

KŪKULUAO AND KA LAMA EDUCATION ACADEMY: A MODEL FOR TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

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This article discusses a model for developing teachers from local communities. The Kūkuluao and Ka Lama Education Academy model purposefully creates comprehensive and collaborative support along the teacher career pathway. The authors provide details about the program development process, as well as specific strategies for data collection, program design, and implementation, all based on a needs assessment that identified challenges and needs of prospective participants and informed community partnership opportunities. Additionally, the model was developed through ongoing participant feedback to respond to evolving community needs, an element critical for relevant and timely teacher support. This systematic, relationship-based approach to increasing teaching capacity in O‘ahu’s Leeward Coast schools held by teachers from those communities has led to a distinctive, sustainable professional network of dedicated community-based teachers.

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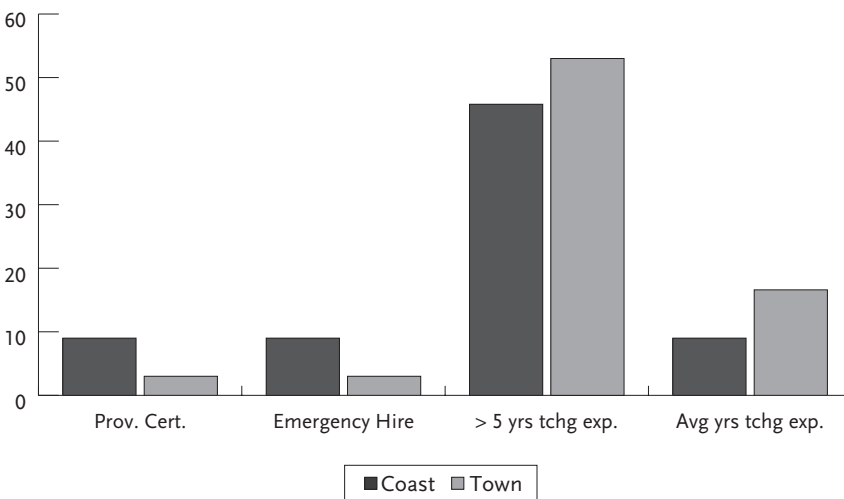
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The shortage of qualified teachers in public education has been an issue faced by many Hawaiian communities (Tibbetts, 2006), putting Native Hawaiian children at risk of educational failure or underachievement. Kana'iaupuni, Malone, and Ishibashi (2005) wrote about the need to address the problem of an inequitable distribution of committed, qualified teachers and funding resources for schools, especially those in more geographically isolated areas. The present authors have worked in remote and isolated communities in Hawai'i and the Pacific region and, as a result of this experience, realize that building a core of well-trained and effective teachers in challenged schools will significantly impact the potential for Native Hawaiian children to succeed.

On the Leeward, or Wai'anae, Coast of O'ahu (henceforth Coast), teacher transiency and teacher quality are major concerns among community members and educators. A comparison of data on teacher credentials and teacher experience reported by the Hawai'i Department of Education (2010) for the 2008–2009 academic year shows that schools in an urban complex area are staffed by 93% fully licensed teachers compared with 81% in the rural complex area. Additionally, there are more teachers with provisional certification and more emergency hires, and fewer teachers with 5 years or more of teaching experience, on the Coast. Figure 1 shows a comparison of these numbers.

FIGURE 1 Comparison of teacher status on the Wai'anae Coast and in urban Honolulu



Note: Prov. Cert. = provisional certification; yrs tchg exp. = years of teaching experience.

This trend reflects a national profile. In their research on teaching careers, Ingersoll and Merrill (2010) found that “increases in turnover rates were higher for beginning teachers. Rates of turnover for first-year public school teachers rose from 21.4% to 28.5% from 1988 to 2004” (p. 19). Similarly, teacher quality and teacher transiency challenges were reported by Mary Vorsino (2010) in the *Honolulu Star-Advertiser*:

More than half of Hawaii’s public school teachers leave within five years of being hired, a sobering statistic the state is scrambling to address at a time when experienced teachers are needed to help turn around struggling schools, meet federal requirements for “highly qualified” teachers and reach ambitious school reform goals.

TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

The literature on teacher recruitment and retention generally addresses preservice recruitment into teacher preparation programs as well as retention of in-service teachers. In June 2002, the Education Commission of the States commissioned the RAND Corporation to conduct a review of the research literature on this subject (Guarino, Santibanez, Daley, & Brewer, 2004). The authors looked at a number of questions, including two that are of interest to our work on the Coast: (a) What are the characteristics of individuals who remain in teaching? and (b) What are the characteristics of schools and districts that successfully recruit and retain effective teachers?

Seven studies cited in the review found that minority teachers tended to have lower attrition rates than White teachers. For example, Ingersoll (2001) analyzed the 1991–1992 Schools and Staffing Survey and Teacher Follow-Up Survey to investigate factors related to teacher attrition and found that minority teachers were less likely to quit teaching than their White counterparts. Other studies with similar results include Kirby, Berends, and Naftel (1999), Adams (1996), Shin (1995), Murnane and Olsen (1989, 1990), Murnane, Singer, Willett, Kemple, and Olsen (1991), and Dworkin (1980).

