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Abstract

Many different ethnic groups living on a small Island has created a culture in Hawai‘i that is unique in the world. Teachers play an important role in helping to shape the future, and while many studies have looked at the qualities of an effective teacher, very few studies have explored what it means to be a great teacher in Hawai‘i. In this study the researcher attempted to answer the research question “What do students think makes a great teacher in Hawai‘i?” by interviewing sixteen students (seven individual interviews and a nine-person focus group interview). Five themes emerged as a result of the interviews: understanding the Hawai‘i culture, teaching the content, classroom management, building relationships, and overcoming challenges. The study concludes by offering recommendations to the Hawai‘i Department of Education, teacher preparation programs, and teachers.

What Do Students Think Makes a Great Teacher in Hawai‘i?

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Chapter I

Introduction

The Author's Personal Reflection on First Two Years of Teaching

It is the first day of summer after my second year of teaching, and I thought it would be beneficial to the reader to offer a closer perspective on the framework of my teaching experience, because to know the type of teacher I am and the types of experiences I've had teaching will provide you with a better sense of the writer of this thesis.

I had a rough first year. I came into my first year of teaching with illusions of reaching troubled students and changing lives. I may have done a little of that along the way, but mostly the freshmen smelled new blood and pounced all over me. I tried to give them some semi-structured boundaries with a little bit of leeway and they grasped onto those boundaries and stretched them as far as possible and made my introduction into the teaching experience pretty brutal. I came in with this idea of inspiring kids with awesome lessons while they listened to me try to teach them about life, but I quickly learned that ninth graders hate lectures (I have since grown the same way, perhaps as a result of the students teaching me to teach them in a way not dependent on hearing my voice). They pretty much hated anything I tried to do, much of which included strategies I had learned in my teacher education program or through researching ideas from mainland educators. But they definitely shaped me into a public school teacher, and I grew into a man perhaps as a result.

I learned that they loved to play games and watch videos, so during my second year I shut up and talked only when I absolutely needed to and made them write instead. The students write a lot in my class now, and I learned from a seminar I took from Ann Bayer to get them to read each other's writing. For a quarter I had them keep journals, and I learned from reading them. Many of the entries brought me

back into what had been a muddled journey through awkwardness and first love and getting my heart broken. Overall, the roughly 300 students I’ve had taught me not to teach like I had been taught.

Many of the strategies I brought into my first year of teaching were those that were well-supported by research (such as those espoused by Buehl (2001) and Smagorinsky (2007)), but I found that when I tried to use them with local students, many of them didn’t seem conducive to producing the type of writing I wanted my students to produce. The students didn’t try hard with them. That realization, which began to set in at Farrington High School, a school in the Kalihi district where I had my student teaching experience, and was perpetuated my first year at Castle High School, which is located in the culturally diverse town of Kaneohe, is what made me realize the uniqueness of local Hawai‘i students and that they perhaps learn differently than mainland students.

One day late last year, when I was confronted with the possibility of having to teach the freshmen who made my first year a rollercoaster ride full of highs and lows again as juniors, I sat down behind my desk in my classroom and took out my “school” notebook and made a list of all the ways I have improved as a teacher since my first year, and all the ways I still want to improve. I remember after I had finished that I was pleased that the list of ways I had improved was longer than what I still felt I should focus on. Hopefully this will give the reader a little sense of my teaching style and teacher identity (and perhaps even learn a thing or two to add to their own teaching repertoire). Here are the lists, side-by-side, just like the way I had written them in my notebook (although I have added a few notes at the end to both lists):

Table 1	
Author’s Self-Reflection About Progress as a Teacher	
How I’ve Improved as a Teacher	What to (Still) Work On
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go to strategy is Personal Reaction Circles (students get into groups to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistently enforce rules/expectations from the very

<p>share their writing and/or questions or reactions to a reading) followed by each group sharing out with the entire class</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learned a diverse range of teaching strategies and activities but now return to students’ favorites (as opposed to the widespread experimentation I tried with strategies my first year) • Video clips over lectures • More peaceful working environments (less talking and distractions as a result of improved classroom management on my part (and maybe just more well-behaved students) • Not always getting on every student who isn’t doing their work (doing so seriously damaged my relationship with some students my first year) – giving them more freedom to choose whether or not to do it • Not upsetting rowdy students • More movies • Not spending so much time planning lessons – more experienced and knowing what “works” • Nicer classroom (I invested some time and money over the summer sprucing up my classroom with motivational posters and samples of student work) • Better start to the year (played more ice breakers and games to get students to feel comfortable and look forward to the class) • Having students do free writes in their journals (that I could then respond to, establishing a relationship through words) • Greeting students outside the door every class at the beginning of the year and later in the year whenever I could/felt like it • Bought a legitimate hoop for vocab basketball (a favorite vocab review game of students) 	<p>beginning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference with individual students who exhibit behavior and academic problems sooner • Continue to research more classroom management and teaching strategies • Don’t irritate ANY students all year • Focus on building more individual relationships • Don’t take students’ complaints so personally – develop thicker skin • Move away from whole-class discussions (they are difficult to manage in a class of 30 plus freshmen, and it’s usually the same students talking. Instead I prefer small group discussions followed by each group sharing out their thoughts and questions with the class) • Don’t be a teacher who students feel they can disrespect, but still be calm and fair • Don’t lose my cool (I developed an increasing anger problem as my second year progressed so I became addicted to peaceful working environments) • Leave work at work (this is something I have always had trouble with) • Nurture the environment early so that I am mainly providing guidance as the students teach themselves and each other
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Played music while students were doing work • Mixing strategies that “work” with new ones that looked promising • More ingrained structure – handouts on the table for students to grab at the beginning of class; having separate trays for each period to turn in work • Talked at students as little as possible (as opposed to the somewhat lengthy Power Point-based presentations I gave my first year) 	
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Issue

Learning to become an effective teacher is a complicated process that never really ends. The opportunity to guide and inspire the minds of the future generation is a privilege that should never be taken for granted. But teaching in a public school can be a tiresome experience that can wear out even the most passionate and talented of teachers. The teacher turnover rate has risen 50 percent from 15 years ago (National Commission on Teaching & America's Future, 2007). About 16.8 percent of teachers now quit teaching each year nationwide; at urban schools the percentage exceeds 20 percent (National Commission on Teaching & America's Future, 2007). In some school districts more teachers quit each year than students drop out. Just less than one-third (29 percent) of new teachers quit within three years of beginning, and 39 percent within five years (Watkins, 2005). About \$7 billion is spent each year recruiting, employing, and keeping teachers (National Commission on Teaching & America's Future, 2007).

Teaching in a public school in Hawai‘i is a unique experience. Being raised in Hawai‘i is different than any other place in the world. Hawai‘i’s unique history that has brought a collection of different ethnicities to the islands has produced a culture unlike any other. Sixty percent of the students who I taught at Castle High School have Native Hawaiian blood in them, and all of them are composed

of more than one ethnicity. A student of mine once wrote about her different ethnicities and the list neared the double digits.

A teacher can have great influence on the minds of students, who in turn will impact a community and the future. I chose as the guiding question of this thesis “What do students in Hawaii think makes a great teacher?”

Significance of Study

A brief history of Hawai‘i. When the Europeans first arrived in Hawai‘i over 235 years ago, the Hawaiians had been living in a well-established society that had been set up after the first Polynesians made their way across the Pacific Ocean to the Hawaiian Islands at least 1,500 years before. The Hawaiian social system was composed of a complicated hierarchy of various levels of chiefs who oversaw ahupua`as, or “self-sustaining land units.” (MacKenzie, 2006). The estimated 400,000 to 800,000 Hawaiians who lived within these ahupua`as at the time of first European contact survived by fishing, hunting, and harvesting plants such as taro, bananas, breadfruit, and sweet potatoes. By 1890, after 110 years of exposure to Europeans, that number had plummeted to 35,000, in part because of diseases introduced by the Europeans; however, there was a slow resurgence in the growth of mixed race-Hawaiians.

In 1810, King Kamehameha capitalized on the technology the Europeans introduced to the Islands and united Hawai‘i under one king through conquering the opposing chiefs. Thirty years later, Hawai‘i had become an established independent constitutional monarchy that was recognized as a sovereign nation by major world nations, including the United States. However, in the late 1840’s Kamehameha III set into motion the demise of the Hawaiian Monarchy when he abolished the anti-private property laws and created the Mahele (land division) process after being pressured by his Western advisers and outside governments to sign the new law. Under the Mahele, Kamehameha

himself received 24 percent of Hawai'i's approximately 400,000 million acres of land, the government 36 percent, and the rest of the chiefs 39 percent (MacKenzie, 2006). The rest of Hawaiians received just 1 percent of prime land.

As foreign interests invaded Hawai'i, the Monarchy became increasingly reliant on outside business interests for economic survival. As those outside interests penetrated Hawai'i, annexation was proposed. In January of 1893, Queen Lili'uokalani sought to reverse the limitations imposed on the Monarchy's authority, inspiring a group of businessmen to collude to take over the Hawai'ian government. Armed U.S. forces invaded Hawai'i and set up in front of the palace and other government properties. Seeking to avoid violence, Lili'uokalani surrendered her authority to the U.S. government, hoping the annexation would eventually be overturned (MacKenzie, 2006). President Grover Cleveland ignored the annexation request, but his successor President William McKinley sought control of Hawai'i, and in 1898 Hawai'i became The Territory of Hawai'i after The Joint Resolution of Annexation was ratified by Congress despite the protests of many Native Hawaiians, including 21,000 who signed a petition resisting annexation. Under the resolution, 1.8 million acres of land were ceded to the United States. Later, after recognizing the struggles of Hawaiians, the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act was passed in 1921, setting aside 200,000 of the acres to create a homestead for Native Hawaiians. To this day, despite numerous court cases, many Hawaiian people are still fighting to be recognized as a sovereign government, like they once were. In 1993, the U.S. government passed the Apology Resolution, admitting responsibility for the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom and acknowledging that the Hawaiians never chose to hand their land over to the United States, refueling sovereignty claims.

A brief history of the Hawai'i education system. The first people to establish a formal education system in Hawai'i were the Christian missionaries who flocked to the islands after European

exposure, beginning in 1820. This early educational system was originally created to facilitate the conversion of Native Hawaiians to Christianity (Talmy, 2001) and to purposely replace Hawaiian with English as the “language of power” (Au, 2008, p. 67), both of which played a pivotal role in colonization efforts. The missionaries spent two years creating a textbook in the Hawaiian language (Hunt, 1969) as the first step in the language conversion efforts because English-speaking teachers were so rare (Au, 2008). By 1826 there were 400 teachers in the Islands (Hunt, 1969). By 1830, about 33 percent of the Hawaiian population was attending these missionary-backed schools. The laws governing these schools were created and maintained by the missionaries and the ruling chiefs.

In addition to the “common schools” for most of Hawai‘i’s children, “select” schools were also created exclusively for the children of the missionaries, Caucasians, and Hawaiian royalty (Talmy, 2001). The lessons in common schools were delivered in Hawaiian; in the select schools the lessons were delivered in English. These different schools were the seeds of colonization efforts to follow, as it provided the opportunity for the missionaries and business elite to collaborate to influence Hawai‘i’s future. “The ‘select’ and ‘common’ schools would ensure the production of a social, political, and economic order from which Caucasians and missionaries could only profit” (Talmy, 2001, p. 3).

The education system the missionaries established and honed over twenty years transitioned into the organized central public school system that exists in Hawai‘i today. In October 1940, the first public school law was created by King Kamehameha III called “The Business of Females,” which made it a requirement for females to educate the youth of Hawai‘i and “to guide the children to the right behavior” or else to “return to the labor of her landlord” (Hunt, 1969, p. 2).

Pushing for a formal constitution to strengthen the education system, missionaries convinced the king to pass a constitution. In 1840, the first public school law was passed, which made education

mandatory for all children four to fourteen. The law also required that a school to be created in any village where 15 or more children lived, each of which would be overseen by a committee of three people who were chosen by the community to select teachers and negotiate pay. It was this law that set into motion the modern school system that was established before many states on the mainland had one. A year later another public school law revoked some provisions in the original law but maintained certain features. One such change was the appointment of “men of intelligence” to oversee the school systems on each island as school agents, and a state superintendent to oversee these schools agents (Hunt, 1969). By 1842, a certification process was created for teachers who taught in Hawai'i. By 1849, teachers were paid thirteen cents a day to teach 164 days a year, for a yearly salary of \$31.57. The entire education system cost \$21,989 to run at the time.

The first schoolhouses were mostly grass huts, and students sat on mats on the floor as they learned reading, writing, math, geography, and a religious-based curriculum. The few books they had available were created from the presses of the missionaries. Students learned in their Native Hawaiian tongue until 1851, when Hawaiian began to be phased out as the official language of instruction, replaced by English. In 1854, the first English schools were created. A year later The Board of Education, made up of a two directors and a president, was created to replace the ministry of education that had overseen the education system up until then (Hunt, 1969). The Board of Education was expanded over the years under the direction of the various superintendents and presidents, and is now composed of twelve members appointed by the governor who oversee Hawai'i's schools.

In 1880, as English-speaking educators became more common in Hawai'i, the Board of Education began a push to close the original schools and replace them with government English schools (Au, 2008). After D. Dwight Baldwin, a local educator who became inspector general, visited the United States to experience how other states ran their education systems, American textbooks were introduced

to the Hawai‘i school system curriculum and eventually replaced materials written in Hawaiian. The Hawai‘i school system was changed to become more similar to American systems. By 1893, the aforementioned overthrow of the Hawaiian government occurred and Hawai‘i was annexed by the U.S., aided by the American values being espoused in schools. In 1895, the inspector-general of schools called schools that used Hawaiians the main language to teach “dead” (Au, 2008). A year later a law was passed banning Hawaiian schools. In 1900, the U.S. Congress passed The Organic Act recognizing Hawai‘i as a territory, officially connecting state and federal control of the Islands and eventually the Hawai‘i public school system (Hunt, 1969).

During the territorial period the public school system encountered many of the same problems it faces today, including teacher shortages that required recruiters to travel to the mainland to seek teachers. The mainland teachers brought in were still not enough to satisfy the demands of the growing public school population, and uncertified teachers were tapped to fill shortages (Hunt, 1969).

Hawaiian Creole English. After obtaining control of the Hawaiian Islands following the overthrow of the monarchy, in 1896 the U.S. government enacted a ban on the speaking of Hawaiian in all governmental affairs, including in public schools (Yamauchi, Lau-Smith, & Luning, 2008). This ban further contributed to the on-going linguicism, or “a fundamental form of discrimination based on language” that was occurring in Hawai‘i (Talmy, 2001, p. 2). That this form of linguicism took place in government-backed schools and forced Hawaiian children to assimilate to the majority culture’s language qualified the ban as linguicide, or the “forced transfer of children... to another community or group” (Talmy, 2001, p. 3).

However, a new form of language was creatively constructed to enable communication between diverse communities throughout Hawai‘i. Hawai‘i Creole English, commonly referred to as Pidgin, is a

language so common in Hawai'i today it has the status as a language (Au, 2008). Conceived as a way for the sugar plantation laborers of various ethnicities to communicate with each other, the unique combination of English and local dialects became a way of speaking in Hawai'i that continues to this day (Talmy, 2001). By the 1930's, about 40 percent of the people in Hawai'i spoke pidgin, and pidgin had become a distinguishable marker of local culture. I have personally grown up hearing Pidgin and even find myself thinking in it at times. Many of my students speak pidgin, and for some that is all they know.

