

I think we will have a great AMATYC conference this November in Washington, DC. As chair of the PAC, I was also privileged to be part of a 15-member committee that read over 260 proposals for the regular hour/two hour sessions, and I have included in this PAC newsletter mailing those of you who seemed to have proposals to do with placement and/or assessment (and who said it was okay to include e-mail addresses ☺). My only regret is that there isn't room at our convention site to accept all 260 proposals. I am thankful that the Proceedings page at [www.amatyc.org](http://www.amatyc.org) has some copies of handouts from past conferences.

Thanks to all of you who submitted Themed Session proposals—we could only take nine 15 minute presentations we will be having for our Placement and Assessment Themed Session, but those nine should be great! There were some who missed the deadline—we are hopeful of having another themed session in 2009 (in Las Vegas). This year it looks like the various Themed Sessions will be on the same day and time, so people can move from one to another according to interest.

I particularly like AMATYC because it helps find and share solutions. Find below:

- A question from a colleague on proctored testing—he would really like your response!
- An assessment project from our PAC Website—can you adapt and use it in a course assessment you are wrestling with?
- Regional liaisons for Placement and Assessment, nominated by their regional vice presidents. One of these is from your region!
- Letters, stories and reflections



## *A Question for You on Proctored On-Line Testing*

- Does your college use proctored testing for its on-line math courses with at least one or more exams proctored during the term?

If yes, what is your rationale for having tests proctored?

If no, what types of assessments are you using instead?

(I want to know if proctoring is for institutional accountability, verifying that learning has occurred, to prevent cheating, or other reasons).

Is anyone aware of research that has been done that addresses the viability of proctoring math exams (I really would like the sources, if possible). Please respond to Michael Flesch, Mathematics Department On-line Lead Instructor, Metropolitan Community College, Nebraska [mflesch@mccneb.edu](mailto:mflesch@mccneb.edu)



## *An Assessment Project from our PAC Website*

*Beyond Crossroads* Assessment Cycle [Submit an assessment project](#)



- [Geometry for Elementary/Middle School Teachers](#) (Darlene Kohrman and Sheila Eisenhauer)

If you click on this link, you will come to a screen with parts. As you click on the parts, reflecting the Beyond Crossroads Assessment Cycle, you can find all the details for Darlene Kohrman's and Sheila Eisenhauer's project (even copies of the tests they gave, and more) Now it may be that your school does not even offer courses for Elementary Teachers, but your are interested in how to design a classroom assessment project. Their ideas may be adaptable to your situation....!

Jim Ham, our website guru, sent this in, and invites us to send in our own assessment projects to our PAC website through the link above.



## *Responses to Call for Items, PAC Newsletter (short tips, pointers to research, questions)*

**Compass vs. ALEKS?** --Marybeth Beno, South Suburban College, South Holland, IL  
[MBeno@southsuburbancollege.edu](mailto:MBeno@southsuburbancollege.edu)

We're thinking about replacing the Compass Placement Exam with the new ALEKS Placement System. Their demonstration makes the product very attractive. We really need something to distinguish between levels of remedial courses. ALEKS not only has open-ended questions (eliminating the guessing), but it allows us to choose the number and scope of questions pertaining to each level. Is anyone already using ALEKS? If so, how is it working out?

**How about those Blue Tests?** --Kathy Mowers, AMATYC Past President [kathy.mowers@kctcs.edu](mailto:kathy.mowers@kctcs.edu)

After reading Connie Buller's article on the "Happy Quiz," I was reminded of a situation where I needed to intervene earlier in an assessment situation. A few semesters back, I had a student who knew every

answer in an introductory statistics class. She was typically the first to respond. Then she took the first exam. She failed the first exam. She then went on to fail the second exam. She had beautiful homework and still came to class and offered the correct answers in class.

For the final, I asked her if there was anything that I could do differently that would help her since she obviously knew the material. She said that she'd like her final to be printed on paper that was the color of her syllabus. That was a dark, bright color that they call "Celestial Blue." She aced the final. One of the points of this anecdote is that there are a lot of variables that we don't expect when we are giving examinations. Just think if she had offered that suggestion earlier, or if I had asked earlier.

**That strategy that seems to make a difference** –Dr. Lalitha Subramanian, Potomac State College of West Virginia University, Keyser, WV [LaSubramanian@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:LaSubramanian@mail.wvu.edu)

I am teaching developmental and college level mathematics courses for the sixth semester now. I have been trying different formative assessments to identify the weaknesses and determine the progress of my students. Regular short class quizzes, one-minute paper at the end of each class, class worksheets that students can solve individually or in groups, calling students to solve problems on the board, etc. are a few in my long list. My trysts with these types of assessments did not seem to help me improve my students' performance significantly. Last semester, I tried another trick. I offered extra points on class quizzes and unit tests if students worked out the corrections clearly with all necessary steps and resubmitted the paper. No doubt this increased my grading work two-fold, but I found many students making their way to my office room to clear their confusions and learn the correct way to solve the problems they got wrong in their paper. This was a positive indicator. The effectiveness of this strategy was confirmed by a significant drop in the fail percentage to an all-time low of 25% in the college algebra and 10% in the introductory calculus classes. Pre-calculus and trigonometry classes did not record the lowest percent of failures. I have plans to make the offer of extra points more stringent by requiring the students to state what he/she has done wrong in the quiz, and then do the correction. I don't know if this will help improve my students' performance. Any other new ideas of formative assessment are highly welcome!!!

*Editor's comment: Are you able yet to see if this results in students doing better in classes following these?*



## *PAC Committee Regions and Liaisons*

- **Northeast:** Emily Woods, Southern Maine CC, [EWoods@smccME.edu](mailto:EWoods@smccME.edu)
- **Mid-Atlantic:** Sharon Gott, Eastern WV U, WV, [sgott@eastern.wvnet.edu](mailto:sgott@eastern.wvnet.edu)
- **Southwest:** Julie DePree, UNM Valencia Campus, NM, [jdepree@unm.edu](mailto:jdepree@unm.edu)
- **Midwest:** Marie Hipple, U of Cincinnati, OH, [hipplem@uc.edu](mailto:hipplem@uc.edu)
- **Central:** Darlene Hatcher, Metropolitan CC, Omaha, NE, [DHatcher@mccneb.edu](mailto:DHatcher@mccneb.edu)
- **Southeast:** Patty Amick, Greenville Tech C, SC, [Patty.amick@gvltec.edu](mailto:Patty.amick@gvltec.edu)
- **Northwest:** Laura Bracken, Lewis-Clark State College, Lewiston, ID [bracken@lcsc.edu](mailto:bracken@lcsc.edu)
- **West:** MaryAnne Anthony, Santa Ana C, CA, [Anthony\\_Maryanne@sac.edu](mailto:Anthony_Maryanne@sac.edu)

Final Note: If you wish to be taken off the mailing list, please e-mail [cbuller@mccneb.edu](mailto:cbuller@mccneb.edu) and let me know.