The Time Is Now! Altering Trajectories of Motor Skill Learning Across the Lifespan

Gabriele Wulf

For those interested in the learning and development of motor skills, these are exciting times! Over the last few decades, we have seen changing conceptualizations and perspectives of motor learning and motor development (e.g., from information processing models to dynamical systems descriptions). What will the next era bring to theoretical insights of motor learning and developmental mechanisms? And how will these insights be utilized in optimizing applications that range from the clinical to the most inspiring expressions of human movement? How mutable or immutable is human motor control and behavior over time and across the lifespan? What kinds of experiences accelerate learning, consolidate memory, or alter developmental trajectories? How can understanding of the principles of learning and development contribute on a significant scale to promotion of skillfulness across contexts and mitigation of motor dysfunction and inactivity?

Historically, the study of human movement has gone through a period of scholarly fragmentation and subfield development, one beneficial result of which is a maturation of methods and measurement of human motor behavior. It can be argued, however, that the time is ripe for an integration of perspectives and the utilization of multiple methods, particularly as the opportunities for incorporating mind-brain-body mechanisms and social-cognitive-affective neural underpinnings have been dramatically enhanced in recent years. For example, discoveries of the mirror neuron system, movement-language couplings, expectancy-perception-action linkages, exercise-cognition relationships, and the like suggest that there has never been a better opportunity for diverse approaches to inform our understanding of motor skill learning—and for the fields of motor learning and development to contribute more broadly to human well-being.

As research in our field seems to be experiencing a new surge, it is timely to have a journal that is dedicated solely to motor learning and development. The *Journal of Motor Learning and Development (JMLD)* aspires to be *the* outlet for research in our area. A unique feature of *JMLD* is that it brings together the learning and developmental aspects of skill acquisition. As such it provides a platform for research related to the learning of movement skills in any age group, and in individuals with various abilities or disabilities. Its goal is to advance the understanding of key organizing principles to motor learning that affect training or therapeutic interventions to promote learning, or reduce deficits and decline, and to serve as a vehicle for cross-fertilization between the developmental and learning perspectives. As Editor-in-Chief, on behalf of the Editorial Board, I look forward to receiving your submissions that will demonstrate that, indeed, the time is now.

Wulf is Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Motor Learning and Development*, and is with the Dept. of Kinesiology and Nutrition Sciences, University of Nevada, Las Vegas.