

## *From the Editor*

### **Nine Years Back and Looking Ahead**

Just about nine years ago, a meeting occurred at James Madison University, attended by William E. Dugger, Kendall Starkweather, Mark Sanders, and yours truly. The purpose of the meeting was to pursue an idea that Mark had of publishing a scholarly journal for technology education. Thus occurred the genesis of the *Journal of Technology Education*. From its inception, Mark has provided consistently high quality, innovative leadership to the *JTE*. Particularly noteworthy was his foresight in anticipating the pervasiveness of electronic journals and establishing the *JTE* as the first scholarly journal in the world (from the information we have collected) with all issues available electronically, on-line. In preparing this, my first issue as editor, I realize even more the tremendous contribution of time, effort, and creativity that Mark has made to scholarship in technology education around the world. Mark will continue as Associate Editor, the position I have held since the beginning.

Though coincidental, it is nonetheless timely that the editorial on research by James Haynie appears in this issue. In developing his argument that more experimental research needs to be conducted by the profession, Haynie analyzed the articles that have appeared in the *JTE*, from volume one, number one. He mentions the need for qualitative research as well. Again coincidentally, four of the five regular articles in this issue are qualitative studies. Using Haynie's data, this means that 40% of all the qualitative articles published in the *JTE* appear between the covers of this issue. This is consistent with the dramatic swing of the pendulum within the social sciences toward qualitative inquiry. Courses in qualitative research methodology at institutions like Virginia Tech have started to become more popular among doctoral students than their quantitative counterparts.

When the name of the *American Industrial Arts Association* was changed to the *International Technology Education Association*, there was a concomitant hope by the leadership that its sphere of influence would grow significantly beyond the boundaries of the United States. From the beginning, the *JTE* has had international representation on its Editorial Board. Four of the five regular articles in this issue were penned by international authors, far more than in any of the past issues. Based on the articles currently in the review process, this international trend may continue.

Over the years, a number of articles have appeared in the *JTE* that either focused on the teacher shortage issue or cited it within another context. As this issue goes to press, it is the height of the hiring season for higher education. There are more positions available in the U. S. in technology teacher education this year than I can remember in my entire career in higher education. Even

more remarkable is the number of these positions that specify primary responsibilities in technology *teacher education*. I have also learned that several of these positions are “new,” thus potentially expanding the resources nationally that we have to prepare teachers and reducing the teacher shortage.

All of these rather disjointed happenings could simply be flashes in the pan. However, it is interesting to conjecture about our future if they were valid indices of the direction in which we are heading. First, the surge of qualitative research could finally lead us to a solid rationale for technology education, perhaps even getting at the unique and significant contributions that we make to the lives of our students in the affective domain of knowledge. Second, we could truly become an international profession in which the global sharing of ideas and research becomes natural behavior and is unimpeded by political or cultural borders. Through our rapidly developing communication networks, scholars and researchers could become equal partners with practitioners and parents in providing the most exciting and sound technology education experiences for our students. Finally, if the number of positions available represents a resurgence in technology teacher education, we could have the human power necessary to do the research about which Jim Haynie and others have long lamented, as well as sufficient numbers of teachers to put the research into practice. The prospects are refreshing.