

Editors-in-chief editorial

A new pathway for *Motriz*: Challenges and commitments

Eliane Mauerberg-deCastro
São Paulo State University

Renato Moraes
University of São Paulo

Afonso A. Machado
São Paulo State University

In recent years, *Motriz* Journal has shown important advances in both the content and quality of its published articles, and the volume of submissions has increased substantially. Since 2006, nearly 2,000 manuscripts have been processed (peer- and editorial-reviewed, and accepted or rejected). Now indexed in major databases, *Motriz* has earned recognition as one of Brazil's leading scientific journals in the area of physical education and movement sciences. This is reflected in its A2 status, as granted by the Brazilian Coordination of Higher Education (CAPES) for the classification of scientific publications. Additionally, *Motriz* has earned a current impact factor of 0.14, as reported in the 2012 JCR (Journal Citation Report). As a consequence of these accomplishments, members of the Board of editors-in-chief and associate editors invited additional members to join them in an effort to make *Motriz* an international publication.

In October 2012, *Motriz* guidelines and language were modified to meet the goal of making *Motriz* an international journal. Members of the Board decided that all manuscripts should be written in English and should comply with the APA (American Psychological Association) Guidelines for the writing style, references, citations, and other technical details. The APA system is the most commonly used citation and writing style in the fields of psychology, education, and the social and behavioral sciences, and replaces the previously adopted ABNT (The Brazilian Guidelines for Technical Issues) system. The last manuscripts written in Portuguese that were approved for publication under the ABNT guidelines are available in *Motriz*, Volume 19, Issue 2, dated April-June 2013.

On May 29, 2013, Volume 19, Issue 3, July to September, launches a new phase of the journal "ahead of print." This edition also includes a supplemental issue, with articles and abstracts approved for the 8th International Congress of Physical Education and Human Movement Sciences and the 14th São Paulo Symposium of Physical Education (CIEFMH / SPEF), held concurrently.

After July 2013, the journal's guideline information will be uploaded to the SciELO open journal system. This first English edition also comes with a new graphic layout. These changes are taking place in order to increase *Motriz*'s international appeal, hopefully attracting authors, making articles enjoyable to read, and making them accessible to an international audience of readers. The conversion of the journal from Portuguese to its first English edition in less than a year is remarkable. The philosophy of "open access," which allows free and unrestricted access to *Motriz*'s content, will pose unrestricted worldwide visibility.

"Aches and pains." Will they go away?

Motriz's transition period has been a challenging process, both for the community of researchers—those who collaborate with the journal (editors and reviewers), and for prospective authors.

Despite its potential visibility and impact, members of the *Motriz* Board still have many concerns. A primary challenge is that many of the journal's highly-credentialed *ad hoc* consultants do not respond in a timely fashion to *Motriz* editors. Prior to the journal's recent transition, many submissions waited extensive periods of time for *ad hoc* reviewers to make editorial decisions, causing difficult delays for editors and authors. Also, the editors-in-chief and associate editors are responsible for assessing the quality of *ad hoc* reviewers' analyses. If their feedback is not adequate, new reviewers must be contacted, resulting in more time delays in the review process.

A second concern—also present in the previous phase of our journal—is how to attract manuscript submissions from international authors. Finally, in the last two years another concern has arisen amongst editors: scientific misconduct (unexpected, but a reality that is no longer rare in our journal). In the recent months, several cases of self-plagiarism/duplication of content or of entire studies were anonymously reported or accidentally detected by the editors.

Although the role of an editor is not to police such practices, we cannot ignore this reality. We invited Debra F. Campbell to illustrate, in her brief essay (below), how, increasingly, research and ethics collide, and this is reflected in actual concerns among many journal editors.

The legacy of a class of scientists—those represented in *Motriz*—should not have to excuse itself from complying with practices and conceptions based on ethics and moral values. This legacy, expressed in printed words, has the potential of leaving a “mark” on the next generation and on history. We hope that these “marks” are not “stains” on the reputation of an entire class of researchers and scholars in the areas of movement science and physical education, but, rather, marks of excellence.

The editors-in-chief, *Motriz*

Special guest commentary

**Common-sense rules to follow
as you “write up” your study**

Debra Frances Campbell
São Paulo State University

*Remember, you have only one chance
to make a first impression*

An old adage—a bit of folk wisdom—claims, “You have only one chance to make a first impression.” A common occurrence amongst journal submissions is that authors submit manuscripts that have been poorly written and that are not properly formatted (Albers, Floyd, Fuhrmann, & Martínez, 2011). Nothing impresses an editor more than a manuscript that is well-written, and well-written manuscripts possess two important qualities (among others): They are written in the *active voice*, and they are succinct. Authors of scientific articles often complicate already complicated information with sentences that are convoluted and difficult to follow. Using the *active voice*, that is, structuring a sentence so that “X does something to Y,” not, “Y has something done to it,” is a basic tenant in writing clearly.

