NEA Human and Civil Rights Awards Program
Lessons Learned from NEA’s Social Justice Advocates

BLAINE KAMALANI KIA
Ellison S. Onizuka Memorial Award

Objective(s)
- Students will be able to understand the struggles the Native Hawaiians faced to save their culture.
- Students will be able to appreciate Hawaiian traditions, including dance.
- Students will be able to make comparisons with similarities and differences in the Hawaiian culture and their own.
- Students will be able to realize how working together makes a large task achievable.

Materials/Preparation
- Whiteboard or chalkboard space
- Markers
- Tape
- Yellow crayons or hi-lighters (one per student)
- 12 x 18 white construction paper sheet (one sheet per small group)
- Handout 1: Hula Dancer Picture Cards (print and cut one set)
- Handout 2: Introducing the National Education Association Human and Civil Rights Awards Program Recipient Blaine Kamalani Kia (make one copy per student)
- World map
- Hawaiian music (CD or play through the computer or MP3 player, etc.)

Lesson At-A-Glance

- Opening the Lesson:
  Say Aloha to Hawaii and Blaine Kamalani Kia

- Leading the Lesson:
  A Social Justice Advocate’s Values

- Closing the Lesson:
  A Social Justice Advocate’s Goals and Actions
Suggested Grouping Structures
Whole group discussion, small group activity, and independent/partner activity
Estimated total lesson time: 40 minutes

Opening the Lesson (10 minutes)
Say Aloha to Hawaii and Blaine Kamalani Kia
1. Write the phrase, “A'oehe hana nui ke alu “ia” on the board.
2. Ask the class to guess what language it might be and what it might mean.
3. Tell the class that it is spoken in one of the U.S. states and prompt answer (Hawaii).
4. Reveal that the quote is in Hawaiian and have a student volunteer go to classroom map and show the location of Hawaii.
5. Ask the class what they know about Hawaii and record each item on the board.
6. Tell the class that in today’s lesson, they will learn about a man who has dedicated great time and effort to help Hawaiians value specific aspects of the arts in their culture. Explain that the word phrase on the whiteboard is his guiding principal “No task is too big when done together by all.”

Leading the Lesson (20 minutes)
A Social Justice Advocate’s Values
7. Tell students to look at the list generated on the board. Ask if anything on the list is related to the Arts.
8. Call on a student volunteer to go to the board and circle any which apply. If none were suggested, prompt students to suggest dance/hula and add to the list.
9. Ask the class what is part of a hula dance (movement, chanting or singing, - prompt definition). Hawaiian native dance with intricate arm movements that tell a story in pantomime, usually danced to rhythmic drumming and accompanied by chanting. Say, “Hula is a traditional dance of the Hawaiian Islands. It is performed to songs or chants known as meles. There are two types of hula dances: Hula kahiko, which tell the stories of important historical events of the Hawaiian people and Hula auana, which is more modern. In the past the hula was performed for kings and used as a religious celebration.” Pass around the Hula Dancer Picture Cards (Handout 1) as you explain.
10. Explain that those who came to the Hawaiian Islands in the 1800’s disapproved of the hula and convinced the Hawaiian government to put restrictions in place to severely limit performances of it. The native Hawaiian language was also banned in public schools.
11. Call on a few students to explain a tradition their family has or a way they celebrate.
12. Ask students how they would feel if they were not permitted to speak their language in their own country or to celebrate family traditions. Indicate that these are the same types of emotions felt by Blaine Kia, a composer, performer, producer and director. He set a goal to inspire children and adults to understand and enjoy the Hawaiian culture through the Hula.
13. **Write** the term “Social Justice” on the board. Ask students what they think Social Justice means. (Prompt the response: All members of a society should be treated equally and fairly). Discuss the notion that in our country and in the world there are many individuals and groups who advocate for social justice and human and civil rights causes. In some cases, these individuals may be doing their job, in some cases they may be volunteers, in all cases they are leaders. (Activate prior knowledge as needed: Ask students to name some examples of social justice and human and civil rights causes.) There are many awards programs in place at the national and global level that recognize the efforts of these advocates. Blaine Kamalani Kia was recognized by the National Education Association for his social justice advocacy work.

14. **Tell** students they will be working in groups to complete web posters about Blaine Kia and the contributions he has made to his native Hawaii.

15. **Divide** students into small groups of four or five. Give them each an information sheet and 12 x 18 white construction paper sheet. Tell them they will have 10 minutes to complete the assigned group work.

16. **Direct** small groups to draw an oval in the center, and write Blaine Kamalani Kia in the center.

17. **Distribute** Handout 2.