Almost ever since its inception, the haole elite have tried to stifle and eventually even ban pidgin from being spoken in public schools (Tamura, 2006). Pidgin was and even currently is viewed as “a sloppy way of speaking, broken English, a bad habit, negative views perpetuated by decades of linguicidal policies aimed at ‘correcting’ Pidgin out of existence” (Talmy, 2001, p. 4). In 1927, school superintendent Will Crawford called the speaking of Hawai'i Creole English the biggest problem facing the Hawai'i public school system. Fourteen years later, the results of a survey showed that Hawai'i first-graders were two to three years behind their mainland counterparts in their English speech skills, and that eighty percent of high school students planning to attend the University of Hawai'i spoke “distinctively different from typical American speech,” with fifteen percent speaking in a way that was incomprehensible to instructors (Tamura, 2006, p. 446). In a response to the failing efforts to stop the speaking of Hawai'i Creole English by public school students, the State Department of Education eventually created a handful of English Standard Schools, in which only about two to nine percent of public school students were accepted (Tamura, 1996). Students were granted admission based on their English ability. The English Standard Schools received more money, attracted better teachers, and had curriculums that were geared toward preparing students for college, while “non-standard” schools were more focused on vocational training. The English Standard Schools were also attended by

predominantly Caucasian students. At one school, Lincoln Elementary school, the student population was composed of 19 Japanese students, 27 Chinese students, and 572 *haole* students. (Talmy, 2001). However, since such a minority of students actually attended English Standard Schools, these schools had little impact on Hawaiian Creole English being spoken by most public school students. Hawaiian Creole speakers, for most of whom the language was the only one they knew besides their parents' native tongues, were faced with the dilemma of being able to "more easily advance professionally and economically" or "their perceived rejection of their primary social groups and shift in allegiances (that made them seem like cultural traitors)" (Tamura, 1996, p. 440).

In 1987 the state Board of Education (ten of thirteen of whom grew up in Hawai‘i) voted to ban Hawaiian Creole English from being spoken in the classroom, but relented after facing fierce resistance from the public. To this day Hawaiian Creole English is something that public school educators hear on a daily, if not minutely basis ("Hey Mista! I like borrow one pencil. Can?"), and speaking Hawai‘i Creole English remains "a badge of localness and a reflection of cultural allegiance" against the powerful Hoale (foreigners not from Hawai‘i) elite" (Tamura, 2006, p. 454).

The Kamehameha Early Education Program. In 1970, amidst growing nationwide realization that the educational dilemmas of minorities weren't going to be solved simply by throwing a lot of money, desire, or creative agendas at the problem, the Kamehameha Early Education Program was created with the purpose of "research(ing) and develop(ing) effective ways to teach Hawaiian-American children fundamental educational skills" (Gallimore & Tharp, 1976, p.5). One of the differences between KEEP and other approaches to studying the problem of the lack of minority culture educational achievement is that "everything must be real. A real school; children who are really representative of urban school problems; research question which have real importance for public education" (Gallimore & Tharp, 1976, p. 4). Before the conception of KEEP there was almost no research available about

educational achievement or the learning processes of Hawai‘i students. After interviewing those involved in education in Hawai‘i, the researchers identified four main problems: “student industriousness, profound reading retardation, language difficulties, and teachers who were unprepared for culturally heterogeneous classrooms and unruly children” (Gallimore & Tharp, 1976, p. 3). Those findings aligned with the scant literature available during that time, but for which no consensus of solutions could be reached. The researchers created the Ka Na‘i Pono Research and Demonstration School and enrolled 300 students, including 25 percent who were non-Hawaiian, to gather data to support the development of programs aimed at improving educational achievement in Hawai‘i. (Gallimore & Tharp, 1976).

KEEP’s Five-Year Summary Report from 1976 provides an overview of the important discoveries learned during the program’s first years. The researchers found that children who speak pidgin well often spoke Standard English well, which caused them to recommend that the focus needs to be on the many students who display poor oral both in pidgin and Standard English and not to treat pidgin as the major impediment of educational achievement in Hawai‘i. Second, the researchers found that Hawaiian American students can be hard workers when inspired by the teacher, but that just because a student is hardworking did not guarantee academic success due to some school’s accessible resources and curriculum. Third, the researchers found that while 10 to 15 percent of KEEP’s students required special education, that KEEP students’ IQs upon leaving kindergarten were the same as the national average. Fourth, the curricula being used to teach children reading skills did not appropriately address Hawaiian-American students and that new programs focused on oral language and verbal-thinking skills needed to be implemented. Fifth, the program found teachers could be trained to teach more effectively to Native Hawaiian students through in-service training.

“If Can, Can: Hawai‘i Creole and reading achievement”. Many people born in Hawai‘i who speak Hawai‘i Creole English have become successful professionals in prestigious fields like medicine and academia (Au, 2008). It is not so much that students speak Hawai‘i Creole that cause Hawai‘i-born students poor test scores on achievement tests, but rather they are not provided with sufficient practice writing in “essay literacy” (Au, 2008). Add to that concern of the self-fulfilling prophecy that many educators tend to create when they believe students who speak in Hawai‘i Creole are not as intelligent as speakers of Standard English, which causes them to “dumb down” curriculums that teachers think their student are capable of handling (Au, 2008).

In addition to educators’ attitudes toward Hawai‘i Creole, students of minority groups like those who speak Hawai‘i Creole both actively and subconsciously resist school decisions that oppose their cultural identity, known as the resistance theory. Students feel their unique language and identities are not valued by the school environment, and instead of replacing them with Standard English, they may make them a higher priority than school (Au, 2008). While rebelling against school is normal to a certain degree to almost all children, most students realize the importance school plays in their future because of encouragement from adults in their lives; however, minority groups may not realize these connections as strongly. This diminishes the power teachers have over student behavior because those students are not as worried about the consequences of misbehavior on teachers’ perceptions of them or their futures.

Solutions to resistance. Au offers several solutions educator can use to “win over” students who adhere to the resistance theory. Making instruction and learning more fun and rewarding for students, incorporating student knowledge and interests outside of school to make learning more relevant, connecting stories and themes to students’ experiences, reading local literature, and using more informal “talk story” discussions make students more likely to engage (Au, 2008). While students are reading a

text, reading comprehension strategies backed by research, higher-level questioning, and teacher praise so that students “feel smart” have been proven to help improve students’ comprehension skills (Au, 2008).

School change. In additions to the decisions educators make that can help improve students willingness and ability to learn, schools can also make changes that help students improve their reading comprehension skills. Students from subordinate cultures like those who speak Hawai‘i Creole are particularly dependent on formal schooling to help them develop their essay literacy. Research has found that it takes at least six years for speakers of Hawai‘i Creole to develop their Standard English literacy ability to proficiency. Schools can take advantage of available research and create a well-planned “staircase curriculum” that advances students’ essay literacy skills over time. Further, this staircase curriculum shouldn’t be purchased “off the shelf”, but should be created and customized by departments throughout grade levels (Au, 2008).

A non-local Hawai‘i teacher’s reflection on her “voyage of discovery”. In one of the few journal articles available in the education literature that addressed the uniqueness of Hawai‘i students and teaching strategies that have been shown effective with teaching Hawai‘i students, Elly Tepper’s beautiful reflection on her then-nineteen years teaching and the lessons she learned at Hau‘ula Elementary, a small school on the North Shore of Oahu, provides a glimpse into the unique experience of teaching in Hawai‘i public schools (Tepper, 1992). About 80 percent of students at Hau‘ula have at least some Hawaiian blood, and Tepper, who was born and raised in New York and whose own education consisted of private schools and experimental education programs at public schools, wrote about the process she faced transitioning from disoriented newcomer to experienced “Teacher.”

Tepper distinguished three cyclical phases of her growth into a Teacher. The first phase was embodied by observation of her students and her own life experiences up until the present moment. The second phase was marked by careful reflection. The final phase was analysis, which included research of theory and literature. All three phases led to experimentation, which circled back around to the first phase.

In Tepper's initial phase of observing the students at Hau'ula, she noted her students' perceived strengths and weaknesses. Tepper noticed that the students scored poorly on standardized tests, they were "restless," they were hesitant to answer questions aloud when asked, they had quick tempers, they had trouble processing verbal directions, and they spoke Pidgin English "that sounded like a foreign language to me" (p.6). However, she noticed they would sit respectfully to hear a story, they worked well together, they were excellent at understanding social patterns, they excelled at games, they were skilled at inferring, and they had the "aloha spirit" that is marked by openness, empathy, and affection.

In Tepper's second phase of growth, she focused on who her students were. Tepper noticed, much like the experience of this researcher, that "I became more self-conscious and confident about my teaching even when it departed from the educators' textbook that I was supposed to follow" (Tepper, 1992, p. 5). Throughout this second phase, Tepper realized the importance of tapping into the ancient Hawaiian methods of teaching that relied on students watching a skilled person model how to do something as students respectfully observed without interruption, followed by practice of the observed skills. Tepper also utilized the ancient-Hawaiians system of promotion by a child's ability to complete a task with proficiency by asking students to demonstrate their growth to her. Tepper noted that:

It was becoming clearer to me that the old Hawaiian ways were not as deeply buried as I had assumed. Even in this age of television and

modern society, I needed only to scratch the surface to tap into the ancient ways, and to great effect. My children were teaching me to become *their* good teacher. (Tepper, 1992, p. 7).

In the third phase of her growth process into a Teacher, Tepper used her experiences and strategies she learned in professional development to experiment with an array of teaching methods, including free-form writing, journals, partner work, group research projects, and independent reading, all with success. Tepper realized the importance of language in teaching the Hawai‘i students and the “shock” that her students faced in the difference between their home lives and school lives. At home, Tepper noted, students’ use of language and activity is uninterrupted and natural, but at school they were forced to complete separate tasks with little connection to the last one (Tepper, 1992).

After nineteen years as a teacher at Hau‘ula, Tepper realized that “my definition of what works is whatever creates those magic moments when the teaching and learning, the teacher and the learners, seems to be vibrating at the same frequency” (Tepper, 1992, p. 11). Tepper learned that successful learning occurs in the common “matching” spaces between the teacher and learner. Tepper emphasized the strategies of creating a classroom family characterized by mutual respect, trust, and support; teaching social studies through immersion experiences in which Hawaiian and students’ own cultural language and traditions are incorporated into lessons and projects; creating a social-based environment for teaching language arts; focusing on a “big idea” with each activity; and creating a work-like atmosphere at school in which children see themselves as “gainfully employed in school” (Tepper, 1992). Tepper also learned that planning projects that include works of art that all students participate in completing either together or as an individual contribution to a class work of art (such as an oral-history anthology of students’ family stories) encouraged students to find meaning in their schoolwork. Through it all, Tepper learned that for teachers to be efficacious they “need to recognize their students as

successful learners – learn what they have, not what they lack; students, to be successful, need to translate knowledge that’s familiar in one domain (home culture) to another (school culture) – realize and recognize themselves as Knowers” (Tepper, 1992, p. 20).

Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence (CREDE). Created to help children from diverse cultures succeed in school, CREDE adopts the sociocultural theory that views children not as passive observers that teachers can implant knowledge into students through lectures, but as active participants in their learning in which the teacher and the student participate together (Tharp, 1997). CREDE operates according to eight premises: all students can learn; all students should be held to high standards; all students should have the goal of English proficiency; all students should strive to be bilingual; cultural and language diversity can aid teaching and learning; teaching and learning should be tailored to individual students; at-risk students can be successful if they are exposed to necessary skills; and solutions should be based on valid theories of development and education (Tharp, 1997).

CREDE seeks to bring the issue of diversity to the national educational spotlight and not just to be relegated to discussions amongst concerned teachers. CREDE operates on five general principles that should be adapted to local communities:

- **Principle 1: Teachers and students are engaged in joint activity:** Teachers and students share the learning experiences to create a common context for learning. This can be especially beneficial if the teacher and the students are of different backgrounds.
- **Principle 2: Language and literacy should be a focus of all activities in school.** Language development should be a goal of all activities, both formal and informal.
- **Principle 3: Learning should be contextualized in real-life experience and skills.** At-risk students especially need to realize how abstract concepts are relevant to their lives. To do this, teachers can develop lessons that utilize students’ language and skills from

outside of school and curricula that focuses on experiences derived from the students' community and their personal lives.

- **Principle 4: Challenge students' cognition.** Instead of dumbing school for at-risk students, challenge students through higher-level thinking rather than simple memorization. Teachers should devise ways to stretch students' zones of proximal development and they realize what students can learn with assistance and on their own.
- **Principle 5: Engage students in the instructional conversation by encouraging them to talk about things that are relevant and interesting to them.** Instead of lecturing, the adult should simply guide the conversation so that it is the students who are talking about what is important to them

Gaps in Literature and Contribution of Study

Despite the wealth of literature about the history of Hawai'i and the unique culture it has produced, there is a dearth of information about specific teaching methods and strategies that have been found to be effective in teaching students who were raised in such a unique culture. If such specific strategies and methods were identified, then more teachers could begin including them into their practice, which will lead to public schools producing more college and career ready students. This will benefit not only those individual students who learned from those effective strategies but also the overall social and economic future of Hawai'i.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to identify specific strategies and teaching methods that have been found to be conducive to helping Hawai'i students obtain the learning objectives within a lesson. These

strategies and methods include how a teacher plans a lesson, carries out a lesson, and reflects on a lesson. The research question that guided this study was “What do students think makes a great teacher in Hawaii?”

Theoretical Perspective

The theoretical perspective that guided this study was the sociocultural theory, which was developed by Lev Vygotsky, a Russian psychologist. According to the sociocultural theory, behavior cannot be fully understood when it is detached from the social environment. Students are active participants in their own learning; knowledge isn't something that is just placed into cognition. Vygotsky coined the term “Zone of Proximal Development” to refer to the difference between what children can do on their own and what they are capable of when they are working with a more advanced individual. This process of “building bridges” between children's current abilities and their abilities when working with a more capable person is often referred to as “scaffolding”. Eventually the child will be able to learn to complete the goal without support because they internalized the lessons passed on by others, either implicitly or explicitly. This internalization is usually accomplished through language: conversations with others become embedded into our “mental undergrounds” (Miller, 2011). Development to Vygotsky is “the process of change” (Miller, 2011).

I chose the sociocultural theory to guide this study because of the emphasis that is placed on the social context of learning. At school children are constantly learning from more knowledgeable adults and peers who all possess more advanced knowledge in certain areas, even without always realizing it. The whole point of education is to teach lessons that advance children's current knowledge to a more sophisticated level of thinking. This can only occur if a teacher accurately recognizes students' zones of proximal development and challenge them appropriately. Students' zones will not stretch if they are not

forced to think more complexly; however, an overestimation of students current zones will also likely not yield results because they will become confused and frustrated. Teachers need to realize students' current knowledge and abilities and then determine the best means to take guide them to the desired objective. The purpose of this study is to identify the ways teachers do that that students find beneficial.

Another reason I chose the sociocultural theory to guide this study is because the importance it places on language. Language is extremely important to many in Hawai‘i. As I attempted to show in the introduction, the Hawai‘i Creole English that so many in Hawai‘i grew up speaking was looked down upon by many who had the firmest grip on the reigns of Hawai‘i's future. Some students would rather fail school than conform to the pressure to speak in Standard English. They feel their culture and individuality are being looked down upon. Teachers are presented with the added challenge of reaching these students who speak in a way some teachers have a difficult time comprehending and then figuring out ways to take the child from their current zone to the more advanced level they have in mind.

Summary

Because teachers have such a great power to influence so many young minds, it is important to identify the most effective ways to lead students to achieving the learning objectives embedded within a unit of focus. However, almost all the available literature about what it means to teach well either is addressed to a general student population (and almost all the authors of the available literature were not raised in Hawai‘i and only had experience in a mainland school system) and not about what it means to teach well to Hawai‘i students. The purpose of this paper is to first establish that Hawai‘i students are unique and similar from their mainland counterparts, and second, to identify the strategies and methods that are most effective in teaching the young minds of Hawai‘i. Doing so will hopefully aid teachers of Hawai‘i students to improve their craft by including more of those strategies and methods into their teaching, which will lead to the improvement of public education in Hawai‘i.

Chapter II

Literature Review

What Does It Mean to Teach Well?

