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EDITOR'S MESSAGE

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As I sit and look at my bookshelf, the bright red covers of *SSLA* stare at me. I have had the honor and privilege to have had my name associated with this excellent journal for the past 34 years, first as Review Editor starting in 1988, then as Associate Editor in 1993, and then as co-editor (with Bill VanPatten) in 2015, and finally, as Editor in 2018. For most of that period, I worked closely with Albert Valdman who had the foresight in the late 1970s to see that the field was ready for a journal that was dedicated solely to the burgeoning field of second language acquisition.

A look at the table of contents from the early years until now reflects the enormous changes that have occurred in our field, taking us from earlier issues of the journal where there was a focus on pedagogical concerns to today's climate where a diversity of approaches is the norm. We have witnessed a codification of submission types as a reflection of the field at large, but the precursors to today's rubrics can be found in earlier pages of the journal. As an example, in 1993, Valdman introduced the category of Replication Study stating, "The way to more valid and reliable SLA research is through replication" (p. 505). In his editorial remarks, he acknowledged the recommendation of Stephen Krashen who advocated for replication when the journal was launched 15 years prior. According to the 1993 editorial, Valdman expressed the hope to have one replication study in each nonthematic issue. Sadly, this did not turn out to be the case, but the way was paved for it to happen, leading us to a full issue of replication studies that will appear as a special issue in 2024.

Over the years, under Valdman's leadership, the journal included full articles, responses to articles, rebuttals to articles, state-of-the art commentaries, review articles, book reviews, and book notices. The latter two categories are the only that have not remained, but the others have provided the impetus for the submission types that currently form the heart of the journal, along with more recent additions, such as the Methods Forum and Critical Commentaries.

In today's world, there is an emphasis on making research relevant to a wider community, for example, practitioners. *SSLA* subscribes to this philosophy and requires authors to write short summaries of their articles for lay consumption. But, this is not an innovation from today; the seeds were planted by Valdman in his 1997 editorial [19(1)], where he introduced a new rubric *Point and Counterpoint.* He made it clear that SSLA welcomes papers that deal with pedagogical matters "if they refer to major theoretical issues in the field" (p. 67). He goes on to say "*Point and Counterpoint* is designed to

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encourage the latter type of submissions. We invite producers and consumers of S/FL research to nominate issues for discussions or to send papers that address issues of interest to teachers, provided these are related to methodological or theoretical concerns of the field" (p. 67). Even though this is not the same as today's emphasis on making research accessible, it does show the concern that *SSLA* had for "issues of interest to teachers."

So, I cannot leave my editorship without acknowledging that the seeds of today's journal were largely planted by Albert Valdman in his more than 40 years at the helm of the journal. I was honored to have had a small part in the development of the journal and it is with a sense of sadness that I now leave *SSLA*. But my sense of sadness is overshadowed by the optimism I have for the journal's new leadership. Beginning with the next issue, Luke Plonsky will be taking over as Editor. Luke has worked with me as Senior Associate Editor and his remarkable knowledge of the field coupled with his interest and expertise in all issues of methodology (e.g., design, analysis) put him in the position of moving the journal through the next phases of the field. He is well positioned to take the journal to even greater areas of excellence and innovation. I look forward to seeing this journey, albeit from a distance.

And now is the time for thanking the many people who have contributed to the journal during my tenure as Editor. First, I would like to thank my partner in crime who co-edited the journal with me for three years. We had a hard act to follow, but I am grateful to Bill for helping to continue the journal's tradition of excellence and for embarking on new ways of moving the field forward. Bill and I were fortunate to have had an amazing team to work with including the Associate Editors, Kim Geeslin, Greg Keating, Luke Plonsky, and Andrea Révész. When I became Editor, Jill Jegerski and Stuart Webb joined the team and Luke Plonsky became Senior Associate Editor. The support, careful reading of the manuscripts, and well thought-out decisions by each of the Associate Editors made my job easier.

And, speaking of making things run smoothly, the amazing editorial assistants who ran all the behind-the-scenes tasks were second to none. Their ability to understand the journal, what it means to be an author waiting for a decision, what it means to be a reviewer with a reviewer deadline that was on top of their daily responsibilities to family and jobs, and how to navigate ScholarOne (not always an easy feat) never ceased to amaze me. Simply put, the journal would not be what it is without them. Thanks to Dustin Crowther, Magda Tigchelaar, Lorena Valmori, and our current "energy team" Lizz Huntley, Ayşen Tuzcu, and Hima Rawal. You were all a pleasure to work with.

Additional thanks to the incredible Editorial Board. Their expertise is what makes the journal tick. They provide their time reviewing articles and have over the years made suggestions at in person and Zoom meetings that have resulted in positive changes and innovations. Finally, one of the most important groups of individuals are the reviewers. I am so grateful to each and every one who agreed to review an article. It is their perceptive comments and thorough reviews that are the bread and butter of the journal. I recognize that this is often an unrewarded task, but it is an important service to the field. I am sure that I speak for Editors everywhere when I say that the field cannot move forward without them.

So, to the many whom I have learned from and relied on, a big thank you. And to Luke, I pass the gavel. May the force be with you.

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