Maths Competency Test

Introduction

The test below is one example of a Maths Competency Test and is intended for use in post primary schools to gain insights into students’ algebraic reasoning in second year. It is envisaged that this competency test be administered to second- year students at the beginning of the year. Analysis of the outcomes of the test will inform planning for interventions and measures to be taken to address any problems identified and to build on evident strengths. The analysis should, therefore, pinpoint those areas of the syllabus requiring particular attention during second year. In order to support the work of schools in this regard, the approach to be adopted in using and analysing the test and how students’ algebraic reasoning can be developed will be discussed at the seminars organised by the Project Maths Development Team during the school year 2014-2015.

While correct solutions to each problem are provided, it is more important that the incorrect answers be analysed so that common errors are identified. This has the potential of providing teachers with a valuable insight into ‘student-thinking’ and opportunities for misconceptions in their algebraic reasoning to be discussed and rectified. It is important to note that there is no requirement on teachers to administer this test. It is not a standardised test nor does it produce results that can be referenced against national norms. It is a guide for teachers to enable them to identify weaknesses as well as areas of strength in their students’ algebraic reasoning.