As I transition to a review of the literature on what makes good teaching, I would like to ask the reader to take a moment to either think about or jot down on a piece of paper a response to the question “What is good teaching?” Chances are you probably struggled to answer this as much as I did before setting out on this literature review, perhaps because teaching well is so multi-faceted, complex, and intangible, and it can also take so many shapes and forms. I got this idea from an article written by Schmeichel (2012) who uses this exercise as a starter activity in her courses for pre-service teachers. Similar to Pirsig’s (1974) quest for understanding the metaphysics of quality, and as one of Schmeichel’s student pointed out about what constitutes pornography, “I know it when I see it!” (Schmeichel, 2012, p.1)

In her beautiful reflection of her growth as a teacher over 35 years, Shakespear (2008) wrote: “Teaching is a messy profession... the details of our work are tightly woven into the myriad ways of humans” (p. 1). Shakespear wrote much of her growth emerged not through professional development opportunities or reading educational literature (although that couldn’t have hurt), but that it

“...came through conversations with others, watching our head of school or another teacher taking risks and analyzing them afterward. All of us are trying to make really, good informed guesses. We are watching for good results and then figuring out and sharing with others through talk why our efforts did or didn’t work” (Shakespear, 2008, p. 1).

Shakespeare wrote that anything new that we learn is simply fused with our sense of self and what we already know and believe, and for new knowledge to matter to us it doesn't have to just make sense but it has to meld with who we are as human beings.

The passionate teacher. In the book *The Passionate Teacher*, Fried (1995) argued that the greatest impact on student learning is the passion – the “quality of caring about ideas and values, this fascination with the potential for growth within people, this depth and fervor about doing things well and striving for excellence – that educators bring in to the classroom each day” (Fried, 1995, p. 6). Fried wrote that many teachers enter into the profession with an intense passion to inspire and change lives, but they become disheartened by the imperfections in the education system and disillusioned when they discover that many students don't want to be inspired, but are in school simply to do enough work to slide by into the next grade. Fried continued that despite the constraints placed on them, passionate teachers are those who are in love with knowledge, ideas, and dilemmas that face this world and who are captivated by the possible futures for the students who enter their classroom each period. Fried believed that “only when teachers bring their passions about learning and about life into their daily work can they dispel the fog of active compliance or active disinterest that surrounds so many students” (Fried, 1995, p.1).

Fried wrote that every teacher has the ability to be a passionate teacher, and that teachers can have all the subject knowledge and be masters the curriculum and know every teaching and classroom management trick in the book, but that nothing will reach students like the passion of a teacher. Every teacher has it inside, but they need to examine themselves and their teaching to discover or relight whatever flicker of it that remains inside them. They have to want to be the “heroes of the mind” (Fried, 2005, p. 6). Teachers have to *care* about their students and the type of people they are and are becoming and can potentially be. Students can sense when a teacher has it, and it is that passion that sets apart the

teachers who the students will remember as a “good” teacher and those who they will remember for the rest of their lives.

Fried maintained that the passionate teacher has the ability to engage students’ minds in ways students themselves want to engage. As Fried wrote, “They have to want to see where their ideas and energies might take them, to follow their curiosity and intuition to useful places” (Fried, 1995, p.4). The passionate teachers use their passion of their subject and the beauty that first attracted them to want to pass on the knowledge they learned to guide their students to that active, almost mystical state of engagement. Passionate teachers *show* their students what it is like to love learning by making them recognize that as teachers, we ourselves will never stop learning. They make students want to become their own seekers of knowledge by using their passion of the subject and carefully developed curriculum to guide them toward the beauty of the subject so they *want* to seek more. They make children and teenagers who are experiencing the confusion and sometimes despair of growing up feel *alive* and to accept themselves as unique and considerate people. Fried writes, “For teachers, the recovery of passion can mean a recovery of our influence – dynamic and positive influence – in the lives of children” (Fried, 1995, p. 29).

Passionate teachers become partners in students’ learning as they guide students toward meaningful experiences, and they don’t give up on the students who are doing just enough to get by. Passionate teachers make mistakes – many of them – but what separates them from other teachers is they recognize when they have made one and they learn from them and grow (Fried, 1995).

Passionate teachers are not those who are apathetic slaves to the required curriculum, but know what to teach and what to ignore so they don’t lose their students’ interest. Passionate teachers must recognize the ideas and knowledge they want their students to remember after they leave their classroom

for the last time. If students are not interested in what they are learning, the whole act of teaching it is a big waste of time because they are just going to forget about it once they have taken the test that assesses their “knowledge” of that content, if they choose to remember it for that long at all (Fried, 1995).

Teacher education programs’ role in producing effective teachers. At the heart of the debate of what makes a good teacher is the role teacher education programs should play in producing effective teachers. Rinaoldo et al (2009) argued that teacher education programs need to go beyond their emphasis on students’ grades, observations, and scores on standardized tests and focus more on ways to assess teacher dispositions). Researchers defined teacher dispositions as “the way in which values, commitments, and professional ethics manifest themselves in professional pedagogy” (Rinaldo et al., 2009, p. 46). The researchers argue that teacher dispositions are a fundamental element of good teaching that teacher education programs must not ignore. They focus on three “core dispositional values” in their study of dispositional growth in 64 teacher candidates over the course of the program: “professional commitment, professional relationships, and critical thinking and reflective practice” (Rinaldo et al., p. 46), with an emphasis on the latter. The researchers argued that students enter into their teacher education programs with a preconceived idea of the type of teacher that they are going to become, and that teacher education programs’ focus on the observable qualities of good teaching is not likely to change those conceptions that teacher candidates bring in about good teaching, which are based largely on prior life and learning experiences and student teaching. Instead they argued that teacher education programs should focus on teaching their candidates to reflect and self-evaluate their own teaching experiences so that they themselves can direct their growth as teachers. They encouraged teacher education programs to solidify their ideas of the qualities they want their teacher candidates to leave the program with, create a method to evaluate those qualities and interventions for those not meeting

proficiency in obtaining those qualities, as well as a method to know whether the candidates possess the desired qualities upon exiting the program.

Taking the perspective that good teaching goes far beyond knowledge of the subject and mastery of the curriculum, the researchers argued that teachers must learn to self-reflect and self-evaluate their own teaching. Qualities such as “curiosity, imagination, empathy, innovation, interest, and compassion” (Rinaldo et al., p. 45), are all integral parts of good teaching, yet there is no way to measure those in teachers except the self-reflective practices teachers use. In their literature review, the researchers delved into a wide array of literature of good reflective practices and good teaching, which include:

- To use “informed judgment to act but cognizance of consequence” (Rinaldo et al., 2009, p. 45)
- To “reflect on what they deem to know as legitimate knowledge and on their claim in knowing what they claim to know” (Rinaldo et al., 2009, p. 45)
- “To engage in symbiotic learning experiences with their students” (Rinaldo et al., 2009, p. 45)
- To reflect throughout the process of teaching to produce lasting change (Rinaldo et al., 2009)
- To evaluate teachers’ own and other teachers’ teaching and the effectiveness of the teaching (Rinaldo et al., 2009)
- To be meta-cognitive of their teaching practices (Rinaldo et al., 2009)
- To engage in conversations with current and future educators to encourage self-reflective practices (Rinaldo et al., 2009)

- To be cognizant of the “informal curriculum” such as the atmosphere teachers create (Rinaldo et al., 2009)
- To be aware that the goal of teachers is “...to transform his or her students, to inspire them to think, to feel, and to experience citizenship as active members in a democratic society” (Rinaldo et al., 2009, p. 45)
- To be aware of their own dispositions, or “the patterns of actions that are thought out and enacted within the context of actions which are engaged in freely without coercion” (Rinaldo et al., 2009, p. 45-46)

The researchers concluded by citing the results of their study that teacher candidates’ dispositions do progressively grow through the teacher training program and that it is possible for teacher education programs to improve teachers’ dispositions. Further, they concluded that most change takes place when teacher candidates are actually engaged in classroom instruction rather than formal lessons on teaching methods or observing other teachers (Rinaldo et al., 2009).

What makes good teaching throughout the world?

Conceptions of what makes good teaching vary across the world, and by looking at how other cultures view good teaching, hopefully American and local Hawai‘i teachers can get a better sense of how our own conceptions are both similar and different so we can grow as teachers. As Gudmundsdottir and Saabar (1991) concluded in their literature review of what makes a good teacher in several diverse cultures throughout the world, “What is important and highlighted in one culture may not be relevant in another. Yet, it should not stop us from learning lessons from others” (Gudmundsdottir & Saabar, 1991, p. 7).

In a review of good teaching in China, England, Israel, Norway, and America, Gudmundsdottir & Saabar (1991) found both commonalities and differences among the five cultures. The authors found that what one culture valued could be considered a weakness in teachers in one or more of the other cultures. For example, the emphasis on egalitarianism that is valued in Norway for its relationship-building abilities with students and promoting a positive classroom climate is considered grounds for discipline problems in Israel. Likewise, in the Chinese culture it is “goodness” to treat everyone identically, but in the Western cultures we are taught to be individualists.

The authors referenced Paine’s (1990) work, who described the Chinese teacher as a “virtuoso” whose “art is teaching” (Gudmundsdottir & Saabar, p. 1, 1991). Chinese teachers are expected to be so well-educated in their subject area that they can add their own personal touch and infuse their sense of self into their teaching. As Paine writes, Chinese teachers are expected to “transcend” the technical knowledge and add “heart” and “wizardry” to the subject. The authors described Chinese teachers as “performers” and their students the “audience” (Gudmundsdottir & Saabar, 1991, p. 2.). Chinese classrooms are very big (between 50 and 70 students) and follow a homogeneous “script” where the teacher begins by reviewing the previous day’s lessons before presenting the text for that day. Students are then called upon to stand and answer questions, sitting only when they get it right or another student gets it right if they answer incorrectly.

In England, teachers are looked upon as “supermen.” Good teaching revolves around four main facets: “the personal qualities of the teacher, their pedagogical skills or technique, and subject matter expertise” as well as professional behavior (Gudmundsdottir & Saabar, 1991, p.2.). English teachers are expected to be reliable, intelligent, passionate, hardworking, and friendly to students, as well as get along with colleagues. They are expected to make texts and concepts come to life by infusing their own

unique qualities and relevant stories into lessons. In addition, English teachers are expected to create and maintain good relationships with parents and the community.

In the United States, teachers are looked upon as “stage performers” and “artists” who, like the Chinese teachers, follow scripts, yet they must be able to adapt to their students and improvise on the fly (Gudmundsdottir & Saabar, 1991), qualities that remain true even 25 years after this literature review was written. Good teaching in America is often measured by standardized test results, observations, and teacher and peer recommendations. Good teaching in is largely focused around being knowledgeable with the subject matter, which includes “pedagogical content knowledge, schema, scripts, agendas, and improvisation” (Gudmundsdottir & Saabar, p.3, 1991). U.S. teachers must be able to plan activities focused around the day’s lessons and explain new content in ways students can grasp and promote successful attainment of the lesson’s objectives. They are expected to be able to play off the responses of the students and “shift and change at the spur of the moment” (Gudmundsdottir & Saabar, 1991, p. 4). In addition, perhaps more so than the other countries studied, the American teacher must possess solid classroom management skills and maintain order in the classroom while being able to get their students to do the assigned work.

In the Israeli culture, the good teacher is looked upon as a “creator of a nation” (Gudmundsdottir & Saabar, p. 4, 1991). Perhaps more important than being an expert in the content area, teachers have been entrusted with shaping the future of the country, that, at least when the article was written over twenty years ago, was still very much developing. Despite that great responsibility, teachers are paid very poorly. In one amusing anecdote, a teacher told her class, “If I got a shekel for every mistake you make this year, I could double my salary” to which a student replied “Oh, come on – doubling a teacher’s salary is no big deal” (Gudmundsdottir & Saabar, p. 5, 1991). The researchers identified four main dimensions of good teaching in the Israeli culture: subject matter expertise, values, classroom

management, and personality (Gudmundsdottir & Saabar, 1991, p. 4). Israeli teachers are expected to fuse the cognitive aspects of the job with the emotional aspects, such as making students enthused about learning content and making lessons fun). They are expected to be able to motivate students to learn and be creative and dynamic. They are also expected to help students deal with personal issues like religion, drugs, and political beliefs. However, one main issue in Israeli schools is the culture's tendency to view everyone as equals, which often leads to discipline problems with students.

Finally, while it is difficult to pinpoint what a good teacher is because of the culture's emphasis on egalitarianism, the researchers highlighted three main qualities of a good Norwegian teacher: "caring, pedagogical skills, and subject matter expertise" (Gudmundsdottir & Saabar, p. 5, 1991). Norwegian teachers often teach the same students for several consecutive years, and they are expected to be able to create and maintain good relationships with their students. Norwegian teachers are presumed to be able to read their students' emotions and help them when they need it. Discipline problems are scarce to non-existent, and classrooms are viewed as a serene refuge. Norwegian teachers are the world's best paid teachers and are well-respected by the community. Teachers get along well together and open jobs are scarce because few teachers leave.

Teaching and learning in Australia. In a study of 866 high school students in grades 8-12 in a large urban Australian high school researchers used a two-stage process to obtain feedback from students about what they consider most important in helping them learn. The first stage used students' written responses to open-ended questions in focus groups to identify 21 key aspects that students felt helped them learn the most. The authors then used a Likert-scale survey asking individual students to evaluate how important each theme was to them on a scale of 5 (most important) to 1 (least important). The researchers also asked students to vote for what they thought the five most important aspects of good teaching were. The authors weighted the individual responses to determine which ones were most

important to students. Students were also requested to rate the degree to which they experienced each of the themes on a 5-point Likert Scale, from “Never” to “All of the Time.” (White, Barnes, Lawson, & Johnson, 2009).

The top ten responses were (from the most to the least important):

- 1) Clear explanations from the teacher
- 2) Creating interest in the lesson
- 3) Being comfortable with approaching the teacher
- 4) Teacher encouragement to promote student success
- 5) Helpful feedback from the teacher
- 6) The teacher checking with students about their grasp of content
- 7) Teaching with passion and vigor
- 8) Taking the time to get know students as individuals
- 9) Having well-organized lessons
- 10) Providing student choice in class activity

However, the degree to which the students experienced each aspect was sometimes much different from the importance they placed on it. In other words, even though they rated some factors as the most important to their learning, they reported experiencing them less than other factors they rated as less important. For example, the ninth most important theme (“well-organized lessons”) was the aspect students identified as the one they most frequently experienced (over half of the time). Similarly, the aspect that students valued fourteenth (well-managed classes) was experienced the third most by students. Conversely, the aspect that most students identified as most important (“the teacher explaining things well”) was sixth on the list of actually being experienced by students (about half of the time). The

second most important aspect (“generating interest in the lesson”) was ranked fourteenth in the frequency students actually experienced it in school. (White, et al, 2009). It would be interesting to duplicate this study with Hawai‘i students to see the degree to which they differ in their values and actual degree they experience them in their learning.

A focus on teaching American students. In truth, while reviewing the literature, there are probably so many factors that go into teaching well that it would be impossible for a teacher to keep all of them in mind when standing in front of a classroom of thirty students with varying interests and skill levels. In this part of the thesis I will delve into the education literature to attempt to identify the most important things American teachers should focus on to improve their teaching (instead of attempting to offer an endless list of qualities that make up an effective teacher).

After examining 179 handbook chapters, sitting through 91 research syntheses, surveying 61 educational research articles, and sifting through 11,000 statistical outcomes to answer the question “What Helps Students Learn?”, Wang, Haertel, and Wahlberg (1997) composed a 28-category conceptual framework that falls under six main categories: “student characteristics; classroom instruction and climate; home, peer, and community context; program design; school organization; and state and district characteristics” (Wang et. al., 1997). The researchers found that direct impacts on student learning, such as everyday instruction and the relationships teachers build with their students, have a greater impact on indirect influences such as state or school-level policies that attempt to affect components of direct influences. Of the 28 categories, the greatest influence on student learning, the authors found, was classroom management. The authors did not use the term the way it is sometimes implied to refer to enforcing rules and managing students’ behaviors, but instead of the way teachers guide students through active questioning strategies to encourage active participation and engagement. The remainder of the top ten of strategies were:

- 2) Metacognitive processes (students being able to monitor their own understanding of content and performance)
- 3) Cognitive processes, or the degree of challenge offered in a course
- 4) Influences on student learning (such as parental support when students have homework)
- 5) The quality of interactions between students and teachers
- 6) A positive working atmosphere
- 7) Students' attitude toward the content and assignments
- 8) How the peers' students are exposed to feel about academics and its impact on their futures
- 9) How much time students are engaged in a lesson
- 10) The culture of the school (how the school highlights and distinguishes academic success)
- 11) The classroom climate (how well students in a class get along)

The bottom five influences on student learning were the size and type of instructional group. This would include whole-class vs. peer grouping, as well the indirect influences mentioned earlier that include the size of the school; state policies for teacher licensure; school discipline policies; and lastly, the size of the school district.

