



REL Pacific E-News Vol. 1, No. 1

Welcome to the REL Pacific Spring 2008 E-News!

The **Regional Educational Laboratory Pacific (REL Pacific)** is 1 of 10 regional educational laboratories funded by the U.S. Department of Education. The purpose of the REL Pacific is to carry out applied educational research, development, dissemination, and technical assistance activities to serve the diverse needs of the Pacific region. Our service area encompasses American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia (Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, and Yap), Guam, Hawai'i, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau.

REL Pacific E-News is a quarterly e-newsletter designed to inform readers of current and emerging educational issues at local, state, and regional levels. At REL Pacific, we work closely with schools, districts, and other agencies to develop creative and practical solutions for important educational challenges. We are interested in both sharing our current work with you and hearing from you regarding the pressing educational needs in your community.

Visit REL Pacific's website (<http://www.prel.org/programs/care/rel.aspx>) or contact REL Pacific directly at (800) 377-4773 for information about current research and policy affecting the Pacific region. We wish to hear from you regarding research projects, studies, and technical assistance activities that may be of interest to your state educational agency or local school district.

Issues & Answers is an ongoing series of reports from short-term Fast Response Projects conducted by the regional educational laboratories on current education issues of importance at local, state, and regional levels.

Recently Published at REL Pacific: Issues & Answers

English Language Proficiency Assessment in the Pacific Region

Using various approaches to identify English language learners, several Pacific region jurisdictions (i.e., American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, Hawai'i) are developing English language proficiency standards, along with assessments aligned with those standards. The Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau are working on content standards, including language arts, and have expressed interest in developing English language proficiency standards, but presently lack formal assessment mechanisms. This report responds to Title I of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, requiring that all students in a school, including English language learners, take the same state academic assessments in reading/language arts, mathematics, and science, beginning with school year 2007–2008. This mandate is of special concern to the REL Pacific, because all jurisdictions within our service region have large numbers of English language learners or limited English proficiency students in their school systems.

Authors: Don Burger, EdD, Rod Mauricio, and Jennifer Ryan

http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/pacific/pdf/REL_2007014.pdf

Preparing and Licensing High Quality Teachers in Pacific Region Jurisdictions

The provisions of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* for teacher quality direct that all students in U.S. public schools be taught by "highly qualified" teachers. To meet the mandate, teachers must satisfy state certification requirements and demonstrate mastery of the subject area they teach. The Pacific region is in need of more highly qualified teachers, but current teacher

preparation and training programs and certification and licensing processes are not meeting this need. This study describes the current state of teacher preparation and licensing across the Pacific region.

Authors: Hilda Heine, EdD and Masa-Aki Emesiochl

http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/pacific/pdf/REL_2007031.pdf

Current REL Pacific Rigorous Research Study

Principles-Based Professional Development to Improve Reading Comprehension for English Language Learners

As part of the REL Pacific task of rigorous applied research and development (Task 2), REL Pacific is carrying out a 5-year rigorous study of the effectiveness of a professional development model, Pacific Communities with High-performance In Literacy Development (Pacific CHILD). The study involves the implementation of a professional development program for 4th- and 5th-grade teachers, with a particular focus on English language learners (ELLs). We adapted the model based on lessons learned from and results of PREL's (2001–2005) P-CHILD research on early literacy. Pacific CHILD focuses on three key reading comprehension strategies coupled with three key instructional strategies.

The REL Pacific is using a cluster, random assignment research design with an equal number of schools receiving and not receiving the professional development. We will sample approximately 50 schools (composed of about 250 teachers and 5,800 students) in three jurisdictions across the Pacific region. In particular, the study addresses the following research questions: Do teachers who participate in the intervention improve their content knowledge and classroom instructional skills? Does the reading comprehension of students of these teachers improve? The study will assess outcomes for schools, teachers, and students by conducting a carefully developed statistical analysis to determine whether there are differences in outcomes between treatment and control schools, teachers, and students that can be traced to the Pacific CHILD professional development program.

Recent REL Fast Response Projects From Other Laboratories

A Description of Foundation Skills Interventions for Struggling Middle-Grade Readers in Four Urban Northeast and Islands Region School Districts (REL Northeast & Islands)

This study describes how four midsize urban school districts in the Northeast and Islands region were providing foundation skills assessments and programs to struggling middle-grade readers. Researchers found variations, but also some similarities, in the districts' use of tests and programs.

<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/project.asp?id=38>

Using Strategy Instruction to Help Struggling High Schoolers Understand What They Read (REL Central)

This review sought to locate and summarize findings from rigorous, scientifically based studies of the effectiveness of strategy instruction—teaching students to use and articulate strategies that foster active, competent, self-regulated, and intentional learning—for helping struggling high school students improve their reading comprehension. The goal was to identify evidence-based practices intended to help high school teachers teach struggling readers.

<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/project.asp?id=14>

Reviewing the Evidence on How Teacher Professional Development Affects Student Achievement (REL Southwest)

Of the more than 1,300 studies identified as potentially addressing the effect of teacher professional development on student achievement in three key content areas, nine meet What Works Clearinghouse evidence standards, attesting to the paucity of rigorous studies that directly examine this link. This report finds that teachers who receive substantial professional

development—an average of 49 hours in the nine studies—can boost their students' achievement by about 21 percentile points.

<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/project.asp?id=70>

Featured Website: Doing What Works

The Doing What Works website “translates research-based practices into practical tools that support and improve classroom instruction.” The website is designed for educators seeking research-based information regarding what works in the classroom. Information on the website is organized into the following three areas:

- LEARN what works: understanding the research base behind recommended practices
- SEE what works: understand how practices are implemented in schools
- DO what works: access tools and templates to improve practice

The website is hosted by the Office of Planning, Evaluation & Policy Development (OPEPD) at the U.S. Department of Education. New content is regularly added to the Doing What Works website: <http://dww.ed.gov/>

Upcoming Pacific Educational Conference (PEC)

Date and Location

PEC 2008 will take place July 14–17, 2008, at Tafuna High School in American Samoa.

Hosts

PEC 2008 is cohosted by the American Samoa Department of Education, American Samoa Community College, and Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL).

<http://www.doe.as/pec2008/>

Theme

The theme for PEC 2008 is The Pacific Child: A Legacy of Community, Culture, and Art.

Workshop and Meeting Proposals

Due April 25, 2008

www.prel.org/pec/pec-2008-registration.aspx

Submit a Fast Response Project Service Request to REL Pacific

If you have an idea for a Fast Response Project that reflects a high priority education issue in your jurisdiction, please submit a service request to REL Pacific through our online service request site: www.prel.org/contactprel/service-request-form.aspx

We look forward to hearing from you!

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