

EDITORIAL

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Welcome to the first edition of MSOR Connections for the academic year 2024/2025. We are delighted that MSOR Connections continues to attract contributions from across the globe, with this edition including some very valuable experiences and insights being shared from Australia, the USA, and the UK.

We start with two case studies which focus on learning and teaching technologies. The first by Haddley and Ardito examines the benefits of the use of Generative AI in assessment and reports on the student perception when asked to use these tools. The other by Evans and Williams, describes a tool to visualise and interact with probability density functions implemented entirely using Python code. As a statistics educator interested in Generative AI in HE, I found both of these of great interest.

These are followed by four very different articles that address, from different perspectives, the really important issue of students' transition to and subsequent engagement with their degree studies. Saha kicks this group off with a case study which provides an informative and interesting outline of a Welcome Day event for students, with a range of useful ideas provided which can be adapted and implemented by others. We then present a report by Shearman and Shaker on the latest meeting of the FYiMaths (First Year in Mathematics) New South Wales, Australia, held in December 2023. This report presents details of a wide range of talks given at that workshop that provide a real insight into what is happening in HE mathematics and statistics in Australia. This is followed by a research focused piece by Brown and Pawley, who report their findings of a study that investigates the importance and experience of student communities for those studying by distance learning. This provides some interesting insights into the student view and poses some interesting questions about how we can better facilitate a better sense of community for those students that require it. This group of four articles is then rounded off by a final case study by Richard and Brady-Van den Bos, that describes an investigation into how designing their own tutorial questions could help students negotiate the often-challenging transition to university mathematics. The focus here is on linear algebra, but the ideas presented can be translated into other topics.

This edition then closes with a very welcome piece by Stewart, which will be especially interesting to those who support nursing and other health care students with mathematics. The focus in this case study provides an insight into how the same issues are experienced in the USA, but also describes the positive impact of viewing "med math" as more than just a dosage calculation and very much part of the overall policy of medication administration, improving patient care and maintaining patient safety.

I would like to say thank you to all these authors for sharing their work. *MSOR Connections* can only function if the community it serves continues to provide content, so we strongly encourage you to consider writing case studies about your practice, accounts of your research into teaching, learning, assessment and support, and your opinions on issues you face in your work. However, just as important are the many reviewers who continue to contribute hugely to the sharing of this good practice and experience, but often go unacknowledged – thank you too for all your support for the journal. We can all help with the functioning of the journal by volunteering as a peer-reviewer. When you register with the journal website, there is an option to tick to register as a reviewer. It is very helpful if you write something in the 'reviewing interests' box, so that when we are selecting reviewers for a paper, we can know what sorts of articles you feel comfortable reviewing. To submit an article or register as a reviewer, just go to <http://journals.gre.ac.uk/> and look for *MSOR Connections*.