

IMPACT

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KAMEHAMEHA SCHOOLS

Explorations Series

Summary of Evaluation Findings 2009

By Robert Medeiros, Marco Morawec, and Brandon Ledward

What

The Explorations Series, offered through Kamehameha Schools’ Extension Education Services (EES), was evaluated by SMS Research in 2008-2009.¹ The Explorations Series offers participants the chance to learn about Hawaiian culture through weeklong, community-based, boarding programs in the summer and during the winter/spring public school intercession.

Key Facts

- The Explorations Series consists of three summer programs (Ho’omāka’ika’i, Ho’olauna, and Kūlia i ka Pono) and a winter/spring intercession (Ipukukui).²
- Participants include Native Hawaiian students entering 6th-8th grade.
- There are a total of 14 program sites located on Kaua’i, O’ahu, Maui, Moloka’i and Hawai’i.
- In the summer of 2009, the program served over 3,500 students.

Why

The Evaluation Phase of Kamehameha Schools’ Education Strategic Plan (ESP) began in 2008 and requires accurate data on the impact of various programs in order to assess progress toward organizational goals and to determine opportunities for expansion, improvement or consolidation.

Findings

Overall, the evaluation affirms that the Explorations Series is functioning well and meeting its intended outcomes.

SMS concluded that the measures used to evaluate the Explorations Series showed positive impact. The findings indicate that gains in students’ knowledge, participants’ connection to Hawaiian culture, and student and parent satisfaction were all high. In particular, the program evaluation concluded that:

1. Students experience growth in cultural knowledge and attachment.
2. Participating in more than one program adds educational value.
3. Students share what they learn with their families.
4. Satisfaction rates and likelihood to continue the programs are very high.

ESPEEDOMETER

SP1 = Prenatal to 8-years
(Optimize and Build)

SP2 = Grades 4 to 16 and post-high
(Sustain Momentum)

SP3 = Kamehameha Schools Campuses, K to 12
(Innovate and Optimize)

Background

Although the Explorations Series officially launched in 2009, the programs that constitute it have a history that reaches back to the summer of 1968. However, the goal has always been to provide young Hawaiian students who are not able to attend Kamehameha Schools with meaningful experiences to enhance their knowledge and appreciation for Hawaiian culture. Sequential programs in the Explorations Series supplement one another for a combined, overall impact.³

In Ho‘omāka‘ika‘i, students learn about Hawaiian values through mele, hula, crafts, and field trips. Next, Ho‘olauna provides students with greater understanding about the significance of place and the practice of Hawaiian customs. Finally, Kūlia i ka Pono views students as future leaders equipping them with confidence and cultural skills via hands on, service learning experiences. In both Ho‘olauna and Kūlia i Ka Pono, content is specific to each program site and community collaborations are keys to success.

Program participants

In summer 2009, the Explorations Series served over 3,500 6th-to-8th grade students in programs across five islands. About 40 percent (1,087) of eligible students returned to the program after participating in the previous year.

The sustained, culturally relevant, and ‘āina-based educational experiences delivered in partnership with community experts help students gain knowledge and skills in the core subjects areas of Ku‘una (cultural practices), ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i (language, specifically Hawaiian), and ‘Āina (connection to place). These objectives are commonly referred to as KOA standards. Although students enter the program with different abilities, over time they strengthen youth developmental assets such as pro-social values and environmental stewardship, which in turn, contributes to a pool of culturally connected, young Hawaiian leaders.



Evaluation design & methodology

Stakeholders agreed upon three broad goals for the Explorations Series evaluation that set the scope of work. These goals include: 1) developing and implementing an evaluation plan, 2) revising logic models and designing appropriate data collection tools, and 3) assessing the impact of the Series and its various programs on participants.

