

# THE PACIFIC CHILD PROJECT

## Summary of the Research Strategy

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Pacific Resources for Education and Learning's (PREL's) Regional Educational Laboratory (REL), like the other nine RELs across the U.S., is under contract with the U.S. Department of Education's (U.S. ED's) Institute of Education Sciences (IES) to promote school improvement in its region by conducting research on educational best practices and disseminating the findings.

This article briefly summarizes some early findings related to the goals and objectives of the project. First, we begin with a discussion of the purpose and mission of the project, as well as the research questions and how we planned to measure the impact of the project over time.

The Pacific Communities with High-performance In Literacy Development (CHILD) professional development (PD) model research project was initiated in response to an overwhelming need in the U.S.-affiliated Pacific to improve teachers' knowledge and instructional practices in early reading. The Pacific CHILD model has been in development for 2.5 years through PREL's REL. The key components that informed the model were studied in nine schools

throughout the Pacific region, five of which were designated research sites where intense data collection took place.

The research question reflected the collective thinking of REL staff members on the most important features to investigate. For the purposes of this study, one overarching question provided the focus and direction: *What are the specific components of an effective PD model in early reading?*

The development of the Pacific CHILD model did not include an experimental design to test its effectiveness compared to other models. Instead, teacher, classroom, and student achievement data were collected to identify relationships between the components of the model and changes in teacher knowledge and instructional practices and how they related to student achievement. To answer the research question, both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies were determined to be the most logical and appropriate. The figure illustrates the concept of the Pacific CHILD model and also indicates the types of information collected to measure those key relationships in the model (those in the light green shaded areas).

The following data were collected and

will provide descriptive information of the Pacific CHILD PD model:

- Professional development process and content data
- Teacher reading knowledge and pedagogy/classroom data
- Student reading achievement data

A summary of the results of analyses using earlier years' data on teachers and students is included below:

Based on analysis of the Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO) Toolkit from school years 2002–2003 and 2003–2004, teachers improved in the following areas:

- How classrooms are set up
- General classroom practices
- Reading instruction
- Activities provided for reading and writing

Based on comparisons of student assessments from fall and spring of school year 2002–2003, students improved in the following areas:

- Sight word identification
- Listen and retell assessments
- Alphabet letter identification
- Alphabet sound identification
- Concepts about print

As indicated, these results are generated from data collected during earlier years. For the final report, we will be using data from all the years to look at longer-term trends in the project. Of particular interest will be to observe whether the students of teachers who showed great improvement in classroom practices and knowledge performed better than students of teachers whose classroom practices and knowledge performance was not as good. The results of this comparison will give us a better picture of the impact of the service (PD for teachers) on student outcomes (reading literacy).

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