With regard to retention of in-service teachers, the RAND review noted a study by T. M. Smith and Ingersoll (2004) that used the Schools and Staffing Survey and its Teacher Follow-Up Survey. The study found that the more types of support teachers experienced, the lower the likelihood of their leaving or changing schools. The types of induction support that were most strongly associated with retention were (a) having a mentor in the same field, (b) having common planning time with other teachers in the same subject, (c) regularly scheduled collaboration with other teachers, and (d) being part of an external network of teachers.

In short, the research on teacher recruitment and retention suggests that building a core of effective teachers in places such as the Leeward Coast is most effective when built on deep relationships with and in the community. To do this, research shows that preservice and in-service teachers require different types of ongoing support. Furthermore, teachers who persist on a pathway of the teaching profession will require different types of support relevant to their school and community context, and to the special relationships fostered and maintained over time.

APPROACHES TO TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION IN OUR NATIVE HAWAIIAN COMMUNITY

There are a few approaches used locally to address the issues of staffing problems identified by Ingersoll and Merrill (2010). One is to recruit teachers from afar, whereas the other is to build a core of teachers from the community. The first has been used by the Hawai'i Department of Education and includes recent partnerships with Teach for America. The second has been labeled a "grow our own teachers" strategy.

The Hawai'i Department of Education (2010) has recruited teachers from the U.S. continent for many decades and maintains that this is an effective strategy for teacher recruitment and retention. Tibbetts (2006) described a recent partnership of the Hawai'i Department of Education and the Teach For America (TFA) initiative, citing that TFA recruits recent college graduates without teaching credentials to teach in hard-to-staff schools. Because recruits do not hold teaching credentials and make only a 2-year commitment to their host schools, teacher retention

becomes an issue. Tibbetts referred to the work of Raymond and Fletcher (2002), showing that at the end of 2 years, more than 60% of TFA teachers leave the teaching field. Darling-Hammond, Holtzman, Gatlin, and Heilig (2005) found that between 57% and 90% of TFA teachers leave after 2 years, and between 72% and 100% leave after 3 years. Although this short-term approach offers a solution for a 2- to 3-year window of contracted teaching for individuals who express a desire to become certified teachers, it does not provide highly qualified teachers or long-term stability of staff who are rooted in committed relational networks in the community.

A different approach, one that is long term and comprehensive, recruits teachers from inside communities and is known by program designers as “grow your own” (GYO) teachers. A number of these programs have been documented in Illinois (Young & Berry, n.d.), Georgia (U.S. Department of Education, 2000), California (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2006), and Washington State (Malloy & Moore, 2010). Although summative data are not yet available for these programs, the Center for Collaboration and the Future of Schooling (see Young & Berry, n.d.) cites indicators that the GYO approach effectively (a) reduces teacher turnover in low-income schools, (b) finds committed teachers for hard-to-fill positions, and (c) recruits and retains teachers from disenfranchised groups.

One of the most relevant articles on teacher recruitment and retention for the Coast community is the work of Tibbetts (2006). With regard to recruitment of preservice teachers, Tibbetts identified the need for development of a pool of highly qualified teacher candidates and suggested that local partnerships make teacher education more accessible to potential teachers with a passion to work in their own communities and schools. Of particular importance, she said, are “specifically increased opportunities to participate in teacher education in the communities in which the prospective teachers live and work through courses delivered at the community colleges or via distance learning technology” (Tibbetts, 2006, p. 3). For in-service teacher recruitment and retention, partnerships that make the work environment more attractive (e.g., financial incentives, assistance to purchase books and classroom supplies, training, mentor teachers, and opportunities to develop a professional community among teachers) increase the likelihood that teachers will continue to stay in the profession. The methodology used to accomplish these ends is especially significant when considering the community being served.

Generally speaking, Western approaches to program development include administering a predetermined set of survey questions to potential participants to learn about their interests and/or needs. This is often followed with program design, which may or may not be relevant to participant responses from the needs assessment. Building a program on this type of framework means that immediate stakeholders are less likely to receive relevant professional development support and, in turn, become less motivated to engage.

Indigenous researchers, advocates, and program staff have increasingly recognized this problem, and many have made a commitment not only to decolonize the process of research and program development but also to create more meaningful and sustainable support for stakeholders (Kawakami, Aton, Cram, Lai, & Porima, 2008; Morelli & Mataira, 2010; L. T. Smith, 1999). Consequently, one of Kūkuluao and Ka Lama Education Academy's (KKLEA) primary strategies is to engage stakeholders as partners and advisors along every step of the teacher career pathway in all elements of professional development delivery. As a result of these efforts to intentionally build on partnerships with stakeholders, we have seen remarkable results, which are discussed below.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

KKLEA is one of a number of educational programs funded through the Institute for Native Pacific Education and Culture (INPEACE). INPEACE was founded in 1994 by three educators who created this 501(c)3 not-for-profit entity to serve indigenous communities at the grassroots level. Its founders had worked with Native Hawaiian and other indigenous communities throughout the state of Hawai'i and the Pacific and wanted to create an agency to advance its mission to "improve the quality of life for Native Hawaiians through community partnerships that promote educational opportunities and promote self-sufficiency" (INPEACE, 2010).¹

Viewing education as a lifelong process from prenatal to adulthood, INPEACE realized the critical need to address educational issues from the strategic perspective of recruiting, developing, and retaining teachers for pre-K-12 schools in Hawaiian communities, and most specifically, on the Coast. Currently, Native Hawaiian children constitute 70% of the student population in Leeward District

schools (Ah Sam, 2007), whereas the Native Hawaiian teacher population is only 10% (Ah Sam, 2007; Au, 2002). By growing our own teachers, we create a stable workforce and provide many opportunities for students to see members of their community as teachers and professional role models.

