

# Aliamanu Middle School media program teaches students hi-tech skills

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Students at Aliamanu Middle School are learning to move beyond merely consuming media. They are learning how to create it.

The school's media production program started in 2004. At first, it was part of the school's existing journalism program. Eventually, the media production aspects began to take precedence, and the program became what it is today.

Running the program comes naturally for teacher Chris Facuri, who has been interested in media and video since he was a kid. However, it wasn't the initial focus of his teaching career.



Matthew Langford shows off his video project from NFL Play 60.

"I was a Hawaiian history teacher on Maui," he said. "I went on a sabbatical and studied media production at Leeward Community College.

When a teaching position opened up at Aliamanu, he jumped at the opportunity to help update the school's courses.

Facuri started integrating more multimedia content to the journalism program. For example, instead of newspaper articles, the students created televised news reports. In the last four or five years, the focus of the program has shifted almost exclusively to media production.

The multimedia program has proven to be a success. At any given time, there are about 20-25 students enrolled.

"They like creating media, not just watching it," said Facuri. "Some dabble with video at home trying to take their skills up a notch."

Some students see the class as a stepping-stone toward a future career.

"I want to be a newscaster some day," said Lauren Galdeano, eighth grader. "I've been interested in news casting since fourth grade."

Others just thought the class would be different than their usual coursework.

"This class is more interesting than my other classes," said Sophia DiPinto, eighth grader.

Students are creating new content every school day.

“A big thing for us is our daily live news broadcast,” said Facuri. “The students run it, writing their own copy and operating all the equipment.”

The news program is broadcast throughout Aliamanu Middle School via closed-circuit television.

In addition to the daily live news broadcasts, students create mini video projects, such as documentaries, reports and public service announcements (PSAs). According to Facuri, these short videos run about two minutes in length and tend to deal with subjects relevant to students’ lives.

Some of these projects are entered into the annual Olelo Youth Xchange Student Video Competition, Hawaii’s largest issues-oriented statewide student video competition. Aliamanu has done well, producing three state winners.

Recently, students attended the NFL Play 60 event held at JBPBH’s Bloch Arena in conjunction with the Pro Bowl. They went not just as participants, but also as reporters.

“I interviewed the cheerleaders,” said Matthew Langford, eighth grader. “I thought it was cool.”

Anywhere from 70 to 80 percent of the students participating in the Aliamanu Middle School media program have parents in the military, and some of their work reflects their experiences as members of military families. Facuri can relate.

“My father was in the Marines,” he said. “He was a 30-year man.”

The military also helps to support the program, which is largely funded by the Joint Venture Education Forum (JVEF).

Looking to the future, Facuri sees the media program branching out into new areas.

“We are moving into digital signage,” he said. “The kids are really getting into graphics.”

One of the ultimate goals of the Aliamanu Middle School media program is to encourage the students to express themselves.

“I try to get them to be creative,” said Facuri. “The emphasis is on getting them to be good storytellers.”



Lauren Galdeano, Olivia Oldham, Sophia DiPinto and Emeri Dingal plan their daily newscast in front of a green screen.