

Editorial

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Six years ago, in my first editorial in 17(3), I outlined some elements that, from my perspective at least, comprised the spirit of this journal. On re-reading it recently, as I prepare to hand on the task of editing this journal to Laurinda Brown in the next issue (which will be a jointly-edited one), I found I had made the rash claim that “subsequent issues of FLM will reflect my sense of [its distinctive spirit]” But in looking back now rather than forward, I see I did not mention at all an important aspect of that spirit: namely, its ‘international’ character, a word which figures in the subtitle ‘an international journal of mathematics education’. What does this claim mean and is it warranted in the case of *For the Learning of Mathematics*? A simple and unequivocal place to start is with the readership: the journal has subscribers, both individual and institutional, from over sixty countries.

What about the journal’s authors over the past six years, given the language of FLM is primarily English (although articles are readily accepted in French)? As Richard Barwell points out in his article in this issue, the politics of language are as present and at times as subtle in our field as elsewhere. In terms of simple counting, of the 133 articles and communications printed in the past eighteen issues, the 179 authors hail from 22 different countries. Current location does not, of course, necessarily translate into nationality or native language. Nevertheless, on this count too, I think FLM can support a claim to being international, despite the fact that just over half the articles during this period were written by authors based in three countries: the UK, the USA and Canada.

However, there are considerably more subtle senses of the word ‘international’, especially when thought about in the context of a journal’s spirit. What does the world of mathematics education (and indeed the world *tout court*) look like through the eyes of the journal’s authors? My first issue in 1997 marked the death of Paolo Freire and, as it turned out, contained many pieces that dealt with ideology in one way or another. This present one is more diverse, but the articles still talk to one another. Jeremy Kilpatrick’s article on the view of French *didactique* from the USA was written nigh on ten years ago: one might reasonably ask why this is being printed now. Partly, as he himself observed to me, because its central points are almost as true now as they were a decade ago – in that sense, this aspect of the world has not overly changed. The world-view of FLM certainly includes *didactique des mathématiques*, as the article in this issue by Josep Gascón attests. Mellony Graven’s article is firmly set in South Africa, yet she brings Etienne Wenger’s categories to bear and returns the compliment for the trip by offering an additional one back up north. Marion Walter’s mathematical pizza piece, although in-turned to and in tune with her

own mathematising, faces out to the world and us. The piece by Brazilians Ana de Carvalho and Tânia Cabral continues an exploration in these pages of the psychoanalytic in relation to mathematics teaching, while Maria Bartolini Bussi and Mara Boni exemplify in their study the subtle perceptual shifts by which the mathematical is attended to and created.

I could have chosen other issues to point to a similarly important breadth and reach: just one example, Luisa Andrade and Patricia Perry from *Una Empresa Docente* in Colombia wrote in 22(1) on the challenges establishing the journal *Revista EMA* (sadly, a recent farewell e-mail reported the demise of their grouping and the likely massive change of direction of the journal), alongside articles about ethnomathematics, subtraction, surprise, imagery, conflict and dialogue, agency. The list is long and significant, but also frequently coherent and co-mingled, and not simply diverse.

The richness of what has been offered to readers over the past six years for the learning of mathematics is in signal part an *international* diversity, not just of location but of phenomenon and point(s) of view taken. There is an important plurality about this artificial realm, one that is reflected in these pages. This written world reveals a sophistication about who and where and why and what is to be focused on, as well as a strong sense of audience to whom authors are turned – at their best, they are challenging, engaging and caring. Long may it continue so.

The editor is only the most evident member of an extensive team who produces a journal. In closing here, I wish to thank publicly, on my own and on this journal’s readers’ behalf, a number of people with whom I have worked closely over the past six years, individuals who have extensively contributed to ensuring the quality of this publication during that time. Bonnie Knox and Geoff Roulet at Queen’s University have contributed extensive and consistent managerial assistance. Nathalie Sinclair (Michigan State University) provided innovative web support for the journal and David Wagner (University of Alberta) has devoted considerable time and effort to editorial support of various kinds. Then there are the members of the Advisory Board and the FLM Board of Directors who lend their names and offer their time and energy to guide and oversee the journal’s development. Finally, I would like to extend my thanks to the staff at Hignell Book Printing in Winnipeg, in particular to Brian Law and, most especially, to Rachele Painchaud-Nash. Her tireless work over the past five years on the design and layout – not least when faced with at times endless-seeming minor corrections – has been most generously and invisibly given. We are all the beneficiaries of these people’s substantial contributions to this journal – I, for one, am very grateful.