

Epilogue

*“We publish while others perish”
-Howard Zinn (1922- 2010)*

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The table of contents of this double issue included the above quote from the historian Howard Zinn which might seem puzzling to the reader. Why was this quote included and what is it supposed to mean? In the opening editorial, I mused over the whole enterprise of scholarly publishing and what it amounts to in the grand scheme of things. Zinn’s quote reminds us that academia is a cloistered unit and many of the things we place importance on in the academic culture of *publish or perish* seem insignificant when viewed through the lens of *real* problems that occur outside the academic cloister. It can also mean that *we* are sitting in a position of privilege in our ivory tower offices while *others* are not.

This suggests that while we engage in scholarship we find intrinsically meaningful, often to seek the validation of peers within academic sub cultures, the prestige of publications, and to climb the meritocratic laced rungs within university systems, we do have the burden of impacting issues “outside” the culture of scholarship, which are beyond the realm of specialized discourses cloaked in domain specific vocabulary.

In the editorial I alluded to the mantra for measurable “change” that dominates discourses within mathematics education, whereas a more meaningful and non measurable change could simply be creating a sense of agency, or changing dominant discourses, or creating subtle shifts in people’s perspectives.

The world of words and ideas wields more power and influence than we imagine. They can influence the discourses that occurs in the future, shape the intellectual character and fortitude of the present and coming generations. So the very least we can do is plant the seeds of “change”, embrace *intellectualism* for what it really means, and be bold enough to engage in scholarship that challenges the status quo in institutional, political and economic mechanisms that characterize the academic cloister, the machinery of grant funding, of publishing and most importantly the world outside.

The most rewarding aspect of running this journal is the correspondence I received from readers over the last 8 years. Many come from teachers who are inspired to teach a mathematical idea not prescribed by the curriculum or the textbook, or implement/test a research finding reported in the journal. Then there are e-mails from undergraduate and graduate students who begin an investigation stemming from ideas published in the journal. Last but not least, the letters that motivate me to keep this journal running are those that say:

“I learned something new”

“Now I know where that mathematical idea comes from”

“It’s nice to be able to read something useful in a journal free of charge”

Some Closing thoughts

I do not necessarily agree with educational research that funds and justifies itself by invoking the *needs* of one country such as the U.S to maintain its global leadership over the others because such arguments are based on the false premise of technological supremacy that fuels the educational-industrial-military economic model. Nevertheless the journal does not squelch such voices in order to push forth any particular ideology (neo capitalist, neo Marxist, neo socialist, neo progressive or otherwise). Intellectual discourse does not occur when everyone is in agreement, or afraid to be the voice of dissent, or when scholars adopt neutral stances, but occurs in a climate which tolerates differing viewpoints. We welcome readers to challenge assumptions and critique arguments put forth by authors that publish in this journal and continue to initiate change in the mindsets and orthodoxies that characterize academia. This, I believe is both our privilege and prerogative.