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Karen Bechtel

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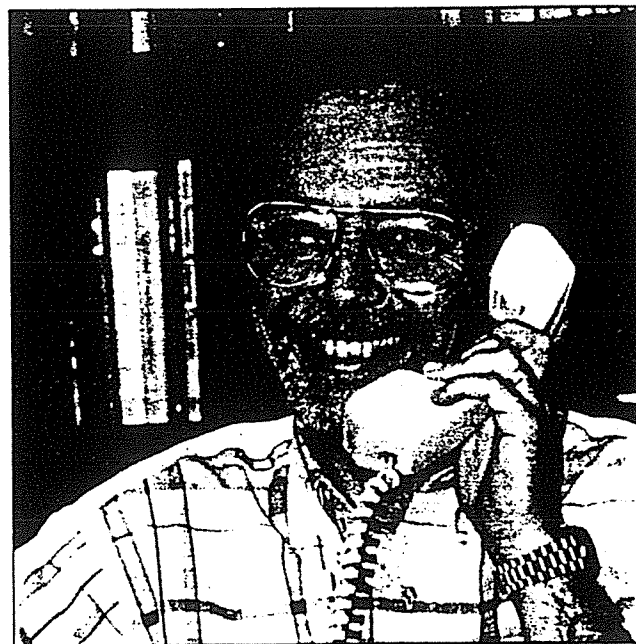
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HEADMASTER'S MESSAGE



Headmaster, Dr. Robert G. Peters

"Progressive Education: Bridging the Past, Present and Future"

As we approach our 75th Anniversary, which will officially be celebrated on October 10, 1993, it seems a good time to look back at our philosophical tradition. The Progressive Education tradition from which Hanahauoli grew has shaped our school throughout its 75 years and still holds meaning for us today; its basic principles will help to guide us in the future.

At the time the Cooke family and friends first began their study of the progressive movement, it was considered a revolutionary approach to education. In the years since Dewey, Kilpatrick and Parker argued the case for this educational philosophy, the movement has been both praised and castigated. The translation of Progressive Education to the classroom has met with varying degrees of success, partially because of its loose interpretation by some and because others have been willing to modify it to meet the changes in our society and the world in general. Current research which supports the "thematic" approach to instruction is based upon the ideas of progressives. The number of visitors to Hanahauoli and the frequent requests for workshops and consultation by schools seeking to implement curricular changes validates its relevance to today's world.

Originating from the premise that education is a process of living, the progressive tradition of Hanahauoli has always sought to relate the classroom experience to the real world. Children do not view their schooling as separate from life, but a part of it. This is evident when one tours the school and sees children in Junior Kindergarten role-playing bees and the beekeeper, or first graders studying about manners and their application to phone calling, or second graders applying for a loan from the Bank of Hawaii to set up their restaurant, or fourth graders interviewing people with disabilities to determine how they must adapt to meet their needs. It becomes most evident when the school addresses how to recognize the anniversary of Pearl Harbor's bombing or trying to decide how to deal with POGs (a current fad in all of Hawaii's schools) when they interfere with the smooth functioning of daily activities.

Directly related to this principle of progressive education is the notion that children learn best through direct experiences. Sixth graders work to understand the concepts of area, perimeter and volume as they design houses based upon blueprint drawings. Children in third grade learn about the value of the environment to ancient Hawaiians by tending their own garden of endemic plants. Fifth graders learn about our government and the election process by designing their own class government and conducting elections. The field trips taken by all classes serve as firsthand research experiences to better understand how their world really works and then to apply that knowledge to their own studies. As Dewey noted: "Thinking is the method of an educative experience;" children must have genuine experiences from which thinking can emerge. They must have genuine problems to solve in order to apply their information and to make new observations. Experiences such as the ones described offer those "genuine experiences."

The two principles cited above both relate to the progressive belief that the school is seen as a part of a larger interrelated environment. The first relationship is that with the home. The family is considered the first and foremost educator of children by the progressive educator. Therefore there must be a close tie between home and school. Hanahauoli's mission statement expresses this sentiment clearly when it articulates the expectation that all parents will participate in the education of their children at school. Parent participation at Hanahauoli is invaluable. Whether it be the Hui's collective effort or individual parents sharing their expertise and interests in the classroom, children are the beneficiaries and it adds a special richness to our program.

Curricular concerns involve the problems of the larger society and thus the learning environment must be expanded beyond the classroom and the school. Sixth graders' attempts to address environmental needs is a direct reflection of this belief as are the

