

Resources for Young Readers: Pacific Language Early Readers CD-ROM

By Kavita Rao

An ant makes plans to go on a fishing trip. A little pig gets lost on the way home. Two youngsters find a shiny shell as they walk along the beach. These are just a few of the characters and stories on the Pacific Language Early Reader CD-ROM. These stories—written, illustrated, and translated by a variety of reading specialists throughout the Pacific—have themes and pictures that are familiar to Pacific island children.

The Pacific Language Early Readers CD-ROM contains 10 stories appropriate for young pre-K to 3rd grade readers. Each story has been translated into 10 languages: Carolinian, Chamorro, Chuukese, English, Kosraean, Marshallese, Palauan, Pohnpeian, Samoan, and Yapese. Audio recordings in most of these local languages accompany the stories, providing “audio books” in the first language for children.

The CD-ROM contains resources that are useful for teachers of English language learners (ELLs), bilingual educators, and parents who would like to read with their children. With stories in multiple languages, teachers of children from Micronesian islands and American Samoa can provide books in their students’ first language and have an English version available to provide opportunities for bilingual skill building. Using the Pacific language versions along with the English versions, teachers can help students build vocabulary in both languages.

The early reader story files on the CD-ROM are designed to be easily accessible to educators. Each story is in Microsoft Word and Adobe PDF formats. These files can be viewed on the computer or printed out. The stories, which are between 6 and 13 pages in length, print out on standard letter-sized paper. Printed hard copies of the stories can become part of a text-rich environment for teachers of ELLs and can be sent home to parents.

For a teacher in Hawai‘i who may have ELL students who speak Marshallese, Chuukese, and Pohnpeian in one classroom, the CD-ROM provides easy access to the same story in each of these languages. For the teacher in Kosrae who may want to read the same story to her students in Kosraean and in English, the CD-ROM makes it easy to access the story in both languages.

The audio files on the CD-ROM provide a powerful learning tool to accompany the text of the books. Students can listen to the books as they read text on the screen or the printed page. The text, along with the audio recording of each story, can be used in classroom listening centers. For young readers, this multi-sensory way to connect text on a page with an oral reading of the story can help build phonological awareness and reading fluency. The audio files are in MP3 format, which can be played back on a computer, or transferred to an audio CD format, which can play back on a standard CD player.

For a free copy of the Pacific Language Early Readers CD-ROM (while supplies last), please contact askprel@prel.org.

Kavita Rao, Educational Technology Specialist, may be contacted at raok@prel.org.