In 1995, the foundation for this work began when INPEACE created a partnership with the Leeward Community College–Wai‘anae Campus (LCC–W). The Ka Lama Education Academy (KLEA) was created to recruit potential teachers to attend community college and to matriculate into the University of Hawai‘i–Mānoa (UHM) elementary teacher education program. Many potential teachers residing in the community had raised their families and worked as educational assistants or paraprofessionals in the schools and wanted to attend college to obtain a teaching degree. Most were the first to attend college in their family, yet did not have the support or encouragement to gain admission to and navigate through the university’s institutional landscape. KLEA was formed in partnership with LCC–W to provide support services to these students.

As this community recruitment initiative was taking place, one of UHM’s College of Education cohorts was designed to provide practicum field experiences in Leeward District public elementary schools. While some college classes were taught at the university’s Mānoa campus in urban Honolulu, field experiences, student teaching, and several methods courses were taught on the Coast. This cohort was enrolled in the state-approved teacher education program (SATEP) for LCC students who were on the teacher career path that provided the opportunity for Coast community members to obtain a bachelor’s degree and ultimately become a licensed teacher. The cohort was named Ka Lama o ke Kaiaulu (KLOKK) to indicate that this group of future teachers could serve as the “light of their community.” The name indicated a special tie to the Wai‘anae Coast, because “kaiaulu” is also the name of the wind that blows along the beachfront.

These efforts established the first two stages of the teacher career pathway for community members to be part of a stable core of teachers on the Coast. In addition, community advisory boards comprising representatives from the Coast, including Department of Education administrators, Ka Lama students, cultural practitioners, university administrators and faculty, and community advocates, were formed to guide the content and structure of the programs.

With recruitment and teacher preparation in place, staff recognized the need to design a teacher induction program for new graduates who were hired in schools on the Coast and to build a teacher retention program to support experienced teachers, many of whom were former graduates of KLOKK. Although KLEA and KLOKK had created a pathway for becoming a classroom teacher, nothing was in place to support new teachers through the transition from student teaching to a classroom of their own. Likewise, little support was in place for experienced teachers to stay on the career path.

In 2007, INPEACE created a teacher retention program named Kūkuluao to address these problems. Kūkuluao means “to build light or enlighten.” The program was designed to firm up the foundation of teachers and teacher leaders in the schools. In 2009, KLEA and Kūkuluao merged to become Kūkuluao and Ka Lama Education Academy (KKLEA). KKLEA now supports all major phases along the teacher career path, which include the following:

- Recruitment into community college and completion of an associate degree
- Enrollment in SATEP and completion of a bachelor of education degree and professional licensing
- Induction (initial employment as a classroom teacher) and completion of first 2 years of teaching as a probationary teacher
- Retention (long-term employment as a classroom teacher) and continued professional development

The expansion of teacher support was undertaken in partnership with community stakeholders who provided guidance and leadership. As a result, we were building the program based on acknowledgment that the Coast is a unique community with its own traditions, strengths, history, politics, insights, and needs. To create a relevant support pathway, we used specific strategies to include participants in the design and implementation of the program.

RESEARCH AND PROGRAM DESIGN

To design a continuum of support for future and current teachers with the intent to “grow our own teachers,” we gathered information from participants using three different strategies. Our first strategy was to design a needs assessment under the direction of teachers who were already teaching on the Coast to identify the challenges, needs, and existing support systems. The experienced teachers who advised on the development of the needs assessment actually administered the survey. The second strategy was to confirm and update survey results with talk-story sessions that elicit and use ongoing feedback to address changing needs and current situations in the community. Finally, we convened a community advisory board to ensure collaboration among relevant agencies in the community.

DATA COLLECTION

The first two steps to design and conduct surveys were intended as a means to learn what individuals needed to persist in either preservice teacher education or in-service employment. We took this approach because of our belief that (a) participants know best what is relevant and meaningful support for them, (b) participants’ needs change throughout career preparation and employment, and (c) stability can be attained by recruiting Wai‘anae Coast community members to become teachers and by building connections to the Coast with other committed educators. Preservice teachers were composed of two subgroups: individuals considering entry into community college as the start of their teacher preparation program and those already enrolled in community college or SATEP. The in-service group comprised new and experienced teachers.

Survey data were collected in 2008. KKLEA staff sent out 134 surveys, and 98 were completed, a high return rate of 73%, likely because the staff members not only were from the community but also were experienced teachers on the Coast. Established relationships and networks allowed staff to persist in additional follow-up with their colleagues and enabled respondents to feel more comfortable with providing information. Here, the Western framework of following a specific format for data collection was secondary to the relationships the teachers had within their existing networks. In the end, 56 preservice stakeholders (community college applicants

and students, and SATEP students) and 42 in-service teachers (new and experienced) completed and returned the surveys. For the first year, we continued to ask new participants (those who were referred to our program or who heard about our services and contacted us) to complete the original survey. Their responses were used to validate our initial findings.

