

PIRLS 2011

Quality Control Observations of the PIRLS/prePIRLS 2011 Data Collection

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International Quality Control Monitors (IQCMs) conducted site visits at a sample of 15 schools in each country during the PIRLS/prePIRLS test administration. For each school visit, the IQCMs completed the PIRLS/prePIRLS 2011 Classroom Observation Record. The observation record was organized into four sections, listed below, in order to facilitate accurate recording of the data collection's major activities in each participating country:

- ◆ Section A—Documentation of the PIRLS/prePIRLS Testing Session;
- ◆ Section B—Summary Observations of the PIRLS/prePIRLS Testing Session;
- ◆ Section C—Student Questionnaire Administration and Distribution of the Learning to Read Survey; and
- ◆ Section D—Interview with the School Coordinator.

In total, the PIRLS/prePIRLS 2011 IQCMs observed 521 PIRLS/prePIRLS testing sessions, and results of their observations are reported in the following sections.

Documentation of the PIRLS/prePIRLS 2011 Testing Sessions

Section A of the Classroom Observation Record addressed activities that took place during the actual testing sessions. The achievement test was administered in two parts with up to 30 minutes break in between each part. During test administration, IQCMs were asked to observe the activities of the Test Administrator, specifically the following:

- ◆ Distributing, securing, and collecting the test booklets;
- ◆ Following the assessment administration script; and
- ◆ Making time announcements during the testing sessions.

Documentation of these activities is presented in Exhibits 1, 2, and 3. In general, IQCMs reported that the assessments were conducted in accordance with the international procedures, particularly with regard to booklet distribution and adherence to time limits (see Exhibit 1). In those sessions, where the time was other than the prescribed 40 minutes, this was because students had completed

their work a few minutes before the allotted time had elapsed; IQCMs reported testing sessions lasting one minute longer in only two cases. In most cases, when Test Administrators observed students working faster than expected, a remaining time announcement was made prior to the planned “5 minutes left” warning to inform students that they still had ample time to complete their work without rushing.

Nearly all IQCM records stated that the break between Part 1 and Part 2 of the testing session was equal to or less than the required 30 minutes and that the testing materials were either secured or supervised during the break. At the end of the testing session, the test booklets were almost always collected or secured. However, in a small percentage of cases (5%), the Student Questionnaire was attached to the test booklet; in such instances, these students were returned the test booklets in order for them to complete the attached questionnaire.

Exhibit 1: Observations of PIRLS/prePIRLS 2011 Assessment Administration Sessions – 521 Sessions

Question	Yes (%)	No (%)	Not Answered (%)
Did the Test Administrator distribute the test booklets according to the booklet assignment on the Student Tracking Form and booklet labels?	99	1	0
Did the total testing time for Part 1 equal the time allowed?	84	15	1
Did the Test Administrator announce “you have 5 minutes left” prior to the end of Part 1?	85	14	1
Were there any other time remaining announcements made during Part 1?	17	82	1
Was the total time for the break equal to or less than 30 minutes?	93	6	1
Were the booklets left unattended or unsecured during the break?	3	96	1
Did the total testing time for Part 2 equal the time allowed?	81	18	1
Did the Test Administrator announce “you have 5 minutes left” prior to the end of Part 2?	82	17	1
Were there any other time remaining announcements made during Part 2?	14	84	2
Did any students finish either Part 1 or Part 2 of the assessment early (before the 40 minutes were up)?	87	12	1
Did the test administrator have a watch with a seconds hand (or stopwatch) for accurately timing the testing session(s)?	92	8	0
Were the booklets collected and secured after the testing session?	94	5	1

Exhibit 2 reports about the activities conducted during the assessment sessions. One of the most important means of standardizing the assessment administration was to have all test administrators follow the script in the Test Administrator Manual. IQCMs reported that, in nearly three-quarters of their

observations, the Test Administrators followed their script exactly and that, of the changes that were made, nearly all were minor. Changes made to the script were most frequently additions, rather than revisions or deletions.

