

Editorial

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Welcome to the spring issue of *Research Matters*. Much current debate in education and assessment is around the potential of technology to enhance (or otherwise) student learning. Our first two articles are on this theme. The first, by Xinyue Li from Cambridge Mathematics, describes the technologies collectively known as “extended reality” and considers opportunities and challenges for using them in teaching and assessing mathematics. The second, by Jude Brady and colleagues, reports on a study where three undergraduates were asked to use ChatGPT to assist with writing essays and then interviewed about their approach.

Our third article, by Nicky Rushton, Dominika Majewska and Stuart Shaw, considers the difficult issues that arise when comparing curriculum documents with the aim of making claims about comparability of different curricula. In particular, they focus on the application of the “mapping method”, using a comparison between the Common Core State Standards in the US and the mathematics national curriculum in England as an example.

Computer-based testing affords the possibility of collecting evidence not only of the student’s response itself, but of other features of the process that produced the response, such as the time taken for each question. With paper-based examinations, however, we usually do not know how long it took students to complete their answers. In our fourth article Emma Walland explores the extent to which data (specifically whether a response was missing or not) can support inferences about whether students were under time pressure in paper-based GCSE examination components, and whether exams in some subjects were more “speeded” than others.

Our final article, by Chris Jellis, presents a historical overview of the Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring (CEM), acquired by Cambridge in 2019 but now celebrating more than 40 years since its creation. It provides a fascinating insight into CEM’s role in pioneering ways for schools to evaluate their effectiveness, and its contribution to some key assessment debates over the years.