Over time, however, we refined the types of support offered on the basis of feedback received from participants at the end of each specific event. This enabled us to identify more specific support services of interest and to rank services that were the most valuable to the participants in a timely manner. Here, ongoing feedback has helped KKLEA to increase our understanding of the needs of participants and to be responsive to them on an ongoing basis and in ways that are dynamic, relevant, and immediate.

Although we used the survey information to design and refine a continuum of comprehensive services, we remained cognizant that the contexts of the profession and the community were fluid and had to be addressed as such. Technology has increasingly taken a more prominent position in instruction and high-stakes testing in the classroom. The economy has been a serious concern, with the state facing a budget crisis and teacher furloughs, as well as the recession on the national and local scene. Educational policy initiatives are also fluid with the Obama administration and its focus on Race to the Top and Core Standards. All of these factors have an impact on our participants in different ways. Therefore, the survey data were treated as a baseline, while ongoing participant feedback was the key mechanism for program monitoring and delivery.

Addressing evolving needs and concerns meant keeping pace with relevant and timely services. We did this in the format of talk-story sessions based on suggestions from KKLEA participants who regularly told us that this format was less threatening and more culturally appropriate than formal focus groups. Participants appreciated the talk-story sessions, which were conducted in a conversational, informal, and collaborative style. As a result, we benefited with greater buy-in, because participants were engaged in meaningful ways at all of the events. As an added measure, these conversations were also linked to written feedback to allow for participants who wished to offer anonymous comments at the end of each event. These efforts to solicit ongoing feedback beyond the initial needs assessment solidified our approach in partnering with participants for directing program delivery.

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

An analysis of the data resulted in the identification of four overall categories to describe participants’ responses to questions about their challenges, needs, and current support as they moved along the teacher career path. The four categories were (a) financial and other resources, (b) knowledge, (c) social and emotional factors, and (d) administrative issues. Within each category, specific support was identified by the respondents. Table 1 represents the types of resources most frequently mentioned by all four groups in each of the categories. The recruitment and teacher preparation groups identified financial and other resources as the area of greatest challenges and needs. Specifically, they identified books, supplies, income, and time. The induction group identified their greatest challenges in the area of knowledge (e.g., how to become licensed, program requirements, realistic expectations of teaching) but indicated their greatest need was for social/emotional support. The retention group identified social/emotional support and administrative issues as the most challenging areas in this phase of their career and expressed the need for more knowledge and social/emotional support. All four groups noted that they already had strong social/emotional support; for the recruits, this was the only area of support mentioned. The retention group also identified current support in the area of knowledge, despite suggesting this was an area of need.

TABLE 1 Summary of Kūkulua and Ka Lama Education Academy participant responses, 2008

	Challenges				Needs				Current Support			
	Financial	Knowledge	Social/Emotional	Admin. Issues	Financial	Knowledge	Social/Emotional	Admin. Issues	Financial	Knowledge	Social/Emotional	Admin. Issues
Recruitment	X				X						X	
Teacher Preparation	X				X						X	
Induction		X				X					X	
Retention			X	X		X	X			X	X	

Note: Xs indicate the highest number of responses to this category; shaded areas indicate no responses to this category.

Findings also revealed that there were different needs within the preservice group, depending on the stage of their college program. Individuals who were in a group prior to the SATEP valued one-to-one support to navigate university systems, financial support, and assistance with academic remediation. Those who were enrolled in SATEP desired assistance in the forms of financial support and professional information. In-service teachers also expressed preferences for different types of support. New teachers wanted to have financial support for setting up their classrooms and for supplies; they wanted opportunities for professional networking and resources for continuing their professional growth.

As these needs were identified, KLEA collaborated with teachers in its network to develop program activities. For example, university students in the KLOKK cohorts provided data for us to shape program support based on their experiences, for example, written and oral feedback about the usefulness and timeliness of seminars, what types of resource books were best, and what types of financial support were needed most (gas cards and classroom supplies) to complete their program. Although they were involved with KKLEA for only the final year of their 2-year teacher preparation program, the students mapped out the support they would have found useful during their first two semesters. Data from this group were used to plan initiatives for the next cohort, Ka Lama VII, who had the benefit of receiving support throughout the 2 years of their teacher education program. The results of their end-of-program evaluation provided ratings and rankings of specific seminar topics, resource books, and different types of financial support they found valuable for supplementing their university program.

The Ka Lama VII cohort also provided valuable guidance for new services and support for the next teacher preparation group. Several suggestions from this group included having KKLEA schedule a Leeward Coast cultural tour at the start of the program so that new preservice teachers would get to know the area, including its history and insights about the community; to create a buddy system that paired a new cohort member with an alumnus from the previous cohort for support and advice; and to schedule more informal get-togethers, especially in the student teaching semester when all cohort members could meet to talk about concerns and compare experiences.

