

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the second issue of *SERJ* for 2011. We have three manuscripts in this issue, along with a letter to the editor.

The first article, handled by co-Editor Peter Petocz, grew out of a statistics education research seminar at the University of Minnesota (USA) taught by the three faculty (Andrew Zieffler, Joan Garfield, Robert delMas) with the four graduate students (Laura Le, Rebekah Isaak, Audbjorg Bjornsdottir, Jiyeon Park) as participants. The focus of the seminar was on the history and current state of research in statistics education, which led the group to explore articles published in *SERJ* from 2002 to 2009. The methodology used several frameworks, or “lenses,” to carry out the investigation, two of which are content analysis and a typology of research studies from the Using Statistics Effectively in Mathematics Education Research report of the American Statistical Association that classifies studies into five types (Frame, Generate, Examine, Generalize, Extend). The result is a picture of statistics education research, as seen through these lenses, with respect to what is being published and why, who is publishing research in *SERJ*, the type of research questions, participants, and methodology that comprise statistics education research, and what this picture suggests about future research in this field.

The second article in this issue, by Clark Dollard (Metropolitan State College of Denver, USA), identifies misconceptions and gaps in understanding probability through individual interviews with a group of 24 preservice elementary education students that raises questions about the instructional experiences needed to prepare these students to effectively teach basic concepts of probability. I believe that in addition to the results of the study, readers will find Dollard’s interview tasks and analysis framework informative and instructive with respect to conducting qualitative research in statistics education.

The final article, by Jennifer Noll (Portland State University, USA), looks at graduate teaching assistants’ (TAs) understanding of concepts related to sampling variability in a sampling context. The study addresses the role of *Statistical Knowledge for Teaching* in the preparation of TAs. The participants consisted of 68 graduate students who had assisted with at least one introductory statistics course and completed at least one graduate-level course in statistics. Though the TAs demonstrated good knowledge of theoretical probability distributions, they had difficulty applying this knowledge to two empirical sampling tasks. Interviews with three of the TAs were used to explore and elaborate the findings from the survey results. I was particularly interested in the way Noll motivated the theoretical framework, as well as the elucidation of the disconnect between the TAs’ academic knowledge and their ability to apply that knowledge.

Finally, this issue includes what I believe is the first *Letter to the Editor* published in *SERJ*. *SERJ* welcomes letters to the editor that promote an open exchange of ideas. The co-editors of *SERJ* will review letters to assure they are respectful, pertinent to statistics education, and scholarly. In that vein, the letter from Anne Millar and Candace Schau provide a commentary on an article published in *SERJ* last May (volume 10, issue 1). I am sure that users of the *Survey of Attitudes Towards Statistics* (SATS) and those that conduct research in the affective domain will find the letter of interest.

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