

EDITORIAL

For some time now IASE members have been suggesting that IASE should have its own research journal as a vehicle through which we could encourage research in statistics education, advance our knowledge about student's attitudes, conceptions and errors as regards stochastic knowledge, and improve the teaching of statistics at all educational levels. We are happy to present to you this first issue of the *Statistics Education Research Journal* (SERJ), which we hope will develop to fulfil these aims.

SERJ will continue and build on the *Newsletter of the International Study Group for Research in Learning Probability and Statistics* (ISGRN) and the *Statistics Education Research Newsletter* (SERN). The ISGRN was conceived in 1988 by Joan Garfield. It appeared initially in a printed version and, from 1996, when Carmen became editor, in an electronic version. After four years of electronic editions (now available at <http://www.ugr.es/~iase/isq.html>) ISGN became an IASE publication and was changed into SERN to better serve the aim of distributing information about research in statistics education (SERN is available at <http://www.ugr.es/~batanero/sergroup.htm>). Joan continued contributing to SERN as an associate editor until very recently, when she needed to reduce her workload. We are very indebted to Joan whose vision of a newsletter and effort over 13 years enabled researchers to get acquainted with one another and informed them about new developments and directions in statistics education research.

The impact of the newsletters was also due to the inspiration and interest of our dear friend John Truran, who was associate editor for both ISGN and SERG and was working with us to prepare this first issue of SERG until his death in December 2001. John was unfortunately unable to see the result of his work, although his ideas are still guiding us. We expect to achieve the quality he expected for SERJ in the near future. We are starting this first issue with a note about John's contributions to statistics education, the summary of his Ph.D. thesis and a selected list of references.

There are many problems regarding the provision of training for research in statistics education that must be solved if statistics education is to become a more mature discipline. At present this training is being carried out across a variety of different departments, such as statistics, mathematics education or psychology. New researchers sometimes need to start a research project in statistics education by themselves and other times they need to travel abroad to complete a thesis in a foreign language. In this issue of SERJ a thematic set of short notes serves to share some of these experiences, in the hope that this will encourage others, and cause readers to reflect on the training of researchers.

The International Research Forums on Statistical Reasoning, Thinking and Literacy (STRL) were started in 1999 at Kibbutz Be'eri, Israel, and continued in 2001 in Armidale, Australia. They gather together researchers who are interested in reflecting on the specific topics of statistical reasoning, thinking and literacy and give rise to suggestions for new research in the area. We are including a report of the first two conferences focussing on these areas, and summaries of the papers presented in STRL2.

This issue concludes with a bibliography on variation, a short paper, and sections formerly in SERN: summaries of recent dissertations and research papers, information about past and forthcoming conferences. In this sense it is not very different from recent issues of SERN, which had already begun to include contributions which would have been suitable for inclusion in a journal. Some of the material in this issue had already been prepared for the newsletter. We intend to increase the number of high quality refereed papers as SERJ develops.

We hope all IASE members will be interested in this new IASE publication, since its success can only be achieved with the help of all those who are committed to improving the quality of statistics education through research. Since the aim of the *Statistics Education Research Journal* is to provide a chance for all statistics education researchers to present their works and exchange their ideas, we invite you to send papers of potential interest, summaries of your theses and papers, and information about statistics education conferences to one of the editors. Details of the form in which submissions should be made are given on our web page <http://fehps.une.edu.au/serj>.

CARMEN BATANERO and FLAVIA JOLLIFFE