

EDITORIAL

Who Wants to Be an *MTE* Editor? A Goal for Your Professional Bucket List

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Imagine: An email pops up in your inbox inviting you to apply to be *MTE*'s next editor. How would you react? Would you jump at the opportunity? Need to think more about it? Respond with a definite "no"? What information would you need in order to help you decide? In my first editorial, I share a bit of why I chose to jump at the opportunity to become *MTE* editor and what I have learned in the last year as Editor Designate, processing manuscripts alongside the founding and former *MTE* editor Peg Smith. In addition to providing insight into the *MTE* review process, I hope this editorial convinces many of you to seriously consider jumping on the opportunity to become *MTE*'s next editor when it comes around again in 3 years.

As readers, authors, and reviewers of manuscripts without editing experience, we tend to have a limited perspective of the peer review process and the role of editor. The image we might have of a journal editor as a grumpy judge who decides the fate of manuscripts and finds that nothing is ever good enough, does not make the role of editor seem very appealing. Although there may be editors who operate in this fashion, this is largely a distortion of what a journal editor is and does. A different, perhaps more accurate representation of a journal editor is that of a coach with a passion for mentoring players and for making the game worth playing. This image of a journal editor better fits the mission of *MTE* as a journal that seeks to improve the knowledge base and the practices of mathematics teacher educators.

When considering the invitation to apply for the position of *MTE* editor, I did not just jump in with eyes closed. I first made an appointment with editor Peg Smith to learn more about the journal and its mission. In that first conversation, I learned pretty quickly that the mission of the journal is to serve not only the readers of the journal but also the authors and reviewers who contribute to the journal, as they too are crucial to the journal's mission to build on and improve the practice of mathematics teacher educators. It became much clearer that being *MTE* editor shared many similarities with my other work as a math-

ematics teacher educator working with multiple constituencies and communities. Once I made that connection, the decision to apply for the *MTE* editorship made it to the top of my professional bucket list.

Another reason that becoming *MTE*'s next editor was attractive to me had to do with my own experience as a scholar in mathematics education. As an author of journal manuscripts, I have received a full spectrum of review decisions—reject, revise and resubmit, and accept. I have experienced firsthand the joys and tribulations that go with writing for publication and the key role that journal editors have played in my development as a writer of scholarly articles for different types of research and practitioner journals. I have benefited from the generosity of strangers who have reviewed my work and invested their time and energy in giving advice on how to sharpen and strengthen the coherence of the arguments I was trying to make. More importantly, these scholars influenced my perspective on and approach to doing high-quality scholarly work in mathematics teacher education. Becoming the next *MTE* editor was my opportunity to pay forward the benefits I had received as a junior scholar in mathematics education.

Having been at the receiving end of editors' decision letters, I came into this new role with some appreciation for how skillful journal editors recast, revoice, and summarize the key issues reviewers have identified that merit revision or rejection of a manuscript. How editors write manuscript decision letters to authors, especially first-time authors, matters not only because they determine the fate of the manuscript under review, but because their approach shapes how these scholars will then engage in the review process as authors and as reviewers of others' manuscripts. Having spent time this year writing decision letters alongside Peg Smith and Melissa Boston (who served as associate editor), I have an even greater appreciation for this work, and I can understand why so many authors have written thank-you letters to them. They have set a high standard and model for what an editor's letter looks like and demonstrated a commitment to doing this consistently over time. Both Kristen Bieda (who is now serving as associate editor) and I are committed to continuing their legacy and growing our practice as editors who will write substantive and constructive decision letters to authors.

The opportunity to spend a year working closely with Peg Smith and the journal's Editorial Panel has supported my successful transition to the role of editor and has given

me many important insights about journal editing and the editorial decision-making process. I share here three important realizations I have had related to the role of *MTE* editor and the exciting work I have signed up to do for the next 3 years. The first one is that editing a journal requires collaboration, the second is the importance of a transparent and educative review process, and the third is that *MTE* is an important resource for current and future generations of mathematics teacher educators.

Journal editing is a collaborative practice.

Regardless of which image one holds for a journal editor, either as judge or coach, both require interactions with multiple collaborators—the author, reviewers, the associate editor, guest editors, and review board members. The social and communicative interactions and skills that are required to effectively manage these relationships resemble the demands of doing productive collaborative work—no one is allowed to take over, and everyone’s work is important to the success of the group’s product. More important, it is not possible for a single person to do the work of journal editing alone. Editing a journal requires the smarts and the skills of multiple people. The editor cannot do everything that needs to happen for a quality publication to come to fruition. Notice that most journals, *MTE* included, have an associate editor. Kristen Bieda will be co-editing the *MTE* journal with me and has been managing manuscripts since we began our term this May.

Everyone involved in producing a journal needs to be invested in the quality of the product because it represents all of our vision and our hard work, not just that of the editor’s. Even this editorial is undergoing a collaborative review and revision process; I asked *MTE* associate editor Kristen Bieda and Editorial Panel Chair Laura Van Zoest to review it, and they provided me with critical and constructive feedback that I used to revise and improve it.

The peer-review process should be transparent and educative.

Another important goal of *MTE* and its editors is to make the peer review process transparent and educative. Making the *MTE* review process transparent means that there should be no mystery about what happens to manuscripts once they are submitted for review. Of course, the peer review is blinded and reviewers’ names are not disclosed to authors, but the process of assigning reviewers to manuscripts, the reviewers’ comments, and the editor’s decision about the submission should all be accessible to the authors.

