publication Manual* (6th Ed.). In particular, I recommend use of the “Ethical Compliance Checklist” (p. 20) in the *Publication Manual* as a good starting place.

Steve Langendorfer, Editor
International Journal of Aquatic Research and Education

Reference

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.