

PREFACE

Yes, you have made a great career choice as a teacher!

—Shirley M. Frye

Teaching is a rewarding profession. As you embark on what may be the most important adventure of your life—that is, the process of teaching students mathematics—take comfort in the words of Shirley Frye, NCTM Past President, spoken at the Beginning Teachers Conference held at the NCTM Eastern Regional Conference in Boston, Massachusetts, in November 2002. Have confidence in the knowledge that you have acquired from your educational experiences thus far. Exercise patience with yourself as you strive to achieve higher levels of competence and reach proficiency.

As you begin your journey as a teacher of mathematics, you are likely to encounter challenges—both inside and outside the classroom—that will seem to overshadow the perceived rewards of teaching. Realize that in your early years of teaching mathematics, you will probably have a “large learning agenda” (Feiman-Nemser 2003, p. 27) that may require you to gain more knowledge about the content you are teaching and how best to present it to your students. This agenda may also require that you learn more about the norms of teaching among your colleagues and in your school community. Although obstacles will surface during your early years of teaching, you should view them as unique learning opportunities that enable you to refine your existing skills and polish your daily practices as you progress along the path of mastery in your new career.

To assist you in this process, the Editorial/Author Panel for the Needs of Mathematics Teachers Beginning Their Careers has compiled this high school volume to help you reach your full potential as an effective teacher of mathematics, thereby improving the mathematics learning of the students who will be the recipients of your instruction throughout your career. The Empowering the Beginning Teacher of Mathematics series contains three books geared specifically toward elementary, middle, and high school teachers of mathematics. These books have been written both *for* you and *to* you. Several authors present their discussions objectively, with the beginning teacher in mind, but many share their wisdom and insights as if they were conversing with you over a cup of

tea. We hope that this level of familiarity will set the tone for your use of this volume.

Our initial charge and primary goal was to develop a resource to which beginning teachers of mathematics could refer and one that they would use often while attending to the many demands of the classroom and the teaching profession in general. We all know that each academic year brings new faces and new demands to the classroom, at times making even veteran teachers feel like beginners again. Thus, we anticipate that this volume may also serve as a source of inspiration for both beginning teachers and their more experienced colleagues.

The Panel has aimed to produce a unique resource that highlights varied contributions in six broad categories: (1) professional growth, (2) curriculum and instruction, (3) classroom management and organization, (4) classroom-level assessment, (4) equity, and (5) school and community. To us, these categories represent the essential domains to which beginning teachers of mathematics must give immediate attention during the early years to establish a firm foundation in the classroom and to pave the way for a long tenure in mathematics teaching. In each category, individual contributions take on different formats, including featured articles, related thematic ideas, bulleted lists of tips and advice, personal testimonies, quick notes that shed light on specific topics, and quotable thoughts that can be stated best only by teachers. Journal-like pages are included at the end of each section for you to make notes and add your personal ideas, stories, tips, or advice to which you can refer in subsequent years or share with colleagues.

From the onset of the writing project, we were careful to avoid producing a volume that mirrors the numerous resources already available in teacher journals and related books. We certainly encourage you, as a beginning teacher of mathematics, to make full use of these resources as you seek to learn more about the situations you encounter in your first few months in the classroom. Our desire, however, is that you do more than merely “read and shelve” this publication. We hope that you keep it close at hand during your early years as a teacher and that you think of it as an *active* resource—one that becomes an integral part of your teaching regimen—in your search for solutions to issues and problems, not solely mathematical, that are sure to arise in your classroom or school during your beginning years.

Numerous people have made possible the production of the books in the Empowering the Beginning Teacher of Mathematics series. I especially offer my gratitude to the other members of the Editorial/Author Panel for their innovative, diligent, and focused work:

- Jeffrey M. Choppin, University of Rochester, Rochester, New York
- Tina Pateracki, Jasper County Schools, Ridgeland, South Carolina
- Jenny Salls, Washoe County School District, Sparks, Nevada
- Jane F. Schielack, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas
- Sharon Zagorski, Milwaukee Public Schools, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Throughout this project, the members of the Panel have contributed countless hours reviewing, editing, and crafting supporting segments to prepare this entire volume for *you*—the beginning teacher of mathematics in the high school. I also wish to acknowledge Harry Tunis, our staff liaison at the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), for his unwavering support and guidance, as well as the production staff of NCTM for assistance in the editing and production of this work. Finally, I wish to thank the authors, who have contributed to this effort as a response to their own desire to see you develop into an enthusiastic, effective classroom practitioner.

Our hope in producing this volume is that you “emerge from [your] first few years of teaching [mathematics] feeling empowered, supported, and capable in all roles of the classroom teacher” (Renard 2003, p. 64). You can help yourself in this endeavor by recognizing the multifaceted roles and responsibilities that teachers of mathematics assume during their beginning years. Moreover, as NCTM’s position statement about new teachers suggests, you should, if possible, take part in a high-quality induction or mentoring program. Ultimately, you should position yourself to reach out to your future colleagues who will enter the field after you and share the ideas that you learn from this volume, other resources, and your own experience.

Yes, you have made a great career choice as a teacher of mathematics in the high school. Now we urge you to enjoy your journey!

Michael F. Chappell
Series Editor