

CULTURE-BASED EDUCATION

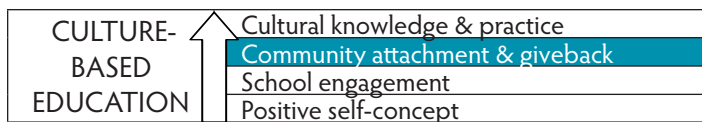
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Hawaiian Cultural Influences in Education (HCIE): Community Attachment and Giveback among Hawaiian Students

By Brandon Ledward and Brennan Takayama

The HCIE study examines the relationship between Hawaiian culture-based educational (CBE) strategies and student outcomes. As part of the study, we asked 600 middle and high school teachers to share their educational strategies with us. We also surveyed students of the same teachers to obtain a better sense of their educational experiences. These data help us understand the range of teaching and learning practices being used across Hawai'i schools.

Preliminary analyses reveal that students whose teachers use greater amounts of culture-based educational approaches are more likely to report higher rates of cultural knowledge and practice, community attachment and giveback, school engagement, and positive self-concept. This report looks specifically at levels of *community attachment and giveback* among participating students.



WHY DOES COMMUNITY ATTACHMENT AND GIVEBACK MATTER?

Building attachment and creating opportunities for students to give back to their communities are goals of many schools and programs. Research demonstrates that service learning experiences on behalf of one's community can increase social responsibility and civic engagement among youth.¹ These outcomes are essential to prepare students to be effective leaders in tomorrow's world. Students' connectedness to their communities can be gauged through a sense of place, community involvement, and engagement with cultural issues.

HOW DOES CULTURE-BASED EDUCATION FIT IN?

Hawaiian culture-based education grounds teaching and learning in culturally relevant content, contexts, and assessments, which draw heavily upon 'ohana (family), kaiāulu (community), and 'ōlelo (Hawaiian language). To better understand the ways in which culture-based educational strategies may influence community attachment and giveback, respondents are classified into two groups: students who have at least one teacher who uses the highest levels of culture-based education (High CBE

Teachers) and students who do not have any teachers that use high or even moderate levels of culture-based education (Low CBE Teachers).²

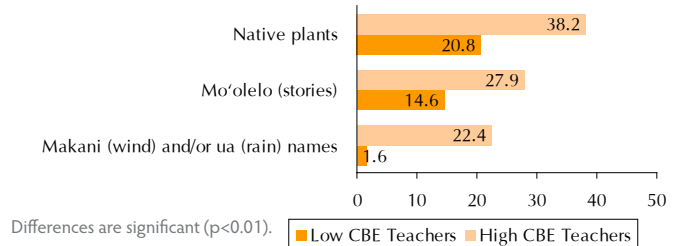
WHAT ARE THE RESULTS OF THE SURVEY?

When examining community connectedness of students, we see that culture-based educational approaches have a significant impact on sense of place, community involvement, and engagement with cultural issues. Students of High CBE Teachers tend to score higher in these areas where 'ohana, community integration, and project-/place-based learning are more likely to be emphasized.

SENSE OF PLACE

Knowledge about what makes a community unique and a strong identification with a particular area are key components of a sense of place. In Hawai'i, places are defined by their names, features, stories, famous residents, and historic events. When asked about native plants, mo'olelo (stories), and wind and rain names for their communities, students of High CBE Teachers consistently report greater knowledge than students of Low CBE Teachers. The difference in percentage points between the groups ranges from 13.3 to 20.8, and all are statistically significant.

Figure 1: Sense of place, percent of Hawaiian students who know more than one for their community

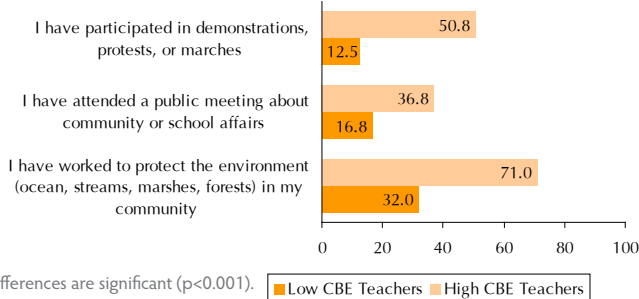


COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

As students develop a strong sense of place, they are more likely to become involved in community matters that affect them. Opportunities for community involvement vary widely and include: volunteer service, ecological stewardship, and local politics. When asked about their participation in demonstrations, public meetings, and efforts to create a sustainable natural

environment for their communities, students of High CBE Teachers demonstrate a deeper level of involvement compared to those of Low CBE Teachers. The difference in percentage points ranges from 20.0 to 39.0, and all are statistically significant.

