

**The STeP Journal**  
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**Editorial**

We have an interesting edition of the STeP journal here for you with some different papers written in a collaborative way between authors. Please explore the range of excellent papers here and get in touch with your own papers for the next edition.

To start the issue, **Joseph Ashcroft from Liverpool John Moores University** presents a study of reading within a year three class and asks whether boys' attitudes to reading differ to those of girls. Specifically Joseph is looking at interest in reading, rather than attainment. He found that interest in reading was generally good, but did indeed discover that boys and girls had differing views, with boys being less enthusiastic and spending less time reading at home than girls. He shares some interesting findings with us such as the fact that the view of reading as school related was recurring and calls on us to remember that children are not always predictable and urges that we need to understand the children and their differences.

Our next paper is a collaboration between two authors: **Seanpaul Gibson and Patrick Bradley from St Mary's University College, Belfast**. Between them they offer us a fascinating paper concerning Key Stage 2 pupils' perceptions of using the BBC Micro:bit in STEM education. Their interest in this topic was motivated by the realisation that Information Communication Technology (ICT) is becoming one of the most important subjects for primary schools across the world, playing a key role in educational, economic and social changes. Thus, they suggest, there is a need to develop teaching resources to nurture ICT literacy in skills, both in schools and as part of lifelong learning. In their study they found that pupils showed a positive response to using the BBC Micro:bit and their paper suggests the importance of such tools. The study was based in Northern Ireland but, in an ever advancing technological society, it finds resonance beyond the bounds of this small-scale project.

Next we go to a paper by **Kim Lay from the University of Bedfordshire**. Kim's topic is learning mentor support and its perceived effect on the motivation of pupil premium students in year 11. She reminds us that motivation is one of the most important things that educational practitioners can target to effect engagement and thereby improve student outcomes. In her small-scale case study she found that learning mentors did help promote student motivation and that there seemed to be a correlation with this and things such as attainment, confidence, homework and focus in lessons. Her participants made it clear that there was not enough time available with the learning mentor, and therefore Kim strongly recommends that it is important for schools to provide suitable amounts of time and space for students to meet with their learning mentor.

Our final paper is another collaboration and somewhat unusual for the journal. **Amin Rahman, Jessica De Souza, Dalila Menguellet and Keith Bugler from Canterbury Christ Church University** share with us their reflections on their first half term on the INSPIRE STEM PGCE PROGRAMME. Following an explanation of this programme, each author shares their thoughts in turn, referencing these thoughts from literature and giving honest reactions to what they have experienced. Well worth a read!

**Alison Jackson**  
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