The researchers advised that any attempted indirect impact to enhance student performance through subsidiary influences that do not have an effect on the direct influences in which actual learning occur are not likely to cause any change. The authors advised greater attention be given to supporting efforts to promote alignment of "remote and district policies" and ways to directly promote efforts to

advance the mental and emotional determinants of how students learn so there can be more direct intervention (Wang et. al, 1997, p. 1).

What makes a great teacher to diverse students? Some researchers have attempted to try to link teaching well with selecting learning strategies that are tailored to students’ cultures (Schmeichel, 2012). Such a mindset has even been offered to attempt to close the achievement gap that exists between Caucasian and minority students by proposing that teachers adopt “culturally relevant” teaching practices that are “proven” to work with students of various ethnicities (Schmeichel, 2012). This argument is very relevant to Hawai‘i students, the large majority of whom are not white nor middle class. As Schmeichel pointed out surely not *all* African American students learn better in groups *all* of the time. Schmeichel questioned whether an African American who doesn’t learn better in groups is any less African American than those who do. She argued that there is a danger in encouraging teachers to teach students a certain way because of the color of their skin or because researchers tell them how students with that skin color learn best. Instead, Schmeichel recommends, get to know *your* students and teach *them* the way they learn best, regardless of what skin color they happen to have. As Schmeichel wrote:

Culturally relevant teaching relies upon a system of reason that not only reinscribes children of colour as culturally different from white children, but that attempts to validate those differences as valuable resources that can be accessed to help children of colour to become as successful, presumably, as white children. As such, discourse around culturally different children fixes cultural identity upon students of colour, and, in effect, governs the practices that order children, structuring what it is possible for us to think about them and for them to think about themselves,

determining what they can and cannot become (Schmeichel, p. 223, 2012).

By assigning students into simplified groups based on what box they happened to check on their standardized test information sheet and then providing the teacher with strategies and lesson plans that will “work” to make them educated ignores the problem that society is still structured so that such a mindset exists at all. Schmeichel warned that this culturally relevant pedagogy movement, which began in the days of segregation and gained full steam in the 1980s and 1990s, could be more of a danger to bringing equity to all students than an asset. As she wrote, “the take up of culture – and therefore race – outside of an active engagement with racism could be a wolf parading in equity’s clothing” (Schmeichel, p. 227, 2012). By arguing that children of color learn different than white, middle-class children is saying that they are different, and reeks of implications that that difference could be inferiority. Instead of teaching to children in a certain way because of the color of their skin or studying why successful African Americans students were successful, Schmeichel argued that educators should teach students to criticize and question why society is the way it is so that they can go out and make a difference. Further, teachers must have the courage and willingness to criticize society themselves and change what they can (somewhat) control: the atmosphere of the classroom that they create and what their students learn from them.

Likewise, Timothy Mahoney (2012) proposed that the best way to train new teachers of minority students is not to teach them certain strategies or methods but to guide them to appreciate the diversity in their students and step out of the unrealistic role of savior to poor urban students. He argued for both new and veteran teachers to explore their own “self-hood” and “solidarity” to gain a better understanding of their limitations and abilities of teachers of urban students. Mahoney began writing his argument when the *No Child Left Behind* federal education initiative “demanded” a definition of what

was good teaching but ignored providing one except for the results on standardized tests. Mahoney was critical of any gains earned under “Race to the Top” and suggested that any tangible gains were “suspicious” (Mahoney, 2012). Mahoney proposed that while many frameworks offer a list of qualities of what constitutes a “good” teacher, such frameworks are lacking because they fail to take into account the importance of “teacher self-hood” and a sense of “solidarity” with students. Mahoney argued that one reason why teachers of urban students are often frustrated with their teaching experiences is because teacher education programs, administrators, and educators themselves ignore such qualities. As a result, “Instead of enabling teachers to know their students in deep and meaningful ways, teachers are taught surface tricks and techniques to know students which maintain the separation between teacher and student, disabling real communication and connection” (Mahoney, 2012, p. 54.).

Like Shakespear, Mahoney cited Palmer’s *The Courage to Teach* and used Palmer’s term of “teacher selfhood” to argue that good teaching cannot be understood by or limited to techniques that can be learned but instead must include a teacher’s “identity” and “integrity.” He quoted Palmer, “as we learn more about who we are, we can learn techniques that reveal rather than conceal the personhood from which good teaching comes” (Palmer, p. 24, 1998).

Palmer borrowed Rorty’s (1989) framework of solidarity to emphasize the importance of reflection in teaching and to see students and others as “fellow travelers.” He encouraged teachers to focus on our “sensitivity to their circumstances” and to break down the invisible barriers that separate the teacher and students, which is especially vital in stereotyped-plagued urban schools. Borrowing a phrase from Liston and Zeichner (1996), Mahoney argued that teachers of urban students are often hindered by their self-imposed “prison(s) of their own experiences” so that they fail to clearly understand and empathize with the backgrounds and experiences of their poor and minority students. While teachers can never realize what it is like to grow up poor or in an urban neighborhood if they have

never grown up in such backgrounds, they *can* focus on the commonalities that they share with students. As Rorty argued, what should perhaps be the “slogan” of good teachers is that “people should try to help other people succeed... (and) to expand as far as possible our sense of ‘us’ – to actively seek common ground with others. While this is not something that only teachers should do, it is a movement that is essential for good teaching” (Mahoney, 2012, p. 59).

Mahoney used a case study of seventeen teacher candidates participating in the Philadelphian Urban Seminar to study the growth of these new teachers as they learned to explore their own teacher selfhood and solidarity. The students reported development in both areas and overall as teachers as the candidates “began to see the hope and promise their students lived within, as well as the poverty and despair” (Mahoney, 2012, p. 57.). As one teacher reported, “I stopped looking at color and started looking at what we had in common” (Mahoney, 2012, p. 57.). It would be interesting to see such a seminar replicated with Hawai‘i teacher candidates.

How can teachers motivate students who don’t seem to care about learning?

No matter how skilled a teacher someone is, if a student is not motivated to learn the course content they likely will not. But students can learn to become motivated through proper teacher modeling, clear communication of what the teacher expects from students, and effective instruction from those the student cares about such as parents and teachers (Brophy, 1987). Motivation is a combination of emotional and cognitive investment from the student, and a good teacher must find ways to work within the boundaries of the required curriculum and school culture to find ways to motivate his or her students, many of whom have no choice but to come to school and who tend to find the experience of doing work to earn grades undesirable. As a result, teachers must seek out and employ a range of strategies to get students to not only care about their performance in school, but to actually care about what they learn. As Brophy wrote, “...teachers are not merely reactors to whatever motivational

patterns their students had developed before entering their classrooms, but rather are *active socialization agents* capable of simulating the general development of student motivation to learn and its activation in particular situations” (Brophy, 1987, p.2).

Brophy adopted the *expectancy x value theory*, which states that people will only exert effort to succeed if 1) they expect to be successful if they exert the required amount of effort, and 2) if they value the reward or feeling of engagement in completing the task. According to the theory, if one of those two preconditions is missing, a person will choose not to put in the effort to complete the task. Brophy offered four prerequisites for any motivational strategy to be effective: a supportive environment that includes the support and encouragement of the teacher; a balance between making the learning or the performance task too easy or too difficult; providing learning objectives and products and that students can find meaningful; and achieving an equilibrium when applying motivation strategies (not going overboard and trying to do too much). Among the 33 strategies Brophy offered to enhance student motivation and to encourage students to be successful not mentioned elsewhere in this literature review are:

- Providing students with a variety of active and engaging teaching strategies and tasks that they can enjoy, find relevant, and feel confident in accomplishing (but not making the assignment or curriculum so easy that they will become bored)
- Teaching students to set goals, monitor their performance, and self-reinforce according to the finished product
- Offering ways for students who fall behind to catch up, such as through make-up assignments and individual support
- Offering students extrinsic incentives to complete a task, such as rewards for successful performance or using competition to motivate and captivate student interest

- Making it known how the objective will benefit students immediately or in the future
- Providing students with a choice on how to demonstrate performance
- Providing students with immediate feedback
- Including elements of fantasy (such as role play) and gamification (such as puzzles or educational games)
- Engaging students with higher-level questions and tasks
- Providing opportunities for peer interaction (such as partner or group work)
- Modeling the importance and personal fulfillment of learning
- Making students as comfortable as possible when completing a test or task to avoid performance anxiety
- Showing integrity and enthusiasm when teaching
- Stimulating interest, curiosity, and suspense in students with the lessons
- Making students realize they don't know everything through showing them things they don't know and through careful questioning to promote healthy cognitive dissonance
- Making abstract or difficult contents more accessible to students (such as through diagrams or visual representations)
- Clearly stating learning objectives and providing students with organizers to help guide students to achieve them
- Modeling "information processing and problem solving strategies" through cognitive modeling (Brophy, 1987).

The first part of this literature review will conclude by returning again to Shakespear's inspiring reflection of her long teaching career. Shakespear wrote that over the course of her career she questioned

how new knowledge appears in the teaching field and wonders how we can improve education when much of what researchers offer as solutions are not always the magic bullet in practice. She continued that of the many hours she has spent observing new and experienced teachers that even the most talented and beloved teachers can usually reach only most of their students. She quoted Parker Palmer's (1993) article "Good Talk about Good Teaching" that much of what goes into teaching involves not techniques that we learn but mainly from what is going on inside of the teacher (Parker, 1998). Parker wrote that before teachers can know the "human condition" of our students we must first know ourselves (Shakespear, p. 2). Everyone can change and develop – even the most experienced and veteran of teachers. Shakespear remembered of a conversation she had with a student who had both a brilliant mind and musical talent after encountering him one day five years after he left her class. He told her that when she informed him that he wasn't writing as well as his intelligence should be able to that it changed his life "when you told me what I didn't want to hear" (Shakespear, 2008, p. 1). It is through our conversations with others that we can grow the most.

I want to end this literature review by offering a lengthy quote from Shakespear reflection that I don't dare attempt to paraphrase:

Yes, I want my fellow teachers and my students to do well in the world, I want them to use their educations, to be ambitious, and to take advantage of every opportunity the culture has to offer. But I also want them to have connected, rich, and happy internal lives. No matter how pragmatic and focused we are on measurable intellectual goals and on external achievements, if we are connected to our kids at all, we are also deeply concerned with them as full people. We really can't help it" (Shakespear, 2008, p. 2).

How Do You Measure Accomplished Teaching?

Over the past decade efforts to evaluate effective teaching have gained momentum, fueled by federal and state initiatives aimed at improving public education in America. However, many of these initiatives have not attempted to tackle the complex dilemma of how to evaluate who is an effective teacher when there are so many facets of teaching effectively and instead chose to focus almost exclusively on standardized test scores, which provide a convenient if not totally reliable way to measure student achievement (Norman, 2010).

Another problem inherent in designing generic measures to gauge effective teaching is that few measures take into account the context in which the teaching takes place. There are hundreds of thousands of teachers in the United States, and designing generic ways to measure how effective they all are as teachers fails to take into account individual teachers' unique experiences, teaching styles, and values concerning education. For example, some cultural groups have unique ideas about what it means to teach well that differed from other cultures. Teachers in urban schools don't have the same support systems or resources as teachers who teach in wealthier schools and usually have more students with histories of underachievement, yet they are being compared using the same measures as teachers who inherit students with stellar academic records. Similarly, by binding teachers' styles to the ways in which they know they will be evaluated forces them to teach in a certain way to achieve or display those objectives. That may hinder the effectiveness the teacher could have exhibited if he or she was allowed to teach in the way that was natural and comfortable for him or her, free from constraints imposed by the measures of what good teaching "looks like" (Norman, 2010).

One component of teacher evaluations that few could argue against is the results the teacher is able to produce on student achievement. It is the job of teachers to educate students in his or her subject area, and they if they are successfully doing that then the results of teacher assessments should reflect

that they are effective teachers. Yet student learning is much more complex than the scores they get on standardized tests, but few teacher evaluation measures have gone beyond correlating effective teachers with the results their students get on those tests. As researchers have pointed out, standardized tests provide only a sliver of the impact schools and teachers have on students. They do not measure the impact that teachers have students' minds, characters, or lives, and by narrowing what makes effective teaching to the scores teachers' students achieve on tests could constrict teachers' abilities to focus on such important objectives. Further, test scores do not reflect the dispositions and knowledge of individual teachers and reflect only the knowledge of the students (and even that assertion is controversial) (Norman, 2010).

As more emphasis has been placed on high-stakes tests to evaluate teacher and school performance, some teachers feel so much pressure to prepare their students for the test that they abandon or place "curriculum teaching" on the backburner to "teach to the test" by incorporating similar or even the same items that students will see on the standardized tests (Popham, 2001). This defeats the purpose of testing, which is to measure students' grasp of a body of knowledge, and not just specific questions. This also invalidates accurate teacher judgment about how to proceed with instruction based on the feedback of student scores on a test because if students are simply answering questions correctly because the teachers told them the right answers or they are familiar with similar items, all worthiness of any analysis of student performance is undermined.

But if standardized tests are not the only measure to assess teacher effectiveness, who is to say that they know or can develop the best statistical methodology to measure effective teaching that go beyond standardized test scores? In addition, conceptions of good teaching evolve over time. For example, few would argue that a teacher today has to be more adept at using and incorporating technology into lessons than even twenty years ago. Any measures that claim to accurately assess

effective teaching would have to evolve as well. Finally, teacher assessment creators have to focus on the fact that the assessments should not be used as a way to classify teachers as “good” or “bad,” but must keep in mind the objective of teacher assessments should be to help all teachers improve in their practice (Norman, 2010).

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards: The “gold standard” of measuring teacher quality

The National Board for Professional Teacher Standards (NTPTS) certification process has been referred to as the “gold standard” for evaluating effective teachers (NTPTS, 2011). After being created in 1987, NTPTS spent seven years determining the most important components of effective teachers before beginning to offer advanced-level certification to qualifying teachers in 1994. The five “core propositions” of NTPTS requires candidates to demonstrate proficiency in are:

- “Teachers are committed to student learning.
- Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.
- Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.
- Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.
- Teachers are members of learning communities” (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2011)

To obtain certification, teachers must pay \$2,500 to undergo a one-to-three-year process in which they must pass ten “rigorous assessments” that include “four portfolio entries featuring teacher practice and six exercises that assess content knowledge” (NTPTS, 2011, p. 4). The assessments are evaluated by teachers trained in the candidate’s content area, and if they pass all ten assessments, the

teachers become Nationally Board Certified. Only three percent, or 91,000 of the nation’s public school teachers are Nationally Board Certified. Benefits are often linked to obtaining certification and salary increases.

How is effective teaching measured in Hawai‘i? As part of the new Educator Effective System (EES) that measures teacher effectiveness in Hawai‘i public schools that was piloted in the 2012-2013 school year and beginning in the 2014-2015 school year will be linked to teacher pay raises and possible termination, teacher effectiveness is measured by a rather complicated final computation of several components. Those components include Classroom Observations/Working Portfolio, Core Professionalism (as measured by individual teacher responses to prompts, The Tripod Student Survey, Student Growth (as measured by student performance on standardized tests), and Student Learning Objectives (in which teachers have to track the progress students make over the course of a semester on two learning targets). Each component measures teaching effectiveness in certain ways, but the question that is then raised is teaching effectively as measured by these objectives the same as teaching well? For example, a teacher can go into the classroom and discipline students into doing everything the teacher wants and their test scores will probably improve as a result, but by the end of the first quarter the teacher will likely be teaching to many more empty seats than when he or she first started because students will not want to come to class to learn from such a teacher. At the same time there could be teachers who love their job, come into work with a great attitude and passion and gives it their best effort to not only help students improve in their subject area but to grow as people as well. Their test scores and EES rating might not be as high as the former teacher, but does that mean the former teacher taught better?