Figure 2: Community involvement, percent of Hawaiian students who have participated more than once

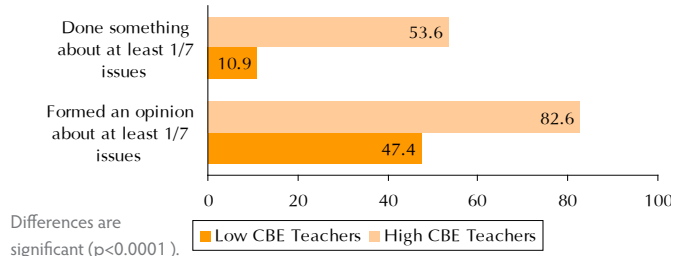


ENGAGEMENT WITH CULTURAL ISSUES

In addition to being physical places, communities also refer to social and/or cultural groups. Generally, civically minded individuals show improved critical thinking and problem solving skills that can be put to use on behalf of the community. Engagement with cultural issues shows knowledge of and connection to the Hawaiian lāhui (nation). Students were asked about their level of engagement with seven issues concerning the use of land (i.e., military, tourism, high-priced luxury housing), native entitlements including land rights, perpetuation of Hawaiian navigation, revitalization of language, Hawaiian self-determination, genetic modification of kalo, and the development of Mauna Kea.

Results demonstrate that students of High CBE Teachers are significantly more likely than students of Low CBE Teachers to be engaged³ and take action on cultural issues. For example, 82.6 percent of students of High CBE Teachers formed an opinion about at least one of the seven issues compared to 47.4 percent of students of Low CBE Teachers. Roughly 80 percent of high school students in civics classes, nationally, report that they are encouraged to form their own opinions about a variety of social and political issues.⁴ Of students that formed an opinion about at least one cultural issue relevant to the Hawaiian community, students of High CBE Teachers are also significantly more likely to have “done something” about it.

Figure 3: Engagement with 7 cultural issues, percent of Hawaiian students who are engaged in various ways



SUMMARY AND LIMITATIONS

Educators and researchers are increasingly becoming aware of the positive impact community connectedness has on student development. When examining sense of place, community involvement, and engagement with cultural issues, students of High CBE Teachers consistently outperform students of Low CBE Teachers. Across these areas, the results are statistically significant for both students’ knowledge of and participation with community matters. It is not surprising that CBE approaches, which focus largely on ‘ohana and community, would produce such effects. At the same time, this difference may be due to school size or other factors mitigating the influence of CBE use. These limitations will be addressed in future analyses.

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE STUDY

Hawaiian Cultural Influences in Education (HCIE) is a joint research project of Kamehameha Schools, the Hawai‘i Department of Education (HiDOE), and Nā Lei Na‘auao, an alliance of Hawaiian-focused public charter schools. The goal is to improve student outcomes by sharing best practices of culturally relevant education.

The study also seeks to recognize and measure student outcomes beyond grades or standardized tests. To determine the impact of CBE approaches on student development, a uniquely interlocking set of surveys was developed for school administrators, teachers, students, and parents.

HCIE data include responses from teachers, students and parents in 62 schools across Hawai‘i. Participants represent five islands (Hawai‘i, O‘ahu, Kaua‘i, Maui, and Moloka‘i), including conventional public schools, charter schools, and Kamehameha Schools.

For more HCIE information visit www.ksbe.edu/spi/projects.php.

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Endnotes

- 1 See Yates & Youniss, J. (Eds.). (2006). *Roots of civic identity: International perspectives on community service and activism in youth*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- 2 For this report, the sample of ~3,000 students is limited to Native Hawaiian participants in public school settings (conventional public schools, kula kaiapuni, and charter schools) in grades 7–10 in school year 2005–2006 who are matched with at least one participating teacher.
- 3 To be considered “engaged” students are not required to be for or against a given issue; they simply need to arrive at some sort of informed opinion.
- 4 This statistic comes from the 2006 Civic and Political Health of the Nation Survey (The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement).



KAMEHAMEHA SCHOOLS