Key evaluation questions were: What characteristics distinguish outcomes for each program? To what extent does the Explorations Series function as a matriculation pipeline? To what degree did the Series contribute to students’ cultural knowledge? What benefit, if any, exist for students attending more than one program in the Series?⁴

Findings

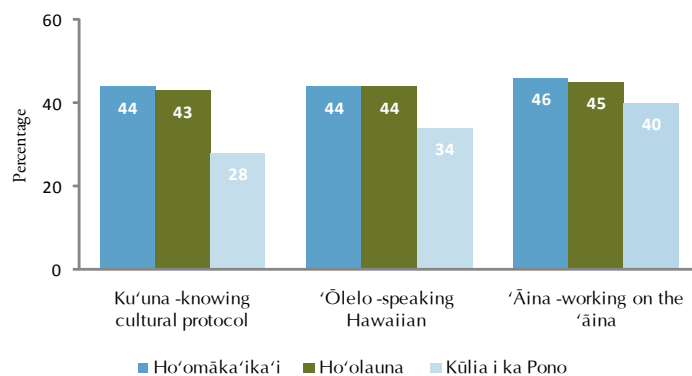
Students experience growth in cultural knowledge and attachment

Based on results of the pre- and post-surveys, a fair number of students across all programs gained one or more levels in the KOA objectives by the end of the program week.⁵ This percentage ranged from 28 percent of students in Kūlia i ka Pono who exhibited growth in Ku‘una to 46 percent of Ho‘omāka‘ika‘i students who experienced growth in the ‘Āina domain. Figure 1 shows the percentage of students that gained specific KOA knowledge across all three programs.

Similar to the gained KOA-specific knowledge reported above, 53 percent of Ho‘olauna and Kūlia i ka Pono students who completed a place-specific knowledge assessment⁶ increased by one or more levels, exceeding the knowledge assessment “improvement” target of 50 percentage points (not shown).

In addition to knowledge gains, pre-program surveys show that cultural attachment was fairly high at the start of the session, and students strengthened their connection to Hawaiian culture over the course of the program. Increases in the connection to Hawaiian culture were seen for participants in all programs: gains were experienced by 47 percent of Ho‘omāka‘ika‘i, 53 percent of Ho‘olauna and 47 percent of Kūlia i ka Pono students (not shown).

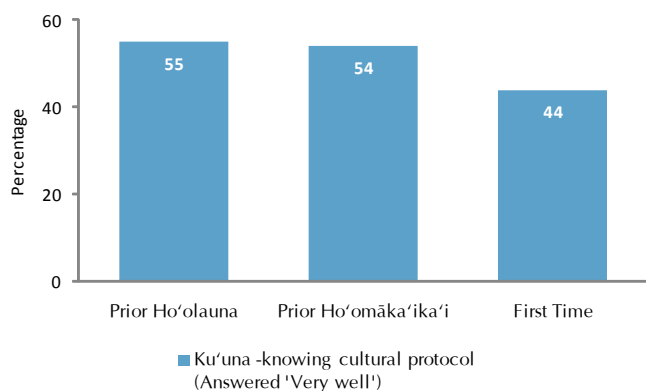
Figure 1: Percentage of students who gained KOA knowledge by program



Participating in more than one program adds educational value

The Exploration Series represents a “stacked services” model where students ideally matriculate through a multiyear pipeline of programs. The data suggest that students who participate in more than one program are more likely to have higher self-rated knowledge/skill levels at the beginning and end of the week than those attending the program for the first time. For example, Figure 2 shows the post-test responses for Ho’olauna and Kūlia i ka Pono students about familiarity with cultural protocol. Students who attended previous programs show much higher knowledge of cultural protocol after program completion (54 to 55 percent) than students who participated in the Explorations Series for the very first time (44 percent). In addition, students with program experience from prior years report spending more time outside the program doing Hawaiian activities with their families.

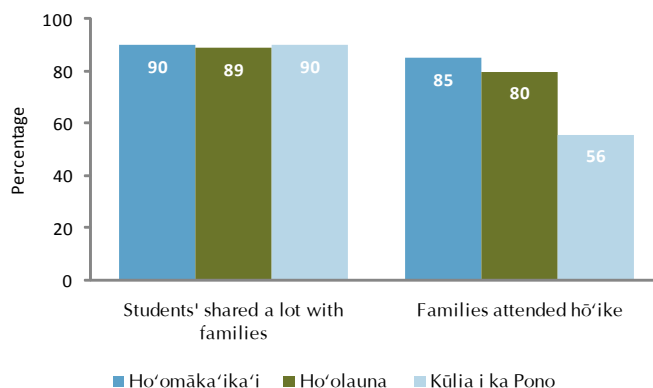
Figure 2: Percentage of students who report high knowledge of cultural protocol by program attendance