Perhaps the most relevant component of the EES for the purposes of this thesis is the Tripod Student Survey, a survey that students complete to evaluate their teacher’s performance. Given twice throughout the course of the 2013-2014 school year before switching to just once in the beginning of the 2014-2015 school year, the survey asks students questions about their experience in the class and the teacher. According to the DOE website, the survey focuses on the three “legs of quality teaching: content, pedagogy and relationships” (Hawai‘i Department of Education, p. 1, 2014). The DOE continues that when the three legs are solid, students will be more engaged and learn better. Students are asked to provide feedback on a 5-point Likert scale concerning the “7 Cs” of effective teaching that are supported in the education literature: Care, Control, Clarify, Challenge, Captivate, Confer and Consolidate. Students in kindergarten through second grade are asked to respond to 32 survey items. Students in grades 3 to 5 are asked to respond to 60 survey items. Secondary students (grades six to twelve) are asked to respond to 90 survey items. In my personal experience the secondary surveys take about 20 minutes to complete if the students don’t just mark neutral for all responses. Teachers give the survey to one class either one or two times a year, as directed by the Hawai‘i DOE. Please refer to Appendix A for a selection of questions from each of the “7 Cs” to give the reader a sense of how not only The Hawai‘i DOE but the United States DOE qualified as effective teaching.

As part of the 2014-2015 Tripod Survey teacher results, the survey provides an average score of teachers in their complex area for each category so individual teachers can compare their scores with the average. These average complex area scores for the Windward District provides a glimpse into how Hawai‘i students view teachers’ strengths and areas for improvement:

For the category of “care,” 66 percent of students reported that their teacher made them feel that they truly care about them. For “challenge,” 66 percent of students reported that their teachers sought

their full effort. For “control,” 48 percent of students reported that fellow students behaved in manners the teacher desired. For “clarify,” 61 percent of students reported that the teacher will explain something differently if students are not comprehending it. For “captivate,” 52 percent of students reported that their teacher made learning enjoyable. For “confer,” 56 percent of students reported that their teacher encouraged them to share their opinions. Finally, for consolidate, 64 percent of students reported that they learned a lot just about every class period.

Despite the feedback the surveys provide, in a survey of thousands of Hawai‘i public school teachers concerning the use of the surveys in their teaching evaluations, over 84 percent disagreed with the survey’s use (HSTA, 2014). Eighty-seven percent responded that they don’t believe that their students understood what they were being asked to respond to. Seventy-six percent of teachers voted to lower the 15 percent weighting of the surveys in their overall evaluation (although they did not identify an ideal percentage). Concerns teachers had on the surveys was that English Second Language Learners include students who didn’t understand what they are being asked and teachers can only provide limited assistance; teachers haven’t been trained on how to improve on what students are surveying them on; there is an inconsistent use of procedures across schools, districts, and states; the directions and questions are not suitable for students; the results lack specific feedback; and teachers have not had training on how the survey is an accurate measurement of student progress (HSTA, 2014).

Gaps in Literature and Contribution of Study

Despite the wealth of literature about the history of Hawai‘i and the unique culture it has produced, there is a dearth of information about specific teaching methods and strategies that have been found to be effective in teaching students who were raised in such a unique culture. If such specific strategies and methods were identified then more teachers could begin including them into their practice,

which would lead to public schools producing more college and career ready students, which would benefit not only those individual students who learned from those effective strategies but also the overall social and economic future of Hawai‘i.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to interview public school students in Hawai‘i to identify specific strategies and teaching methods that have been found to be conducive to helping Hawai‘i students learn. These strategies and methods include how a teacher plans a lesson, carries out a lesson, and reflects on a lesson.

Chapter III

Methodology:

Research Design

Informal student interviews.

Participants. The reason I chose students to interview about the research question is that students are the very purpose of the education system and they have witnessed many examples of good and bad teachers throughout their educational journeys. One could make the argument that students know better than anyone what good teaching is because they are the ones whose learning is impacted through the decisions that teachers make, such as the strategies the teacher selects to teach an objective and how the teacher manages a classroom. When observing teachers, administrators and other educators may believe they know when a teacher is teaching well or poorly, but they do not know for sure how much the lesson is working for students, who should be the sole focus of the lesson's design and implementation.

One strength of focus group interviews according to McMillian and Schumacher (2010) is that they create a more "social environment in which group members are stimulated by one another's perceptions and ideas, (and) the researcher can increase the quality and richness of data through a more efficient strategy than one-on-one interviewing (p. 363). Especially with students who have probably never been interviewed for a study before, it is important to make them feel as comfortable as possible so that their responses are genuine and natural. Being around other students will likely make them feel less intimidated than being interviewed one-on-one by an adult.

According to McMillian and Schumacher (2010) there are five aspects that affect the quality of an interview: the length of the interview, the number of interviews required to fulfill the purpose of the

study, the time and place of the interview, the subject(s) being interviewed, and the communication style of the interview. As a former student journalist who has interviewed probably a hundred different people for various stories, I am familiar with interviewing people but realize the need to adjust my approach to make students feel as comfortable as possible doing something that is probably very unfamiliar to them. This means I kept the interviews relatively brief, interviewed a range of students so I was not just receiving responses from a particular type of student, interviewed students in a setting they feel comfortable in (such as a classroom), and used my experience as a teacher to put the students at ease throughout the interview process.

One possible limitation of the focus group strategy was that students may have become sidetracked or went off topic, or some students may have been uncomfortable to share their perspectives in front of other students. Of course, students may also have just wanted to tell me what they think I wanted to hear or to finish the interview as quickly as possible.

I also offered students the option of participating in an individual interview if they preferred or if it was more convenient (the individual interviews were often much briefer). While many of the limitations of focus group interview also applied to individual ones, individual interviews offered the additional limitation that students may have been uncomfortable in the one-on-one setting and may have rushed through their responses to finish sooner.

Selection and recruitment. I emailed fellow teachers to ask if they could suggest students that they felt will represent a broad range of ability levels. I also asked my students if they knew anyone who might be interested in participating. Through these two recruitment methods I obtained seventeen students' parental consent and student assent forms.

Instruments. Student demographics and prior achievement (grade level, GPA, and ethnicity) were measured by a survey developed by the researcher. The key variables in this study were measured through students' responses to open-ended questions posed by this researcher. Please refer to Appendix B for a list of the questions that students were asked.

Procedures. At the beginning of the focus group interviews I asked students their ethnicities, grade levels, ages, and GPAs to report in the study when applicable while keeping participants' names anonymous. I recorded the interviews with a tape recorder and took notes as I listened to the responses of students. I asked follow-up questions to clarify information or when I believed the responses might lead to more information that would be valuable. I then transcribed and analyzed the responses.

Data Analysis

After finishing all interviews with students, I typed transcripts using the audio recordings of the interviews. I performed data coding on the transcripts to first identify segments (McMillian and Schumacher, 2010) in the interviews. I assigned codes, or a label that provides meaning, to each segment. I used the "dining room table" method of analysis in which I wrote down each code on an index card to make it easier to refine the codes before continuing on to the categorization phase. I continued to revise and hone my codes as I continued the coding process, eliminating and revising codes as necessary to fit the data. I then assigned each code to an overlying category using the constant comparison method of coding, or a process in which the researcher "is continually searching for both supporting and contrary evidence about the meaning of the category" (McMillian and Schumacher, 2010, p. 377). After coding the transcript and assigning data to categories, I then further broke down the categories to identify common patterns in the interviews with students. I attempted to explain how each theme contributed to a better understanding of the research question according to students. I then

consolidated the themes that emerged with each interview subject into an overall analysis of what makes good teaching to Hawai‘i students. Emphasis was placed on codes that were mentioned by more than one student, or that a student spoke passionately or at length about. Finally, in the third coding stage the researcher identified the main categories that the remaining labels could be classified under. The following section will report those findings.

Summary

I attempted to answer the very multi-layered research question of “What Makes Good Teaching to Hawai‘i Students?” through informal focus group interviews with a diverse range of students. By interviewing students who came from diverse backgrounds, prior achievement, and attitudes towards school, I hoped that the results of the interviews would yield thematic patterns that could apply to all (or at least the majority of) students, and not only the most academically gifted or unmotivated learners. By identifying strategies and methods that a diverse range of students report are effective, more educators can utilize those strategies in their lessons, which will benefit students obtaining the learning objectives for the lesson.

Chapter IV

Results

Participants

Students from diverse range of student ethnicities, grade levels, and GPAs were interviewed for this study. Of the sixteen students interviewed, eighteen percent identified primarily as Japanese, eighteen percent as Japanese/Chinese, and twelve percent as Hawaiian. The remaining ethnicities (6 percent each) of individual students were African American, African American/Caucasian, Hawaiian/Filipino, Caucasian, Chamorro, Chinese/Filipino, Japanese/Okinawan, and Swiss/Japanese.

Most of the participants (68 percent) were seniors. Twenty-five percent were juniors, and the remaining student was a freshman.

Twenty-five percent of the participants were classified as “at-risk” (students who are not likely to graduate without intervention) and reported GPA’s ranging from 2.5 to 2.9. Eighteen percent of student’s GPAs ranged from 3.0 to 3.4. The remaining 56 percent had reported GPAs over 3.5 (eighteen percent of which had perfect 4.0 GPAs or higher).

Results

This study identified five major themes as a result of the sixteen student interviews (seven individual interviews and a nine-person focus group interview): understanding the Hawai‘i culture, teaching the content, classroom management, building relationships, and overcoming challenges. Table 2 describes each theme along with the number of students who mentioned that theme in their interviews.

Table 2 Description of Themes from Student Interviews.		
Theme	Description	Number of Students Who Mentioned Theme
Teaching the Content	Teachers are able to break down concepts so students can understand. Teachers engage students. Teachers are able to ask good questions and answer students questions effectively.	16
Understanding the Culture of Hawai‘i	Students from Hawai‘i and students from the mainland have differences; effective teachers recognize and appreciate those differences.	11
Building Relationships	Teachers are able to create and maintain positive relationships with students.	10
Overcoming Challenges	Teachers are able to adapt to and successfully overcome challenges when presented with them.	10
Classroom Management	Teachers are able to manage students with diverse attitudes and abilities to create a positive and safe classroom environment.	4

Note: The names of students who participated in the focus have been changed to protect anonymity.

Focus group interview responses are designated by pseudonyms or distinguished from individual interviews where applicable.

Teaching the content.

Breaking down the concept. Six students reported that good teachers know how to break down complicated concepts in ways that students comprehend. If students don’t understand the explanation,

good teachers will break it down even more simply or think of another way to explain it so that students do understand. This was one of the first qualities of a good teacher in Hawai‘i mentioned in the focus group.

“Danielle: The way (teachers) think. They can’t just have one way to think, they have to have multiple ways.

Chantel: They have to understand the students... So if a student doesn’t understand they can explain it in a different way.”

Engagement. Three students reported that good teachers know how to keep students interested in a lesson. If students are excited or engaged they are more likely to learn than if they were bored. Engagement usually involves more than simply assigning seatwork to students. “(Good teachers) keep the students engaged instead of just giving them a piece of paper and being like ‘go’ without explaining anything,” said one African American senior from the mainland. One way to discourage engagement that some students mentioned is to give them assignments that they have little personal interest in and that require them to sit at their desk and read or write without any interaction with others. Many students reported this kind of work as boring, and some mentioned it as one of the things teachers do that tends to hinder their learning. As one at-risk Hawai‘i/Filipino senior: “They just make us sit down and stare at a paper. Just ‘do that paper.’ It’s basically just sitting and doing literally nothing but writing.”

A few of the students reported that they like school assignments more when there is an element of fun involved (such as skits). The assessments allow students to prove they obtained the objective while allowing them to enjoy the assignment.

Relating to students' lives. Four students mentioned that their favorite teachers had the ability to make learning more relevant for students, which makes it more likely that they will want to engage. As one African American junior from the mainland said:

Like last year people would be like, 'we are getting off topic,' but that's when you can like relate to stuff! It was a biology class and he would teach us about X and Y chromosomes, and then he would start talking about what makes girls and what makes guys different. And he would relate to certain things and he would bring up examples and he would bring up stuff that you didn't have to pay attention to but you want to listen because he just pulls you into his lessons, and he tries to relate to teens and help us understand stuff.

Encouraging creativity. One way teachers can make learning more fun for students is to give students assignments that allow them to use their creativity. One African American junior reported preferring assignments that provide an element of choice rather than fixed expectations for how the finished assignment should look:

I don't like essays with just a boring prompts, I like essays where you can decide. Like in my English class it's really hard but he gives us like creative essays, so I feel like if it's creative I can do it because it comes from my imagination, but if it's like a set prompt I have to make it a certain way. I can't explain it... it has to be set and it's not different or unique, or it's just a boring essay.

Teachers can also incorporate students' interests into assignments to engage more students. As an at-risk Hawaiian/Filipino senior explained when asked about his favorite lesson,

I would probably say the first time I made homemade ice-cream in science class. It was kind of fun because we also did it in groups, so we learned how to make ice cream and we did it with people we were more comfortable around, so it gave us a sense of fun for doing it, and there was a prize afterwards for best ice cream.

Another student appreciated the time and effort her favorite teacher put into creating her own assignments to make them more customizable for her students: "My other favorite teacher is Senora Martinez, the Spanish teacher," said one African American junior. I like her because she teaches us Spanish but it's in a fun way. Like with some teachers they will just make us do book work and read the book and try to conjugate verbs, she makes her own homework ... And she gives us activities and fun projects."

One important way some students mentioned to keep students engaged is the teaching strategies teachers select for lessons.

Teaching strategies. Three students mentioned being more engaged in their learning when they are interested in the learning activities. As one at-risk Hawaiian/Filipino senior said, "Teachers can engage us in group activities or hands-on activities. That helps me to learn more because I am more engaged with the lesson that day." Another African American junior said she prefers working on projects over seat work because they are more interesting and have less boundaries: "I like projects. I like projects I can take home and make a power point or a model of something. I like hands-on work."

Group work. One teaching strategy six students said they prefer is working in peer groups. Students reported that they prefer to work in groups because if they need help they can ask other students. As one African American junior explained: "I like labs better in groups than instead of just by myself because when I am in a group I can ask other people if I don't understand something in class, then I could see if maybe like four other people to see if they understand it, and then we could put all our ideas together in one answer that's right."

However, eight students (including seven of the nine students in the focus group interview) reported disliking group work because students become too easily distracted and don't complete quality work. As one at-risk Hawaiian senior said:

"I actually don't like working with people unless they are planning on working because some people just mess around. And if I need to get an assignment done I wouldn't want those kind of partners. That's why I like individual work because if you need help you can ask a teacher, or you could ask a peer or classmate. I like one-on-one learning. I don't like to work in groups because then you have fun – too much fun – and then you don't do it. "

Likewise, in the focus group interview (which was composed of mostly "A" students) only two of the nine students reported preferring group work to individual work. However, many of the students said they like group work when they are able to choose their own groups or when they are able to be grouped with other responsible students. The following excerpt from the interview provides a glimpse of the different feelings students have surrounding group work.

“Elouise: It really depends who you have in your group. Like if it was the people in here, I wouldn’t mind group work, because I know I could rely on them.

Irene: Also, for projects, group work is good, but for assignments then...

Elouise: I think group work is good because it teaches you other things. It teaches you outside of just academics – you know, team work and leadership, those kinds of things. Really, nobody else likes group work?

Danielle: In terms of learning, I think I can learn fine by myself.

Elouise: I hate working by myself. I suck at it.”

Pacing. Five students reported that the pacing of lessons affect their learning. One African American junior complained when a teacher is moving too slow she becomes bored and loses focus, but when teachers talk too fast she can’t keep up with the notes. One honor student mentioned that her biggest pet peeve was when teachers “waste time.”