Exhibit 2: Test Administrators Following the Test Administration Script – 521 Sessions

Question	Yes (%)	No (%)	Not Answered (%)
Had the test administrator familiarized himself or herself with the test administration script prior to the testing?	94	3	2 (I Cannot Answer) 0 (Not Answered)
Did the test administrator follow the test administration script in the Test Administrator Manual?	72	27 (Minor changes) 1 (Major changes)	0
<i>If the Test Administrator made changes to the script, how would you describe them?</i>			
<i>Additions</i>	18	8	2 (Not Answered) 72 (Not Applicable)
<i>Revisions</i>	12	10	6 (Not Answered) 72 (Not Applicable)
<i>Deletions</i>	8	15	5 (Not Answered) 72 (Not Applicable)
Did the test administrator address student questions appropriately?	99	1	0

Exhibit 3 presents observations on student compliance with instructions and overall cooperation with the test administration. According to the IQCMs observations, there were no cases reported in which students did not comply at all with the instruction to stop work at the end of either Part 1 or Part 2 of the testing session. Most students stopped working immediately upon instruction. In addition, IQCMs described students as orderly and cooperative during most testing sessions.

Exhibit 3: Student Cooperation During Assessment Administration – 521 Sessions

Question	Very Well (%)	Fairly Well (%)	Not well at all (%)	Not Answered (%)
When the Test Administrator ended Part 1, how well did the student comply with the instruction to stop work?	89	10	0	1
When the Test Administrator ended Part 2, how well did the student comply with the instruction to stop work?	91	8	0	1

Question	Extremely (%)	Moderately (%)	Somewhat (%)	Hardly (%)	Not answered (%)
To what extent would you describe the students as orderly and cooperative?	70	26	3	0	1

Summary Observations of the PIRLS/prePIRLS 2011 Testing Sessions

Section B of the Classroom Observation Record comprised the IQCMs' general observations during of the PIRLS/prePIRLS assessment administration. Exhibit 4 summarizes these observations, including the following:

- ◆ Overall impressions of the test administration;
- ◆ How well the Test Administrator monitored students; and
- ◆ Any unusual circumstances that arose during the testing session (e.g., student refusal to participate, defective instruments, emergency situations, and cheating).

IQCMs reported that the overall quality of testing sessions in almost all instances was good, very good, or excellent (56%). For most testing sessions, no problems were observed. In the few sessions where a defective test instrument was detected, the Test Administrator always replaced the instrument appropriately. In 19 percent of the observed testing sessions, a student left the room for an “emergency” (usually a bathroom visit) during the testing session. In such cases, Test Administrators were instructed that they should collect the student’s test booklet, and return it upon re-admission to the testing session; however, in a small number of cases, the student had already completed the test and, thus, it was not necessary to return the test booklet after re-admission. In all remaining cases, students were instructed to close their booklets and leave them on their tables while being out of the classroom.

Exhibit 4: General Observations of the Testing Session – 521 Sessions

Question	Yes (%)	No (%)	Not Answered (%)
Did the student identification information on the booklets correspond with the Student Tracking Form?	97	3	0
Were any defective test booklets detected and replaced?	2 (BEFORE the testing began) 2 (AFTER the testing began)	98 (BEFORE the testing began) 94 (AFTER the testing began)	0 (BEFORE the testing began) 4 (AFTER the testing began)
<i>If any defective test booklets were replaced, did the Test Administrator replace them appropriately?</i>	4	0	1 (Not Answered) 95 (Not Applicable)
Did any students refuse to take the test?	1	98	1
<i>If a student refused, did the Test Administrator accurately follow the instructions for excusing the student?</i>	1	0	1 (Not Answered) 98 (Not Applicable)

Exhibit 4: General Observations of the Testing Session – 521 Sessions (Continued)