Another strategy used to guide the program development and implementation was to convene an advisory board of participants and agencies that support education in our community. This group meets twice a year. Its members are program participants, representatives from university programs, related education and

community agencies, Coast community members, and funders. The group has been integral in defining how KKLEA can offer more support to its participants, including the following:

- Expand the advisory board to include other teacher education programs; members include other SATEP and associates in teaching programs
- Consider national trends and policy initiatives; members include business and foundations representatives to provide broader context
- Support general recruitment efforts of community colleges and focus on subgroup of education career path students
- Recognize and position specific participant perspective within broader policy context; provide support for National Board Certification
- Provide financial support to encourage cultural curriculum implementation

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

Since our start with surveys in 2008, participant numbers have consistently increased, especially through word of mouth. The KKLEA model is a proven success. This is indicated by consistent increase of participant numbers, positive evaluations, continual requests for more activities, participant advancement along the teacher career path, and a growing sense of community through networking and relationship-building. We started with 83 participants in our recruitment category in the 2007–2008 school year; we currently have 250 who are actively pursuing enrollment in community college or are already enrolled, plus an additional 132 who have attended presentations and are considering attending college. We started with 65 teachers (new and experienced) in 2007–2008, and we currently have 98 in our database. Our teacher preparation numbers have held steady, with 25 in 2007–2008 and 30 today. Although the numbers may be relatively small, these graduates have shown a strong commitment to teaching in schools on the Leeward

Coast. Of the 13 graduates of our most recent KLOKK cohort (Ka Lama VII), 10 are teaching in Leeward Coast schools. In addition, 6 of the 14 mentor teachers for the current Ka Lama VIII cohort are graduates of previous Ka Lama cohorts.

Our events are consistently well rated, with ratings for recruitment events ranging from 4.6 to 5.0 on a 5-point scale (1 = *poor*, 5 = *excellent*), events for teacher preparation students ranging from 4.8 to 5.0, and events for new and experienced teachers ranging from 4.1 to 5.0. Event attendance averaged 13 participants per event for the 32 recruitment events held in 2010, and 14 participants per event for the 24 events held for teacher preparation, induction, and retention teachers in 2010. Table 2 highlights the 2009–2010 school year by providing a breakdown of the 398 participants and their relationships with the community.

TABLE 2 KKLEA participants and relationship to Wai‘anae Coast community

KKLEA Participants in 2009–2010 School Year	No. and % of Group With Wai‘anae Coast Community Connections	Connections to Wai‘anae Coast Community
KKLEA recruits and community college students	226/231 = 98%	Residents of the Wai‘anae Coast interested in becoming teachers in their community
SATEP students	21/21 = 100%	Teacher candidates training in field experience/student teaching classrooms in schools on the Wai‘anae Coast
Newly hired and experienced teachers	108/146 = 74%	In-service teachers working in schools on the Wai‘anae Coast

Note: KKLEA = Kūkuluao and Ka Lama Education Academy; SATEP = state-approved teacher education program.

KŪKULUAO AND KA LAMA EDUCATION ACADEMY: THE MODEL

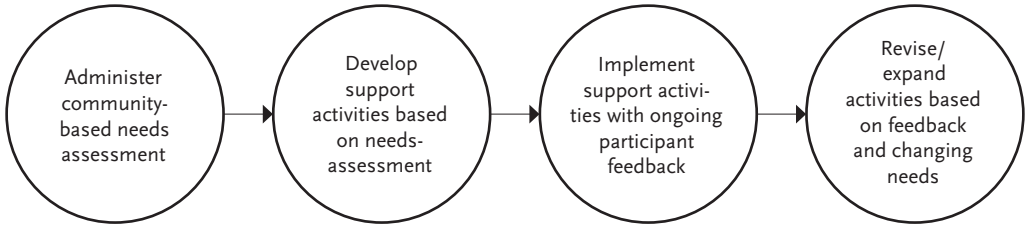
The KKLEA model has evolved over the past 10 years under the direction of teachers, potential teachers, and other committed community stakeholders to recruit, support, and retain future and current teachers on the Leeward Coast. Over the past decade, we have seen recruitment and retention programs rise and fall on the Coast and in other Hawaiian communities. We have observed the limitations of such programs, particularly because most address only a single phase within

the teacher career path, lack relevancy and timing, and/or provide support that does not address teacher needs in any comprehensive way. Research indicates that “one-time professional development workshops are often outside of the context of the school, not typically aligned with ongoing practice, and do not reliably lead to changes in classroom teaching” (Research Notes 15, 2009, p. 1). In addition, “no single strategy will always work in every school, for every teacher, all of the time; local customization is necessary for the success of programs of teacher learning or professional development” (Research Notes 15, 2009, p. 4). Hence, without any focus on building and nurturing a network of relationships among preservice and in-service teachers, a factor crucial for sustainability, professional teacher development remains outside of the scope of building school capacity (Newmann, King, & Youngs, 2000). The KKLEA model is based on a systemic approach of growing our own teachers to increase the number of qualified and committed teachers in public schools on the Leeward Coast. Growing our own teachers from within the community means that we can focus our priorities on building a sustainable program that can stabilize our schools with professionals from the community who are more likely to remain committed beyond 2 years, which is the average amount of time a teacher from out of state stays.

In working to meet these goals, KKLEA has identified critical areas of need for support; designed a system of interventions to address financial, social/emotional, and professional knowledge-based needs; and developed a strong network of individuals who are vested in the program and function as advisors and leaders in these efforts. In many ways, this model “overly simplifies a highly complex process” (Guskey, 2002, p. 385), particularly given the fact that “Professional development programs are systematic efforts to bring about change in the classroom practices of teachers, in their attitudes and beliefs, and in the learning outcomes of students” (p. 381). This explanation, of course, fails to capture the complexity of any historical, social, economic, and political realities that are unique to the Coast and other Hawaiian communities where efforts are being made to strengthen and stabilize the teacher population.