18. **Instruct** the groups to read the information on Handout 2 and highlight important accomplishments and events to create the word web. (Students can use a yellow crayon to highlight.)

19. **Instruct** small groups to discuss and select the relevant facts to put on their paper in ovals around the center oval, connecting with lines.

20. **Allow** students to include as many facts as they choose, with a minimum of five. They may also add details about any fact adding another line and smaller oval from it.

21. **Allow** for 10 minutes of work time and then, instruct students to tape their papers to the wall (bulletin board edge, chalk tray etc. so all are visible). Let them look at each other's papers and compare facts selected.

22. **Discuss** the common facts and why they tell the kind of person Blaine Kia was and what his accomplishments meant to Hawaii. Have students explain why these traits helped him to be a social justice advocate.

**Closing the Lesson (10 minutes)**

A Social Justice Advocate’s Goals and Actions

23. **Tell** students to think again about the meaning of Blaine Kia’s guiding principles, “No task is too big when done together by all.” Ask them how the facts on their word webs support that idea. (Possible responses: Helping students to appreciate and be involved in the Hawaii traditions and culture creates a connection and meaning. These values are often passed on to others, and that connection creates a stronger bond, both among the Hawaiian people, and the connection to the traditions of the past).

24. **Conduct** a whole group discussion by having the students summarize Blaine Kamalani Kia’s goals and actions as a social justice advocate. Tell the class that you are going to pose a question and play music. As the music plays
they should think about their answer. When the music stops, they should find a partner and share. After a few minutes, you will post the next question and start the music again. Pose the following questions: What was his cause and why? What was his goal related to his cause? What actions did he take to reach his goals?

Assessment Suggestion(s):
- Discussion responses
- Evaluate the Group Concept Webs

Adaptations, Enrichment, Cross-curricular Opportunities
- Have students create a children’s picture book about Blaine Kamalani Kia that could be used with younger students for a character lesson. Have students work in small groups and give them the choice of developing fiction or non-fiction short stories. Be sure to include illustrations of photographs with captions in either version.
Lessons Learned from NEA’s Social Justice Advocates

NEA Human and Civil Rights Awards Program Lesson Plans

Blaine Kamalani Kia

Middle School

Grades 6-8

LESSON PLAN HANDOUT 1

Hula Dancer Picture Cards
Introducing the National Education Association Human and Civil Rights Awards Program Recipient

Blaine Kamalani Kia

The culture of politically and economically dominant people becomes the dominant culture in a country, overwhelming native cultures. Over the last four centuries, this tragedy has been re-enacted in many lands. Indigenous people have had to struggle to preserve their culture—including their language, their religious practices, their core values, and their oral histories—or face cultural extinction.

The Hawaiian Islands are no exception.

The Christian missionaries who came to the Hawaiian Islands in the early 1800s saw the hula, a dance central to the Native Hawaiian culture, as “an abomination” and preached against it. And the white merchants who came to Hawaii to make their fortunes also disapproved of the hula. They thought the hula and the celebration which accompanied it were a distraction that kept Native Hawaiians from fulfilling their duties as field hands on the merchant’s plantations or as workers in their processing plants. And as the missionaries and merchants grew more powerful, they actually managed to pressure the Hawaiian government into issuing an edict that severely restricted the practice of the hula. These restrictions lasted for nearly half a century.
The other major assault on the Native Hawaiian culture came in the form of efforts to obliterate the Hawaiian language. Public schools in Hawaii were banned from teaching the Hawaiian language, and Native Hawaiian children who spoke their native tongue were punished.

It is against this historical backdrop that we celebrate Blaine Kamalani Kia. While the restrictions of the past have been lifted, the new obstacle to cultural survival is indifference. As a composer, performer, producer and director, Mr. Kia has been untiring in his efforts to promote and perpetuate the hula, the Hawaiian language and music, and Hawaiian oral traditions. He has given freely of himself to the community to inspire children and adults to understand and enjoy the Hawaiian culture. Above all else, he is a great teacher who gratefully acknowledges the great hula teachers who taught him. What’s more, Mr. Kia has established hula halau (schools) all over the world, including Hawaii, California, Japan, Canada, Tahiti and New Zealand.

As Laverne Fernandes Moore, Vice Chairperson of the NEA Asian and Pacific Islander Caucus has noted: “Blaine Kamalani Kia recognized early on that the fusion of the old with the new is at the heart of sovereignty.” He has combined his deep knowledge of Hawaiian culture with expertise in modern society’s business and finance to create economic opportunities for Native Hawaiians and other indigenous groups.

For all of Blaine Kamalani Kia’s accomplishments as an individual, his guiding principle remains very Hawaiian: “A’ohe hana nui ke alu ‘ia”—No task is too big when done together by all.