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Editorial

Numerical Cognition Speaks Up: Reflections and Acknowledgements on the Journal of Numerical Cognition

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The Journal of Numerical Cognition published its first issue last year. For me, the first issue was released with a mixture of excitement, relief and trepidation. *Excitement*, that the project had come to fruition from its initial genesis (see comments in Towse, 2015). *Relief* – that the first issue was public and as a result, that the Journal was more than just a potential web page and a set of behind-the-scenes activities. With the release of Volume 1, Issue 1, there was the start of Journal content. And *trepidation* because at that point, because the Journal was in publication, there was now an expectation of follow up and schedules and yet the Journal was of course still very much in its infancy.

Looking back over the past year, I am happy to confirm that the Journal has indeed been a success. The current issue completes the first full year of publication and accomplishes its target of three issues for the year, accompanying the initial issue that appeared near the end of 2015. I am particularly pleased that the Journal has been able to publish a range of articles that start to represent at least some of the diversity of work in numerical cognition, including for example developmental questions tested at age 4 and beyond (Knudsen, Fischer, Henning, & Aschersleben, 2015; Starr & Brannon, 2015), cross cultural issues (Morrissey, Liu, Kang, Hallett, & Wang, 2016), analysis of the trajectory of real world mathematics skills (Sullivan, Frank, & Barner, 2016) and the cognition that supports different arithmetic processes (Curtis, Huebner, & LeFevre, 2016). In addition, the Journal has addressed and discussed conceptual issues in the research priorities for the field (see Alcock et al., 2016, and accompanying commentaries).

Moreover, I believe that it is already apparent that the Journal has good visibility and value. Each of the research reports in the very first issue has been viewed several hundred times, and the on-page counter of course does not pick up reads from other servers or emailed copies of the papers between colleagues, and so on. Moreover, the majority of the research reports from the first issue have already accumulated multiple citations (and these are other-citations not self-citations). Consequently, I feel confident in being able to write

that submitting work to the Journal should be seen as an attractive option, not only for reasons already identified a year ago (Towse, 2015), but also because of evidence that such work stands a good chance of being noticed and used, and feeding into the field of numerical cognition.

Journal Statistics

At the time of writing, The Journal had received 66 submissions (this is over an approximately two-year period, because it includes the run-up to launch). The mean time to review has been approximately 7 weeks and, for papers which have been published, the mean time from initial submission to appearance has been approximately 7 months. Review time is within the stated objectives for the Journal. whilst being on the outer region of what we would like to achieve. When there have been delays in the review process we have striven to update authors. In any case, these statistics are provided to back up the Journal aspiration to offer effective peer review of submissions and that this occurs in a reasonable time scale.

Aside from the articles themselves, the Journal has benefited from the establishment of the Mathematical Cognition and Learning Society [http://the-mcls.org], a development that was anticipated but not realised at the launch of the first issue. The Society now provides an important and valuable home for researchers in the field. Moreover, JNC is the official journal of the Society, so there is now a link between a research Society and this research Journal. I believe this is of tremendous benefit to each; the first post-launch meeting of the Society is in Tennessee in 2017, and it is a meeting many are looking forward to already.

The success of the Journal would simply not be possible without the many volunteers who have agreed to invest their time and energy in reviewing submissions. Peer review is by no means a perfect system, but as Editor it has been heartening to witness the constructive advice provided by reviewers – necessarily critical at times, but also insightful and supportive and helping to improve the work that is considered and the way it can be communicated. An experienced and wise Journal Editor, on hearing about the project to launch the Journal of Numerical Cognition had confided "*Your biggest problem is going to be finding reviewers. Numerical Cognition above all others is the area where finding journal reviewers is especially hard*." That potential reviewers sometimes decline invitations is to be expected – we nearly all have busy lives and an almost endless list of commitments and priorities. And whilst it would be terrific if we could increase the rate at which review invitations were accepted, the past year provides evidence that this prediction was actually unduly pessimistic.

As Editor, I would like to state my appreciation to the publishers, PsychOpen, for all their help and support in the past year. I have been very impressed by the professionalism, commitment and cooperation that has been provided. They want the Journal to succeed, they want to do a good job, and they want to help authors make the most of the work they have undertaken – and it shows. They provide an exceptional platform for psychologists to discuss their research.

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