

Editorial

Making a Difference through Mathematics Educational Research

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The *Mathematics Education Research Journal* [MERJ] is, with this issue, embarking on its eighteenth year of publication. Over the years since the first issue in 1989, the journal has maintained its focus as a forum in which high quality research is presented and disseminated to readers with an interest in any aspect and level of the teaching and learning of mathematics. The journal is unique in that it accepts papers of interest to general international readership as well as those with a specific Australasian focus. It is broad in methodological focus as well as scope, accepting a wide range of research approaches.

Past editors have shaped the development of the journal into the scholarly enterprise that it is today. It is important to recognise the contributions they have made, particularly at this moment when a new team is taking over editing responsibilities. It is testimony to the dedication and hard work of previous editors that MERJ has experienced a steady growth rate in interest both from subscribers and from potential authors, including those who are highly influential in their respective areas of expertise.

The new team comprising myself, as editor in chief, and Gloria Stillman and Gail FitzSimons, as associate editors, is keen to build on the successes of the past. We want to ensure that the journal will continue to exemplify the hallmarks of a scholarly journal. While we are particularly interested in reflecting the journal's special Australasian character, at the same time we would also want to recognise the journal's ever-increasing international readership and the growing number of submissions received from authors based beyond Australasia. The mix of the journal's Editorial Board lends support to the journal's national standing as well as its international significance.

As we begin a new phase in the journal it is important to reiterate that the journal publishes research that investigates the real experiences of the mathematical education communities in which people live and learn. Some of those studies are large and others are small-scale. Whatever the size or approach, the projects have been undertaken because researchers are trying to make sense of the mathematics that is going on in centres, classrooms, schools, universities, workplaces and elsewhere. In documenting and analysing educational experiences, they are attempting to fathom out what makes a mathematics experience meaningful and trying to understand how mathematics is lived. They draw on theories to provide explanation, as they grapple with the reality of interpreting uncertainties and tensions in what they observe and hear. All do

research because at the heart of their work is a desire to find out what makes a difference in mathematics education.

Many others are also keen to make a difference and they reveal that in other ways. We particularly want to thank the journal's reviewers for their willingness to assist in the review process. Members of the Editorial Board help by reviewing several papers during the course of the year. Others from the mathematics education community generously give of their time too. We want to express our thanks to all reviewers for their careful and thoughtful reports and for the helpful guidance they provide to our authors. Their thoroughness and their expertise are both greatly valued. The new editors look forward to continuing the productive relationship with you all.