

## Community Quest Takes Life As Its Text

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Few students even dream of having \$10,000 to invest under the guiding eye of a stockbroker from Merrill, Lynch, Pierce, Fenner, and Smith. Yet a group of Kailua High School pupils had that chance this year (even if it was stage money) as members of the pioneering Community Quest program, for the prestigious firm is one of 39 community learning stations that have offered time, space, and personnel to make learning both stimulating and realistic. Educators concerned with "relevance" would do well to take note of Community Quest (CQ), one of the most innovative projects in secondary curriculum and teacher education in Hawaii today.

The basic premises of the program, now finishing its first year, have a compelling logic. For many students, education is more meaningful when it occurs in real-life, off-campus situations, and includes the social, cultural, governmental, and economic institutions of the community. Furthermore, students can learn from people with varied skills and interests—lawyers, businessmen, scientists, artists, politicians, and many others. Skilled teachers can help students use the talents of such people to gain a richer education.

There is also compelling evidence that community-centered education works. In addition to the positive response of Kailua parents and students, there are similar, nationally acclaimed programs such as the Parkway School in Philadelphia and the Metro "School Without Walls" in Chicago.

In fact, it was a visit to Kailua High by Nathaniel Blackman, principal of the Metro School, that gave life to an interest in community education shared by Kailua principal Flora Takekawa and Theodore Brameld, a member of the faculty of the Innovative Program in Secondary Teacher Education (IP). Two features of Kailua High made it particularly appropriate for establishing a com-

munity-centered curriculum: variable modular scheduling which gave students flexible blocks of time, and the existing independent, interdisciplinary study program called Quest which allowed students to pursue learning outside of regular courses.

Planning started in January, 1972. Sam Young was named Kailua High School coordinator for CQ, and Dr. Brameld became University coordinator. Dr. Brameld and a group of university interns worked over the summer to establish the initial 24 learning stations, and CQ started with 53 high school students that fall. These students were picked at random from a group of juniors and seniors who applied. By chance the composition of the group was almost equally divided between juniors and seniors and between boys and girls.

There are two unique aspects of the Kailua program. One is that CQ is offered as an alternative to the traditional class structure within the school. The other is that CQ also trains prospective teachers in theory and methods of community learning. A group of about 20 interns, mostly graduate and undergraduate students in the College of Education, serve as supervisors of the various learning stations. During the year they have attended weekly seminars conducted by Dr. Brameld and Dr. William Boyer of the College of Education. These seminars have covered a wide range of practical and theoretical problems. Much emphasis has been put on enabling interns to function more effectively in the dual role of learner and teacher in the learning stations. More broadly, interns have been encouraged to see that their role extends to developing in themselves and creating in their students a sensitivity to overriding social goals and needs.

A student in CQ works in three learning stations per quarter. Most learning stations are



planned in seven-week units and meet an average of four hours weekly. The student is given regular credit toward graduation for his work. Some stations meet as early as 8 in the morning and some end as late as 5 in the evening. Most meet twice a week. Each station agreed to supply a coordinator who would be responsible for instructing the high school students. In most instances the coordinators have been enthusiastic, well-informed, and stimulating. In some cases, however, the university intern found himself doing most or all of the instruction. In addition, several Kailua faculty served the stations as advisors on academic matters.

A partial list of stations includes:

The Newspapers of Hawaii, In Touch With Life (Kukui Health Building), Participating in Sea Life Park, Religious Life in Hawaiian Culture, Third Arm—A Project in Working Together (Chinatown), Science Curator Project (Bishop Museum), Life of the Land, Aquaculture (Coconut Island), Adventures in Growing Plants (Pearl City).

Students are also urged to take on-campus courses in areas not offered through Community Quest. A number have done so. This makes for a more rounded education and keeps the student identified with the school. Students are also urged to take independent study on campus.

Like any new venture, CQ has its problems. One of these has been a lack of means of transportation to and from learning stations, and a lack of funds to reimburse students and interns for their travel expenses. In fact, the program has had no operating funds whatsoever. Another problem has been in the development of appropriate means of evaluating the different facets of CQ: the quality of student performance, abilities of university interns, worthwhileness of individual learning stations and the effectiveness of the program as a whole. However, several evaluative measures have been developed over the year. High school students have the option of receiving a letter grade or credit-no credit. Their evaluation is based on four criteria:

Involvement—participating, sharing, giving as well as taking.

Attendance—punctuality and regularity.

Effort—reading, research, writing, designing, investigating, doing the job.

Responsibility—carrying through agreed upon obligations; individual and/or group tasks.

University interns have evaluated themselves and the program. One of them is formally evaluating the program as part of her master's degree work. Most of the students have found the learning stations stimulating and relevant.

The present success of CQ has been judged sufficient to warrant its expansion in 1973-74. The number of learning stations will be increased, and their scope will be expanded to include career-orientation. Such stations will give students a view of what a career in a particular occupational area might be like. Some stations may also include training in specific vocational skills. More of the stations will be located in Kailua and nearby areas, thereby increasing community involvement and support and alleviating the transportation problem.

The number of students will also be increased. CQ will be open to all juniors and seniors who wish to enroll with an upper limit of about 100. Greater Kailua faculty involvement will be sought. Individual teachers will be encouraged to become more involved with learning stations. Mr. Young will continue as Kailua Coordinator and there will be a new University coordinator to replace Dr. Brameld who will go to the City University of New York as Visiting Distinguished Professor of Urban Education. Interns from the College of Education will again be sought to supervise learning stations. An important new input into CQ will be the active support of parents. Several have already volunteered to man learning stations and furnish transportation.

In the final analysis, any program must be judged by its effect on students. An intern summed up her year this way: It was an experience that totally involved me, my feelings and my ideas. Despite all the frustrations, it was an exciting experience. The close personal relationships with students, other interns, and faculty were absorbing. I felt I was an integral part of something new.

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