

# Preface

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Last year, the Seventy-Fifth (and final) Yearbook of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM 2013\*) was published as a celebration of the record of rich contributions these annual publications have made to the field of mathematics education. Longtime NCTM members regularly comment on the yearbooks as “a favorite from NCTM,” one prized enough to earn an office shelf dedicated to their personal volumes. (You can learn more about the yearbook’s history in the preface and introduction to the seventy-fifth volume.) Why, then, would NCTM want to change such an important publication?

When the NCTM yearbook was first published in 1926, it was the only book published annually by the Council. Since that time, NCTM has substantially increased the number of its publications and broadened their scope. Thus the NCTM Board of Directors and members recognized a need to reexamine the yearbook’s role and purpose. In 2010, the NCTM Board of Directors appointed a Yearbook Task Force charged with considering the role of the yearbook among the many other NCTM publications (i.e., “Does the Yearbook continue to serve a need for members and others in the field?”) and possibly proposing alternatives to the yearbook. As a result of the task force’s final recommendation, the Board of Directors approved the creation of annual publication designed to uphold the strong traditions of the yearbook while also changing in ways that would reflect twenty-first-century needs and opportunities as well as initiate a more global conversation about mathematics education. As part of this change, the Yearbook Task Force recommended a new title. The title of “yearbook” made sense when the volume was the only book of the year from NCTM. Moreover, NCTM surveys of members revealed that many newer members did not understand the purpose of the yearbook—some members even wondered if it contained photos of members much like a high school yearbook. Thus, the title *Annual Perspectives in Mathematics Education* clearly reflects this book’s role and purpose: providing members with a range of perspectives on timely topics in mathematics education each year. *APME* will take on important topics, offering a range of authors (including classroom teachers, university researchers, professional developers, and occasionally educators outside of mathematics education), targeting a diverse audience that reflects our membership, and providing a collection of chapters that span the pre-K–16 spectrum.

As we considered how *APME* could best meet current needs and take advantage of technological advances in publishing, we decided to institute some different procedures from those used to create the yearbook. In today’s world, research is published at a faster rate, policies change frequently, and educators need access to current and high-quality information, perspectives, and findings much more quickly than in the past. In order to ensure that *APME* is timely, the timeline from conceptualizing the topic or theme to printing needed to be reduced. The topic for this initial 2014 volume—*Using Research to Improve Instruction*—was selected less than two years prior to its publication. This is approximately half of the time that had been allotted for planning,

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\*National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM). *Defining Mathematics Education: Presidential Yearbook Selections, 1926–2012*. Seventy-fifth Yearbook of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, edited by Francis (Skip) Fennell. Reston, Va.: NCTM, 2013.

selecting chapters for, editing, and printing each yearbook. Moreover, the time from when *APME* authors first submit manuscripts to publication is approximately one year—a considerably shorter publication timeline than authors experience with most professional journals. Given that all *APME* manuscripts undergo a blind peer-review process (at least three reviewers read each manuscript, provide recommendations, and then either ask for revisions or decline the manuscript) and that manuscripts were often substantially revised based on reviewers' and editors' recommendations, *APME*'s timeline is aggressive.

Developments in the publishing process have enabled this ambitious timeline, and dedicated and time-sensitive efforts from authors, editorial panel members, and editors were also critical to this change. For this very first *APME* volume, we experienced an enthusiastic response to a call for manuscripts. Indeed, after undergoing a blind review, the acceptance rate was 27 percent. With the shortened timeline of *APME* and the corresponding opportunity to publish perspectives on issues as they affect educators, students, and schools, it is our hope, and that of NCTM, that readers will find *APME* at the forefront of today's issues. Our goal is to create a publication that addresses current topics, provides high-quality manuscripts from a range of perspectives, and exposes readers to the most current research to inform practice.

Another important element of *APME* relates to access. Online access to professional publications has become an expectation in today's world. Individual chapters from most NCTM yearbooks could not be accessed in the same way as journal articles through library systems or NCTM's online website. When the Yearbook Task Force first identified this problem in 2010, NCTM quickly moved to provide access to individual yearbook chapters with an online purchase option through the NCTM website. However, library access remained difficult. *APME* is classified as a periodical published annually so that library systems will treat each chapter as a journal article. With this change, chapters will be easy to access through library-based searches or through other forms of online searches. An additional benefit of this classification, for those authors needing to report on the impact of their work, is that *APME* now falls under the more traditional academic category of a blind, peer-reviewed journal that is published annually.

## ■ Creating the Inaugural Volume

As Amy Roth McDuffie (*APME*'s first series editor) and the members of the NCTM's Educational Materials Committee (EMC) looked to select an initial topic and a volume editor, they aimed to create a volume that would be important and immediately beneficial to all NCTM members. For this reason, they decided to focus on the goal that has been at the core of NCTM's mission since its inception: supporting teachers to improve instruction through research-based approaches. Karen Karp was selected to edit this first volume, and she in turn selected Barbara Dougherty, Francis (Skip) Fennell, Elham Kazemi, Matt Larson, Travis Olson, Nelson Palmer, and Christine Suurtamm to round out the Editorial Panel. The Editorial Panel made a purposeful decision to rely strictly on a peer-review process for all *APME* manuscripts and not to extend invitations for particular authors to write chapters on specific topics. The panel then discussed and decided on themes and topics of interest for the volume and collected these in a list. Next, for the first time an Intent to Submit application was used so that the Editorial Panel would be able to plan with these possible topics in mind; fortunately, an enthusiastic response from hundreds of authors was received. There were several levels to the review process with all authors responding under tight deadlines. The chapters were regrouped into five sometimes overlapping clusters

that the panel decided were at the forefront of mathematics education: Change; Problem Solving; Reasoning, Explaining, and Discourse; Seeing Structure and Generalizing; and Assessment for Teaching and Learning. The results are exciting and provocative, and the Editorial Panel is hopeful that readers will agree and find that the 2014 inaugural volume of *APME* makes an important contribution to supporting the teaching and learning of mathematics.

## ■ In Appreciation

First and foremost, the Editorial Panel members were central to the work herein. They read chapters multiple times, giving detailed comments, edits, and direction, and they responded in a very rapid succession of reviews.

We also would like to acknowledge the contributions and guidance of the NCTM Headquarters staff. Those individuals who supported the production of the volume include Ken Krehbiel, associate executive director for communications; Joanne Hodges, senior director of publications; Myrna Jacobs, publications manager; Larry Shea, copy and production editor; Elizabeth Pontiff, text editor; Kathe Richardson, meeting planner; and many others who worked behind the scenes. In addition, a number of NCTM members provided guidance and input on the volume and on the purpose of *APME*, including William Speer and Rheta Rubenstein (previous general editors of the NCTM yearbook), Susan Garthwaite and Rick Hudson (EMC Chairs during the production of this volume), EMC committee members, Yearbook Task Force members, as well as many other NCTM members who were willing to share their ideas. We are grateful for the long hours, considered attention, and commitment to quality from all involved in bringing this volume to fruition.

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