



### *Editorial*

In the past 18 months, there have been two editorials in *Neuropsychologia*. The first of these informed readers about how the editorial team determines whether manuscripts fall within the scope of the journal. The second informed readers about the re-organisation of the editorial procedures which took place in September 2006, specifically the creation of new sections. The aim of this third editorial is to inform readers about further developments in the editorial team and about changes to editorial procedures. In addition, the editorial will clarify how the journal's scope is defined, and remind readers about some of the journal's manuscript categories.

Shlomo Bentin's term as co-Editor-in-Chief concluded at the end of 2007. Shlomo put an enormous amount of work into the journal over the past 3 years and I am extremely grateful for his astute advice on many tricky issues connected with the editorial process and *Neuropsychologia's* policies. His contribution will be sorely missed. Shlomo's role as editor of the Perception Section has been taken on by Sabine Kastner, who is now dealing with any new submissions that fall within the area of perception. I have agreed to take on the role as sole Editor-in-Chief. As well as editing of manuscripts falling in the Memory Section of the journal, I will focus on general policy issues that include commissioning special issues, and review papers, as well as ensuring consistency of decision making across sections and continual improvement in the review process. If you are interested in editing a Special Issue, you should contact me before submitting a more formal proposal. We are looking for collections of papers on currently hot topics within cognitive neuroscience with contributions from leading researchers of the relevant topic, drawn from a good range of countries.

The editorial team has been taking steps to speed up the review process, as well as to improve its fairness and quality. The first significant step in this was the introduction last year of a team of Section Editors, who focus on editing manuscripts that lie within their areas of expertise. The aim is to ensure that no editor is massively overloaded, and so has the time and expertise to select the best reviewers and make an informed and balanced editorial decision. A new development is that submitting authors can now suggest possible reviewers who have the knowledge to make particularly well informed judgments about the manuscript. If you submit a manuscript, I would encourage you to indicate such reviewers.

Increased efficiency of the reviewing process is also being helped by the latest upgrade of the Elsevier Editorial System, EES-5. The changes make the system more user friendly in several ways. For example, assuming that authors suggest or oppose a particular reviewer and the reviewer is registered with *Neuropsychologia*, a note will appear on the suggested reviewer's profile when an editor is searching for reviewers. Together with the availability of Scopus with EES, this will help editors select the most informed and appropriate reviewers for submitted manuscripts. The system now also allows all manuscripts to contain numbered lines, which will make it easier for authors to identify more quickly where changes need to be made when they are revising their manuscripts.

We have been gradually raising the bar over which manuscripts have to pass in order to be accepted and, in conjunction with a concern about maintaining consistency in the decision making process across editors, a further change is now being introduced. In the letter of invitation to reviewers, we now explicitly indicate the criteria that should form the basis of the editorial assessment, and when submitting their reports, reviewers are asked to complete a checklist which summarises their judgment as to how well the manuscript meets each of a number of key criteria. As well as being asked to assess how appropriately designed, executed, analysed and interpreted the studies are that are reported in the submitted manuscript, reviewers will also be asked to rate how novel, interesting and important the reported work is. In addition, reviewers will be asked to rate how the manuscript fits into the journal's scope (manuscripts that clearly do not fit will already have been rejected as inappropriate by the relevant Section Editor). Manuscripts will be rejected if the responsible editor judges that the manuscript can only reach the standards of the journal if a further experiment or experiments are run. If the editor judges that the manuscript can reach the standards of the journal by a normal revision, i.e. rewriting to increase clarity, inclusion of more information that is already collected, re-analysis or qualification of interpretations of the data, then authors will be asked to revise the manuscript. Major, rather than minor, revisions will be asked for if the changes needed are large, and such major revisions will be re-reviewed (re-review may not be necessary for minor revision manuscripts). Reviewers will also be asked to rate the writing with particular emphasis on how clear the manuscript is likely to be for readers. This will only be used as a basis for rejection when the writing prevents proper understanding of the manuscript's main points, in which case the authors will be given a chance to re-submit provided they improve the writing sufficiently. When the problem is less severe, authors will be required to address the writing problems with due care as part of their major or minor revisions, and the manuscript will not be accepted until it is sufficiently clear.

