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Opening Up: Small Wins in Open Science: Things You Can Do Today to Improve Research in I-O Psychology

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The recent open science movement is a multifaceted idea and undertaking, with grand long-term ambitions. Although many academic, editorial, and disciplinary forces involved in the open science movement have called for changes toward improving replicability and reproducibility, those calls can often seem too abstract to be useful, too formidable to be practiced, too peripheral to be worth doing, or otherwise challenging for researchers to understand how to engage in open science. Such calls are often made within a "crisis narrative" that is intended to bring serious attention to the need for transparency and openness in science. Unfortunately, the crisis narrative may very well interfere with our collective ability to carry out several practical day-to-day open science activities that are relatively easy for researchers to do and contribute to a more credible body of knowledge. Fortunately, we can switch the crisis narrative to one that brings focus on the specific opportunities and challenges we face as scientists (Fanelli, 2018). Weick (1984) aptly recognized that many organizational challenges can be reframed as "mere problems" that can be addressed by practical means, leading "small wins" that accumulate toward the common good.

We view many aspects of open science as "mere problems" to address in this practical way, one of them being transparency in published research. To be clear, engaging in open science behaviors that improve transparency does not always mean that sharing research materials and data is always appropriate. Instead, it means more broadly that researchers should communicate transparently about the key aspects of their research process (including why materials/data were or were not shared) so that their readers can then better understand and interpret the results of that research. So long as we can agree on the general principle that improving the transparency and openness of our research practices is beneficial (e.g., building a stronger and more credible community of research and practice), then we all can agree on our commitment to open science. This doesn't have to be hard—we can work together on "small wins."

We submit that authors can employ several tactics to get started with a small-wins strategy of opening up science. Here are a few: (a) making the exact scale items for a study available online in a repository, (b) preregistering one of a set of upcoming studies, (c) making a dataset open and accessible (e.g., through a publication outlet/on OSF/on social media), (d) making their science available sooner by posting an early draft to a preprint server, and (e) posting the training guide and content for activities such as an interview, focus group, or experimental intervention in an online appendix or repository. Picking even just one of these tactics will help you get started with open science. We would love to hear about more open science tactics useful to you! Email them to Chris at christopher.castille@nicholls.edu, and he will share them in a future issue.

We see value in open science habits not just for authors but also for journals. Habits can accrue to journals that encourage open science behaviors in their policies ,and these habits can also accrue to researchers as reflected across their work, within their lab, and in working with their colleagues. Such habits signal a strong commitment by journals to making our science more robust (see Grand, Rogelberg, Allen, et al., 2018), perhaps attracting additional journals and researchers in a virtuous cycle that begets a stronger science of I-O