Teachers’ pacing also includes time embedded in lessons for students to ask questions instead of plowing through lectures without pause. “I don’t like when they just babble on and then don’t give us time to ask questions at the time when it’s necessary,” one at-risk Hawaiian senior said. “Maybe we might forget it or in the end it will be confusing because they didn’t give us time to learn so then they will basically have to repeat themselves.”

Pacing includes not only the delivery of the lesson, but also the amount of time teachers provide for students to complete assignments and assessments. Students should be given enough time to complete the assessment so they are able to produce quality work. As one mixed-ethnicity Hawaiian

freshman said, “They need to not be so demanding of everything. Like, give us a due date and push us to the goal, don’t push us too fast so that we are going to break and not want to do it.”

Asking and answering questions. Seven students mentioned that good teachers know when students have questions and how to answer them in ways they can understand. Teachers should be able to explain things in multiple ways until they find the explanation that students comprehend. Two students even went a step further and said that good teachers are able to tell when their students are not understanding something because of facial expressions or because they are forced to ask other students for help.

Three students expressed that they appreciate it when teachers take the time to check in with them individually to see if they are confused about anything. One at-risk Hawaiian senior mentioned that she appreciates when teachers chunk their explanations by steps and then asks students if have any questions after each step. Another at-risk Caucasian senior said he likes it when teachers check in with students one-on-one as they are working on an assignment, but then address the explanation to the entire class in case other students are having the same problem.

Teachers can also use the opportunity to answer questions to further elaborate a concept or provide additional examples. “I really like for me when you can ask a teacher a question that somewhat applies to the concept but it’s a little off topic or advanced and they still know how to answer it, and they give you their best opinion,” one Japanese/Okinawan honor student said in the focus interview. “It’s just remarkable, especially since some people don’t seem to know what they are teaching. They are just, ‘I don’t know, it’s the concept, read your book.’”

Availability outside of class. Three students mentioned that they are grateful when teachers take the time to meet with them outside of class. One African American/Caucasian senior said that one of his

favorite teachers would even meet with him after school to go over assignments for the classes he missed and even work through science experiments with him. One at-risk Hawaiian senior mentioned that her English teacher had a sign-up sheet that students could request additional help outside of class, and that the teacher would email them to set up appointment times.

Patience. Three of the four at-risk students mentioned that good teachers are patient. One at-risk student said this is especially important when a student is struggling to understand something, and another at-risk student said that students not understanding the content is the biggest challenge teachers today are facing.

“Be patient,” one at-risk Hawaiian senior said in her advice to teachers. “If a student needs help or they are not understanding and the teacher is trying to explain it the best way, they can try to figure out a way or be creative to find a new way to break it down and teach it to them so they do understand it. Don’t get frustrated with a student they are working with.”

Using visuals. Three students mentioned that visuals in addition to explanations help them to learn. One student mentioned that charts and visuals help her learn math.

“I guess something to do with our visual besides just hearing it all the time,” a mixed-ethnicity Hawaiian freshman replied when asked what helped her learn best in class. “I like seeing what we are learning because when we are seeing it we are comprehending it better than just hearing it. So we might not understand it until we actually see it.”

Student input/perspective. Three students advised teachers to seek out and be more open to the student perspective. Students know best how they learn, so teachers should ask them. “Ask the students how they learn better and what would help them be better,” one African American/Caucasian senior advised teachers. “Ask students ... and then go from there.”

Teachers can also check in with students frequently to see how they are doing before continuing on. “My advice would be to just see how the kids are doing first, see if everyone is good, and just teach and help them along the way,” one at-risk Chamorro senior said. “Don’t let them become, you know, lost when they are teaching. Just always check in on the kids.”

Seeking to understand the student perspective isn’t just limited to how students learn best. One mixed-ethnicity Hawaiian freshman advised teachers to be more open-minded to try to understand how the students are feeling. “Mostly because students have to understand that you are there to teach them and that you are not there to be our friend, but you also have to understand where we are coming from. Students and teachers are different, but teachers always think that because they are teachers that they are right, but sometimes you got to understand that to some students, they are right, too.”

Parent involvement. One student mentioned that teachers should seek to recruit parental support to enhance opportunities for student success. With added pressure from parents, students are more likely to achieve academic goals. “I feel like if you get your parents involved in the schooling then you will do better,” one African American junior said. “You are not just going to slack or anything; you’re going to do the work.”

Understanding Hawai‘i and the culture. Nine students reported that they perceived differences between students born and raised in Hawai‘i and those from the mainland, and two other students said that they didn’t know. One mixed-ethnicity Hawaiian freshman pointed out that mainland teachers teach in the ways they learned in school, and Hawai‘i teachers do the same. “Mainland students were taught different because of the way that they are and the way they comprehend, and also (who) their teachers (are),” she said. “But Hawaiian students, we try to break it down to the way that we say it. So the way that the teachers learned it is the way they are going to teach us.”

One at-risk Hawaiian senior said she heard that when mainland students move here they find school assignments easier. Another African American senior from the mainland noticed that there is more competition between students on the mainland than in Hawai‘i: “On the mainland it’s all stress, it’s all competing for the higher grade. Like here, we still compete, but it’s not as stressed out as on the mainland. Like people they are more relaxed than when it comes to the mainland.”

Some students mentioned the cultural differences between students from the mainland and Hawai‘i. One African American/Caucasian junior student from the mainland noted the differences in the way mainland students and some local students talk. Another at-risk Chamorro senior echoed the feeling that in Hawai‘i people are less individualistic than those from the mainland, noting: “(In Hawai‘i) everyone is more ‘ohana to each other, so they treat people with more respect and hospitality over here. Here it’s not really like a ‘every man’ thing; everyone works together.”

In the focus group interview, some students said they felt the differences between those from the mainland and those from Hawai‘i derived from the different cultures in which they are raised in:

“Kaya: I think they (people from the mainland) are more cultured.

Elouise: Like they are in a bubble.

Me: Can you elaborate? A bubble...

Ryan: We’re just exposed to different cultures. They are more exposed to European cultures and here it’s more Asian and Southeast Asia and those kind of areas.

Haley: Because of the different cultures we are exposed to, like in Asia it’s wrong to speak back to your elders or your teachers, I think that’s another reason why we are soft-spoken, because we don’t want to talk back. It’s considered rude.

Some students also felt that being a good teacher in Hawai‘i means to recognize and appreciate the cultural diversity of Hawai‘i, and that to do so requires living in Hawai‘i for an extended period.

Elouise: I think (teachers) should be more culturally understanding because Hawai‘i is very diverse, so they shouldn’t just focus... I know it’s mean to say, but some teachers don’t understand the situations we are going through. And because we live in Hawai‘i it’s like a melting pot.

Me: I think that’s important. What do you think teachers can do to be more culturally understanding or recognize the uniqueness of Hawai‘i?

Haley: I think part of it is just living here and experiencing it. And that’s not something you can pay money for – it’s more of just a time thing.”

Building relationships. Ten students mentioned that one of the most important things teachers can do is to build relationships with their students. When teachers build positive relationships with their students the whole atmosphere of a class benefits and makes it less likely that students will misbehave. Building positive relationships with teachers also creates trust, which may make it more likely for students to approach the teacher for help.

An excerpt from the focus group interview provides a brief glimpse at how important students feel a good relationship is with teachers:

“Grace: But I think that still builds off the relationship with the student and the teacher, because I know for me personally if I don’t know the teacher very well I am probably just going to lie about it because I am embarrassed about not knowing something. They have to develop good relationships so that the students want to ask questions.

Me: I've heard that a lot in my interviews – develop good relationships with students. How would a teacher develop good relationships with students?

Danielle: It's kind of like building relationships with anyone. A teacher has to be confident that they can build relationships with students. Like if a teacher is shy then they are automatically shutting themselves out from something that they can do. So teachers themselves should be confident as people, and they should look at students as if they are meeting new people, not like they are a teacher and they are the student.

Grace: I also think that there has to be like a balance between being your teacher and being your friend. Because you don't just want to be a teacher is strict or boring... but you also don't want a teacher that's all about being your friend so they act like a pushover and they don't teach at that point.

Chantel: Or they are more caught up in your social life than they are in your education."

Caring about students. One way to build good relationships with students is to care about them.

Three of the four at-risk teacher mentioned their English teacher as their favorite teacher because she constantly shows that she cares about them: "I have a favorite English 4 teacher Ms. Burns because she always helps us out and she never lets us do things on your own," said an at-risk Chamarro senior. "She always put her time into us and our learning. And she really cares; she shows that she cares all the time."

Another at-risk Caucasian senior said of the same teacher:

As of right now, I guess you can tell, it's Ms. Burns, because she knows where to draw the line. She's half friendly and half teacher. She knows where she needs to be the teacher and where she can be your friend. And she's kind of like my mom, because I am scared of her, I'm only people who can scare

me and the ones who I respect highly, and she brings that to the table every day she comes to the period. She makes English *fun*, and she makes me actually understand more than I ever thought I actually would.

Another African American junior went so far as to say teachers have the ability to change or even save a life simply by making the effort to care:

“I feel like teachers shouldn't be all into students' private lives, but if they feel like something is happening... like if a student is getting 'A's' one quarter and the next quarter they are getting an 'F,' then try to talk to that student about how they are doing, not just sit there and say, 'Oh they are just lazy.' Talk to them and ask them if they need help. And if they need someone to talk to then try to be there for them and not just sit there are let stuff happen. Because you could actually save a someone' life if a kid is suicidal or something.”

Teachers as “friends”. One of the most divisive topics among students is the level of relationship teachers should have with their students. Two students felt as though a good teacher becomes a friend to students, another student believed that friendship and teaching have nothing to do with each other, and four students believed that while a teacher might not necessarily be students' friends they should certainly care about their students.

One at-risk Caucasian senior mentioned that he thinks the relationships between teachers and students in Hawai‘i is unique: “I think down here the students get to know the teacher a little better and they become friends. Cause that’s what I see around here – the teachers are friends with the students. I have never been to the mainland so I wouldn’t know, but I would say that it is very different.”

One mixed-ethnicity Hawaiian freshman student said one of the things that made her favorite teachers so special was that she went beyond just being a teacher to students:

“She was funny, she wasn’t sarcastic, and she knew how to communicate with students besides trying to be just a teacher. She was (more than) a teacher. Teachers aren’t supposed to be friends, but she became a friend to all the students even though we saw her as a teacher.”

Another at-risk Caucasian senior said the advice he would give teachers to find the balance between being students’ teachers and friends.

“Just know when to draw the line – when to be the friend and when to be the teacher – and to show respect too because that’s how I am. If you respect me then I respect you, and if not then you are just my teacher and not anything else than that.”

Mutual respect. One of the easiest ways to damage a relationship with a student is to disrespect them, even if teachers do not intend to nor even realize that they are being disrespectful. A mixed-ethnicity Hawaiian freshmen said:

Students don’t like it when teachers try to be all sarcastic with you and try to be rude to us and saying that we need to respect them but they aren’t respecting us and the way that we learn. Like when we come to school there are some students who don’t already

want to be in school, and then the way that some teachers teach us they put down the way that we are, so it's like we don't want to try anymore,"

Another at-risk Caucasian senior said when teachers disrespect students it can affect teaching and learning for the entire class:

The thing that I don't like is when they kind of talk down to us like we're babies. Because other teachers tell us this is high school we're not elementary students, but some of those teachers they just talk down to us no matter what, even if it's a period they had before we get the aftermath of what happened and it's kind of really annoying and it just makes you distraught for the rest of the class because they don't really touch on certain things or they go too fast.

Overcoming challenges. Students mentioned many different challenges teachers face. Two students mentioned students' attachments to their phones and the difficulties teachers face trying to get students to put them away for the entire class. One Japanese/Chinese senior said in the focus group interview that with the school culture now shifting toward an emphasis on more heterogeneous classes that are being asked to teach to a range of student abilities that is too diverse to reach all students. "I mean it is so difficult to teach in a heterogeneous classroom, and it's not fair to the kids. "I mean the ones who actually want to get ahead. And the teachers...they suck. And they just get complained at. It sucks... It must suck to be a teacher."

Three students mentioned the new mandatory English curriculum Springboard that the DOE began implementing in middle and high school classes last year. In the focus group interview a

Japanese/Chinese senior mentioned that forcing teachers to teach with certain materials binds their teaching style so they are forced to teach in ways they aren't experienced with.

So once you force a teacher to teach with something, like Springboard, where they are not very comfortable with the material or the structure, then you are forcing them to do something that *they* are not comfortable with and they are not going to be comfortable teaching it to students, and they are not going to be able to teach to the students what they need to know.

She pointed out that the people making the decisions about what students are learning are working Department of Education desk jobs and are not the ones who are actually in the classroom and know what engages student and how they best learn.

One Japanese/Chinese senior male added in the focus group interview that “standardizing in general” is good for new teachers because they always have work to give to students, “but teachers that have already been established for quite some time and who are already good at what they do, they feel like they are getting brought down to the level of a new teacher. They feel like that’s not their place.”

One student who also mentioned the Springboard curriculum as a challenge said that good teachers adapt to challenges as they come the best they can. “They get used to it over the years,” an at-risk Hawaiian senior said. “It’s not going to happen right away; it takes time. Each day they do it they just have to adapt. They just got to put pieces of the new ways to learn and teach there and keep adding it all in until they get it all.

Classroom management. Eight students reported that one of the biggest challenges that many teachers face is managing student behavior. “It’s just that the kids don’t respect them as much as they should, and that’s something that has been sort of out of touch with our generation as of late,” an at-risk Caucasian senior said. “So that’s something that’s really kind of crappy thing for them is that they are constantly disrespected by people and they are looked down upon by the people who should maybe be looking up with them.”

This challenge is augmented when teachers have to take into account many different types of student attitudes and previous experiences. “Controlling students is always going to be difficult,” a mixed-ethnicity Hawaiian freshman said. “You can’t just base yourself on one student and judge the whole class based on that one student. You have to individually understand the characteristics of each student besides just pinpointing everyone based on one student.”

Another student who said she felt managing disrespectful students was the greatest challenge teachers faced advised teachers to use class time to address student misbehavior. “I feel like if a teacher just sits around and lets it happen then it will just happen over and over,” an African American junior said. “And you know how kids talk, right? So let’s say like, I tell my friend, ‘This teacher, he doesn’t care about me.’ What if they get that teacher next year? She’ll say, ‘Oh, I don’t have to do my work because they teacher isn’t going to do anything.’ So basically just every kid isn’t going to do their work.”

Fairness. Two students said of their biggest inhibitions to their learning is when teachers treat students or even entire classes unfairly. One Japanese/Okinawan senior mentioned in the focus group interview that “favoritism” is something teachers do that she dislikes the most. Another African American senior mentioned she disliked it when favoritism extended to entire periods:

You know how some sometimes in class you have those teachers who will say 'you guys are my favorite period; I don't like this period.' Like I feel teachers shouldn't do that though. Shouldn't they care about all of them. I mean, you're like a parent, you wouldn't just say 'I love this child more than that child,' or 'I love this child more than that child.' I think a parent should say I love all my kids the same."

Chapter VI

Discussion and Conclusion

Based on the sixteen student interviews, the researcher identified five main themes that answered the research question: understanding the Hawai‘i culture, teaching the content, classroom management, building relationships, and overcoming challenges. This section will present the most significant primary findings from the study and their implications, possible limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research.

Understanding the Hawai‘i Culture

The results of the study show that all students who were directly asked whether there were perceived difference between mainland students and students from Hawai‘i felt that there were. These differences ranged from attitudes toward school to cultural differences. As some students pointed out in the focus group interview, those from Hawai‘i and those from the mainland are exposed to different cultural groups growing up. Many students from the mainland have exposure to cultures influenced by more European beliefs and attitudes, while Hawai‘i’s culture is a unique combination of European cultures and a mishmash of the other cultures that have comprised such a small archipelago. To ground these differences in attitudes in the theoretical perspective of this paper, because learning is a social activity, the conversations we have are internalized and become part of our way of thinking. Exposure to different attitudes and ways of speaking produces different personalities and attitudes, which further affects who we tend to socialize with. In addition to the mixture of cultural values, the Hawai‘i culture is complicated because of the resistance some in Hawai‘i feel toward the existence of European and other foreign values that were spread here because of the arrival of the Europeans and other cultural groups. These attitudes have perpetuated a “local” mindset that is unique to Hawai‘i and that speaking and

understanding Hawai‘i Creole is a significant part of (Tamura, 2006), and that some in Hawai‘i consider so important that they rather protect that local identity than conform to the dominant culture (Au, 2008). As one student pointed out, it is important that a great teacher in Hawai‘i be able to understand the situations both local and mainland students are going through. By understanding each student better and their unique personalities, teachers can build better relationships with their students, allowing them to scaffold more effectively because they know them better.

