The Teaching Statistics Trust

August 2026

Dear Colleague

Teaching Statistics Trust Lecture, 2026-2027

In 2017 the Teaching Statistics Trust (TST) established an annual lecture series for teachers of statistics in all subjects, whether specialist or non-specialist, in secondary schools, colleges and early years of university.

The purpose of the TST Lecture is to encourage new thinking and exciting approaches to teaching statistics, with the ultimate aim that teachers and students gain a deeper understanding of the subject.

The first eight TST Lectures were delivered by: Professor Sir David Spiegelhalter; Professor Christine Franklin; Neil Sheldon; Professor Rhys Jones; Roger Porkess and Stella Dudzic; Professor Jim Ridgway; Dr Peter Martin; and Professor Rachel Hilliam. Further details and recordings of some of the lectures are available here. All the lectures proved to be entertaining and stimulating for teachers and they were very well received.

In 2026-27, the 9th lecture in the series, entitled

Statistics and Data Science Education in the AI Age

is being delivered by Tom Button. The lecture is scheduled for about an hour, with time for questions and discussion afterwards**.**

An abstract of the lecture and a brief biography of Tom are presented overleaf.

The Teaching Statistics Trust is currently setting a schedule for delivery of the 2026-27 TST lecture. Please contact me if you would like to host Tom delivering the lecture.

Yours sincerely

Neville Davies

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Statistics and Data Science Education in the AI Age

Tom Button

Mathematics in Education and Industry (MEI)

Life in the 21st century involves interacting with data-driven models on a daily basis. These models include artificial intelligence (AI) but this is a widely used (and misused!) term that is poorly defined. The reality is that an increasing number of decisions that affect us are wholly or partly taken by tools whose design is opaque at best. Many people of all ages would benefit from a deeper understanding of how data is used to build these tools and this starts with statistics and data education in schools.

In this talk we will explore:

- the importance of data to the development of machine learning and AI, and how statistics and data science education can build a strong foundation for understanding these;
- MEI's experiences in running data science courses for teachers and students since 2019 and how the lessons learned from delivering these can inform future curriculum development;
- how technology changes the way that people interact with data and the implications for the curriculum as well as the way that statistics is taught and assessed;
- a vision for the future of the statistics and data science curriculum.

Brief biography of Tom Button

Tom Button is the Director for Data Science and Mathematics Technology at MEI. He leads on the design and the provision of data science courses for students and teachers. Since 2019 thousands of students and hundreds of teachers have engaged in these courses.

He is also an expert in the use of technology in the mathematics classroom and has over 20 years' experience in supporting teachers in making effective use of digital mathematical tools. He was one of the lead authors of the 2024 JMC report on *Mathematics education and digital technology*. Between 2011 and 2013 he led on the development of *Further Pure with Technology*: an innovative A level Further Mathematics unit that was the first school-level examination in England to use computer algebra.

Prior to joining MEI in 2005 Tom taught A level Mathematics and A level Further Mathematics for 10 years in a number of sixth form colleges.