

FA05: 9:10-9:20 a.m. Probing Students' Mathematical Difficulties in Introductory Physics*

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Instructors often report apparent difficulties among introductory university physics students with mathematical skills and concepts normally taught in high school or earlier. As part of a systematic effort to identify and address such difficulties, we have begun to investigate skill levels with trigonometry, basic algebra, symbolic manipulation, and vector concepts, among students in algebra- and calculus-based introductory physics. We will present a summary of our initial results, and outline a strategy for addressing these difficulties within the context of physics classes themselves.

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