Recommendations. To be a great teacher in Hawai‘i requires more than just a solid grasp of the content or pedagogical abilities. Being a great teacher goes beyond students’ grades or their grasp of the content – a great teacher cares about students and has a good grasp of the “hidden curriculum” of life and the challenges students encounter. It requires a teacher to be aware of underlying social patterns and to truly listen to their students to realize what they are going through and how they can help, both academically and personally. It requires an understanding of exactly what makes Hawai‘i so unique and a familiarity with what the students are going through being raised in such a unique place. Students are all going through similar but unique maturation processes, and a great teacher should be aware of what that process entails. By recognizing where students are in their zones of proximal development, teachers can help guide students understanding more by scaffolding to more complex ways of thinking. In addition, one student felt that no class could teach a teacher what is unique about living and teaching in Hawai‘i, but it is only something that teachers can learn about living here over time.

Possible future studies will look at what else is unique about living in Hawai‘i and how that uniqueness can be conveyed to new teachers. In the 2012-2013 school year the DOE implemented a mandatory program in the Windward District with the purpose of orienting new teachers to the Hawai‘i culture. New teachers were immersed into traditional Native Hawaiian experiences, including poi pounding, ti leaf making, and Native Hawai‘i cuisine and music. While the program was brief (one all-

day workshop per quarter, with a follow-up reflection-based meeting a few weeks later), it did provide teachers with snapshots of the beliefs and values many of their students are exposed to outside of school. It would be interesting to compare student achievement and teacher satisfaction before and after the program was implemented to gauge its effectiveness.

One possible implication for future research directed at improving education in Hawai‘i would be to look closer at the different teaching styles of teachers from Hawai‘i and teachers from the mainland. How do teachers in Hawai‘i and teachers on the mainland gauge where students are in their zones of proximal development and then use scaffolding to guide them to higher-levels of understanding? Are there any general similarities or differences? It would be interesting to compare the curriculum of subjects in mainland districts to comparable ones here in Hawai‘i. Is the work “harder” on the mainland? How so? Do educators in Hawai‘i continue to “dumb down” their curriculums so that they are teaching what they believe their students can handle (Au, 2008), and to what extent? What would happen if Hawai‘i students were taught using the same curriculum that students from the mainland learn from (that may be what the Hawai‘i DOE is experimenting with the Springboard curriculum)? How can the DOE and teachers adapt proven curriculums to engage Hawai‘i students?

Group Work

When I first began teaching in 2012-2013, the educational system was undergoing a shift toward more collaborative-based learning. Teachers were discouraged from over-emphasizing teacher-centered direct instruction and lectures in favor of a more constructivist-collaborative approach to learning in which students work to construct their own meaning, often working together. In terms of the sociocultural perspective, group work should be an effective strategy if there is a capable peer working in the group who can help guide the other group members to his or her more advanced understanding. While these approaches were considered more student-centered and effective because instead of

regurgitating information students are more actively involved in learning experiences, I struggled with implementing this constructivist-collaborative approach at times because students weren't used to creating their own knowledge and they tended to go off task when working in group so that the quality of the finished product was mediocre. My observations are consistent in Wang et. Al's study that found that the size or type of instruction, such as whole-class or peer group, was among the bottom five influences on student learning.

When I began this study I assumed most students would mention group work as a strategy they liked. While a few students did indeed mention group work as a preferred learning strategy because they could work with other students to figure out anything they don't understand, I was surprised by the amount of students who reported that they did not like group work. While two of the four at-risk students mentioned preferring group work, the other two at-risk students preferred to work individually with occasional teacher support. One of the students mentioned that this was because students tend to have "too much fun" and don't do the work. One flaw with group work is that the groups may lack a strong leader or a more knowledgeable peer who can lead the group, or if there is such a member present in the group they may lack effective scaffolding strategies.

In a poll of the nine students who participated in the focus group, only two of the nine reported that they prefer to work in groups. This may be because the focus group interview was composed almost entirely of honor students who are likely used to being the ones looked at to lead the group, but they are more comfortable just producing quality work without the added challenge of having to guide others with less advanced understanding of the content than them.

Recommendations. Teachers are being encouraged to implement more collaborative approaches to learning, but are students really learning or achieving more in groups than they would individually?

In this researcher’s experience, students tend to take a lot more time to complete assignments in groups than they would if the same assignment was assigned as individual work. Is this extra time allotted to allow students to work in groups “worth it” in terms of student achievement? A more collaborative-based learning is touted as more engaging to students, but are students engaged on the work they are supposed to be doing or talking with each other about the opposite sex or what they are doing over the weekend? In other words, learning is social and the conversations we have become internalized, but when working in groups are the conversations students are internalizing advancing their knowledge about the learning objective or other matters? Future studies could look at student achievement over the course of a unit in which one teacher emphasizes group-work for one-class and individual work for another class both learning the same content and compare student achievement at the end of the unit. Another future study the DOE could easily implement is to conduct a student survey with a sample size much bigger than the one assembled for the purposes of this study about their favorite learning strategies.

Teachers as “Friends”

One of the aspects of being a good teacher that students disagreed on the most is the relationship a teacher should have with their students. One student felt it was unique in Hawai‘i that teachers become “friends” with students. Another student encouraged teachers to almost assume the role of a counselor to students, checking in on them when something appears to be wrong or their academic performance is impacted. This student went so far as to say that teachers can be lifesavers who can help students who are on the brink of giving up. To frame this attitude in the sociocultural perspective, teachers are often the more developmentally mature individual with a better understanding of how to deal with the issues life presents better than most students, and they are often able to scaffold how to deal with issues students are facing based on their own experiences. Still other students thought that teachers should

focus on their actual teaching and that they should stay out of students’ personal lives while still building and maintaining positive relationships with students.

Recommendations. Perhaps the proper relationship between a teacher and students differs depending on the context of the situation and the individual student. A teacher cannot be a savior to 120 students. To help a student through a problem usually means teachers shouldering additional burdens themselves, and many teachers are already carrying loads that are heavy enough. Yet as teachers we cannot help but grow to care about these young people who we see each day.

Perhaps the students who teachers should focus on the most are the ones that nobody else notices. If teachers are going to focus extra energy in addition to planning, grading, instructing, attending meetings, and satisfying DOE job requirements, those are the students who need it the most. They are the ones most likely not going to go on to become rich or famous like the students many teachers tend to lavish attention and praise on (and for good reason), but they are the ones who could benefit from it the most. So perhaps the balance in being a “teacher” and being a “friend” can be found by doing the best you can for all students (and if you can become their friend, great) while focusing on the students who could use the extra support and attention the most.

It would be worthwhile for the DOE and the future of America to include ways teachers can identify and research-backed ways they can help troubled students. I personally have received almost no training in this area, so when I see a student in need or I’m thrown into a situation I have to rely on experience and instinct. There are many students who are intelligent (perhaps not even necessarily in the “academic” sense) but who are confused and awkward around others, and if a teacher can simply make a point to check in with them to see if they can help somehow then perhaps there would be less teen suicides or future sociopaths. It can be a harsh world filled with pockets of darkness, and the one big

advantage a teacher has is that they have navigated it and can help guide students throughout it. One could go even further and argue that certain teachers who have valuable life experience could receive specialized training to identify students who need the most support and the methods that would provide the most help. Instead of waiting for troubled students to find their way to the counselors (and most probably don't) it would be beneficial for the future generations if there are trained specialists (perhaps one in each "house" or "grade level") within actual classrooms who are prepared to reach out to those students. The DOE could provide training through professional development, and perhaps those teachers could even receive additional compensation for their time.

Student Engagement

One of the biggest detriments to student learning that was reported by many students was when teachers simply give students a worksheet and tell them to complete it. Students find this boring. This learning strategy also goes against just about every aspect of the sociocultural perspective. There is no socializing, no conversations, no more knowledgeable person to guide and scaffold, and no way to gauge the students zone of proximal development. Students may read the lesson and complete the assignment correctly, and some may even remember the lesson, but if one of the purposes of school is to instill a lifelong love of learning in students, does this kind of book work really constitute "teaching?" One could make the argument that the textbook authors are the ones doing the teaching, and that the only planning involved in a lesson like this is how much time to give the students before going over the answers. If student engagement enhances learning and retention, how much learning is actually occurring when students sit there and stare at a paper the teacher is going to go over anyways after an hour?

Instead, some students reported liking assignments that are fun and engaging. Students mentioned skits, projects, and “hands-on” work as assignments they enjoy doing that are also conducive to their learning or showing that they have obtained the learning objective. These are the types of assignments that make students look forward to a class instead of dreading going to it. Instead of a teacher simply asking what would be a good assignment for the lesson that day, perhaps teachers should instead ask, “How can I make advancing my students zone of proximal development more fun for them?”

Future studies will explore the strategies and assignments that students find the most engaging and that makes them more interested in the learning. If more strategies are identified then teachers can add these to their teaching arsenal, increasing student engagement and achievement.

Overcoming Challenges

The biggest challenges teachers face was one of the questions that elicited a variety of different responses. Some of the challenges students mentioned that teachers face is managing difficult students, student progress affecting teacher’s reputations, students not putting away their phones, dealing with disrespectful students, students not understanding content, negative experiences with previous classes affecting the next ones, teacher pay, and standardization of teaching, such as DOE English teachers being forced to adapt their teaching to the new Springboard curriculum.

One of the challenges mentioned most often was English teachers having to adapt to the new Springboard curriculum. One student mentioned that this knocks English teachers down to the level of new teachers. The curriculums that experienced teachers have honed from years of learning what works and what doesn’t through trial and error is suddenly replaced by a curriculum that DOE desk workers chose for students.

Recommendations. Future studies should compare student achievement of teachers using standardized curriculums such as Springboard to original curriculums created by teachers themselves. If the main goal of teaching is to enhance student achievement, then the DOE should know if the curriculum they selected scaffolds the content more effectively than the curriculums teachers create and that it indeed leads to greater student achievement than the ones created by teachers.

In the meantime, perhaps a balance can be found. Instead of forcing teachers to teach according to a prescribed lesson plan, perhaps the DOE can name common texts, assignments, and final assessments, and then allow individual teachers to decide how to teach students so that they attain the necessary skills needed to succeed. Having common assessments and assignments will allow teachers to work together to provide input and ideas on how to help students achieve while still allowing for teacher freedom to choose lessons that they feel comfortable teaching. If learning is a social activity, then allowing teachers to work together toward common goals will enhance teaching and learning rather than simply giving eventual teachers prescribed curriculums and lesson plans. Curriculums like Springboard can still be available for new teachers, if teachers feel like using it, or in case of emergency (in my experience, assignments in the Springboard curriculum can make excellent emergency substitute plans). It can be extremely awkward to teach in a way a teacher is not comfortable teaching. By providing common end goals (summative) and “check points” (formative) assignments while not binding teachers to a prescribed curriculum allows for a balance between teacher accountability and freedom.

Further, as Au recommended, since it takes about six years for a speaker of Hawaii Creole to reach proficiency in essay literacy, it may be more beneficial for the DOE to stop searching for generic curriculums that teachers feel are binding and instead search for the most successful department-created curriculums that schools have realized success with. The DOE can share these original curriculums with similar schools for them to customize to their own students.

Contribution to Research

This study contributed to the research on education in Hawai‘i by providing the perspective of a diverse range of students, many of whom are seniors who are nearing the end of their postsecondary education. To this researcher’s knowledge no study has attempted to interview students attending school in Hawai‘i to ask their feelings about getting a public education in Hawai‘i and what teachers can focus on to improve in their teaching. From this study we have learned that many students do consider Hawai‘i students and mainland to be different from each other, and one student felt it is important for Hawai‘i teachers to be aware of these differences and their implications for teaching. This study also shined light on a larger shift the educational establishment has been moving toward with collaborative learning, which many students reported they do not prefer. Future studies will explore whether this shift is inhibiting or helping student achievement. Likewise, the national system is also grappling with the issue of standardization of content, and the local student who addressed this tended to argue for the side of teacher freedom rather than standardization.

This study also addressed an issue that certainly isn’t unique to Hawai‘i but one student felt was more pronounced here: teachers becoming “friends” with their students. While there was no clear student consensus on the proper boundaries a teacher should have with students, this study did call attention for future studies to explore this issue. Finally, this study adds to the literature by encouraging teachers to think of ways they can make learning more fun for their students, which is not a consideration many teachers take into account when planning a lesson.

Limitations of Study

While this study included the perspectives of diverse students, it is important to keep in mind that the sample size was small (16 students). It is possible that interviewing more students would have

yielded additional codes or findings that addressed those codes. Another limitation was in the student interviews. Some students might have been nervous or rushed, which may have affected their responses. Finally, while every student spoke at least once in the focus group interview, some students spoke more than others, and four students in particular talked the most.

Recommendations

Teacher preparation programs. Teacher preparation programs can better prepare their student teachers for the rigors of actual teaching by interviewing students who have graduated from the program and who went into teaching about how they wish the program better prepared them. This would likely include strategies to build relationships with students, which some students considered being integral to being a great teacher. Building relationships makes students more comfortable around teachers, which makes it easier for teachers to get to know individual students and their zones of proximal developments. This was something I wasn't prepared to actively focus on my first year of teaching – I assumed the students and I would naturally bond. But it takes work to get the students to trust and like you. Strategies such as standing outside of class and greeting students, thinking of good questions to ask students about their interests and lives, finding ways to make students feel good about themselves or feel smart, and ironically when to leave students alone are all lessons teacher preparations can include without much additional support or preparations.

Further, teacher preparation programs should interview teachers who are not from Hawai‘i but who have experience teaching here about their perceptions of teaching in Hawai‘i and what makes it unique from teaching in the mainland. Some of the professors who taught me in my teacher preparation program had little actual experience teaching in Hawai‘i classrooms (although many had teaching experience on the mainland). It is important to identify what is unique about teaching in Hawai‘i

classrooms to better prepare teachers entering the profession. Subjects like Hawai‘i’s history, pidgin English, and local culture should all be covered so teachers are not surprised when they find themselves in front of a class of students without a mentor teacher’s support for the first time.

Finally, teacher preparation programs should prepare teachers for the challenges of standardization of content and how teachers can find the balance in satisfying the DOE’s requirements of teachers and their freedom to teach what and how they believe is best. New teachers should be prepared to plan and adapt their lesson plans based from texts and assignments they did not select or create while at the same time recognizing that what engages local students are not necessarily those strategies that mainland curriculum writers believe are best.

Teachers. One recommendation that any teacher no matter how experienced they are can implement at any time in the school year is to simply care more about their students. Teachers should put aside their own issues and focus on helping the students while they are at work. This definitely includes helping students obtain educational objectives, but can also include helping students to grow as people and helping students who are dealing with personal issues. A simple note or even just a smile and friendly “hello” to a student who looks depressed could help turn their day around. Helping to raise the future generation is a great privilege that teachers are entrusted with, and teachers should not take that privilege for granted.

Another recommendation to teachers is to think about the student perspective. Most students don’t want to be in school or do work for a letter that is attributed to their name at the end of the school year. Teachers should realize that and strive to make their class places students can look forward to coming to. There is no reason why advancing students zones of proximal developments can’t be fun, too. It doesn’t take that much more planning to include an activity students can enjoy instead of copying

a worksheet for students to complete quietly. At the very least teachers can add in a fun element to the worksheet (such as making it into a game by letting students who finish the answer first shoot baskets for extra credit points). Making learning fun doesn't have to impede learning; it can enhance it!

