

Editorial

I am writing this editorial on the eleventh of January, towards the start of the New Year 2004. I sent the copy for the March issue (FLM 24(1)) to the designer on the fifth of January and am awaiting the first-page proofs. When I sent the copy, I asked the designer to leave page two blank - it would either be an editorial or an image, but I had not finally decided.

When I co-edited the journal *Mathematics Teaching* there were no editorials - editors' comments inviting responses from readers were at the end of articles. These invitations to write were in evidence in 23(3), for instance, responses to *Loved articles* (p. 29) and wondering what readers' suggestions would be for "research problems whose solutions would make a substantial contribution to mathematics education" (p. 28). Some writing responding to the invitation (p. 4) related to Barry Mazur's book follows this editorial. I am still interested in receiving other thoughts. The *Communications* section, a standard feature in FLM, encourages responses to any article. The real life of FLM is in the connections that are made between issues through the discussions that are provoked within its pages.

On the thirtyfirst of December I received a New Year's e-greeting from a long-time research collaborator, Alf Coles:

Did you know there is a new edition of *Mind and nature* out? Published in 2002 by Hampton Press [1] and part of a series *Advances in Systems Theory, Complexity, and the Human Sciences* - there's due to be a Maturana in the same series. I've been enjoying re-reading the Bateson

On the seventh of January John Mason forwarded to me an e-message from Mary Catherine Bateson, Gregory Bateson's daughter:

From: Mary Catherine Bateson <mcatab@attglobal.net>
Date: Tue, 06 Jan 2004 Gregory Bateson was born in 1904, so 2004 is his centennial. I believe that much of his work was mis- understood or unappreciated during his lifetime because it challenged people to think in new ways and defied disciplinary compartments

I am writing now to urge all of you to take advantage of his centennial in the coming year, in whatever way fits your knowledge and interests, so that the people you work with have the opportunity to look again at Bateson's writings in the new century. If you go back to his writings (several now going into new editions), you will find that some of it is still very challenging, some of it seems out of date, and much of it was prescient and is more accessible than it was at the time of his death twenty years ago.

If you would like to be in touch on Bateson-related issues, please reply to this email giving "GBateson list" as your subject. Please take a minute to say who you are and what your interest is in Bateson's work.

Gregory Bateson's literary estate is administered by the Institute for Intercultural Studies in New York, which has a Newsletter. The Institute maintains a website with a growing Bateson section and some relevant links. You can visit the website at:

<http://www.interculturalstudies.org>

Please feel free to forward this email to colleagues or organizations that might like to know about it. Catherine Bateson.

The decision about what was going on page two was made - write an editorial that would effectively be an editor's invitation to write.

24(3) will begin to collect together writings from readers about the interactions of the works of Bateson with their own work as mathematicians, teachers and researchers. The normal FLM structures will apply:

- *communications* of up to 2,500 words that might act as stories, personal histories and reflections
- *longer pieces*, with a 5000 word limit, that might re-work or re-describe issues arising out of research using some of Bateson's ideas as a theoretical or methodological frame
- *quotations* that have been particularly influential for you that I can use as 'fillers'

Longer pieces than 5000 words would need to be divided into a number of parts. FLM has a two-stage process for reviewing articles that will still operate. So, I would need your writing by the end of July at the very latest if it were going to make it through those two stages by the end of August when I would need to send the copy to the designer.

For some of you reading this the reaction is going to be: Who is Gregory Bateson? How is his work used in educational circles? If you want to find out more before next November try *Mind and nature* and *Steps to an ecology of mind* (new edition, 2000 [2]). I first read *Steps* in 1972 and have continued to go back to the text, reading and re-reading the individual essays in the collection. I have also used the ideas to support my thinking about teaching and research. I suppose that is one of the reasons John Mason sent me the e-message in the first place and why I have acted in this way having read it. I look forward to reading how others have critically engaged with the ideas. I am happy to discuss your suggestions for possible articles.

Notes and references

[1] Bateson, G (2002, first edition, 1979) *Mind and nature. a necessary unity*, Cresskill, NJ, Hampton Press Inc. There is a web-page where you can find out more information about other titles in the Hampton Press *Advances in Systems Theory, Complexity, and the Human Sciences* book series:

<http://www.issis.org/links/hampton.htm>

[2] Bateson, G (2000, first edition, 1972) *Steps to an ecology of mind*, Chicago, IL, University of Chicago Press. This edition has a new foreword by Mary Catherine Bateson.

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