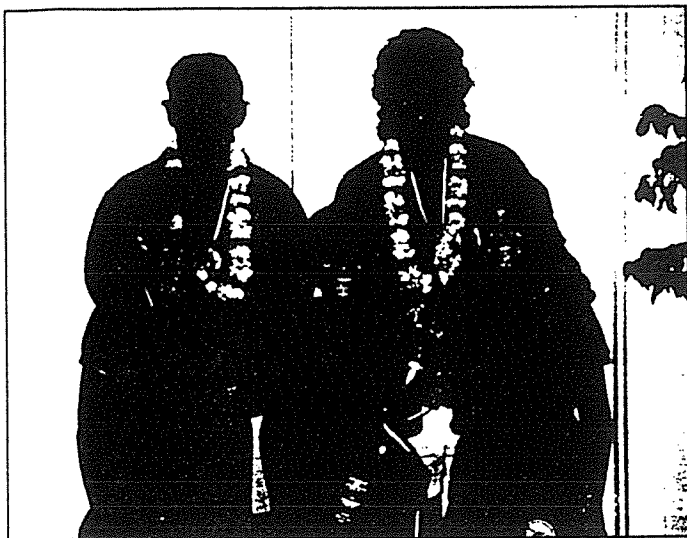
Senior Kindergartners' efforts to dehydrate food as they learn what it would be like to be astronauts and live in space. Literature Circles which involve children in analyzing topics such as prejudice and change while they all read different novels related to the topic offer opportunities to explore current problems facing our society. Addressing the impact of Columbus's "discoveries" upon Native Americans or studying about the Hawaiian sovereignty issue during the centennial of the overthrow of the monarchy are examples of extending the classroom into the broader community.

Closely related to this "ecological" view of curriculum is the Progressive commitment to the ideal of democracy. Because school is seen as a microcosm of the larger community, it must act as a social institution in which children learn how to become productive members of a democratic community. School is seen as a place for social living; therefore, the business of the school is focused upon the social use of knowledge for the purpose of solving social problems. The learning approach must involve opportunities to develop the skills necessary to function in society. Problem solving in group situations becomes essential as does the establishment of acceptable norms, rules and roles. Hanahauoli continues this tradition, which may be ever more important in our society which seems to be struggling to establish a sense of social responsibility. Group problem solving efforts — for the purpose of conflict resolution during recess, or for trying to determine the best material for a musical production, or for reaching consensus on a graduation format, or for developing a plan to assist Island School on Kauai devastated by Hurricane Iniki — all offer our children opportunities to engage in an interpersonal interactive context much like the democratic society into which they will proceed as future citizens.

Learner self-direction and responsibility were important characteristics of the Progressive movement as were the integration of skills and subject matter within significant and relevant content. Using social studies/science units as our lens to view the world, Hanahauoli continues firm in holding to these beliefs. Children are given many opportunities to make choices and to assume the responsibility for following through, whether it be in the Library's Independent Study Program or participating in jump Rope for Heart. Skills in language (reading, writing and speech) as well as in math are related to their study units to facilitate their use as well as to understand that they are tools for communication or learning which can be applied to real-life situations and problem solving. Concepts which promote thinking and organizing a world view are the focus of our units as they assist children to structure new information and to make connections. Establishing relationships underlies our entire program as teachers

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CURRENT STUDENTS



Michael Semenza '93, Regan O'Neill '93, and Mark Robinson '94

Congratulations to **Michael Semenza '93**, **Regan O'Neill '93**, and **Mark Robinson '94** who played on the team that recently won the Hawaii Youth Soccer Association Challenge Cup. With that honor goes the opportunity for their team to represent Hawaii in a regional tournament in Albuquerque in June. The team was coached by parents John Semenza and Mark Robinson.

Hanahauoli thespians: **Nani Weinberg '94** recently played Trixie in the Diamond Head Theatre production of "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof," and classmate **Mariko Davidson** was a supernumerary in Hawaii Opera Theatre's "Samson et Delila."

Headmaster's Message

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integrate among the disciplines. The child who studies the physics of sound in science and then the types of instruments which produce those sounds is able to go to the Physical World Lab (formerly Shop) and make an instrument he or she can learn to play in music class. All of this is done with an emphasis upon the place of music in our world and past civilizations as an expression of who a people are or may have been; it also leads to interesting speculation about music of the future and its function. Creating a sense of how the world functions and a child's place in it is the job of the elementary years. It is one to which Hanahauoli is committed.

Perhaps most important of all the Progressive principles was their commitment to the individual which validated the importance of childhood and diversity. The Progressives recognized that each individual is biologically, socially and psychologically unique. At the same time, they appreciated that all individuals appear to progress through similar stages of development, although at different paces, and that there might be considerable variation between any two individuals. It therefore becomes the obligation of the school to provide a variety of opportunities to maximize individual development. Such a view requires a broad and varied program which recognizes what Howard Gardner calls "the multiple intelligences" of our children. It suggests that we

must provide many avenues for learning and self expression and we must give adequate time for each child to develop. It also recommends admitting children of varied and diverse backgrounds who will add richness to the thinking of all children in the classroom. Ultimately what is implied is that the period of childhood has its own characteristics, such as learning through play, and we cannot create a "hurried child" or a "miniature adult." The ways children think must be validated and accepted. The role of the educator, both at home and at school, becomes one of opening up new ways of thinking by providing real problem solving experiences and expecting that children will grasp that for which they are ready.

This analysis takes us full circle. The first principle cited addressed the importance of school as a part of life. All that has been presented reflects this basic premise. The world in which we live is a diverse one seeking to find unifying elements. The Progressive Education tradition argues strongly for finding ways through the education process to realize this need. Viewing the individual as a socially responsible problem solver within the context of democratic decision making was the underlying belief of the Progressives. Can there be a more worthwhile mission for us to follow as we plan for Hanahauoli's next 75 years?