Another recommendation to teachers is to engage in constant self-reflection about their growth as a teacher. At the end of each day teachers should ask themselves what went well and what could be improved. By identifying the weaknesses and strengths in a lesson a teacher can begin to learn what types of strategies and teaching methods are effective and which ones should be replaced. Teachers should constantly be seeking to become better. Once the desire to become the best teacher possible is extinguished, perhaps it is time to find another profession to become adept at.

Conclusion

For this study the researcher attempted to answer the research question “What do Hawai‘i students think makes a great teacher?” by interviewing sixteen students of diverse ethnicities and prior educational achievement. Through the student interviews several themes emerged that addressed the research question, including the perceived differences between Hawai‘i students and mainland students and the importance of Hawai‘i teachers recognizing those differences, the complications of the shift toward collaborative learning and standardization of teaching, the ambiguity in the closeness of student-teacher relationships, and the importance of keeping students engaged by making learning fun and avoiding book work. While one of the advantages of the study was that a diverse array of students was interviewed, the sample size was small so there is no guarantee the same responses would emerge with a larger sample size. Future studies will attempt to pinpoint the characteristics that make living, learning, and teaching in Hawai‘i unique and how teachers can utilize that uniqueness to enhance the effectiveness of their teaching. To be a great teacher in Hawai‘i includes recognizing the specialness of

Hawai'i, the people, and the culture while at the same time possessing the tangible and intangible qualities that make a teacher great anywhere.

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*Appendix A***The 7Cs of the Student Tripod Survey****“CARE**

- I like the way my teacher treats me when I need help.
- My teacher is nice to me when I ask questions.
- My teacher in this class makes me feel that he/she really cares about me.
- If I am sad or angry, my teacher helps me feel better.
- My teacher in this class encourages me to do my best.
- My teacher seems to know if something is bothering me.
- My teacher gives us time to explain our ideas.

CONTROL

- My classmates behave the way the teacher wants them to.
- Our class stays busy and does not waste time.
- Students behave so badly in this class that it slows down our learning.
- Everybody knows what they should be doing and learning in this class.

CLARIFY

- My teacher explains things in very orderly ways.
- In this class, we learn to correct our mistakes.
- My teacher explains difficult things clearly.
- My teacher has several good ways to explain each topic that we cover in this class.
- I understand what I’m supposed to be learning in class.
- My teacher knows when the class understands, and when we do not.
- This class is neat – everything has a place and things are easy to find.
- If you don’t understand something, my teacher explains it another way.

CHALLENGE

- My teacher pushes us to think hard about the things we read.
- My teacher pushes everyone to work hard.
- In this class, we have to think about the writing we do.
- In this class, my teacher accepts nothing less than our full effort.

CAPTIVATE

- School work is interesting.
- We have interesting homework.
- Homework helps me learn.

- School work is not very enjoyable. (Do you agree?)

CONFER

- When he/she is teaching us, my teacher asks us whether we understand.
- My teacher asks questions to be sure we are following along when he/she is teaching.
- My teacher checks to make sure we understand what he/she is teaching us.
- My teacher tells us what we are learning and why.
- My teacher wants us to share our thoughts.
- Students speak up and share their ideas about class work.
- My teacher wants me to explain my answers – why I think what I think.

CONSOLIDATE

- My teacher takes the time to summarize what we learn each day.
- When my teacher marks my work, he/she writes on my papers to help me understand.” (Hawai‘i DOE, 2014).

Appendix B

Student Interview Questions

- 1) Do you think Hawai'i students are unique from students on the mainland? How?
- 2) What are some things that teachers do to help you learn something that are helpful for you?
- 3) What are some things that teachers do that are not helpful to your learning of new things?
- 4) What does a great teacher do if you do not understand something?
- 5) Who was your favorite teacher throughout your educational experience? Your current grade level?
- 6) What are your favorite learning activities to do in class? Why?
- 7) What was your favorite lesson given by a teacher? Why?
- 8) What do you think are the greatest challenges facing teachers?
- 9) How do great teachers overcome those challenges?
- 10) What do you think it means to be a great teacher to Hawai'i students? What distinguishes great teachers from average or bad ones?
- 11) What advice or feedback would you give to teachers to become better?

Appendix C

Internal Review Board Approval




MÄNOA

MEMORANDUM

Office of Research Compliance UNIVERSITY
Human Studies Program of HAWAII

April 1, 2015

TO: Mark Brislin
Principal Investigator
Educational Psychology

FROM: Denise A. Lin-DeShetler, MPH, MA 
Director

SUBJECT: CHS #22902- "What Makes Good Teaching to Hawaii Students?"

Under an expedited review procedure, the research project identified above was approved for one year on March 18, 2015 by the University of Hawaii (UH) Human Studies Program. The application qualified for expedited review under CFR 46.110 and 21 CFR 56.110, Category (7).

This memorandum is your record of the Human Studies Program approval of this study. Please maintain it with your study records.

The Human Studies Program approval for this project will expire on March 17, 2016. If you expect your project to continue beyond this date, you must submit an application for renewal of this Human Studies Program approval. The Human Studies Program approval must be maintained for the entire term of your project.

If, during the course of your project, you intend to make changes to this study, you must obtain approval from the Human Studies Program prior to implementing any changes. If an Unanticipated Problem occurs during the course of the study, you must notify the Human Studies Program within 24 hours of knowledge of the problem. A formal report must be submitted to the Human Studies Program within 10 days. The definition of "Unanticipated Problem" may be found at:

http://hawaii.edu/irb/download/documents/SOPP_101_UP_Reporting.pdf, and the report form may be downloaded here: http://hawaii.edu/irb/download/fonns/A_UP_Report.doc.

You are required to maintain complete records pertaining to the use of humans as participants in your research. This includes all information or materials conveyed to and received from participants as well as signed consent forms, data, analyses, and results. These records must be maintained for at least three years following project completion or termination, and they are subject to inspection and review by the Human Studies Program and other authorized agencies.

1960 East-West Road
Biomedical Sciences Building 8104
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96822 Telephone: (808)
956-5007

Fax: (808) 956-8683

An Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Institution

CHS #22902

Page 2

April 1, 2015

Please notify this office when your project is complete. Upon notification, we will close our files pertaining to your project. Reactivation of the Human Studies Program approval will require a new Human Studies Program application.

Please contact this office if you have any questions or require assistance. We appreciate your cooperation, and wish you success with your research.

*Appendix D***Hawaii Department of Education Data Sharing Agreement and Work Plan**

Data Sharing Agreement between
Mark Brislin and
Hawaii Department of Education

This data sharing agreement allows the Hawaii Department of Education (HIDOE) to share individual student or staff data and/or personally identifiable student information (hereafter “PII”) from education records to Mark Brislin for the following purpose(s):

- The study is part of a thesis (Plan A) proposal required for completion of the University of Hawaii at Manoa’s Educational Psychology program.
- The final work product will be in the form of a qualitative written report that compiles common themes that emerge from student interviews, with a particular focus on overlapping themes among two or more students. The final report will be submitted to a thesis committee composed of educational psychology professors (listed below), the principal of Pearl City High School (the site of the study), and the Department of Education.

This agreement authorizes Mark Brislin access to the data in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 34 CFR §99.31, in order to conduct a research project on behalf of HIDOE. Disclosing data/information from education records to Mark Brislin in no way assigns him or anyone on his project team ownership of the data/information or records; therefore, the data/information and/or records may be re-disclosed only with written permission from HIDOE or otherwise in compliance with FERPA and its regulations.

Attached to this data sharing agreement is a detailed work plan describing the data sharing activities related to the project “**What Makes Good Teaching to Hawaii Students?**” Other related documents will be kept on file by HIDOE for reference, review and in the course of an audit, including certificates of completion from the project lead(s)/principal investigator(s) listed in the attached work plan for the online training “FERPA 101: For Local Education Agencies,” available at <http://ptac.ed.gov>.

1. Start Date: Upon full execution of this agreement.
2. End Date: December 31, 2015
3. Names and positions of non-HIDOE personnel authorized to access the data:

- Mark Brislin, Graduate Student, University of Hawaii at Manoa, Educational Psychology (EDEP)
- Michael Salzman, Professor, University of Hawaii At Manoa
- Marie Iding, Professor, University of Hawaii at Manoa
- Kathleen Ratliffe, Professor, University of Hawaii at Manoa

Should staff change over the course of the project, Mark Brislin must inform HIDOE of any changes to the list above by requesting a modification to the attached work plan. Upon entering into the project, a new project team member will be required to adhere to the terms set forth in this data sharing agreement.

4. Specific data authorized for sharing:

HIDOE will share the following data with Mark Brislin under the study or evaluation exception in FERPA, 34 CFR §99.31(a)(6)(i): Student responses to survey/interview questions that are specifically designed for this thesis study. A copy of these survey/interview questions will be kept on file at HIDOE’s Data Governance and Analysis Branch.

5. Limitations to the use and release of the data:

Mark Brislin is authorized by way of this agreement to access the specified data and use said data only to meet the purpose(s) of this agreement. If the data, as a whole, that are presented to Mark Brislin contain PII, the entire data set is considered PII and should be handled as such, and is protected under FERPA and this agreement. HIDOE maintains the right to conduct audits or other monitoring activities of Mark Brislin policies, procedures and systems. In the event that a violation occurs, Mark Brislin may be ineligible to receive PII data for a minimum of five years. HIDOE also reserves the right to pursue legal redress related to the violation. HIDOE has final decision-making authority for all disputes related to this agreement. In the event the agreement is terminated, all data and information derived by the data will be destroyed upon notification of the termination and the authorized representative shall send written verification of the destruction to HIDOE.

6. Data destruction protocols employed by Mark Brislin :

Mark Brislin agrees to destroy the data within 30 days after the end date of this agreement. This requirement does not apply to signed consent forms, which, in accordance with 45 CFR §46.115(b) “IRB Records,” may be retained for three years after completion of the research.

7. Data protection plan:

All audio recordings will be secured throughout the study and destroyed upon its completion. All transcripts that have students' real names removed entirely or replaced with codes or fake names to protect their identity. All consent forms and data will be kept in a file cabinet inside a secured room at Pearl City High School.

8. Description of disciplinary policy for FERPA violation:

Mark Brislin will fully comply with FERPA by protecting the privacy of student records and the confidentiality of all data in their possession. Should an unintentional violation arise, Mark Brislin will report it immediately to HODOE and take the necessary steps to come into compliance as well as deal with violators within Mark Brislin's applicable personnel policies and procedures. In the event Mark Brislin learns of a security breach involving the data, he must report it immediately to HODOE as outlined in the guidance document, "Guidelines for Notification of Security Breaches of Personal Information" (available at bit.ly/SecBreachGuide) so that breach notification can occur as required by Hawaii Revised Statute 487N. Any breach is the responsibility and liability of the Mark Brislin, which, by entering into this agreement, agrees to indemnify and defend HODOE should HODOE be found liable as a result of the breach.

Even if HODOE shares de-identified data with Mark Brislin, he will provide HODOE with a copy of the study results or final report of the study prior to publication for review to ensure that no PII is contained with the document. This includes data such as aggregated counts that are small enough to allow a reasonable person in the school community to identify the student(s) with reasonable certainty.

We, the undersigned, agree to adhere to the terms and conditions specified above.

State of Hawaii
Department of Education

University of Hawai'i at Manoa
College of Education, Educational Psychology (EDEP)

x _____

x _____

Joseph Halfmann
Principal, Pearl City High School

Mark Brislin
Graduate student

Date _____

Date _____

What Do Students Think Makes a Great Teacher in Hawai'i?

Data Sharing Agreement Work Plan**HIDOE partner**

Name: Principal Joseph Halfmann

School/office: Pearl City High School

Requestor Information**Project lead/principal investigator**

Name: Mark Brislin Organization: University of Hawaii at Manoa/Pearl City High School
 Email: mbrislin@hawaii.edu Phone: (808) 375-4930

Point of contact (if different from project lead/principal investigator)

Name: _____ Organization: _____
 Email: _____ Phone: _____

1. Project title/subject**What Makes Good Teaching to Hawaii Students?****2. Related HIDOE research application or written agreement:** Not applicable

a. Document type:

 Research application MOU MOA Contractb. Document #:

c. Document title:

d. Approval period:

Start date: Not approved yetEnd date: **3. Purpose of data sharing activities:** Contracted services/research on behalf of HIDOE Non-contracted services/research on behalf of HIDOE Independent use/research (for non-HIDOE purposes)

a. Detailed description of purpose (e.g., for contracted services, HIDOE federal reporting requirements, grant, graduate degree, publication):

What Do Students Think Makes a Great Teacher in Hawai'i?

The study is part of a thesis (Plan A) proposal required for completing of the University of Hawaii at Manoa's Educational Psychology program. The State Department of Education and Pearl City High School have also approved the study as part of a data sharing agreement.

- b. Is the purpose to "re-purpose" HIDOE data to which the Requestor/organization already has access (e.g., already released Yes No by HIDOE, already collected by Requestor/organization)?
- c. If yes, describe the reason for this access to HIDOE data (e.g., data sharing/research/data collection activities, delivery of program/service/professional development):

The main source of data collection will be focus group and individual interviews with students at Pearl City High School (the school I am employed as a teacher at.

4. Desired outcomes of data sharing activities:

Despite the wealth of literature about the history of Hawaii and the unique culture it has produced, there is a dearth of information about specific teaching methods and strategies that have been found to be effective in teaching students who were raised in such a unique culture. If such specific strategies and methods were identified then more teachers could begin including them into their practice, which will lead to public schools producing more college and career ready students. This outcome will benefit not only those individual students who learned from those effective strategies but also the overall social and economic future of Hawaii.

5. Work product and final deliverables (e.g., reports, publications, training materials, tools, presentations) and intended audience(s):

The final work product will be in the form of a qualitative written report that compiles common themes that emerge from student interviews, with a particular focus on overlapping themes among two or more students. The final report will be submitted to a thesis committee composed of educational psychology professors (listed below), the principal of Pearl City High School (the site of the study), and the Department of Education.

6. Data sharing activities:

- a. Are the data personally identifiable? Yes No b. If yes:
- i. Provide relevant parent/guardian consent, adult participant consent, and student assent forms that contain all required and applicable checklist items:

Please list the forms below and submit copies along with this document.

NOTE: To download copies of the checklists, visit <http://bit.ly/hawaiidoereseach>

- Parent Consent Forms
- Student Assent Forms

What Do Students Think Makes a Great Teacher in Hawai'i?

- ii. Provide a FERPA 101 certificate of completion for the project lead/principal investigator:

Please submit a copy along with this document. If the project has multiple principal investigators, please submit separate certificates of completion for each individual.

NOTE: To access the training "FERPA 101: For Local Education Agencies," visit <http://ptac.ed.gov>

- c. HIDEO data that HIDEO will share with the Requestor (specific data elements):

--

7. Roles and responsibilities:

- a. HIDEO's roles and responsibilities:

The Hawaii Department of Education Data Governance and Analysis will approve will approve all data used for external purposes.
--

- b. Requestor's roles and responsibilities:

The requestor will create all consent forms, surveys, and interview questions (which will be approved by Pearl City High School Principal Joseph Halfmann.
--

- c. All non-HIDEO personnel who will have access to the HIDEO data described in #6c (name, position, and affiliated organization):

Michael Salzman, Professor, University of Hawaii At Manoa Marie Iding, Professor, University of Hawaii at Manoa Kathleen Ratliffe, Professor, University of Hawaii at Manoa

8. Data protection plan:

- a. Secure data transfer/retrieval:

All audio recordings will be secured throughout the study and destroyed upon its completion. All transcripts will have actual names removed or replaced.
--

- b. Secure data storage:

9. All consent forms and data will be kept in a file cabinet inside a secured room at Pearl City High School.

10. Target approval date:

ASAP

11. Anticipated length of project (if applicable, this should match item2d):

3 months

12. Additional information, documents, and agreements (e.g., IRB approval or exemption documentation, grant award and deliverables, funder requirements and deadlines, contract with an external evaluator):

What Do Students Think Makes a Great Teacher in Hawai'i?

Please list any documents below and submit copies along with this document.

- Parent Consent form attached
- Student Assent form attached