

Intended for Grades: 6-8 **Estimated Time:** 5-30 minutes

Activity Title: BY OBSERVING, ONE LEARNS (*I Ka Nānā No a 'Ike*)
(‘Ōlelo No’eau #1186)

Activity Purpose: Students will develop critical observation skills

Materials & Preparation:

- Divide group into two equal teams

Background Information:

Observation was a critical skill to sustain life in old Hawai‘i. Youth were taught to pay attention to things they wanted to learn by being quiet, observing, and listening. The student would then practice a task before asking a question, because only then would they know enough to ask something worthwhile.

In today’s world, it is also critical to be able to focus on what is happening around you. Students benefit by being able to pay close attention to teachers and coaches, to friends and family, and to the natural world around them, as they will then connect more deeply to all they are experiencing. Developing the skill of focus and close observation needs practice (and reminders with some middle age students). This activity can help promote keen observation skills.

Steps:

1. Divide your group into two equal teams (teacher participates or a student helps if # is odd)
2. Have team #1 stand in a straight line.
3. Ask team #2 to move about for 1-2 minutes to observe every detail about each team #1 person.
4. On your signal, have Team 2 turn around so they can’t see team #1.
5. Team #1 members then have 1-2 minutes to alter a set number of items (start with six) about their physical appearance (roll up sleeves, change hair, remove glasses or jewelry, etc.)
6. On your signal, Team #2 will have 1-2 minutes or 3 incorrect guesses to identify all the changes made by Team #1. Team #2 earns one point for each item correctly identified.
7. Teams switch roles after scoring is completed. Play for a defined set of rounds or a time limit.

Considerations: Allow teams to figure out their own strategies on what to change. Keep your instructions simple so they need to problem solve how to make changes.

8. Debrief: Discuss what students learned from this activity. Help them get to the conclusion that paying close attention to things is critical to learn well. Possible discussion prompts:

What did you learn from this activity?

How was it working with your team? What was easy? What was difficult to do?

Why is it important to have good observation skills?

How can paying close attention help make a difference in what you do at school? At home? With friends? During sports or other activities?

Resources:

- *Olelo No’eau, Hawaiian Proverbs and Poetical Sayings* by Mary Kawena Pukui