Editorial

Publishing in a Mathematics Education Research Journal

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The *International Electronic Journal of Mathematics Education* has had an increasingly visible presence in our field in its short life in the last four years. IEJME has firmly established itself as a reputable outlet for researchers from a wide international spectrum of countries from Nigeria, Japan to USA. The works of authors from about twenty different countries all over the globe have now been published in IEJME. Yet there are many more authors whose submitted work to IEJME are not accepted for a variety of reasons. We will reflect on the characteristics of successful papers in this editorial with the hopes that considering these issues will help (especially junior) members of mathematics education research community who are intending to submit their work to IEJME.

The first test for publishable research is about production of *new knowledge* in mathematics education (Blume, Heid, and Zbiek, 2010). This means that a good paper should go beyond simply reporting a study, it should make explicit links to the literature in the field, identify its place in the network of ideas, and clarify its contribution. A paper can do so by either providing a new explanation to a question or a new tool to do research. Even when we think that our idea has not been thought before, if we look deep enough, we often find other people who have thought about similar issues, and published their work. Needless to say, the manuscript should be squarely about a question pertaining to teaching and learning of mathematics. A neat idea to prove a mathematical conjecture should probably be sent to a journal with a focus on mathematics itself. We observed that a great majority of the rejected articles (about 60%) fail to adequately situate the study within the greater domain of related literature and fail to clarify its "angle" to the field.

Second, the paper should present *credible* and *convincing* knowledge (Blume, Heid, & Zbiek, 2010). That is, the design of the study should rule out alternative explanations to the findings, variables should be defined operationally by valid and reliable instruments, collected data should inform the questions asked, and data analysis should be sufficiently clear. The findings should be interpreted in relation to the ideas reviewed earlier in the paper, conclusions and implications should be drawn for educational practice. Again, a great majority of the rejected papers fail to establish credibility for the claims made by not addressing one or more of the issues discussed here.

Lastly, the manuscript must be written according to the established norms of the published research in social sciences. That is, the title should be short , adequately describe the content, and avoid smart metaphors if possible. Although smart titles may be tempting, boring keywords in the title will make the article more "visible" for search engines and more likely to be cited by others. The authors should definitely conform to the suggested writing style, such as making sure subtitles, tables, figures, references and bibliography are made correctly, and references should match one -to-one with the items in the bibliography. After reading authors' guide of the journal, just looking into the published articles in that journal might as

well prove to be useful for authors, because we learn from examples as well. It is my experience that rejected articles almost always have issues to be corrected in writing.

In our now global community of researchers in mathematics education, it takes hard work to produce publishable manuscripts. But we should remember that we will only publish if we send a manuscript out, and it is to our advantage to put it in the best shape possible before it is sent to reviewers.

References

Blume, G. W., Heid, M. K., & Zbiek, R. M. (2010). What is the purpose of publishing in mathematics education? *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education*, *41*, 210-211.