

COMMENTARY

Mathematics Teacher Educator: The Evolution of a New Journal

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In the past decade, there has been a growing interest in the role that practitioners play as stakeholders in and coproducers of professional knowledge and of research knowledge in mathematics education (Kieran, Krainer, & Shaughnessy, in press). Although the wellspring of professional knowledge and craft wisdom of teachers has been sparsely tapped in previous decades, there are now signs from all over the world that teachers are playing an increasingly important role in research on the teaching and learning of mathematics (Bednarz, 2004; Fernandez & Yoshida, 2004; Herbel-Eisenmann & Cirillo, 2009; Huang & Bao, 2006; Jaworski et al., 2007; Makar & O'Brien, in press). A recent conference brought together practitioners, teacher educators, and researchers in mathematics education to develop a research agenda that will provide closer links between research and practice (NCTM, 2010).

Concurrent with the growing interest in incorporating practitioner perspectives into research and development in mathematics education, there has been an increased awareness in the field of the need to systematically grow our research knowledge base on the professional development of mathematics teachers and on the education of prospective mathematics teachers. We need to better document and share what we learn from the education of prospective and practicing mathematics teachers. The impact of many mathematics education in-service projects and effective advances in preservice mathematics teacher programs have rarely been adequately shared with the field, in part because there have not been outlets to encourage the publication of such work. In the past, what is known about effective preservice and in-service mathematics teacher development has tended to have been gleaned from isolated studies rather than from a systematic program of research. To counter this trend, Weiss (1999) provided guidelines for the evaluation of professional development efforts in mathematics teacher education. Recent work has begun to identify and synthesize elements of effective professional development in a systematic way (e.g., Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, &

Orphanos, 2009; Desimone, 2009; Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Sztajn, Marrongelle, & Smith, 2011).

These new emphases in the work of mathematics educators—forming research partnerships with practitioners and investigating the education of preservice and practicing mathematics teachers in a more scientific and evidence-based manner—have had a growing influence on the thinking of both the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) and the Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators (AMTE).

In the fall of 2009, discussions about the possibility of creating a new journal focused on the practice of mathematics teacher education began to percolate in discussions at the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. The Editorial Panel for the NCTM practitioner journal for secondary teachers, *Mathematics Teacher (MT)*, had been receiving an increasing number of strong manuscripts dealing with issues around the preparation of preservice teachers and on the professional development of in-service teachers. However, many of these manuscripts did not fit the charge and purpose of *MT*, a journal of mathematics and mathematics teaching for secondary teachers. These articles were also different from the usual types of research articles in many mathematics education research journals. As discussions continued, it became clear to NCTM that there was a growing need in the mathematics education community for an entirely different kind of professional journal than the Council had in its portfolio.

Around the same time that NCTM was brainstorming the possibility of starting a new journal for teacher educators, the Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators formed a task force to study the efficacy of launching a new professional journal quite similar to the kind of journal that was being considered by the NCTM Board of Directors. In January 2010, representatives from the leadership of AMTE and NCTM met to discuss the possibility of a collaborating to create such a journal. A task force consisting of members of both AMTE and NCTM was formed to study the matter more deeply and to provide further information and recommendations on whether to pursue a joint journal effort, and if so, how to proceed. In the summer of 2010, the task force submitted a formal motion to the boards of directors of NCTM and AMTE to cosponsor the creation and publication of a new journal. The motion to create a new journal was approved by both the boards, an initial Editorial Panel was formed, and the first editor was appointed for a new journal, *Mathematics Teacher Educator (MTE)*.

The *MTE* was created, among other reasons, to build a professional knowledge base in mathematics teacher education that stems from practitioner knowledge. The journal will provide a means for practitioner knowledge related to the preparation, support, and development of mathematics teachers to be made public, shared, stored, verified, and improved over time—necessary conditions for practitioner knowledge to provide a solid foundation for professional knowledge (Hiebert, Gallimore, & Stigler, 2002). Through *MTE* we hope to increase our professional and research knowledge about teacher education, through accounts of exemplary preservice and in-service mathematics teacher education programs; in reports of effective classroom pedagogical strategies; with studies of effective ways of developing the content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge of preservice and in-service teachers; and eventually, through scholarly reviews of materials and resources for the mathematical education of teachers.

The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics is thrilled to cosponsor this new journal, *Mathematics Teacher Educator*, together with the Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators. We believe that *MTE* is uniquely positioned to encourage the publication of scholarly work that will enable the profession to systematically investigate critical issues around the preparation of preservice mathematics teachers as well as the professional development and leadership development of in-service mathematics teachers and teacher leaders. Over time we envision a growing body of work that will draw upon the best of what we can learn from practitioner knowledge to help inform and continually update best practices for preparing future mathematics teachers and for developing and strengthening existing mathematics teachers. With focused effort to build and extend these knowledge bases, we hope to be able to improve the recruitment, education, and retention of excellent mathematics teachers for many future generations of our students.

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