THE UNIVERSITY OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA
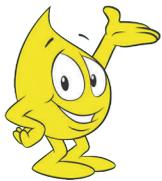*Achieving International Excellence*

Education

Graduate School of Education

WELCOME

This newsletter is designed to share questions, queries, feedback and any news regarding PIPS.

STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS

Updates from the PIPS Coordinator

Hello Everyone,
Well its been a busy year, with some new challenges for us to work through! Well done to everyone for their perseverance, the hard work is now done and the Final Assessment will be a lot smoother and easier.
We're keen to hear feedback from our schools, so if you haven't already, do take a moment to complete our online Teacher Survey, available at
http://www.education.uwa.edu.au/pips/current/survey

Kind regards
Vivienne Pepper
Vivienne.Pepper@uwa.edu.au

From the PIPS Project Officer

Hello to our PIPS schools for 2010!
What a year 2010 has been, with the new items included and a problem for us to overcome with the program glitch. I hope we have helped you to work through any issues you encountered this year, and I certainly look forward to a smooth sailing 2011! The new scales are working wonderfully, and I hope you can take some time to look at the report that will soon be sent out to schools.
Look forward to working with you again next year!

Cheerio
Jo Faulkner
Joanne.Faulkner@uwa.edu.au

WHO USED PIPS IN 2010

This year saw 771 schools undertake PIPS testing across Australia. Over 25,400 students have been assessed so far. We look forward to welcoming still more schools in 2011. The PIPS Baseline assessment provides a valuable tool for planning in the classroom, and monitoring school wide trends over the years.

Reminder
Undertake Final Assessment between:

ACT	18th October-29th October
NSW, QLD, TAS, VIC, NT	11th October– 29th October
WA	12th October– 29th October

CURRENT ISSUES

IDEAS+

IDEAS+ is a software program you can download from the AusPIPS website. It allows you a greater ability to interact with, customize and compare your data in the ways that *you* find useful. There are many functions included in IDEAS+, but two of the main benefits are that you can customize and compare groups using IDEAS+, and that you can generate individual student reports for a variety of purposes.

More information on how to use these two useful functions and many others is available in the 2010 PIPS Manual (Page 73), or located in the Documentation section at http://www.education.uwa.edu.au/pips/current

Using AusPIPS

Make sure to have a look on our AusPIPS website! AusPIPS is used to upload data, download feedback, manage you school/contact details and keep up to date with all things PIPS. More information on navigating AusPIPS is found in the 2010 PIPS Manual (Page 48).

The AusPIPS website is located at
https://css.cemcentre.org/PIPSAus/Login.aspx
You will need your PIPS ID and AusPIPS password to log-in to the secure site. If you have forgotten your password you can email us directly for a reminder
(Please include your PIPS ID, School Name and Address as a way of identifying requests)

If you have not received your PIPS Manual or it has been misplaced, electronic copies are available on the PIPS website, http://www.education.uwa.edu.au/pips

PIPS Contacts:

Project Director: Professor Helen Wildy
PIPS Project Coordinator: Ms. Vivienne Pepper
PIPS Project Officer: Ms. Jo Faulkner
Queries: (t) 08-6488 2859
(f) 08-6488 1052

Visit our website to download this newsletter or find out more info on PIPS from:
http://www.education.uwa.edu.au/pips/

ADMINISTRATION NOTE (ACT Public schools only)

ACT Public schools need to check that student details have been entered correctly before undertaking the final assessment. The Student ID is a 6 or 7 digit maze number e.g. 6898731 not the Family code e.g. CAVAD. For guidance to edit details, refer to page 35 of the 2010 PIPS Manual.

LOOKING AT THE CHANGES TO PIPS IN 2010
The task for a team of people working to develop assessments item is two-fold. They must construct an assessment that is valid and reliable in terms of the data it will return. They must also ensure that the teachers administering the assessment tool are provided with information useful to their classroom planning, and that is worthy of the time they will invest in administering the assessment. These two goals informed the changes to PIPS in 2010. Below are answers to some of the questions we have received about the new items.
For further details, please be sure to access the report which will soon be distributed to schools.

