

PACIFIC news

American Samoa

The 2005 Annual Conference of the International Commission on the Samoan Language was held in June at American Samoa Community College. Speakers included members of the federal and local governments and the American Samoa Department of Education, as well as Samoan language scholars from across the region and representatives from the government of Samoa.

CNMI

The 24th annual Pacific Islands Bilingual Bicultural Association (PIBBA) conference took place on Tinian in June. The theme was "Language and Culture: To Survive or Not to Survive." Speakers included CNMI Governor Juan N. Babauta and Commissioner of Education (and PREL Board Chair) Rita Hocog Inos.

Chuuk

The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) Parent Information and Resource Center (PIRC) program in Chuuk has received national attention thanks to a program in which parents and Head Start teachers make native language books for use in Head Start centers and at home. This innovative program not only encourages parent involvement, but also addresses the shortage of native Pacific language teaching materials. Photos from the bookmaking workshops are featured on the national PIRC website, www.pirc-info.net/action.asp.

Guam

Devoted educator and mother Alice Borja passed away in March. Ms. Borja began her career as a classroom teacher and later became a Mathematics School Program Consultant, Assistant Principal, and Mathematics/Science Program Specialist with PREL. A talented educator who shared her love of mathematics with many around the Pacific region, Ms. Borja's success stemmed not only from her mastery of the subject matter, but also from her way with people. She was a quiet leader whose warm smile and calm manner brought out the best in those around her. Her impact will be felt for a long time to come.



Photo: Liane Singh

A new program called Passport to Careers will provide 500 Guam high school students with summer work experience that will help guide their selection of courses in the upcoming school year. Over ten youth-related agencies are collaborating on the program. A major source of funding for the project is the Pacific

Vocational Education Improvement Program administered through PREL. A related program, the Learning Continuum framework, lets students gain job experience in certain high-demand fields during the school year.

Over 40 mentors from across the U.S.-affiliated Pacific joined 10 novice mathematics teachers at the annual Mathematics Education for Novice Teachers: Opportunities for Reflection (MENTOR) Project institute July 18–22. The MENTOR Project is a National Science Foundation funded program administered by PREL in which teams of experienced professional developers mentor novice teachers of mathematics in the Pacific region, nurturing their mathematics instruction skills (see related article on pp. 16–17).

Mr. Steve Baxendale, Director of the PRELSTAR program at PREL, gave the keynote address at Guam Community College's *Inspire with Technology Conference* in March. He spoke about meeting the needs of the Millennial generation. This generation is the first to have grown up with ubiquitous access to personal technology tools. Their experience with technology in most aspects of their lives has a profound effect on the way they approach learning. To learn more about the way the Millennials use technology, check out these resources (also see the article on p. 20 of the April 2005 *Pacific Educator*).

- Vignettes about the Future of Learning Technologies by Chris Dede (2002) in *2020 Visions: Transforming Education and Training through Advanced Technologies* at www.ta.doc.gov/reports/TechPolicy/2020Visions.pdf.
- Ian Jukes' The Web-Not the Death of Language. The Committed Sardine Blog at <http://homepage.mac.com/iajukes/blogwavestudio/index.html>.
- The Digital Disconnect: The Widening Gap between Internet-Savvy Students and Their Schools. By Doug Levin, Susan Arafeh, Amanda Lenhart, & Lee Rainie (2002) at www.pewinternet.org/report_display.asp?r=67.
- Marc Prensky's Mid-Winter Web Blog at www.marcprensky.com/blog.
- *Got Game: How the Gamer Generation Is Reshaping Business Forever* by John Beck and Mitchell Wade (2004) from Harvard Business School Press.
- *Digital Game-Based Learning* by Marc Prensky (2004) available from Paragon House.
- *Growing up Digital: The Rise of the Net Generation* by Dan Tapscott (1998) available from McGraw-Hill Trade.

Hawai'i

The Focus on Professional Development in Early Reading Forum took place in Honolulu June 8–9. Over 200 practitioners, state literacy leaders, and teacher educators took advantage of the opportunity to listen to and engage in dialog with nine of the nation's leading researchers. This PREL-sponsored event was the fourth in a series of national forums promoting early literacy.

In June, representatives from the U.S. Department of Education met in PREL's Honolulu offices with education officials from the three U.S. Pacific territories of American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and Guam. This meeting, the latest in a series facilitated by PREL, focused on standards, assessment and accountability; English language learners; and highly qualified teachers—areas that are emphasized in the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*. The three teams created draft plans to improve student learning in their schools.