Several EEG/ERP researchers have asked me about whether their papers no longer fit within *Neuropsychologia*'s scope. This is not the case and in order to clarify this issue, I will briefly repeat how we now determine whether a manuscript fits within the journal's scope. One central criterion is used. All manuscripts need to have as their main aim the theoretical linking of psychological/behavioural and brain processes in a way that is plausible and sufficiently specific. The specificity relates to how precisely brain and psychological/behavioural processes are identified. Manuscripts can have as minor aims clinical or measurement issues, but whether they fit the journal's scope will be judged in terms of how well the primary aim is fulfilled. Obviously, manuscripts that

report studies in which psychological/behavioural manipulations, but not brain measurements or manipulations are used, are likely to lie closer to the edge of the journal's scope. But if they are deemed to make a plausible and sufficiently specific theoretical link between psychological and brain processes, then they will be judged to fall within the journal's scope. Clearly EEG/ERP, like fMRI and TMS studies, will all fall within the scope of the journal as long as they are not only focused on methodological or clinical issues. Authors are reminded that initial editorial decisions about whether to send a manuscript out for review is based on the abstract. They, therefore, need to make clear in their abstracts that their manuscript has an appropriate primary aim focused on a cognitive neuroscience question and that their results enable them to meet this aim with reasonable plausibility and sufficient specificity. As with all editorial decisions, there is always a subjective component in borderline cases, which is why different editors may sometimes reach different decisions.

Manuscript categories in the journal include "Reviews", "Perspectives" and "Current Controversies", in addition to the Papers and Notes sections. If you disagree with the methodology or interpretations in an article recently published in *Neuropsychologia*, and want to write a current controversies manuscript, you should always contact me in the first instance so that I can ensure unsuitable comments are not submitted. You need to indicate what aspect(s) of the methodology, interpretation or both was incorrect and support your view with arguments. You should also indicate a more appropriate methodology and/or interpretation, again supporting your view with arguments. My decision will be based on whether I judge that the topic considered is of wide interest and that the potential arguments may help advance the field. If I agree that a suitable comment could be made, you should submit your manuscript (not exceeding 1500 words with or without an abstract) to EES. Where necessary this will be sent out for review, and if the manuscript is judged acceptable, then I will approach the targeted authors to give them the opportunity to respond within a reasonable deadline. If both comment and response are acceptable, then they will be published next to each other in a forthcoming issue of the journal.

Current Controversies manuscripts are intended to display reasoned arguments between opposing perspectives about topical and polemical issues that relate to recent *Neuropsychologia* publications. The Perspectives component of the Reviews and Perspectives section aims to air similar reasoned differences of opinion, but using a fuller development of the arguments and in a way that need not relate to any papers recently published in the journal. The arguments of the authors representing the differing perspectives are supposed to be developed within the framework provided by a brief review of the relevant literature. The separate authors are supposed to address each others arguments and where issues are clearly currently unresolved they should indicate ways of resolving these issues. This is made possible by the separate authors exchanging their draft Perspective manuscripts before their first submission to EES. Once submitted, the manuscripts will be subject to the normal review process. In order to make this process work, potential authors will be approached by the "Reviews and Perspectives" Section Editor (Dr. Morris Moscovitch), by myself, or by one of the Section Editors and deadlines agreed for first draft exchange and initial submission to EES. Alternatively, anyone interested in writing a Perspective manuscript should approach either myself or Morris Moscovitch not only about the theme for two or more Perspective papers, but also

with suggestions for the authors of the different papers that will represent the rival viewpoints. The Editors will only allow the process to begin when all authors have agreed to follow the general procedures outlined above. Any manuscript that is submitted as a Perspective without following the above procedure will be rejected as inappropriate, although it may subsequently be allowed to be re-submitted as a Review, if appropriate changes are made, or re-submitted as a Perspective if the conditions described above are met.

The editorial team wishes to expand the number of original review papers the journal publishes and, should you be interested in writing such, do please contact either myself or Morris Moscovitch.

On behalf of the editorial team, I wish you all the best for a happy and productive 2008, and we look forward to receiving your next original research paper for review.

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