MTE works to make the process transparent to prospective authors not only by providing information for authors online but also by actively sharing information with them through webinars on how to write for *MTE* and sessions

at the Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators (*AMTE*) and at the NCTM Annual Meeting and Exposition focused on writing manuscripts for *MTE*. This past year at *AMTE*, we offered a session featuring published *MTE* authors who successfully turned their *AMTE* conference presentation into an *MTE* publication. At the NCTM Research Conference we featured authors who had successfully taken ideas from their research work and crafted them into practitioner manuscripts that were then published in *MTE*.

MTE also strives to provide educative reviews for all authors, even those whose manuscripts are rejected. This requires developing reviewers’ capacity to produce good reviews. Skilled reviewers and high-quality reviews are crucial to the peer-review process. Reviewers who meet deadlines and are clear, thoughtful, and sensitive in their comments to the author are worth their weight in gold. Good reviewers do not try to rewrite the manuscript for the author, but instead provide feedback that will bolster the author’s ideas and arguments. They identify the parts of the manuscript that meet the review criteria for the journal and those where the manuscript falls short or can be strengthened. These reviews are not only helpful to the editor and to the author of the manuscript, they are also educative to other reviewers of the same manuscript.

MTE editors are committed to providing all authors with educative reviews, including those whose manuscripts have been rejected. Each manuscript is guaranteed to have at least one very strong review because one editorial panel member is always assigned as a reviewer. Editorial board members discuss and clarify the journal’s review criteria and how to write helpful reviews by reviewing manuscripts together at the annual board meeting and when new members are appointed to the board. This distributes and builds the reviewing skills of everyone on the panel. Other reviewers, especially those who review frequently, also benefit from reading the editor’s decision letters and the panel members’ reviews.

Authors whose manuscripts are returned without review because they do not fit the journal’s criteria are also provided with an explanation of why their submission does not fit the journal and with suggestions on where they could submit their manuscript. Manuscripts that clearly fit the journal but are missing criteria or are underdeveloped in several of the review criteria are quickly returned to the authors for further development. They are provided with an editor’s decision letter that clearly identifies the weaknesses of the manuscript relative to the *MTE* review criteria and with specific suggestions for improving their manuscript either to submit to another journal or back to *MTE* as a new manuscript submission.

MTE strives to support the next generation of mathematics teacher educators.

MTE is committed to developing the next generation of mathematics teacher educators by publishing articles that address shared problems of practice and that allow current and future generations to replicate and build on the solutions shared by the authors. *MTE* editors make visible through their editorials the relevance and potential impact of the published articles for current and future educators. In this issue, which inaugurates my and Kristen's tenure as the editors of *MTE*, we can see evidence of this commitment. Although the previous editorial team handled all five articles in this issue, the same commitment will continue under the next editorial team's leadership. Each article in this issue provide readers with theoretical and practical tools to address current issues in the work of mathematics teacher educators, but because they target vexing problems of professional practice, these articles will continue to have relevance for future generations of mathematics teacher educators reading the archived issues of this journal.

In "Making the Most of Teacher Self-Captured Video," van Es and colleagues discuss important questions and strategies for using teacher self-captured videos in professional development settings. In "Mentor-Guided Lesson Study as a Tool to Support Learning in Field Experiences," Bieda and colleagues share a creative approach to engage mentor teachers and preservice teachers in a field-related course assignment. In "Transforming Perceptions of Proof: A Four-Part Instructional Sequence," Boyle and colleagues describe an instructional sequence that broadens and deepens teachers' perception of the nature of proof. In "Enhancing Teachers' Assessment of Mathematical Processes Through Test Analysis in University Courses," Hunsader and colleagues detail how to enhance preservice and in-service teachers' knowledge of classroom assessments. And in "Developing a Mathematics Instructional Practice Survey: Considerations and Evidence," Carney and colleagues give us insights into how to design and test survey tools that can be used to seriously explore instructional practice at scale.

I am thrilled to be writing my first editorial with this great collection of articles. I am very honored to have been entrusted to guide and steer *MTE's* journey into its next 3 years and to be working alongside Kristen as associate editor, with a very committed and talented group of editorial board members. Kristen and I are looking forward to continuing to build the journal's visibility and reputation as a publication venue that showcases the good work that mathematics teacher educators are doing and that will be admired and built upon by the next generation of mathematics teacher educators. More important, we are committed to making the editorship of *MTE* an attractive professional bucket list item for scholars for many generations to come.

To close, I hope this editorial has encouraged many of you to add *MTE* editorship to your professional bucket lists. If so, you might want to consider what will help you prepare for that role and what opportunities you should be actively seeking that will stretch your reviewing, mentoring, and leadership skills. You might start by learning more about the writing process or about how to provide mindful feedback to authors. Working on these skills will not only prepare you for a future role as editor of this journal but will also improve your own scholarly writing. Serving on editorial boards of peer-reviewed journals and books is another way to prepare for the role of future *MTE* editor and get an insider's look into journal editing. Kristen and I look forward to mentoring and passing on what we have learned to the next editorial team. In the meantime, we are very excited to be the new editors of *MTE* and to contribute our perspectives to the journal's mission "to build a professional knowledge base for mathematics teacher educators that stems from, develops, and strengthens practitioner knowledge."

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