Providing a legacy – MSOR Network resources

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The MSOR Network’s current focus is on providing a legacy for our community. As we move into what we expect to be the final few months of the Network’s life the transition to discipline support provided directly by the Higher Education Academy is well underway. This has given some capacity to look at what our legacy is and how we can best ensure that this remains available.

So to paraphrase one of my favourite films, what has the MSOR Network ever done for you? Well there have been our workshops. Both the ‘Induction for New Lecturers’ and ‘Supporting Post Graduates who Teach Mathematics and Statistics’ have been popular and influential in supporting those new to teaching. (Incidentally one of the Network academic staff was recently attending a conference in New Zealand when he was approached by two former induction course participants from 2002 and 2003 who said how much they had enjoyed it.) We have also delivered a large number of events around specific themes such as accessibility, maths and maths educators, teaching statistics, external examining – the list could go on.

Through mini-projects and other routes we have provided a significant amount of funding to help develop new thinking, test ideas and develop good practice. CETL-MSOR Conferences have provided an opportunity for colleagues to share the outcomes of these and other experiences. We are delighted that, with continued support from sigma and the HE STEM National Programme and in partnership with the Higher Education Academy, CETL-MSOR 2012 Sharing Good Practice in MSOR Teaching and Learning will take place at the University of Sheffield on 12 and 13 July 2012.

But however good events are, they are by their very nature transitory. We leave workshops and conferences inspired and enthused to try a new initiative or change our practice, but for a lot of us everyday life gets in the way. Existing commitments, workloads and demands mean that when we make the time to think about that inspiring practice we can’t always quite remember all of the details. Then there are those of us who can’t make it to an event or to the Conference. So one of the elements of the Network’s legacy is to share the outcomes of work we have supported in order to continue to inform teaching and learning practice.

We are in the process of revising the content of our website www.mathstore.ac.uk so that resources can be easily found. Following discussions with the Royal Statistical Centre’s Centre for Statistical Education at Plymouth University it has been agreed that the Network will be hosted as a live site until September 2014. In addition resources will be shared with our partners including the Higher Education Academy.
Resources currently under development include ‘Ten Years of Mini-Projects’ which will review mini-projects that we have supported since 2001. A copy will be sent to all HEIs offering mathematical sciences degree programmes and it will also be available to download. We are also in the process of completing a guide for external examiners and developing web-based support resources for ‘Teaching Mathematics in Higher Education – the basics and beyond’.

The Network also wants to ensure that resources we have helped develop and that continue to meet a need remain available. As the graphic clearly demonstrates there is a continuing demand for our Facts and Formulae series leaflets with over 170,000 being distributed in response to requests since 2005. A significant number of these, approximately 48,000 were distributed in 2011 as part of Network legacy activity and we do have a limited number remaining. All our leaflets are available to download both from our website and www.mathcentre.ac.uk.

To conclude the legacy of the MSOR Network must be to help ensure that project outcomes and resources continue to be available. We are committed to work with partners to share our resources as well as developing our own website to provide clear links to valid and useful documents. It’s just up to you to use them....