Too, a common tendency, especially amongst inexperienced writers, is to include superfluous information in an attempt to impress readers. However, editors of scientific journals must be wary of such attempts, as space in their journals is limited, and every word counts.

Another increasingly common occurrence, especially in inexperienced authors, is that they submit their manuscripts to international English-language journals after using an online translator to translate their study from their native language to English. The results are often humorous at best, and can be disastrous in terms of presenting the study in a well-written, professional manner.

*Dress for success, or, don't go to the party
in the wrong clothes*

Have you ever had the experience of going to a formal party dressed in your best attire and seeing someone there who was dressed in Bermuda shorts? What did you think about that person? Perhaps you thought that you went to a lot of trouble to look your best and that the person in shorts didn't take the time or initiative to put their best foot forward. It is likely that you thought they were incapable of, or unwilling to, follow directions; or maybe you thought they were sloppy, or even careless?

When an editor receives a manuscript for review and subsequent publication in his or her journal, the first thing he or she will notice—speaking metaphorically—is how it is “dressed.” That is, does the manuscript follow the proper format, as indicated in the journal's submission guidelines? Did the author “put her best foot forward,” or was she careless and sloppy in the way she presented her manuscript, suggesting that she may have done the same during the process of gathering and analyzing her data? The study itself may have great merit and may have been done with great care, but, like the assumptions we make about someone who wears shorts to a formal party, the editor will make assumptions based on his or her first impression of your manuscript.

The presence of good writing style and the proper formatting of a manuscript cannot guarantee that a study will be published. Naturally, the study itself must meet the proper criteria, as judged by a jury of peers. However, when an author has taken care with these details, it is logical to assume that he or she likely completed the study itself with great care, and that the manuscript deserves to move on to the review process. Conversely, when an editor receives a manuscript that lacks even proper formatting, as specified in a journal's submission guidelines, he or she often assumes that the author was careless with the details of the study as well. Many journal editors will not consider even looking at a manuscript that is not properly formatted, and they immediately reject it. One of the most commonly cited reasons for journal rejections is that the author did not properly format the manuscript before submitting it.

A variety of online resources are available to both aspiring and veteran scientific writers, including style guides and formatting templates.

A few words about originality

A 2010 report in *Nature* reveals that the journal is amongst the growing number of “major science publishers” to employ a plagiarism screening service called CrossCheck. In 2010, the report claimed that the database of articles for comparison totaled 25 million. The *Nature* report claims that, “In one notable pilot of the system on three journals, their publisher had to reject 6%, 10% and 23% of accepted papers, respectively,” although, it says, other studies reveal lower rates of plagiarism (*Nature*, 2010, p.159). The report makes

two notable conclusions. The first is that "...data are sorely lacking on the true extent of plagiarism, whether its prevalence is growing substantially and what differences might exist between disciplines." The second implied that we should be appalled that those in academia would even consider the practice of plagiarism. "What is disheartening is that plagiarism seems pervasive enough to make such precautions necessary" (p. 159).

Indeed, discussions amongst academics about what is known anecdotally as "cookie-cutter" or "salami" research seem to reflect a growing concern. This is a practice in which quantitative researchers change one or two variables of a previously-published study, re-analyze their data, and re-submit the entire study, almost intact, with only slight variations from the original study. Some scientists question the integrity of such practices, and simply call it *duplication research* or *plagiarism* (Errami et al., 2008; Errami et al., 2010).

Similarly, social scientists using qualitative methods are facing problems with what some refer to as "textual re-use" (Collberg & Kobourov, 2005). The re-use of one's own work is a hotly debated topic: Some believe that re-using one's own work without changing the content significantly and without proper attribution is *self-plagiarism*; others believe that one cannot steal one's own work, and, therefore, that one cannot plagiarize oneself (Bretag & Carapiet, 2007).

However, such practices place journal editors and reviewers not only in ethical dilemmas, but, also, possible legal dilemmas. The re-publishing of an article that was formerly published in another journal is a breach of intellectual property use, and places editors in the precarious position of having to "police" manuscript submissions (Covan, 2009).

Most journals have very strict rules in this regard, and, it is best to err on the side of conservatism. That is, avoid potential ethical and professional dilemmas by carefully citing all work and attributing it to the author, even if *you* are the author. Remember, it is better to "over cite" in your references than to not attribute credit where credit is due.

References and suggested readings

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Authors' note

Eliane Mauerberg-deCastro and Afonso Antonio Machado are affiliated with São Paulo State University, Rio Claro, SP; Renato Moraes is affiliated with the University of São Paulo, Ribeirão Preto, SP. They are the editors-in-chief of *Motriz*.

Debra Frances Campbell is a communications expert and integrated marketing consultant. She is currently finishing her doctorate in Human Development and Technologies, São Paulo State University, Rio Claro, SP.