



Kamehameha Launches K-3 Reading Program

It's a Hawaiian Thing to Do

Increasing reading skills and literacy in early education is a rapidly growing national concern. A good foundation in reading not only prepares a child for future social and academic achievement, but creates in that child a love of learning that will be of lifetime benefit. Repeatedly, studies have shown that high literacy rates and good reading skills depend on a child's earliest exposure to the reading experience.

Helping to provide that early education reading experience to Hawaiian children is an outreach area where Kamehameha can, by leveraging its resources, positively impact quality education within the Hawaiian community. To this end, Kamehameha Schools (KS) will launch its Kindergarten to Grade Three (K-3) Reading Program this fall.

"Let's start with the big picture," says KS K-3 Reading Program Director Anna Sumida. "The K-3 Reading Program is a partnership between Kamehameha Schools and the state Department of Education (DOE). The program will focus on enhancing the reading skills of K-3 children with the goal of increasing student achievement. And, the criteria we're using targets public schools with the largest numbers of Hawaiian students."

Unlike earlier programs, this new partnership with the DOE will look beyond simply classroom instruction to a three-pronged approach incorporating the child's whole learning experience. The

three components of KS' K-3 Reading program are instructional support, tutoring support, and parent education.

Instructional Support – The KS/DOE Partnership

Kamehameha will not re-invent the wheel. "Most public schools have solid reading programs," says Sumida. "So we're not going to create a reading program to replace theirs. What we are going to do is support existing programs and provide materials based on a school's needs."

Support will come in the form of staffing, classroom assistance, enlisting alumni/parent volunteer tutoring, and in designing parent and community workshop programs to develop and reinforce community-based and culturally relevant curricula.

Professional development will figure largely in the program. "In some areas with large Hawaiian populations, there are schools with high teacher turnover rates," says Sumida. "As a consequence, there are a number of novice teachers positioned among earlier grades who can use additional training and materials. Kamehameha can be of help here. We can provide that professional development based on the strengths and needs of the schools."



Director Anna Sumida (right) and her administrative assistant Susan Lau.

Tutoring Support

Once curriculum is developed within the community, Kamehameha Schools' K-3 program will utilize staff to support classroom instruction. "After their mornings in the classroom," says Sumida, "staff will shift into one-on-one tutorial support and group instruction."

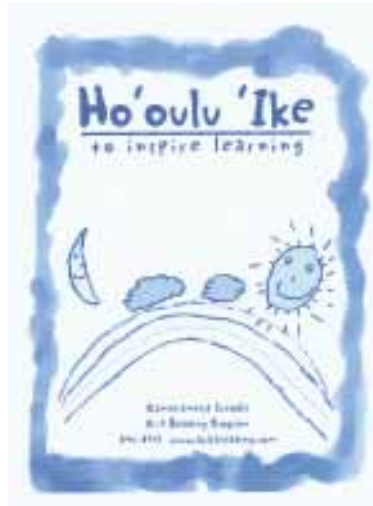
Kamehameha will also introduce Jed Gaines' Read Aloud Program (RAP) through the family workshops. "Jed Gaines gets children and parents together with volunteer tutors for a read aloud time," says Sumida. "After volunteers read to the children, Jed reads to the parents. It's just amazing, when parents experience this read aloud, they're so excited and they understand how wonderful it is to be read to. And, we will introduce this program in all the schools we participate in, because families and children start talking about the books they've read and it lights a fire, an enthusiasm for reading that is very positive."

Finally, Kamehameha will encourage parents, alumni and kūpuna to volunteer in the classrooms or to work as tutors. "We'd like to encourage alumni to participate in read aloud sessions, in fact, anyone interested in working with parents and the community can help create culturally relevant curriculum as part of the school reform process."

Parent Education – The Home-School Connection

"We know from demographic studies," says Sumida, "that among the many strengths in the Hawaiian community is family. The 'ohana. It's cohesive, expansive, often extended, and devoted to children. So our third area of emphasis will be the home-school connection because we want to tap into that positive energy that exists in Hawaiian families and thereby advance culturally relevant programs."

"Through our parent education program, parents will learn how they can support their children at home, because we know that students



with parental support for their reading development always exceed far beyond those without parental support.

"But, the answers will come from the community," Sumida adds thoughtfully, "because Hawaiians have that cultural way of knowing so deeply. So, the community – parents, families, kūpuna, community and cultural leaders – will be involved in the curriculum planning process because the main focus of this

DOE partnership is to empower leadership within schools, communities and families to give input in terms of how we create curriculum for children."

