

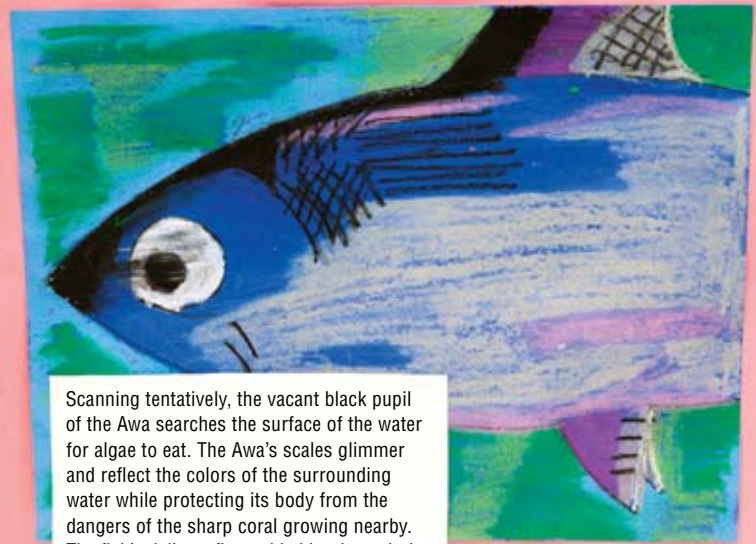
# Academic Literacy

“academic literacy is a well—researched and recognized critical component of student achievement”

Academic literacy, the ability to read and write in many and varied forms, has always been central to PREL’s work with educators and is a well-researched and recognized critical component of student achievement. At school, students engage in academic literacy across the curriculum where they are expected to make meaning from content area texts, extend their vocabulary, make inferences, summarize, link ideas across texts, and express their ideas orally and in writing as processes of learning. The importance of achieving academic literacy in English is especially significant for the Pacific region, as the majority of students are multilingual, bilingual, or English language learners (ELLs). Therefore, PREL’s work reaches out to all students—those excelling and struggling in academic literacy—with a special focus on ELLs and the strategies that support their learning of content and the language of school. We provide ongoing consultation and professional development; access to high-quality resources and services; and timely, relevant information to decision makers and teachers. Through these activities, we work with educators to determine which policies and strategies about academic literacy are most appropriate for their schools, teachers, and students. Some of the work PREL did in the past year related to Academic Literacy follows.

## Image to Word – Word to Image

The Image to Word – Word to Image program is an instructional approach that supports teachers in providing all students the opportunity to acquire essential reading, writing, and art skills and helps students improve literacy in reading, science, social studies, and other core subjects. It uses both visual and verbal modalities to build vocabulary and enhance comprehension. Using multiple modes of thinking is particularly helpful for second language learners who are able to use the universal language of pictures to anchor thoughts as they move back and forth between their first and second languages. In the past year, 175 teachers in Hawai’i were trained in various schools to incorporate Image to Word – Word to Image into their classroom instruction.



Scanning tentatively, the vacant black pupil of the Awa searches the surface of the water for algae to eat. The Awa’s scales glimmer and reflect the colors of the surrounding water while protecting its body from the dangers of the sharp coral growing nearby. The fish’s delicate fins guide him through the cool water and steer him away from harmful predators. As an herbivore, the Awa finds himself a frequent target of the carnivores in the Waihe’e fishpond. So how does the Awa play into the larger picture of biodiversity of the pond? By taking advantage of its physical adaptations, the Awa is able to survive another day and continue to play an active role in the food web of this local ecosystem.

-Diana Kenney

### **Territories & Freely Associated States Education Grant Program (T&FASEGP)**

The T&FASEGP allows PREL staff to offer technical assistance (TA) to state and local agency grantees in the three U.S. territories and the Republic of Palau to ensure effective implementation of grantees' projects. The focus of much of this work has been academic literacy, using models such as Response to Intervention (RtI) and Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP). Mathematics is now also a priority under the grant. PREL continues to provide TA in literacy, numeracy, and the use of database management for decision making. The latest achievement of this program is in support of the development of universal screeners in grantees' vernacular and English for early literacy, which is part of the work surrounding Integrated Service Delivery. The T&FASEGP also established networking relationships between the grantees and the University of Hawai'i College of Education's Curriculum Research and Development Group (CRDG) Measure Up project and the math department's Super M project model, both of which offer alternatives to professional development in math for educators in the Pacific region. Plans are underway to support summer math camp projects for each of the grantees in 2010.



### **Reading Comprehension Across the Curriculum**

Through various programs, PREL offers services that address reading comprehension of expository text in core subject areas across the grades. While mostly focusing on English, comparative work (between English and the vernacular) is an important aspect of these services in bilingual contexts. Research-based reading strategies, such as locating the main idea, text structure, vocabulary, and summarizing, are highlighted. In 2009, professional development on reading comprehension was provided to more than 430 teachers from Kosrae, Pohnpei, the RMI, and the Republic of Palau.