Question	Yes (%)	No (%)	Not Answered (%)
Were any late students admitted to the testing room?	3 (BEFORE the testing began) 3 (AFTER the testing began)	91 (There were no late students) 2 (Late students were not admitted)	1
Did any students leave the room for an “emergency” during the testing?	19	80	1
<i>If a student left the room for an emergency during the testing, did the Test Administrator address the situation appropriately (collect the test booklet, and if re-admitted, return the test booklet)?</i>	13	5	2 (Not Answered) 80 (Not Applicable)
Were there any students requiring special accommodations (e.g., students with visual or hearing impairment, Dyslexia)?	9	90	1
Did students store away everything, including all electronic devices, having only a pen or a pencil and the test booklet for the duration of the test administration?	99	1	0
During the testing sessions did the test administrator walk around the room to be sure students were working on the correct section of the test and/or behaving properly?	98	2	0
Were the conditions in the testing room suitable (lighting, temperature, noise, etc.) for the students to work without distractions?	92	7	1
Did the seating arrangement provide adequate space for students to work and not be distracted by each other?	94	5	1
Did you see any evidence of students attempting to cheat on the tests (e.g., by copying from a neighbor)?	4	95	1

Question	Excellent (%)	Very Good (%)	Good (%)	Fair (%)	Poor (%)	Not Answered (%)
In general, how would you describe the overall quality of the testing session?	56	30	11	2	1	0

Student Questionnaire Administration and Distribution of the Learning to Read Survey

Section C of the Classroom Observation Record comprised the IQCMs' observations of the Student Questionnaire administration and distribution of the Learning to Read Survey, which was to be completed by parents (see Exhibit 5).

In 73 percent of cases, Test Administrators followed the Student Questionnaire administration script exactly. If the Test Administrator made changes to the script, most frequently these were “minor,” such as paraphrasing the directions. “Major changes” to the script were reported only in 1 percent of cases. In 44 percent of all sessions, Test Administrators read Student Questionnaire questions aloud, while in 51 percent of the sessions, students answered these questions independently. Note that some schools chose to administer the questionnaire on a different date than the PIRLS/prePIRLS assessment. In such cases, IQCMs were not required to observe the questionnaire administration. Also, if the same students were assessed for PIRLS/prePIRLS 2011 and TIMSS 2011, students were required to complete only one Student Questionnaire, which most frequently was administered on the first assessment day.

Finally, 41 percent of the Test Administrators distributed the Learning to Read Surveys after the Student Questionnaire administration. The remaining administrators distributed, the Learning to Read Surveys via the following means:

- ◆ Mailing surveys directly to parents;
- ◆ Gathering parents for completing the survey in the school; or
- ◆ Distributing the surveys on the TIMSS assessment administration day for students assessed for both PIRLS/prePIRLS 2011 and TIMSS 2011.

Exhibit 5: Student Questionnaire Administration and Distribution of Parent’s Learning to Read Survey – 521 Sessions

Question	Yes (%)	No (%)	Not Answered (%)
When the test administrator read the script to end the assessment session followed by the Student Questionnaire administration, did the test administrator announce a break?	86	13	1
Did the Test Administrator distribute the Student Questionnaires according to the Student Tracking Form and questionnaire labels?	93	2	5 (Not Applicable)
Did the test administrator follow the questionnaire administration script in the Test Administrator Manual?	73	21 (Minor changes) 1 (Major changes)	5 (Not Applicable)
<i>If the Test Administrator made changes to the script, how would you describe them?</i>			
<i>Additions</i>	15	7	0 (Not Answered) 78 (Not Applicable)
<i>Revisions</i>	12	8	2 (Not Answered) 78 (Not Applicable)
<i>Deletions</i>	5	14	3 (Not Answered) 78 (Not Applicable)
Did the test administrator read the questions aloud to the students?	44	51 (students answer the questions independently)	5 (Not Applicable)
After the Student Questionnaire administration, did the test administrator distribute the Learning to Read Survey?	41	54	5 (Not Applicable)
<i>If the Learning to Read Surveys were distributed at this time, did the test administrator distribute them according to the Student Tracking Form and survey labels?</i>	41	0	0 (Not Answered) 59 (Not Applicable)

Interview with the School Coordinator

Section D was the final component of the Classroom Observation Record, and involved the IQCM conducting an interview with the School Coordinator. The interview addressed such issues as the following:

- ◆ Shipment of assessment materials;
- ◆ Arrangements for test administration;
- ◆ Responsiveness of the national center to queries;
- ◆ Necessity for make-up sessions; and
- ◆ Organization of classes in the school, as a validation of within-school sampling procedures.