Because of its unique design, development process, and success, KKLEA offers a comprehensive teacher career pathway model for consideration in other Hawaiian communities. This model uses a strategy that can be implemented to identify and address specific needs for ongoing support that have not been available to local and potential teachers through existing agencies and institutions. Figure 2 shows the steps used to launch this model.

FIGURE 2 Kūkuluao and Ka Lama Education Academy model: Steps for teacher professional development

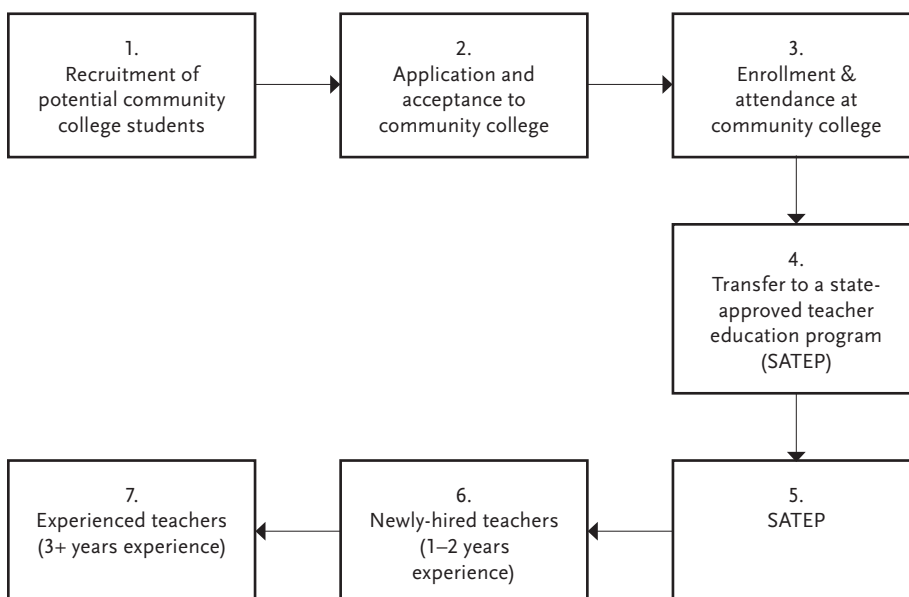


Certainly, teacher development activities would need to be tailored to meet specific needs within each unique Hawaiian community. However, there are specific guidelines offered by the KKLEA model that can be implemented in other communities by paying close attention to

- developing programs from the ground up by starting with a needs-based assessment developed in partnership with and administered by teachers who are community members;
- being responsive to participant feedback by designing program activities around those needs expressed by teachers on an ongoing basis;
- paying special attention to partnerships and enfranchising others through networking and community-based cultural learning opportunities that are timely, relevant, and applicable to classroom implementation;
- using the teacher career pathway as a model for building a comprehensive system of support; and
- creating a sustainable system through participants' sense of ownership of the program.

A second aspect of the model is its attention to the developmental stages within the teacher career path. Figure 3 illustrates the teacher career path and key milestones that KKLEA has identified as significant components to accomplish on the path.

FIGURE 3 Kūkuluao and Ka Lama Education Academy teacher career pathway model and key milestones for teacher recruitment, support, and retention



This model expands the first step of the original four phases (recruitment) to focus on the challenges and needs of those interested in teaching as they work toward acceptance into a teacher preparation program. In our work with recruitment, we have come to realize that community members who have been away from formal education for many years need additional academic advising, counseling, and support to enroll and succeed in the first 2 years of college. We have also found that once teachers and future teachers from the community receive needed support, their drive and their commitment to the community increase (Monk, 2007), and the likelihood of retention is greater when “rural teachers were raised close to where they now teach” (Collins, 1999). Finally, the potential for even greater success occurs when “Various ‘grow-your-own’ strategies offer incentives to local residents with potential to become teachers, such as assisting them in obtaining the needed education and training” (Collins, 1999).

CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS TO THE KKLEA MODEL

The KKLEA model has focused on its goal of developing a stable workforce of teachers on the Coast for more than a decade now. There have been many unanticipated challenges and lessons learned. These challenges are not unique; other programs face issues of sustainability, changing program parameters, and relationship building. We believe, however, that our response to the issues manifest a different approach that is grounded in cultural protocol, including a strong commitment to honoring relationships with our participants and community stakeholders as we partner to grow our own teachers and build a stable educational workforce on the Coast.

Sustainability

Over the years, because many programs have been implemented for short periods in rural Native Hawaiian communities, new programs must prove their intentions of sustaining efforts to accomplish a long-term presence. These communities have been consistently and historically disappointed, when funds earmarked for sustainable efforts have proved unreliable. Public funding for comprehensive and systematic teacher support is virtually nonexistent. Early in Ka Lama's history, funding from the federal government was available for startup and new development but not for continuing support. Local funding is always a challenge. While long-term community well-being might be considered the responsibility of local foundations and trusts, changing economic conditions and lack of clear policies, procedures, and expectations make this a challenge that must be addressed strategically.

