NOMAD - A Nordic *and* an international journal

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NOMAD is now in its second year with Norwegian editors. It is a policy of NOMAD that the last issue in each volume should be published in English. All manuscripts to be published in this first issue of volume 6 are written in English, so for the first time in the history of NOMAD issue 1 will also be published in English. The language of the journal has been discussed from time to time by the editorial board, and is a concern of the editors. It has been decided that if all articles in an issue are English-language articles, the other material - such as this introduction by the editors should be in English as well.

Mathematics education is an international discipline. It is therefor natural that there are similar problems concerning the teaching and learning of mathematics all over the world. Hence articles written in educational context of one country is often highly relevant to educators in other countries as well, even if the educational systems are very different.

NOMAD is a Nordic journal, but it is also an international journal in a wider setting than just addressing readers in these countries. We want to foster mathematics education as a research discipline in the Nordic countries, but we would also like to inform the world about the development in this field of research in our countries. In addition we want to make our readers aware of the developments in other countries of the world. Lately the editors have received a number of submitted articles in the English language. Often the author(s) of these articles have had ties to the Nordic countries. However, articles from researchers not having any direct link to the Nordic countries have also been received. In general we welcome articles written by such researchers , if they otherwise meet the standards for the journal. However, there is an ambition shared by the editorial board and the editors, that NOMAD should have a definite Nordic profile.

We are aware of that there are conducted many interesting research projects in mathematics education the Nordic countries. It is our hope

that researchers involved in such projects will look to NOMAD as a place to publish their results. We need to communicate those studies to our Nordic colleagues to establish a common Nordic community and to continue to have a strong Nordic profile of NOMAD.

For several years it has been a growing interest in establishing different kinds of networks between the Nordic countries. We could here mention NORMA 98 (Second Nordic Conference on Mathematics Education) in Kristiansand in June and The Nordic Research Workshop which have been held in Umeå for several years now. (The next workshop will be held August 5-9, 1998). It has also recently been taken initiative to establish a Nordic Network of Research and Development Efforts in Undergraduate Mathematics Education. We hope that NOMAD could play an important role in such kinds of Nordic collaboration.

This issue is a really international issue, with authors from Canada, Australia, Greece and USA. *Caroline Lajoie & Roberta Mura* use the example of division by zero to illustrate how reliance on concrete representations of mathematical concepts can become an obstacle to understanding. Their work is based on data obtained from a study of prospective elementary teachers. The article describes some difficulties these students encountered in dealing with division by zero. They also show how these difficulties could be explained by the students' desire for a (non-existent) physical interpretation of the mathematical problem.

The theme of the second article, written by *Anastasios Barkatsas, Vasilis Gialamas, Dimitris Karageorgos & Katerina Kasimatis,* is the relationship between attitudes towards mathematics and mathematics performance. The subjects of the study are Year 7 students in Greek High Schools. The research reveals that high performance in mathematics is associated with more positive students' attitudes toward mathematics learning. It also points to that the students demonstrated a serious weakness in solving real life problems using the mathematics they have been taught.

The third article by *Denise S. Mewborn & Deborah A. Gober* investigates preservice teachers' perspectives on gender equity and explore how they process the information they receive about gender issues. The study is based on written surveys administered to 225 preservice and inservice teachers enrolled in mathematics and science

education (methods) courses at the university. The article suggests that most preservice teachers have an individual difference view of gender equity in which they strive to treat all students the same to avoid discrimination. Some students hold a categorical view of gender equity in which they strive to overcome stereotypes about boys and girls. They also point to that a small number of students actively denied that gender issues have any relevance to education.