

Editorial

Reflections on being an editor: the rewards and the difficulties

Editing a scientific journal is a unique experience: you come into contact with the emergence of great ideas, authors of various levels of sophistication and topics with a range of different approaches. It means being present as experimental techniques and innovative methodologies are created over researchers' lifetimes. It is an opportunity to watch science evolve, see authors mature and observe the changes favoured by the scientific community over time. You are part of the complex fight taking place on the sidelines, the result of which determines what the reader will discover, judge and approve or reject: the published article. This often needs to be revised many times until it reaches the level expected by the audience of its publishing journal. Working as a journal editor involves the honour of being given a certain amount of decision-making power. At the very least you are able to exert some kind of influence on the selection and approval process preceding the publication of a piece of work; a decision that undoubtedly plays a role in establishing the course of science.

It is extremely gratifying to see the finished product in print after many hours of work: attractive to look at from the outside and, more importantly, with a scientific content of an excellent standard. Receiving the approval of the development agencies is also one of the great moments in the life of an editor. Not only is their continuing financial support essential for keeping the journal regularly in print, but their endorsement represents a confirmation of the journal's quality.

Editing a scientific journal is in fact incredibly rewarding and I consider myself very honoured to have been the editor-in-chief of this journal and a reviewer of innumerable others in Brazil and abroad for so many years.

However, the work of the editor-in-chief also involves dealing with difficulties and concerns. Deadlines that need to be met, norms that have to be fulfilled, the dissatisfaction of authors whose work has not been accepted, reviewers who do not return their reviews or who give aggressive and unacceptable comments; each of these contributes to an elevated stress level during the journal's production phase.

Making decisions on what is accepted for publication is a privilege, but also a great responsibility. Whether a piece of work is approved for publication or not affects which procedures and scientific ideas are validated or rejected and has an influence on the author's status. When you accept a piece of work for publication, you are collaborating with the author in upholding his work contract, the financial support he receives and his status in the community. Yet, if you reject a manuscript, you must be conscious of the fact that this might have grave consequences for the professional life of the author.

Even though each author is responsible for the ideas presented in his article, the journal's profile is determined by the articles published in it and any material included must be carefully selected. Currently, with the great importance placed on publishing papers based on dissertations and theses, many more young researchers are looking for publication opportunities. Although some studies are of excellent quality, others still reflect the scientific immaturity of their authors. Care must be taken so as not to hinder the emergence of new perspectives, while also taking into account that a study requires relevant topics and adequate procedures.

The constant need to publish means authors sometimes submit articles that are not quite ready. Many of these manuscripts return from the reviewers needing to be reworded, since otherwise the study cannot be published. Then

again, authors sometimes take their time in handing in the modified document, which then needs to be sent to the reviewers for another analysis. The result is a lengthy process requiring the collaboration of a committed group of reviewers, who are skilful in the art of judging.

Reviewers ought to consider being invited to give an opinion on whether a piece of work should be published or not a great honour: they are being granted the right to make decisions that could have a great influence on someone's professional life. Unfortunately, many researchers, mainly due to lack of time, do not return reviews and on many occasions the articles need to be sent to various reviewers until the necessary two revisers have been found. This is one of the greatest obstacles an editor must overcome.

Despite these complications so characteristic of editing scientific periodicals, the journal *Estudos de Psicologia* (Studies in Psychology) from Campinas, has been able to maintain a level of excellence regarding its uninterrupted regular publication as well as its high-quality, wide-ranging content.

In 2010 we received 117 articles for consideration, of which 48 gained approval, including some that had been pending since the year before. We published 51 articles written by authors from various states and countries, with an average of 14 articles per volume. *Estudos de Psicologia* was given the Qualis classification A-2, receives funding by the CNPq, and is indexed in international databases, such as PSycINFO, Latindex, Clase, Scopus and national databases, such as SciELO, Lilacs, Index Psi. It should be emphasised that the journal's existence and high quality rest on these factors: the excellence of its editors and reviewers, the dynamic work of the Publishing Group of the Life Science Centre, responsible for publishing this journal and the constant funding and support of the Dean's and Assistant Dean's offices at Pontifícia Universidade Católica de Campinas (PUC-Campinas). I thank all for their collaboration and for granting me the honour of being editor-in-chief of *Estudos de Psicologia*.

Marilda Emmanuel Novaes Lipp
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