

## Editorial...

# *The Mathematics Educator*—10 Years Old and Growing

Keith Leatham

This issue represents something of a landmark for *The Mathematics Educator (TME)*. For 10 years now *TME* has been published by the Mathematics Education Student Association (MESA) at the University of Georgia (UGA). *TME* was conceived by members of MESA who wanted first-hand experience in the makings of a research journal. As with any profession, those entering the field desire to get their feet wet; given the necessity of publication to academic career longevity, the ins and outs of publication are a natural area of interest to graduate students. They wonder what goes into doing and reporting research; but, in addition, they ask questions like “What gets published?” and “How are manuscripts received, reviewed, accepted, rejected, edited, and published?”

MESA added the publication of a journal to its constitution in the spring of 1989. To get the ball rolling, a seminar was organized for winter quarter 1990; the intent of the seminar was to “produce a pilot issue of the proposed journal in order to establish and document necessary policies and procedures related to its publication” (*TME*, 1990, inside front cover). The seminar participants took joint responsibility for collecting and reviewing manuscripts from within their ranks as well as from the UGA faculty. The first issue was published in the summer of 1990. Although many aspects of the journal have evolved over time, the intent has remained the same: 1) to give students in MESA an opportunity to gain hands-on experience with the ins and outs of publishing literature related to mathematics education, and 2) to give students and faculty at UGA and around the world a place to publish their work. I will now discuss some of the changes that have occurred over the past 10 volumes of *TME*, as well as some interesting facts from over the years.

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*As we are yet in our infancy, we welcome thoughtful, concerned parenting from our knowledgeable readership. We aim to generate meaningful discourse and encourage research among our readership, however, the quality of our efforts will be in some part dependent on the quality of participation we receive. We hope that your association with The Mathematics Educator, whatever it may be, will be a valuable one.*

—Original Seminar Participants, 1990

Earl Bennett	Shannon Primm
Maria Fernandez	Susan Ross
Simeon Hau	Marilyn Strutchens
Julio Mosquera	Catherine Vistro
Nicholas Oppong	

The initial vision of *TME* was one in which a yearly seminar of MESA members took joint responsibility for publishing the journal. The logistics of this enterprise, however, called for more continuity and structure. Nicholas Oppong, a member of the founding seminar, took on the challenge of being the first editor of *TME*. Associate editors and a general staff were organized during the 1990-1991 school year, and the summer of 1991 saw the publication of the second issue of *TME*. Feedback from the first issue was positive and encouraging. In response to a request from one of the readers, short author autobiographies were added to each article, a tradition that continues to be an important feature of the journal. This information gives the mathematics education community an opportunity to get to know upstarts as well as long time residents. Also in this issue the first of a number of articles written by practicing school teachers was published. Providing an outlet for such personal career development was and continues to be an important goal of *TME*.

By the third year of operation, MESA was able to take on what it had laid out in its original plans for

**How did you first get involved with *TME*?  
What motivated you to get involved?**

*Nicholas Oppong handed me a graphic and asked me if I could recreate it on a computer. I had never before used graphic software, but began to learn that day in a lab in Aderhold.*

—Lynn Stallings, 93-94 Editor

*I got involved as reviewer; I guess that the interest on learning is what led me to accept to be the Editor.*

—Vilma Mesa, 98-99 Editor

*TME*—to be a biannual publication. Thus, issues of the journal were identified by Volume and Number as they are today. The first two issues were retroactively named Volumes 1 and 2. A new feature, *In Focus...*, was introduced in Volume 3, Number 1 and remains part of each issue to this day. *In Focus...* was designed, in part, to “provide diverse views about education with a focus on mathematics education” (Editorial, Vol. 3, Num. 1). The purpose has changed somewhat over the years. Although still in the same vein, *In Focus...* is now usually written by someone (not always from within mathematics education) who has something to say that the editorial staff thinks should be heard. These invited pieces often address hot topics, and the intent is to get people talking or thinking about new issues. The second issue of Volume 3 saw the first editorial written by someone other than the editor. This became a trend, and to date 10 authors have written guest editorials.

Starting with Volume 4, *The Mathematics Educator Reviews* became a regular feature of *TME*, providing reviews of computer software and graphing calculators. When email became commonplace, authors’ email addresses were added to the biographies, encouraging interaction between readers and authors. By this time, the circulation had grown to 500, spanning 31 states and 38 countries.

