

I. From the Director

Dr. Robert Bernhardt, October 2009



Last year was fraught with difficulties. Our long association with the mathematics placement testing program of the Mathematical Association of America was terminated, and could not be restarted in time for us to offer testing in the fall of 2008. We were able to obtain strong support from EMPT programs in Kentucky, Wisconsin, and Ohio in obtaining a new test. We settled on the Ohio EMPT test, and we were able to restart our testing program in the spring of 2009. Thus the sharp decline in the numbers of high school students testing with us in 2008-2009, as opposed to the years previous to this one.

Some very good things have come from this change, I think. While the new test is harder than the old test, and contains a greater diversity of problems, most comments from secondary teachers have been positive. In addition, Ohio EMPT has data that indicates that the mathematics placement tests used in Ohio place students more accurately than many commercial placement tests, such as ACT and Accuplacer. And the Ohio EMPT test is built on these placement tests. Validity measures of this type are very nice to see.

However, our problems are not over. We are now having difficulty with the online Web-based version of the test. Until we can resolve this issue, we are forced to fall back on using paper-and-pencil testing only. The good news is that this will not affect most of the teachers and students participating in our program, since only 12% of the students who test with us use online testing. The bad news is that online testing is probably the wave of the future. Thus we need to resolve this problem, and we will be working to do this in the coming months.