Our stakeholders and collaborators have shown that they believe in the KKLEA model, given the long-term financial support our programs have received throughout the years. We also know that our partners have a deep investment in stabilizing school faculty in Native Hawaiian communities. Although the financial climate has caused funders and programs alike to reassess their use of resources, we believe that the support funders provide to programs such as KKLEA is a sound investment. These funds maintain a program that is well established in meeting its short-, medium-, and long-term goals, encompassing all stages of the teacher career path.

The integrated and collaborative approach of KKLEA adds to the sustainability of the program and its impact on teachers and students. Staff and participants continue to implement these two key strategies: first, always ask for and respect feedback, and second, collaboratively respond with relevant and creative initiatives. Supporting and sustaining local teachers by responding to their stated needs means that we and our stakeholders can achieve the goal of building a stable core of teachers from the community and, in turn, reduce the need to hire and put financial resources toward mainland teachers who will generally only make a 2-year commitment to Hawai'i students. In short, educators with a strong affiliation for a particular community make powerful teachers for that community. KKLEA teachers have repeatedly told us that "giving back" to their community is a key motivation for them to return to their home community after college and continue to work at their local school, even when they move to another community for family or other reasons.

Considering that a teacher's career might span 30 years with an average classroom size of 25 students per year, a single teacher has the potential to have an impact on 750 students over the course of his or her career. The impact on the number of students increases in two significant ways: first, when a teacher teaches multiple classes, and second, when he or she mentors a new teacher or a university student preparing to enter into a teaching career. Investments made in supporting teachers from the community have huge implications for educational impact on the students over time. Conversely, a teacher who comes to Hawai'i with a 2-year contract has the potential to affect about 50 students over those 2 years. When that teacher moves, any future benefit to the children of Hawai'i and Leeward Coast communities is lost.

Changing Program Parameters

Most recruitment and retention programs have set features that prescribe implementation. Typically, participant feedback is not considered central to program design. Often support strategies remain fixed with little or no room for modification. KKLEA not only supports participants based on their feedback but also continues to adjust the support according to ongoing recommendations and requests made by participants. This approach has proved to be one of KKLEA's greatest assets, as indicated by growth in the program and participant evaluations.

For example, KKLEA provided support to experienced teachers in their efforts to take the National Board Certification (NBC). The NBC is the highest achievement for a teacher in his or her career and verifies his or her status as a highly qualified teacher. Five core propositions drive NBC standards: (a) Teachers are committed to students and their learning; (b) teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students; (c) teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student teaching; (d) teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience; and (e) teachers are members of learning communities (see <http://www.nbpts.org/>). When teachers informed KKLEA of their desire for support in this area, program staff scheduled sessions and provided a venue for interested teachers to come together, found and compensated an experienced speaker and coach, provided feedback on teachers' essays, timed the events to meet the needs for NBC submissions, and celebrated the completion of the process, regardless of whether teachers passed the first time or not. The need for this support was not evident in the initial survey responses but evolved through ongoing talk-story/network sessions and event evaluations. As a result, teachers were supported at various stages in their NBC process, and nine ultimately submitted work to the National Board toward their certification. Since the writing of this article, four have received word that they passed their certifications. More recently, teachers at one of the Coast schools asked KKLEA to assist them with designing and securing support for a schoolwide effort to bring the NBC opportunity to their entire faculty. Approximately 15 teachers from the school are now collectively working toward the goal of becoming NBC certified. Their network has created intimacy, support, and interdependency in helping one another toward this goal. The effects of this network and support have continued to evolve in what we see as the concept of *wai'ale'ale* (ripple effect), in which a network to accomplish the highest achievement in the profession has blossomed and leaders from the group are emerging.

As a result of this particular network, one teacher decided to move into an educational administration program with the intent to one day become a school administrator, and two others now serve as resource mentors for lower grade teachers. All of these experienced teachers are working toward systemic change by not only engaging their own professional development but also seeking ways to collectively build a core of qualified and stable teachers and to encourage leadership in others.

FIGURE 4 Veteran teachers discuss National Board Certification process with Dr. Cristy Kessler of the University of Hawai'i–Mānoa (second from right).



2009

In yet another example, the induction and retention teachers attending the annual teacher recognition luncheon helped to create a schedule of KKLEA events for the upcoming school year. Some events held in the previous school year are repeats based on teacher requests, such as effective communication with families, whereas others are new events based on current interests and needs, such as understanding the new online format for the Hawai'i State Assessments. This type of open planning and participation by the beneficiaries of the program has allowed us to serve the teaching community more effectively, and it is reflective of the positive and collaborative relationships that have developed among the participants, staff, and community over the course of the program.

FIGURE 5 Retention teachers demonstrate Moenahā (a culture-based instructional method) at annual Teacher Recognition Day at Kūkuluao and Ka Lama Education Academy



2010

The following comments were taken from the teachers' written evaluations at a recent teacher recognition luncheon:

- “I always feel like such careful thought went into each activity. Thank you for making us feel like valued people!”
- “I appreciate everything—the support, collaboration, learning, good food, and educational conversations with depth and genuine concern.”
- “It is always great to get together with teachers and talk, think, brainstorm, and appreciate our profession and what we could do to better ourselves.”

