

British Society for Research into Learning Mathematics

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BERA SIG and Outreach

Alf Coles, Bristol University

<http://www.bsrlm.org.uk>

BERA SIG and Outreach Co-ordinator's Report 2015-16

This year marked a formal separation of BSRLM and the BERA Special Interest Group for 'Mathematics in Education'. Whereas, formally, BSRLM was seen as equivalent to the BERA SIG and hence elections to the BSRLM executive (for the role of BERA SIG Co-ordinator) constituted election to a role in BERA, this is no longer the case. The separation was instigated by BERA following their own review of their constitution. It is for this reason that the executive role name has changed to include the term 'Outreach Co-ordinator'. Going forward, there will need to be separate elections to this role, one within BSRLM (onto the executive) and the other within BERA Mathematics in Education SIG members (for the Co-ordinator position). This opens the possibility that the BERA SIG Co-ordinator might not be a member of BSRLM, although our hope is that the same person will occupy both roles. However, the BERA SIG role is not time limited and also not limited to one individual and so, for example, Alison Clark-Wilson (the former BSRLM executive member with the BERA role) is continuing as one of the BERA SIG Co-ordinators.

Practitioner Research Day Conference

In July this year, BSRLM and the BERA 'Mathematics in Education' SIG co-hosted with the 'Practitioner Research SIG' a day event in Exeter for teacher-researchers to share their own work and findings. There were eight presentations from teachers, a keynote (from Alison Clark-Wilson) and three methodological sessions by more experienced researchers. The eight presenting teachers were often but not exclusively involved in Master's research linked to a HEI. The feedback from the day was overwhelmingly positive such that there were immediate plans made to repeat the day in 2017. We decided to bring the day a little further away from the end of term and to host in London – please look out for details and encourage anyone you know to participate!

BERA Conference

This year, we took an active role in encouraging submissions of 'symposia' linked to Mathematics Education in the BERA conference (which takes place in September every year). A symposium is a group of 3 – 5 linked papers that are then presented together at BERA, with the opportunity therefore of conversations across the work that leads to further synergies. We were pleased to see that this activity resulted in more symposia than we have had for several years.

The total number of individual papers received (not in a symposium) was similar to numbers in the last three years.

Year	No. of symposia	No. of individual papers (no. rejected)
2016	4	15 (3)
2015	0	18 (0)
2014	1	16 (3)
2013	1	12 (0)
2012	2	17 (1)
2011	2	15 (1)

Table 1: BERA SIG numbers over time (data supplied by the BERA office)

At the BERA conference there is a session for SIG members to convene and discuss what the SIG does. There was general agreement that the Practitioner Research day is a positive event that should be continued. There was also discussion of the role of the SIG at BERA, given that we have BSRLM as the natural forum where, as mathematics educators, we can get together. One suggestion, that met with support, was that as a community we could use the BERA conference as an opportunity to present our work outside mathematics education. This could be achieved by offering symposia or individual papers and badging them not as mathematics education (at present you cannot 'double badge' papers or symposia). We will be encouraging this alternative badging for 2017 (and so might expect to see a drop in 'Mathematics in Education' numbers in 2017).

Outreach

As part of my wider outreach role, I have been in contact with two colleagues at CINVESTAV in Mexico (which is the major mathematics education research and training centre in the country). There is a long-standing society in Mexico, the 'Mexican Society for Mathematics Education' which runs out of this centre and they are keen to make links with BSRLM and, in particular, to see if they can begin offering (in Mexico) day conferences similar to the ones we run in the UK. The BSRLM executive are keen for possible links to be pursued and one current idea is to apply to the Newton fund for money to help organise an event in Mexico, which BSRLM could support. If anyone is interested in helping pursue these connections, please let me know.

Next year

As well as the points for next year that are indicated above, in 2017 I am hoping to make more active links with the Maths Hubs and encourage attendance at BSRLM e.g., of teacher-researchers or other groups involved in Maths Hub activities.

Alf Coles, Nov 2016