Why was the Phonological Awareness (PA) scale replaced?

The PA scale was replaced in the 2010 version of PIPS after a lot of research and testing. The PIPS team looked at the results we were obtaining from the original PA scales and saw that there were gaps; that is, students at the low and high end of the scale were not being assessed.

The new items were researched by the PIPS team in Australia and assessment experts from the CEM centre in Durham, UK. Over 100 items were tested with more than 300 Australian students and the items were shown to the teachers from trial schools. From that large number of items, the best were selected for inclusion in PIPS 2010.

Further analysis of the new items shows that the gaps we identified are indeed closing, and students at the high and low end of the spectrum in PA are being better captured by the new scale.

Are the new PA items pitched correctly for Prep students? They seem too hard.

The PIPS team are really happy with the way the new PA items work. Just like with the Reading and Maths sections, we set out to create some really easy items that most students could complete (like "Repeating Words") and some really difficult items that few students could complete (like "Hearing Sounds"). The new model achieves exactly this. Some of the "Hearing Sounds" items prove exceptionally difficult, but there are still some students who *can* do them, and these are the students we are targeting.

In 2010, we ran all items with all students. This was so we could gather a large amount of data on each of the new questions, so we could be sure the scale was operating effectively, and could be confident when introducing the stopping rules. In 2011, stopping rules will be introduced to the PA scale, consistent with the remainder of the PIPS assessment. This means that if a student gets 3 items wrong in a row, or 4 items wrong in a section, they will not proceed any further.

## Why do the PA items have 'CVC' examples and then very complex questions?

The Phonological Awareness scale runs from easy to hard, as mentioned above, just like the Reading and Maths sections of the PIPS assessment. By the time the student is working on the Hearing Sounds questions, they are seeing *very* hard items (just like "Walking to School" in Reading). The examples however, we try to keep as simple as possible, so that the students might better understand them. This is just like the *Fish live in water* example before the start of the very complex "Walking to School" items in the Reading scale. You can imagine if we started each section of the PA scale with easy items and then worked our way up to hard items each time, it would be a very long assessment!

Will you bring back the rhyme section?

The rhyme section was removed from the PA scale because it didn't fit with the remainder of the items. New rhyme items were trialled, with the same findings. Indeed, much of the literature around assessing PA discusses the controversial nature of rhyming as a valid measure of phonological awareness. For this reason, because of the goal of providing valid and reliable data, a section on rhyming will not be included in the PA scale.

In our online survey, we asked if you would like to see the rhyming section included as an optional assessment. The result was a resounding 'Yes', with 83% of 191 respondents saying that they would find this useful in their classroom practice. The PIPS Australia team is in talks with PIPS UK to make this happen in 2011.

If the Rhyme section was included as an optional assessment (much like the Behaviour and Attitudes components) would this be of use to your classroom practice?

- Yes
- No
- Undecided
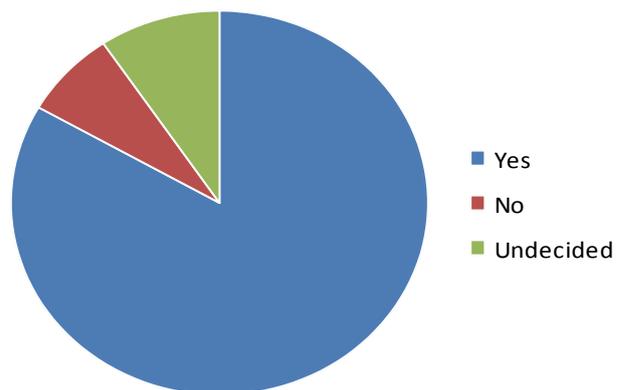
Can I provide some feedback?

Absolutely! The PIPS team have set up a survey for teachers to provide their feedback in an anonymous manner. This is the best way for us to receive your feedback, because it is all in one place, and we can graph and analyse the feedback we receive more easily. Please log on to the website, and provide us with your answers to our survey.

www.education.uwa.edu.au/pips