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Bridging the Gap with Diagnostic Testing

Some research done by mathematicians and mathematics educators claims that the math skills of incoming university students have been declining over the past 20 years or so, and data collected at the University of Manitoba from our incoming Calculus students supports these claims. Enrolment in first year mathematics courses continues to increase while success rates continue to decline, and the gap between high school Pre-Calculus and university Calculus grades continues to grow. In order to address this increasing gap from high school mathematics to university mathematics, many universities use Diagnostic or Placement Testing in order to identify individual areas of weakness and direct students towards appropriate remediation. This talk will focus on the research behind Diagnostic (or Placement) testing, and describe the struggles to implement such a testing mechanism at the University of Manitoba.