

New chief editors on the job

As announced in the previous number, it is time for the editorship to move to another country, namely Denmark. From the beginning of 2006, Morten Blomhøj, IMFUFA, Roskilde University, and Paola Valero, Department of Education, Learning and Philosophy, Aalborg University, are the new chief editors. During the next four years the editorship of NOMAD will be a cooperative enterprise between two persons. We will work hard to strengthen NOMAD's profile and its position on the Nordic scene of mathematics education research both in terms of the number of subscribers and in terms of the scientific quality of the journal.

One of the first tasks we face is raising the number of submitted manuscripts for publication. During the last years research in the field of mathematics education has significantly grown in the Nordic region, not only because of the expansion of the work of experienced researchers, but also because of the increasing interest in doctoral studies. The political emphasis on the necessity of improving mathematical instruction in the Nordic countries has also meant public investment in a variety of developmental projects in which researchers and teachers cooperate in bringing together theory and practice, and producing knowledge about changing processes in educational institutions. From these different sources there is a production of knowledge concerning the phenomena of teaching and learning of mathematics. NOMAD's role is making public this knowledge, as a basis for an academic debate and an improvement of praxis. We know that there are many exciting research projects going on in our field. Therefore, we encourage all members of the mathematics education community in the region to participate actively in preparing manuscripts and submitting them for publication.

The issue of language also needs to be reconsidered. It has been clear from NOMAD's very beginning the necessity of building scholarship in mathematics education in the Scandinavian languages. As a result of this the journal has published three numbers per year with most papers written in the Scandinavian languages (Danish, Norwegian and Swedish), and one number in English. Although we still believe in the

strength of publication in these languages, we can also confirm that there are many Nordic authors who prefer English as their working language. We also need to add the fact that NOMAD has also become an attractive journal for publication of mathematics education research produced by authors from other countries in the world. It is clear that mathematics education research in our countries is responsive to globalisation and internationalisation. This fact makes it difficult to have a clear-cut language policy. More than suggesting a particular principle for a language policy, we encourage an opening of this debate in our community. We continue considering manuscripts for publication in all the four languages mentioned above, and authors outside the Nordic region are also welcomed to publish research of relevance for the region in NOMAD.

A new initiative the editors will engage with is the production of one special thematic issue per volume, normally the fourth issue. The editors will send out both special invitations and a general call for contributions for authors to submit manuscripts for the thematic issue. Suffice to say that all papers will go through the usual review procedure.

The theme proposed for the special issue in 2006 is *Learning difficulties in/with mathematics*. In the Nordic countries there is a strong tradition of building inclusive educational systems. In the field of mathematics education many recent initiatives have chosen to teach mathematics for all, also for those who experience great difficulties in/with the learning of the subject. These efforts have faced great obstacles and research on these issues have raised political and scientific debates about, for example, the meaning of the very same term "difficulties in/with learning mathematics", the theoretical perspectives that are suitable to give an account of these problems, and the methodological challenges for carrying out research on the topic. It is clear that a deeper understanding of all these issues is a first necessary step in tackling the problems. We invite contributions within this topic for the thematic issue of NOMAD 2006. The deadline for submission of manuscripts is September 1st, 2006.

About this number

This number collects an interesting series of papers, which represents the variety of research going on in the field in the Nordic region. In accordance with our language policy this issue contains articles both in English and Swedish. In their article "Accountability affects the use of small group learning in school mathematics", John Berry and Pasi Salhberg raise a discussion about how teachers in England and Finland view the role of small group work in the learning of mathematics, and point to how teachers' views do not only have to do with their understanding of the

teaching/learning activity, but also with how they interpret and learn to live in the contextual constraints of the school. The paper in Swedish "Det hänger på decimalen! Om hur vi formar och bygger meningsmönster i vår omvärld" by Eva Riesbeck analyses in-depth how students make sense of a real world situation and a related problem. The problem, which is about the ordering of four decimal numbers in the context of a 60 meters running competition, is an excellent basis for analysing the tremendous complexity involved in students' sense making processes. Through analysing the students' communication in different types of interview situations, Riesbeck shows that the students need to be actively involved in the communication in order to develop and maintain a mathematical perspective on the real life situation. Hence the study underlines the importance of inclusive dialogue in mathematics teaching. Markus Häikiöniemi in his paper "Perceiving the derivative: the case of Susanna" presents a case study on a 11th grade student's perceptions of the derivative of a function in its different forms of representations. Carefully designed task-based interviews and connected analyses allow the author to draw a both detailed and comprehensive picture of Susanna's perception. The findings are interpreted from the theoretical standpoint learning in the embodied and in the symbolic world. Hereby the paper contributes to the ongoing theoretical discussion about learners' formation of mathematical concepts.

Morten Blomhøj and Paola Valero
NOMAD Editors

