



## Editorial

It is with some trepidation that I took over as Editor of the *British Journal of Educational Psychology* in January 2002. I was following in the steps of key individuals in the field of Educational Psychology and taking on the task as pressures on academics in Britain were continually increasing. The *BJEP* has established itself over the years as a journal that publishes high quality papers reflecting a range of theoretical orientations and methodologies. The first issue for me as the new editor was to continue the best of earlier traditions in a context of change and innovation. The second issue was to do this as efficiently and effectively as possible. With over 100 submissions in the first nine months of office, the challenge was clearly set! In this editorial, I will outline some of the developments you will see in the journal and the rationale for these changes.

My first task is to thank Professor Peter Tomlinson who has guided the journal through the last four years in a creative and balanced way. Peter was always willing to work with new and exciting ideas and keen to give authors the opportunity to revise manuscripts that presented important empirical data or challenged views. It is only in recent months that I realise how much time and effort he has put into keeping *BJEP* running as a responsive and innovative journal. Needless to say the associate editors have also played an invaluable job. I have now had the opportunity to work with each of them individually and I am extremely grateful for their professionalism and expertise.

As an editorial board we will continue the tradition of publishing a range of high quality articles, reflecting a balanced view of research topics in educational psychology. This will include studies ranging from those with a specific empirical focus and methodological form, through to meta-analyses, research reviews and relevant theoretical developments. The basic criteria are: 1) that the work should be novel; and 2) contribute to our understanding of educational psychology or the interface between education and psychology. Papers, where appropriate, will continue to be blind reviewed by two referees. This process will be coordinated either by an associate editor or myself.

One of the first changes you will have noticed over the last year is the new face of *BJEP*. The journal's cover has changed and this is linked with placing *BJEP* within the range of journals published by the British Psychological Society (<http://www.bps.org.uk/publications/journals.cfm>). This change has important implications as all manuscripts are now processed through the BPS offices. This will result in improved responses to both authors and editors and an efficient tracking of reviews. The BPS journals website allows authors to submit their manuscripts via the web and we encourage authors to use this when they can (<http://www.bps.org.uk/publications/jSubmission.cfm>). In addition, readers will have noted the extended list of Associate Editors and the inclusion of Advisory Editors. The need to provide expert reviews for the variety of papers submitted to the journal and the need to maintain a high quality journal led us to seek experts throughout the world who could contribute to this process. I am grateful for their willingness in taking on this task and for the many reviews that have already been submitted. These new administrative arrangements are also complemented by the inclusion of a new *BJEP* Annual Review paper.

The *BJEP* Annual Review is a commissioned refereed review article that addresses research themes from other areas of psychology or other disciplines which impact on educational psychology research and practice. These articles are designed to be both informative and provocative state-of-the-art reviews and will be provided by experts in the area who are cognisant of the field of educational psychology. We are very pleased to publish in this edition 'Genetics and Educational Psychology' written by Professor Robert Plomin and Dr. Sheila Walker. This is both an engaging and accessible article that will challenge some readers' assumptions about the ways in which developments in genetics may impact on research and practice in educational psychology. The next *BJEP* Annual Review will be published in March 2004.

As a graduate student I had the opportunity to be supervised by Dr Robin Campbell. I learnt many things over the years we worked together, but he left me with a refrain that still runs in my mind: 'What do the data mean? Pick out the important issues. Don't get lost in masses of correlations and details'. Robin's advice, as ever, was sound. It leads to clear thinking and often innovative and challenging conclusions but to do this it is necessary to spend time with the data. With this in mind Dr Dan Wright, our statistical advisor, was asked to prepare a brief working paper that would help authors address statistical issues and explore their data fully. Dan's paper has been reviewed by a number of international experts and received the approval of the Chair of the BPS Journals Committee – Professor Michael West. We hope that it will serve as an important reference source in preparing manuscripts and reviewing papers.

The success of a journal depends on the work of the editorial board, high quality submissions and the process of reviewing. We are grateful to the referees who respond to our requests: without you, the journal would not function. We would encourage more individuals to accept our requests to review papers; this is an important and stimulating task that will ultimately enhance the status of the discipline and the journal.

We hope you will see over the coming years a continuation of some of the best features of *BJEP* as well as change and innovation.

**Julie E. Dockrell**