

Project CLEAR

Operated by the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence, the statewide Learning Acceleration System Grant (LASG) provides funding to build local educational agencies’ capacity to accelerate academic progress through evidence-based strategies, with specific goals to increase learning among educators and accelerate learning for students. Project California Literacy Elevation by Accelerating Reading (Project CLEAR) is an LASG recipient working to build the capacity of school districts to provide evidence-based literacy acceleration strategies. Led by the San Diego County Office of Education and four partner counties, Project CLEAR works with St. Mary’s College to offer ongoing, job-embedded professional learning pathways—credit-bearing course sequences and certifications in Reading Recovery,¹ Literacy Lessons,² and Descubriendo la Lectura³—for teacher leaders, teachers, and administrators.

In year 4 (2024–25) of its grant, Project CLEAR:

Trained 101 teacher leaders and teachers across 17 counties in comprehensive literacy strategies and interventions

Facilitated between one and two years of literacy growth over 12-20 weeks, on average, for the 260 students who participated in one-on-one reading tutoring and intervention provided by teachers who received Project CLEAR professional learning

Trained 122 teachers and administrators across 11 counties in a six-week course focused on early literacy assessments

Increasing learning and changing educator practice

Project CLEAR strengthens educators’ agency by equipping them with knowledge and tools to make responsive, asset-based decisions in real time. Teachers learn to identify students’ strengths, conduct assessments, and adjust their instruction on the spot to meet students where they are. 90% of Project CLEAR participants who took the 2024–25 LASG participant survey⁴ felt they had a better understanding of how to apply asset-based approaches in their practice.

“Both the teacher and the children are becoming decisionmakers ... every child comes with their own unique strengths and their own unique needs ... [Teachers] have to be very responsive, very flexible, very tentative in their hypothesis about what’s going on and adjust in the moment as the child is learning.”

– Project CLEAR staff member

“I have changed my approach to evaluating struggling students. I now apply an asset-based approach. I also do more in-depth reading assessments to give me deeper insight into how to best address my students’ needs.”

– Project CLEAR participant

Project CLEAR's professional development fosters a strong learning culture among educators while creating opportunities for collaboration and the sharing of best practices across districts and county offices. 95% of Project CLEAR survey respondents regularly offer instructional advice or support to other educators.

"My new learning has led to some powerful discussion with teachers. As my understanding expands, I'm able to lead reflective conversations with colleagues about their own practices."

– Project CLEAR participant

Learning by doing. Project CLEAR teachers combine coursework with classroom practice, working with students while receiving real-time feedback to refine their instructional strategies throughout the year. This learning cycle is reinforced by ongoing coaching and professional development that extend beyond the initial training, ensuring teachers receive sustained support in the role.

Internal evaluation highlights educator growth. According to data collected and reported⁵ by Project CLEAR's internal evaluation team, teachers participating in Project CLEAR "reported confidence increases of up to 38% in targeted competencies, including assessment analysis, data-based instruction, and literacy intervention strategies."

Accelerating learning for students

Students are empowered by their learning, gaining confidence, and taking ownership over their educational journey. As a result, students are recognizing and experiencing real-time improvements in their reading and literacy abilities.

"Two teachers who are involved in the project ... were lauding that they felt that [their participation] was making a huge difference with kids. They could see the evidence of change for the students, ...that it was building the students' confidence, and they felt it was doing a world of good for the kids."

– Project CLEAR staff member

"My students are feeling more confident in their ability to read print or texts. They are taking more risks because they know they can use the same strategies I'm using to teach them."

– Project CLEAR participant

Students are making academic gains in literacy after receiving interventions led by teachers who participated in Project CLEAR. When surveyed, 89% of Project CLEAR participants felt their participation had already had an impact on their students, and many teachers shared examples of seeing that growth in their observations and data.

"My students have made great growth in their reading. They have a positive attitude toward reading."

– Project CLEAR staff member

"The students I've worked with in the past three years have all shown enormous gains in literacy, some of them growing more than two grade levels in reading/writing in one year."

– Project CLEAR participant

Growth in literacy achievement scores.

In 2024–25, Project CLEAR served 243 first-graders in Reading Recovery and 17 in Descubriendo la Lectura. Students in these interventions made gains in text complexity, writing vocabulary, and phonics—outpacing U.S. peers in similar programs.⁶ Starting below national averages, these students caught up and often surpassed the national comparison group, achieving 1.0–1.9 years of growth in just 12–20 weeks.

Accelerating learning for multilingual

learners. Project CLEAR accelerates literacy for multilingual learners by training and certifying bilingual educators in Descubriendo la Lectura. Students receive daily one-on-one reading tutoring for 12 to 20 weeks from a specially trained teacher. Spanish-speaking DLL students showed an equal or greater reading growth compared to the national DLL group.⁷

Student Success Story: Breakthrough in student confidence. In the survey, a Project CLEAR educator described working with a student who had steadily made progress but had not yet shown signs of deep connection to the text. “He does what I ask him to do. He’s growing. He’s building his repertoire,” the teacher explained, “but today, he really just started noticing things in the text and the writing that he was doing.” The student began making spontaneous connections: recognizing the first letter of his name and recalling vocabulary from previous books. “It was this ‘a-ha’ for him that he could start connecting things,” the teacher said. Reflecting on the moment, they added, “I think it’s one of those points in the learning progression where you go, ‘Oh, this kid’s about to skyrocket and take off.’”

Endnotes

¹ Learn more about Reading Recovery: <https://readingrecovery.org/what-is-reading-recovery/reading-recovery-overview/>

² Learn more about Literacy Lessons: <https://readingrecovery.org/literacy-lessons-overview/>

³ Learn more about Descubriendo la Lectura: <https://myliteracycouncil.org/dll/>

⁴ Education Northwest administered the 2024–25 LASG participant survey to 227 Project CLEAR participants in March 2025. The response rate was 58%.

⁵ Read Project CLEAR’s 2025 evaluation report: <https://tinyurl.com/clearreport2025>

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Learn more about Project CLEAR



This case brief was developed by Education Northwest, the external evaluator for the LASG, using data collected through grantee focus groups, an annual survey of LASG participants, and a review of documents and participation records kept by the grantees. The analysis of student observation survey data was conducted by Project CLEAR’s internal evaluation team.