

## EDITORIAL

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Welcome to this issue of *MSOR Connections*, the second to collect papers from the CETL-MSOR Conference 2023 held at Cardiff University on 7th-8th September 2023. I mentioned the longstanding connection and shared history between that conference and this journal in the previous issue's editorial, noting that both emerged from the Maths, Stats and OR Network (in the case of the conference, in collaboration with the various Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning associated with MSOR subjects). The MSOR Network was a Subject Centre of the Learning and Teaching Support Network/Higher Education Academy from 2000-2012. After the HEA closed its subject centres, *MSOR Connections* was relaunched by the HEA itself in 2013, but only lasted two issues in that format (Vol. 13 No. 1 and 2).

In 2014, a group of us got together and agreed a plan to revive *MSOR Connections* as a community initiative, with support from the **sigma** Network and University of Greenwich. This group formed the first editorial board and the first set of editors (Noel-Ann Bradshaw, Alun Owen, Rob Wilson, and me). We agreed an editorial workflow that would allow us to publish the journal on a sustainable basis with no budget, with at first four (more recently three) editors taking turns to be responsible for an issue – organising peer review of articles, making editorial decisions, compiling and copyediting the issue, and writing the editorial. We published our first issue (Vol. 14 No. 1) in autumn 2015 and the current issue (Vol. 22 No. 3) is the twenty-sixth since the revival, representing around one third of the total issues of *MSOR Connections* published in its quarter century so far.

This is the tenth issue of *MSOR Connections* for which I have been responsible since the relaunch<sup>1</sup>, and it will be my last. I have had the privilege of publishing issues with 81 articles featuring the work of 153 authors from ten countries<sup>2</sup> (17 authors appear in more than one of these issues; one author appears in four of them!). I have twice worked with guest editors, chairs of conferences or workshops from which the issue collects papers. I've also enjoyed creating the images for the covers since volume 19, taking over from Rob Wilson who did it until then. It has all been a delight, and I am pleased to have played a small role in the history of this journal. I leave it in the safe hands of my fellow editors Tony Mann and Alun Owen.

But first, this issue opens with an interesting opinion article exploring the use of language in statistics and whether this is a barrier to understanding for students – and those supporting them! – who are not fluent in statistical English. Rollings opens a conversation about what we can do to help. Another issue in supporting students in using statistics is test selection. Goodale tries out ChatGPT as an interactive alternative to flowcharts for students to get self-help on the right test to use.

Moving onto teaching practice, Kuveke, Shaker and Prendergast report on the design and delivery of a multidisciplinary first-year undergraduate statistics module, taking into account the common interests and disciplinary differences of the student cohorts. Shearman, Aziz and Pettigrew describe the development and analysis of an online diagnostic tool as part of a university mathematics refresher program. Using a hierarchical knowledge map, this tool attempts to reduce the number of questions students must answer to determine their level of understanding. Brewer draws inspiration from a career in pre-university education in an attempt to make large-group teaching at university more interactive. Fairfax and Saha attempt to use a group project to improve the sense of cross-cultural student community on a degree where a large number of overseas students join in year 2.

Connections between mathematics support and other academic support programmes are explored by Hurley and Casey, whose new delivery model involves closer collaboration which has highlighted possible links between support connected to mathematics anxiety and mathematical resilience and support offered through coaching.

Finally, Ardito explores the post-pandemic transition from a blended learning course to a traditional face-to-face format, sharing an 'anthology' approach to repurposing digital materials as a supplementary resource.

*MSOR Connections* is a venue for our community to share its innovative practice, and also a place for those new to writing and reviewing articles to get started. We have some experience supporting new authors and new peer reviewers. Though I am leaving the editorial team, I intend to continue writing and reviewing articles, knowing only too well that the journal could not operate without people like you and I doing both. I encourage you to join me – submitting articles or signing up with your reviewing interests via the journal website <https://journals.gre.ac.uk/index.php/msor>.

1. 14(2), 15(2), 16(3), 18(1), 18(2), 20(1), 20(2), 21(3), 22(2) and 22(3).
2. UK and Ireland, of course, plus Australia, Finland, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, South Africa, and USA.