Students share what they learn with their families

As noted above, another indicator of gained knowledge is the amount of sharing participants do with family members. When parents were asked how much their child shared with them about what they learned in the program, around 90 percent answered “A lot” or “Quite a lot” (see Figure 3). Although the Explorations Series is a boarding experience, each program culminates with an end-of-week hō’ike - student demonstration of learning - to which parents and caregivers are invited. Figure 3 shows that family attendance at the hō’ike was considerably high: Ho’omāka’ika’i (85 percent), Ho’olauna (80 percent), and Kūlia i ka Pono (56 percent).⁷

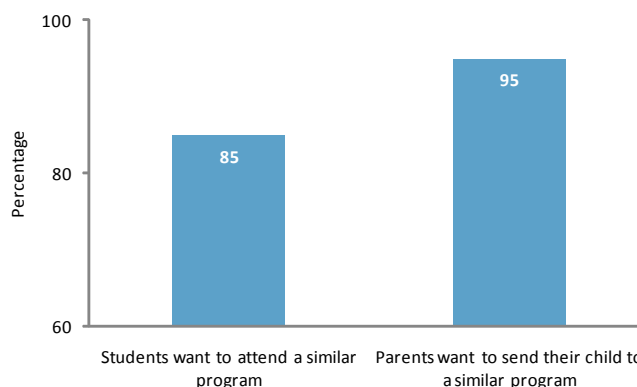
Figure 3: Percentage of students that shared a lot with families and family hō’ike attendance by program



Overall satisfaction rates are very high

As evidence of their program satisfaction, many students would like to attend a future Explorations Series program and most parents support enrolling their children as well. Combining responses for all programs and program sites, 85 percent of students want to return and 95 percent of parents plan to enroll their child in the next Explorations Series program. This may, in part, be due to the quality of instructors and community resource people on hand. Over 95 percent of students rated their kumu/ kūpuna (teachers/elders) well prepared and helpful “All of the time” or “Almost all of the time.” Figure 4 shows the students’ intentions to return to a similar program and parents’ intentions to enroll their children in those programs.

Figure 4: Percentage of students and parents’ intentions to enroll in a similar program



Recommendations & next steps

Data collected and analyzed by a third-party professional evaluator (SMS) indicate the Explorations Series' positive impact on participants is well in line with the stated KOA program goals. For continuous program refinement and improvement, SMS offered a handful of recommendations. These suggestions are noted below followed by a brief explanation of how staff members are responding to them.

Identify appropriate middle school benchmarks –With the KOA objectives and corresponding pre/post tests, program staff can better gauge impact. Including a more widely used set of measures, such as developmental assets, would allow broader comparisons. EES and R&E are discussing how to strategically employ the Nā Ōpio Survey of Youth Development in the context of the Explorations Series.

Track students throughout the Series – It is noted in SMS' report that the Summer 2009 data provide a baseline for coming years. In addition, unique IDs generated for the evaluation may offer a longitudinal look at impact. Future evaluations can make use of existing data and track student's knowledge gains over time.

Examine student friendliness and respect – Generally, students reported positive experiences in the program, but friendliness and respect among participants were issues raised in Ho'omāka'ika'i. While only 3 percent of students said peers were friendly "Rarely" or "Not at all" and 7 percent said their peers showed respect "Rarely" or "Not at all," these were the lowest scoring factors overall. Program staff will address these concerns in upcoming trainings and review/develop policies to improve student conduct.



For more information about this brief:

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For more information about the Explorations Series:
<http://extension.ksbe.edu/Enrichment>

Endnotes:

- 1 This summary brief is based on the full report submitted by SMS titled, "Enrichment Program Evaluation" (September 30, 2009).
- 2 The evaluation results presented in this report do not cover the spring/winter intercessions (Ipukukui).
- 3 Six weeks are devoted to the Explorations Series each summer, wherein programs service up to six cohorts each.
- 4 The overall response rate - valid pre- and post-tests for students - was considerably high at about 70 percent.
- 5 For example, a student might have indicated that she speaks Hawaiian "with difficulty" at the beginning of the week and then increased her score to "fairly well" by the end of the week.
- 6 The program evaluation did not include a knowledge assessment for Ho'omāka'ika'i students in 2009 (initial year). The 2010 evaluation design also includes a knowledge assessment for Ho'omāka'ika'i students.
- 7 It is believed that hō'ike attendance follows a similar trend as family involvement, whereby parents and caregivers invest more time in earlier educational experiences and less time as their children get older.