Volumes four and five truly displayed MESA’s desire for the journal both to improve as well as to reflect the changing scenery of mathematics education. Several features were phased out during these

volumes. It was a tradition to print a calendar of conferences related to mathematics education that would be occurring over the next year. With the advent of the Internet, this no longer seemed necessary. In recent years Internet addresses for the home pages of such conferences have been included once again (see this issue, p. 42). Printing mathematics problems and their solutions, which had been a standard feature of *TME* since its inception, began to be phased out. One is reprinted, for nostalgia’s sake, at the end of this editorial. We invite readers to send their solutions to this problem and we will publish a sample of the results in the next issue.

Several other milestones have been reached in recent years. The editor for Volume 9 was particularly interested in mathematics education across the globe. This resulted in the incredibly diverse Issue 2 of Volume 9. Whereas the first issue of *TME* contained articles solely from the students and faculty of the University of Georgia, Volume 9, Issue 2 was made up of articles discussing the state of mathematics education in the respective countries of authors from Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Columbia, Costa Rica, France, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, and the US. Also

**What do you most value from the editor experience? Did the experience have any significant impact on who you are today—particularly as a mathematics educator?**

*I greatly enjoy the collaboration that took place in publishing the journal. The editorial team had interesting discussions about manuscripts and developed our understanding of the review process. It set a foundation for my future work as a reviewer, author, and editor.*

—Maria Fernandez, 92-93 Editor

*Reading manuscripts, reading reviewers' comments, editing manuscripts, deciding which articles to accept and how to lay them out in the journal all have made me a better writer. I feel that I have an insider's view of the publication process that gave me a head start on my professional publication endeavors.*

—Denise Spangler Mewborn, 94-96 Editor

during this era, with Volume 9, Issue 1, *TME* entered a new phase of its existence and began publishing on the internet as TMEonline. For a journal which receives no monetary compensation and is distributed free of charge, the Internet has truly been a lifesaver. Now an even wider range of people can have access to *TME* with no additional cost. Of course, subscriptions for paper copies of *TME* are still available to those who do not have Internet access—and those who do! Also during this time the manner in which manuscripts were submitted changed. We crossed the point where more manuscripts are submitted electronically than through the mail.

In closing I pay tribute to the eight previous editors of *TME*: Nicholas Oppong, Maria L. Fernandez, Lynn Stallings, Denise Spangler Mewborn, Pamela Turner, Mary Beth Searcy, Ron M. Kleiner, and Vilma Mesa. They, along with numerous other graduate students, have left a legacy of excellence. On behalf of the former editors I also thank the faculty at UGA. Over the years they have freely shared of their time, talents and experience. Their advice has allowed *TME*, as well as those involved in its publication, to grow. It is my hope as current editor that we are holding true to the great traditions that have been established over the past 10 years, while also adapting to changing needs and resources. I hope *TME* remains for years to come a place where those both fresh and seasoned to the field of Mathematics Education can find a place to publish their work and become familiar with the work of others.

**Do you have any particular anecdotes or experiences that you want to share with *TME* readers about your term as editor?**

*I remember how much time I spent editing several papers with Lynn Hancock and Denise Mewborn. We ended up nicknaming Lynn the "Editor of Brevity" and Denise the "Editor of Elaboration." Although that process was very time consuming, having the opportunity to discuss manuscripts with those two talented writers and editors was an invaluable part of my graduate education.*

—Lynn Stallings, 93-94 Editor

*Making the first cover was quite a challenge. The mathematics education department had a new, big, black, eye-catching NEXT computer that contained a first version of Mathematica. Shannon Primm and Simeon Hau decided to make the cover on that rarely used computer, that printed very nice, sharp images. Even though they did not know the software or the computer at the time and there was a thunderstorm, they made several cover versions and brought them over to journal headquarters, better known as Athens Insurers, for a staff vote just under the wire.*

—Maria Fernandez, 92-93 Editor

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### *From the Archives...*

In the image to the right,  $W$ ,  $X$ ,  $Y$ , and  $Z$  are the midpoints of the sides of square  $ABCD$ . The eight segments obtained by connecting the midpoint of each side to the endpoints of the opposite side form an octagon in the interior of the square.

- Prove or disprove: The octagon is regular.
- Find the area of the octagon.
- What other conjectures might you make?

*This problem first appeared in the second issue of TME (Summer, 1991). It was provided by Dr. Jim Wilson and was part of an ongoing feature called From Dr. Wilson's Notebook...*

