

2013

## Consulting Editors

Merrill-Palmer Quarterly Editors

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# Editorial Policies

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## Principal Objectives

The principal objectives for *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly* are to maintain the standards of excellence established by previous editors and continue to advance the scope and quality of scholarship that appears in the journal. This aim has been at the forefront of *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly* for its more than 50 years of existence (see Ladd, 2004), and as a result the journal's readership, submission rates, and scholarly reputation have grown substantially. Another objective is to expand the scope of the journal's content so as to embrace diverse academic disciplines, research contexts and paradigms, and geopolitical perspectives while also refining the journal's mission by featuring articles in which authors initiate important new areas of inquiry, transcend traditional disciplinary boundaries, and introduce conceptual, methodological, and analytic innovations. Toward this end, the editors seek to establish a format for the journal that is diverse with respect to contributors' and readers' scientific disciplines, professional status (junior versus senior investigators), ethnicity and cultural backgrounds, and geopolitical contexts or locations. Included in this aim is the goal of publishing contributions from a global community of scholars; the editors encourage submissions from investigators who reside or work in countries other than the United States and Canada.

## Substantive Focus

*Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*'s mission is to serve as a primary source of new research studies in human development, theoretical papers, critical reviews of literature, and scholarly commentaries. The purview of *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly* encompasses theory and research on all areas of child and adolescent development and incorporates the journal's historical commitment to the study of development in context (e.g., sociocultural variations, families, schools, neighborhoods, peers, and media). The majority of papers that are considered for *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly* are original reports of empirical research that extend knowledge about child and adolescent development. The editors are primarily interested in submissions that advance developmental theory and generate novel findings from sound developmental methods and designs. Also preferred are empirical investigations that contain provocative aims, multiple studies, and innovative methods. In contrast, articles that focus on technical issues (e.g., creation and evaluation of measures, methods, and statistical analyses) are of lesser interest unless

they also contain an original substantive (developmental) component and contribution. This same restriction applies to investigations that do *not* include infants, children, or adolescents as participants. Examples would include investigations conducted on undergraduates or adults that do not also contain data collected with children.

### **Creation of Special Sections or Special Issues**

Devoting journal space to special sections and special issues may at times complement aspects of *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly's* mission. Proposals for special sections or issues may be submitted for consideration and, if encouraged, developed in collaboration with the editors. Those interested in developing a special issue or section should contact the editor for additional information. As illustrations, special sections or issues might focus on topics or areas of investigation that (a) bring novel perspectives and findings to bear on existing research traditions or literatures, (b) address emergent and/or controversial issues within and/or across disciplines, (c) are of growing international importance, or (d) are of particular interest to specific cultural, ethnic, or national groups.

### **Manuscript Review Process**

The editors of *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly* aspire to provide authors with high-quality peer reviews and decisive, constructive decision letters in a timely manner. Further information about the manuscript review process is provided in the paragraphs that follow.

*Blind review.* Articles submitted to *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly* undergo blind peer review. Thus, only manuscripts that have been prepared for blind peer review can be considered for publication.

*Role, nature, and number of peer reviews.* Peer reviewers play an important advisory role in the evaluation of manuscript submissions, and the editors will solicit reviews from colleagues who possess expertise in areas that are pertinent to an author's work. Manuscripts that undergo peer review will typically be sent to two peer reviewers, who will be contacted in advance and asked if they will complete the review within the editor's time line. Copies of reviews that are returned on time will be included with the editor's decision letter. Reviews that arrive after the decision date will also be forwarded to authors.

*Portion of submissions that undergo peer review.* The majority of manuscripts that address topics that are relevant to the journal and its readership will undergo peer review. Others, including manuscripts that are judged by the editors to contain substantial scientific, ethical, or formatting problems, or that

fall outside the journal's mission, will be returned to authors with the editor's comments. The editors are committed to the view that the function of a scientific journal (and the editors and peer reviewers who staff it) is not only to select and publish high-quality articles but also to improve the quality of investigation within our disciplines through scholarly debate, criticism, and collaboration. New investigators, in particular, are likely to profit from this process.

