

EDITORIAL

Editorial

Robert Wilson, School of Mathematics, Cardiff University, Cardiff, UK. Email: wilsonrh@cardiff.ac.uk

It is a year on from the 're-launch' of MSOR Connections and I am delighted to report that there is clearly still a strong appetite across the community to share ideas and experiences of mathematics learning, teaching and support. As the sigma-network begins a new phase of development, following on from the end of the funding period secured by **sigma**, it is anticipated that MSOR Connections will have an increasingly important role to play in disseminating practice across the sector. Therefore, on behalf of the editors, I would like to take this opportunity to keep encouraging all readers for their contributions as we all look to learn from one another and develop our practice.

The breadth of contributions submitted to Connections is again reflected in this latest issue. We begin with an article from Darlington and Bowyer who report on student perceptions of A-level Mathematics and Further Mathematics. This is followed by two case studies from Khan and Cornock who consider alternative approaches to motivate first year undergraduate students in the study of statistics and skills development respectively.

The next two articles involve undergraduate projects. Hunt and Bradshaw discuss how a 'research paper' approach has been developed in place of more traditional project assessment methods; while Sienko et al. report on how an undergraduate project has directly enhanced exam scheduling procedures at their institution.

We then have three papers which demonstrate the advances being made in Mathematics Support across Ireland. Pfeiffer et al. present a review of the 10th annual workshop of the Irish Mathematics Learning Support Network, which focussed on the importance of tutor support and personal development in the provision of mathematics support. Donlon and Ni-Fhloinn report on how mathematics support is being extended to secondary school students by Dublin City University. Then McIvor et al. highlight the process of establishing the first Mathematics Support Centre in any Further and Higher Education College in Northern Ireland.

The final articles in this issue review some of the electronic tools that are now available to complement mathematics learning and support. Cross discusses the potential benefits of using a Microsoft Surface Pro tablet when providing mathematics support; while Farmer provides a detailed review of popular survey tools that are currently available to students to collect the various forms of data often required as part of their studies.

Finally, I would like to congratulate Tony Croft and Duncan Lawson in being awarded the prestigious Gold Medal from the Institute of Mathematics and its Applications (IMA). Tony and Duncan's hard work and commitment in establishing **sigma** has led to a thriving community of mathematics support practitioners and this award is well deserved recognition of the sustained and outstanding contribution both have made to mathematics education across Higher Education.