

# Issues in Infusing Hawaiian Cultural Practice into K-12 Curriculum

Alice J. Kawakami

UHM COE

[alicek@hawaii.edu](mailto:alicek@hawaii.edu)



We have a lot to learn from each  
other

The charge to incorporate Hawaiian culture  
into K-12 curriculum has been around  
since the early 1970s.



Many programs have experience addressing the challenge from a number of perspectives.

- Kamehameha Early Education Program
- DOE's Kupuna Program
- Aha Punana Leo
- Kula Kaiapuni
- Public Charter Schools
- Na Pua No`eau
- Kamehameha's Strategic Plan



# Teacher Education Examples

- UHM – Kalama Cohort on Leeward O`ahu  
Ka Lama o ke Kaiaulu
- UHH – statewide teacher education for  
Hawaiian Immersion teachers  
Kahuawaiola
- UHM – statewide teacher education cohort  
for Hawaiian serving communities  
Kahoiwai



# Projects

- Polynesian Voyaging Society
  - Hokulea
- Na Kalai Wa`a Moku o Hawai`I
  - Makali`I
- Ka`ala Farms
- New Opportunities Through Minority Initiatives in Space Science (NOMISS)
- Teacher training through Na Lei Na`auao



# Na Pua No`eau Curriculum Development Research

- According to exemplary Hawaiian educators, successful learning for Hawaiian education is:

**experience-based** and

**takes place in authentic  
settings.**



# Application of Vygotskian Social Learning Theory

- Vygotsky points to the importance of the learning environment and interactions among individuals within the social context
- Culturally-based learning is specific to the people and places engaged in learning
- Culturally-based learning is context specific:
  - Involves identity
  - In a real place
  - In real time



The primary challenge facing us as we strive to design and implement cultural learning within a cultural context:

- Institutions based on Western models of schooling may value and promote decontextualized curriculum that can be:
  - Generic – One size fits all
  - Teacher-proof – anyone can implement it
  - Scripted – interactions are predetermined



# Discussion of Curriculum Models to share successful strategies

- Continuum of Change
  - Most change
  - Least change
- Aspects of Programs
  - Institutional context
  - Medium of instruction
  - Content focus
  - Assessment goals
  - “Data”
  - Pedagogical style



# A few questions to consider

- How can Hawaiian values and spirituality be central to curriculum for Hawaii's public education system?



- How can Hawaiian language be made more accessible to students in all educational settings ( not only Hawaiian Immersion settings)?
- How can public policy and legislation be used to benefit and value Hawaiian cultural learning rather than sanction and penalize such learning?



- How can contextualized, experience-based learning opportunities be provided within current institutional contexts?
- How can cultural experts and practitioners (i.e. kupuna) be incorporated as central faculty for all schools?



# My Perspective

- We need to have a full range of models to address the diverse learning contexts and institutional settings existent.
- We need to establish partnerships to share successful strategies.
- Together we can be better prepared to develop successful learning opportunities that are enriched by cultural experiences for our students and for ourselves.



# Let's talk 😊

- Hili hewa ka mana`o ke `oke kukakuka.
  - Discussion brings together a plan.
  - `Olelo No`eau
- 
- Discussion is the oxygen of change.
  - Jim Maclachlan



# Mahalo nui!

- If you are interested in discussing these ideas further and forming partnerships,

please contact me:

[alicek@hawaii.edu](mailto:alicek@hawaii.edu)

956-4245 at UHM COE