*Length of the review period.* Research findings are time-sensitive information, and it is of concern that there has been a tendency for lag times to increase at many journals in recent years (see Nelson, 1996). *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly* will continue the policy of processing manuscripts and communicating initial decisions to authors within approximately three months of the time the manuscript is received at the editorial office.

## Manuscript Submission

Adherence to manuscript preparation and submission guidelines increases the efficiency with which manuscripts are processed. The editors reserve the right to return or reject manuscripts that deviate substantially from these requirements.

*Manuscript format and style.* Follow the instructions and specifications provided in the 6th edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (2010). It may be purchased from the APA Order Department, P.O. Box 92984, Washington, DC 20090-2984 (online: [www.apa.org/books/](http://www.apa.org/books/)). Begin each of the following on a new page: title page, abstract, first page of text, references, appendix, footnotes, tables, figure captions, figures. Use margins of 1 inch on all sides of every page (top, bottom, and sides). Double-space *everything*, including text, tables, and references. Please use 12-point font. Text should be left-justified, and words should not be divided at the end of lines.

*Title page.* A separate title page should be attached to each copy of the manuscript. Place all information about the authors (e.g., institutional affiliations and contact information) on this page *only*, using the APA three-paragraph format (i.e., affiliation, acknowledgments, contact information). Blind review requires that information that might identify the authors or their affiliations be removed from all pages of the manuscript except the title page.

*Abstract.* Include an abstract that does not exceed 150 words.

*Manuscript length.* Most reports of empirical investigations that are considered for publication in *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly* do not exceed 30–40 pages, all-inclusive (i.e., including references, tables, and figures). Additional page space may, at times, be permitted for critical reviews of literature, theoretical papers, or manuscripts that contain multiple studies.

*Written informed consent.* Reports of studies in which minors (i.e., children, adolescents under the age of 18) were participants must include a description of the procedures used to obtain written informed consent, and an assurance that informed consent was obtained for all participants prior to their involvement in the investigation (see the American Psychological Association's ethical guidelines). Reports of studies that do not meet established ethical standards (e.g., the ethical standards of the American Psychological Association) cannot be considered for publication.

*Cover letter.* In a cover letter, the corresponding author must affirm that (a) the manuscript (and findings) is not under consideration by another publisher or journal and (b) the study reported in this manuscript has been conducted in accordance with *APA* ethical guidelines. For studies that are part of a larger project or have aspects in common with previously published articles, please explain how the various parts are related. The cover letter should contain the following forms of contact information for the corresponding author: e-mail address, postal (street) address, phone number, and fax number. The corresponding author is responsible for keeping coauthors apprised of all information pertaining to manuscript submission, manuscript review, and editorial decisions.

*Submitting manuscripts for review.* Manuscripts can be submitted electronically either by e-mail or through the *MPQ* website. Send submissions (manuscript and cover letter) in the form of MS Word documents to **mpq@asu.edu** or <http://www.merrillpalmerquarterly.com>.

*Website.* Additional information about this journal can be found online at <http://www.merrillpalmerquarterly.com>.

*Manuscript inquiries and communications.* Inquiries about manuscripts should be directed to the editorial office via e-mail ([mpq@asu.edu](mailto:mpq@asu.edu)) or fax (480-965-0334). Receipt of manuscripts will be acknowledged via e-mail.

Gary W. Ladd

## References

- American Psychological Association. (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Ladd, G. W. (2004). Celebrating the 50th anniversary of the *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, 50, 1–16.
- Nelson, K. (1996). Observations of an ex-journal editor on professional responsibilities. *SRCD Newsletter*, Spring, 1–3.

# Consulting Editors

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Many scholars contribute their time and expertise to the quality of this journal by providing reviews of submitted manuscripts. We thank the individuals listed here, as well as members of the Editorial Board listed on the inside cover, for their recent work on behalf of this journal.

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