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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

MAP testing: A Powerful Assessment Choice	1
Arkansas on iTunes U	2
Grant Opportunities	3
Web Resources	3

MAP testing: A Powerful Assessment Choice

by Sarah McKenzie

You may have heard of the MAP tests that are being piloted at several FPS schools this spring, and this article will give you some insight into what the assessment is and the wonderful information it provides for students, teachers, parents and district staff.

Why are we adding more assessment?

The FPS Curriculum Audit conducted by PDK this fall found that the current state of student assessment was inadequate to monitor

and evaluate student progress and achievement and insufficient to evaluate curriculum and programs effectively.

What is the purpose of MAP?

- ◇ Provide teachers with timely information to improve student learning
- ◇ Monitor academic growth and consistently track progress over time
- ◇ Inform students, teachers and families about student skills
- ◇ Make data driven decisions about instruction
- ◇ Provide reliable data to evaluate the effectiveness of programs and curriculum

What is MAP and how is it different than other tests?

MAP, which stands for Measures of Academic Progress, is a computer-based assessment program produced by Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA). Assessments in both reading and math take students about 50 minutes each to complete.

MAP tests are unique in that they adapt to the appropriate level for each child's learning. As a student responds to questions, the test responds to the student, adjusting up or down in difficulty. This type of assessment is called a computer adaptive

assessment, and provides a grade-independent analysis of a child's learning. MAP is aligned to Arkansas State standards, and approximately three million students take the test each year across the United States and throughout the world.



(continued on page 2)

MAP testing: A Powerful Assessment Choice *(continued from page 1)*

Within 24 hours of testing, teachers can access the resulting data that show their students as individuals – each with their own base of knowledge.

How Does MAP data help students and teachers?

There are several features of MAP that can increase teacher effectiveness and student growth:

- ◇ Results are immediately available to teachers and principals
- ◇ Detailed information for students, teachers, and families about student skills
- ◇ Actionable data to inform decisions about curriculum and instruction
- ◇ A consistent measure for tracking student progress over time (like marking a child's height on a door frame)
- ◇ Aligned to state standards but not tied to a pacing guide
- ◇ Adaptable to special populations through computer adaptability
- ◇ Measures student growth with the option to compare to growth norms

Arkansas on iTunes U

The Arkansas Department of Education is currently working to make content available for Arkansas educators through iTunes U. iTunes U is an area of the free iTunes program that provides educational podcasts and other media at no charge in many subject areas. You can review content currently available through <http://deimos.apple.com/WebObjects/Core.woa/Browse/arkansas.gov>. You do have to have iTunes installed to access the content.

Arkansas on iTunes U is inviting educators to provide podcasts that are appropriate for publication over the summer so they will be available in the fall. You would be paid for these tracks. If you are interested in participating, you will need to create a demo track along with a proposal, and submit them and a signed statement of assurance by June 4.

Information about the summer contracts is available at <http://arkansasitunesu.ning.com/forum/topics/details-about-content-provider>. You can also read additional information and discussion about the project through the ning for the group (<http://arkansasitunesu.ning.com/>).



iTunes U

Grant Opportunity



* 21st Century Readiness *

We Are Teachers is asking teachers for their thoughts on the question "What does 21st century readiness mean to you, your students, and your community?"

You do have to register with WeAreTeachers, but after completing the easy registration, the Grant Application is available. Once you respond, encourage students, teachers, colleagues and friends to vote for your entry. The ten entries with the most votes will win an iPod nano with video and will be asked to submit a video representing their idea.

The video portion will answer the question "if you could tell your story with video, what would you show?" At the conclusion of the microgrant process, The Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21) will be inviting previous applicants as well as students, educators, and community members across the nation to submit video showing a project, idea, or thought in action. The person with the winning video entry chosen by our panel of judges will receive a trip for you and a friend to Washington DC to the National Summit on 21st Century Readiness. Travel, hotel and meals for two days and two nights are included.

Previous video entries are available for all educators to view at <https://thepartnershipfor21stcenturyskills238.eduvision.tv>

The grant application is available at <http://www.weareteachers.com/web/cybersummit/microgrant>

Application deadline: June 8, 2010 for microgrant; video submission due by August 2, 2010

Web Resources

Playing History: Historical Games (grades 3-12) (<http://www.playinghistory.org/>)

Playing History is a directory of free historical games, interactives, and simulations. There is a growing body of research about the value of educational games and this site is a database for high quality games and simulations. You will find not only games for history, but for different cultural knowledge, too. This site does not host these games. It is a sharing point for teachers/enthusiasts of history to recommend games and find them.



Pollinator Live (grades preK-12) (<http://www.pollinatorlive.pwnet.org/teacher/lessons.php>)

Build understanding of the important work of pollinators in our lives. Find great lesson plans that follow the National Science Education Standards for all grade levels (including pre-K.) Find web based activities and lesson plans in PDF format. Also find gardening information and other resources.