Further, our Community Advisory Board members offer different strategies about how we can improve our services and increase the positive impact on teachers and ultimately on students. For example, at a recent meeting, Board members who are teachers from one of our Coast schools asked us to send out an announcement of a paraprofessional teaching position being offered at their school to the

community college students in KKLEA who were working toward their Associate of Arts in Teaching degree. As experienced teachers, they understand how motivating the work with children can be to aspiring teachers, and they wanted to encourage those who want to work as teachers but still have at least 2 years of schooling. Board members also suggested creating more school volunteering opportunities for community college students, including helping those who are interested in meeting the Department of Education's volunteer requirements such as background check and TB testing.

While networking and group activities build relationships among colleagues engaged in education, KKLEA support and assistance is also tailored to unique situations of individual participants. For instance, a member of our recruitment group met several times with KKLEA staff to review his university coursework, examine his academic and career options, and develop a plan for applying to a teacher preparation program. The support he received resulted in his acceptance to and completion of his teacher preparation program. In another case, three students in our teacher preparation group worked with KKLEA staff to get extensions for potentially expiring university credits. Two induction teachers were told they would be bumped from their first-year teaching positions and initiated a request for information and recommendations from our staff before applying to other Department of Education schools. The advice and recommendations they received from KKLEA staff helped them to secure teaching positions at other schools. Finally, in the process of applying for the NBC, nine retention teachers were unable to obtain copies of their teacher licenses, which they needed to submit with their application. On behalf of the teachers, KKLEA staff worked with the Hawai'i Teachers Standards Board to expedite the process, resulting in the teachers' receipt of necessary documentation in the required time to proceed with submission of their applications.

CONCLUSION

Although this may seem fundamental, the most important lesson learned is that sustaining a program in a community over time requires great attention to relationships. The Nā Honua Maui Ola: Hawaiian Cultural Pathways for Healthy and Responsive Learning Environments (Native Hawaiian Education Council, in

press) establishes that initiatives must strive for cultural integrity within Native Hawaiian communities. For example, 'ike pilina (value of relationships) is the first of nine cultural pathways described in the document. The vision of that pathway states, "We envision generations of respectful, responsible, and strong relationships that are strengthened in service to Akua [God], 'āina [land], and each other." This concept is demonstrated in the KKLEA model. We put relationships with people and places at the forefront of our work. The KKLEA community includes individuals at many different phases along the teacher career path. Networking opportunities within and across these phases are central to the success of our program. They serve to build relationships between the participants and program staff, and also among participants themselves. Participants' views and opinions guide the program's operation. In fact, we are convinced that in the long run, leadership development of future and current teachers requires that they actively guide the development of support systems designed for their professional growth and stability in the teaching profession by growing our own teachers.

KKLEA is part of a decolonizing strategy that aligns with the work of Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999, p. 3), who wrote, "the significance of indigenous perspectives on research and attempts to account for how, and why, such perspectives may have developed" is a beginning and suggested that our processes must include examining "different approaches and methodologies that...ensure that research with indigenous peoples can be more respectful, ethical, sympathetic, and useful." This is key, because it provides a base for understanding protocol and relationship-building when doing indigenous research or program development. Applying this methodology to the development of a stable teacher workforce on the Coast involved several fundamental steps: (a) designing an appropriate needs assessment, (b) administering the needs assessment tool in accordance with indigenous protocol, and (c) engaging stakeholders as partners and leaders. This ensures long-term and sustainable benefit to the community. Actively engaging in relationships with stakeholders and "sharing knowledge" (L. T. Smith, 1999, p. 16) mean that deep commitments are shared over time.

In building a stable workforce, Kawakami et al. (2008) pointed to the importance of an appropriate methodology and evaluation process, particularly noting that cultural and community views must remain central to working within existing relationships between those who conduct evaluations and the community being assessed. In sum, they advocated for project goals and objectives to be set by the community as well as that data include cultural, historical, social, emotional, and cognitive information valid to the community.

Approaches to teacher recruitment and retention that honor community perspectives to strengthen and build on existing relationships with the community and with individuals committed to education on the Coast influence the grow-your-own-teachers model. Addressing issues of inequity in teacher quality on the Coast requires a community-based workforce development approach by recruiting community members into a professional pathway and supporting them throughout the duration of their career.

We believe the success of the KKLEA model rests on our deliberate responsiveness to the requests and recommendations of our participants and partners in the community. For this reason, the activities we offer are not only productive but also desired. By being sensitive to participant feedback, we have been able to reach people where they are in their development as professionals. This, in turn, has increased their motivation to be engaged in professional development. Support activities have led to high levels of engagement during activities and even after, as evidenced by word-of-mouth referrals among teachers and the relationships that are built among this community of colleagues. This success is also evidenced by relationships and “generations” of student teachers and mentor teachers employed in the schools on the Coast. Over time, participants have become resources to others in the network, representing the value of ‘ike pilina in further strengthening and stabilizing this network of teachers on the Coast.

To provide a long-term solution to the teacher transiency challenge, program services must address the continuum of phases from recruitment into community college to retention of experienced teachers with graduate school and advanced professional certification both comprehensively and systematically. Targeted services help to focus participants on immediate and attainable goals, as well as enable them to see a vision of the long-term contributions they will be able to make to their families and their communities.

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NOTE

1 Early on, most of INPEACE's programs focused on young children and their families. As the organization grew and more community relationships were formed, it became evident that early childhood services gave children a good start, but if the students attended schools where teacher transiency was high (as is the case in many Hawaiian communities), then students were missing essential relationships with a stable core of adults who understood them and advocated for their long-term educational success.