

# NEARStar

## ...to Zip Zoom English

By Kaira Resch

In June 2005, over 5 years of research, development, and evaluation came to a conclusion for the Network for English Acquisition and Reading Star Schools Program (NEARStar). During that time, Pacific Resources for Education and Learning's (PREL's) NEARStar team—now PREL Creative Services—accomplished the development and implementation of 30 modules of instruction containing hours of explicit instruction, differentiated practices, and an extraordinary library of resources to ensure successful development of critical language and reading skills for young English language learners.

The NEARStar body of work was recognized with several awards over the past 3 years of development, such as the EDDIE and BESSIE awards 2 years in a row and the AEP's Advanced Achievement Award for Best Educational Website: Language Instruction/Children. It is no surprise that such an innovative and efficient tool would pique the curiosity of several publishing houses interested in its commercial potential.

After several meetings and meticulous negotiations, PREL's Board of Directors agreed upon a licensing arrangement for

NEARStar with Scholastic, Inc., a leading publisher of children's books and educational programs and materials.

We are proud to announce the arrival of Scholastic Zip Zoom™ English, the newly evolved reading technology solution for English language learners. Since winter 2004, partners Scholastic, Inc. and PREL have assembled a joint development and marketing team to take the program to the next level, working to bring Scholastic Zip Zoom English to market by December 2005, and with the vision to take the program to our children in the United States, the Pacific region, and around the world.

Previews of Scholastic Zip Zoom English have already been presented at several professional forums, such as the International

Reading Association (IRA) Annual Convention and the National Educational Computing Conference (NECC), the world's largest educational technology conference for teachers and technology coordinators. To date, the program has received great reviews and much anticipation for its imminent release. In addition, Scholastic is

conducting tests in Asia, and talk of development of Scholastic Zip Zoom in Central and South America has commenced.

We are excited about our partnership with Scholastic, Inc., and foresee Scholastic Zip Zoom English as a commercial success, allowing PREL to continue its mission of Building Capacity Through Education.

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