As shown in Exhibit 6, a large majority of School Coordinators considered that the PIRLS/prePIRLS 2011 administration in their school went very well overall (84%), that the provided School Coordinator Manual worked well (89%), and that other school staff members had mostly positive attitudes towards the PIRLS/prePIRLS testing (73%). There were only a few cases where components were missing from shipments of test materials, and nearly all such cases were resolved before the testing date. In one case, the School Coordinator reported not receiving all of the PIRLS/prePIRLS materials. However, in this case, as in a number of other similar cases, an external Test Administrator brought the materials and administered the test.

In more than half of the sessions (59%), School Coordinators indicated that students were given special instructions, motivational talks, or incentives by a school official or the classroom teacher prior to testing. Twelve percent of School Coordinators anticipated needing a makeup session, and almost all of these coordinators intended to conduct one.

Because the sampling of classes requires a complete list of all classes in the school at the target grade, IQCMs were asked to verify that the class list did indeed include all classes. Most School Coordinators confirmed that the complete list of classes had been documented and that all students appeared in one and only one of these classes.

Finally, a tribute to the planning and implementation of PIRLS/prePIRLS 2011 was the fact that 85 percent of respondents said they would be willing to serve as a School Coordinator in future international assessments.

Exhibit 6: Interview with the School Coordinator

Question	Yes (%)	No (%)	Not Answered (%)
Prior to the testing day, did you have time to check your shipment of materials from the national center?	72	22	6
Did you receive the correct shipment of the materials as listed in your School Coordinator Manual and according to the tracking forms?	81	9	10
<i>If no, did the national center provide the missing materials in time for the testing?</i>	3	4	12 (Not Answered) 81 (Not Applicable)
Was the national center responsive to your questions or concerns?	85	3	12

Exhibit 6: Interview with the School Coordinator (Continued)

Question	Yes (%)	No (%)	Not Answered (%)
Was the Teacher Questionnaire administered online?	20	77	3
<i>If the Teacher Questionnaire was administered online, did the teacher(s) encounter any problems?</i>	3	17	3 (Not Answered) 77 (Not Applicable)
Was the School Questionnaire administered online?	20	76	4
<i>If the School Questionnaire was administered online, did the person completing it encounter any problems?</i>	1	19	4 (Not Answered) 76 (Not Applicable)
Do you anticipate that a makeup session will be required at your school?	12	86	2
<i>If yes, do you intend to conduct one?</i>	11	1	2 (Not Answered) 86 (Not Applicable)
Did the students receive any special instructions, motivational talk, or incentives to prepare them for the assessment?	59	38	3
Is this a complete list of the classes in this grade in this school?	86	10	4
To the best of your knowledge, are there any students in this grade level who are not in any of these classes?	4	91	5
To the best of your knowledge, are there any students in this grade level in more than one of these classes?	2	93	5
If there was another international assessment, would you be willing to serve as a School Coordinator?	85	5	10

Question	Very well, no problems (%)	Satisfactorily, few problems (%)	Unsatisfactorily, many problems (%)	Not Answered (%)
Overall, how would you say the session went?	84	13	1	2

Question	Positive (%)	Neutral (%)	Negative (%)	Not Answered (%)
Overall, how would you rate the attitude of the other school staff members towards the PIRLS testing?	73	23	2	2

Question	Worked well (%)	Needs improvement (%)	Not Answered (%)
Overall, do you feel the School Coordinator Manual worked well for you or does it need improvement?	89	5	6