Three-Components

"Three components are tied together," says Sumida. "By supporting classroom instruction and teacher development, we're helping children. By supporting an alumni/parent/community-tutoring program, we're helping children. By helping parents, we're helping children. "

*Lawe i ka
ma'alea a
k'ono'ono*

*(Take wisdom
and make it
deep).*

– 'ŌLELO NO'EAU:
HAWAIIAN PROVERBS
AND POETICAL SAYINGS

READ ME A STORY





VITAMINS A-B-C

*Richer than I
you can never be
I had a mother
who read to me.*

– STRICKLAND GILLIAN,
“THE READING MOTHER”

FROM BEST LOVED POEMS
OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Cultural Ways of Learning

Culturally relevant curriculum development is the centerpiece of Kamehameha’s K-3 Reading Program. Although the modern Hawaiian family lives in a Western-dominated society, Western ways of acquiring knowledge are not the only methods by which Hawaiians learn. In her Harvard Graduate School of Education dissertation, *Native Hawaiian Epistemology: Nānā I Ke Kumu*, scholar Manu Aluli Meyer states, “Knowledge for Native Hawaiians, is grounded in the natural environment and in the ancestral line of family.”

Utilizing environment, family, and community as self-enhancing tools to teach Hawaiian children flows easily from Myer’s axiom. According to K-3 Reading Director Sumida, environment and family are as obvious as the culturally significant voyages of the Hōkūle’a.

In studying the non-instrument-navigated voyages, children simultaneously learn about navigation, ocean science, astronomy, and other “academic” disciplines. Once again, studies show that children learn through culturally meaningful experiences, so integrating culturally relevant activities into curriculum is fundamental to its ability to stimulate young minds. “From there, you make the connections to science, social science or social studies,” says Sumida. “Math can be worked into that too. But, you want to make culture the hook. That’s going to be the entry into appropriate curriculum.”

Parent/Community Workshops

At workshops for parents and interested members of the community, the KS K-3 Reading program will provide an array of materials for home use. An alphabet chart – incorporating some Hawaiian imagery such as “C” for canoe, “G” for gecko, “L” for lei, and even “N” for nēnē – may be used for coloring by the children, or posted on the refrigerator. Magnetic letters spelling a child’s name will be given out as well.

The program also incorporates environmental learning, like “M” is for McDonald’s™ or “B” is for Big Bird. It all helps children connect, in a meaningful context, to things that are relevant to them and their lives.

KS Educational Videos

Among the most important contributions Kamehameha Schools will make to early childhood reading comes by way of two beautifully produced educational videos based on Sumida’s years of early childhood teaching and working with parents.

“There are some very akamai parents out there,” says Sumida. “Parents who just have an intuitive knack of knowing exactly the things that help their child learn to read and write. The two educational videos capture these parents expressing the simple tools and positive effects of reading with a child. Essentially, these are videos in which parents talk with parents. There are no experts here. No university professors. No principals. No librarians. Just parents.”

The Kamehameha Schools-produced video *Ho’oulu ‘Ike – Inspire Learning: Help Your Child Learn to Read* – comes in two volumes. The first, “Birth Through Preschool,” helps parents develop a child’s natural love for reading by relating easy ways to engage children in books and involve them with the alphabet and phonics. It also relates how parents may use a child’s innate curiosity about the natural world as a living classroom to learn about reading.

The second volume, “Kindergarten and First Grade,” is a simple and easy-to-understand demonstration of ways to help children read. “Like a tricycle needing three wheels,” says Sumida, “good readers must use three clues – meaning, phonics and grammar – to read with understanding.” In this video, parents easily learn how to make children feel successful with reading and how to help children use the three



Ho'oulu 'Ike videos may be borrowed free of charge from any public library or Blockbuster Video



reading clues to learn to read, write and spell.

Important to the K-3 program, Kamehameha has taken special steps to insure the accessibility of the video programs. Both *Ho'oulu 'Ike* videos may be borrowed free of charge from any public library or Blockbuster Video. "These videos are also available to our alumni," says Sumida, "even alumni who have relatives active in teaching their children to read. In that way we can extend our help into the broader community."

Children Love to Read

Reading to a child supports that child's positive experience with reading. But allowing that child to read to you is just as important, "because that's how they get better at reading," says Sumida, "and it encourages a bonding and a real closeness between parent and child. That's the key to a firm literacy foundation – a positive experience with books and family support."

Children have a natural inclination to want to read and Kamehameha will assist participating schools by providing exciting and enriching literature. "We have great books," says Sumida, "and this is one of the best times in terms of children's literature. There's just an explosion of great picture books for kids. And, that's important. Children want to read interesting books with great illustrations. We're incorporating books that tickle their eager imaginations at a time when brain development is at its most rapid rate. The broader the exposure, the greater the student's access to books – lots and lots of books – the greater the student's opportunities to enhance his natural eagerness to learn will be."

Reading – It's a Hawaiian Thing to Do

"I'm thrilled Kamehameha is expanding its outreach into this culturally meaningful K-3 Reading Program with all the personnel, materials and supportive educational data we can bring to it," Sumida says. "And, as we all know, Hawaiians have a noble history of learning."

Indeed, by 1833, more than half the adult population of the Hawaiian Islands read, making mid-19th century Hawai'i among the most literate nations in the world.

So in the excitement surrounding Kamehameha Schools' fall 2000 launching of its K-3 Reading program, one can see Kamehameha carrying on yet another proud tradition. Because reading – it's a Hawaiian thing to do.

To learn more about Kamehameha Schools' K-3 Reading Program, or to volunteer, phone (808) 843-3332 or e-mail: reading@ksbe.edu

I'M
HUNGRY
FOR
WORDS

