



enCORE Transforms Special Education Classroom at Kealakehe High:

*From Piecemeal to
Proficiency and
Beyond*

OVERVIEW

"I honestly love this curriculum," shares **Samantha Killnas, a Special Education Teacher at Kealakehe High** in Hawaii, reflecting on her three years using enCORE. "Not only has it improved my student's scores, but it has also helped them to feel more included in their school community. Seeing my students' faces when I tell them they just did algebra, or read a book like our student aides read in their own classes, is a highlight of the lessons."

Samantha's classroom includes students with autism, intellectual disabilities, and multiple disabilities, with cognitive abilities spanning from 18-months to a second grade academic level.

THE CHALLENGE BEFORE enCORE: A DAILY SCRAMBLE

Before implementing enCORE, Samantha faced significant challenges in her classroom. With no set state standards for special education in Hawaii, her classroom instruction relied on "piecemealing." She spent countless hours creating worksheets, finding weekly themes, and modifying materials on the fly.

"If nothing else, I needed a guideline of what to do each week," she recalls. Beyond just a guideline, she also needed concrete, grade appropriate materials to present to her administrator, ensuring her students were being exposed to appropriate federal guidelines.

THE enCORE SOLUTION: STRUCTURE, SUPPORT & SUCCESS

enCORE provided the much-needed structure and comprehensive materials that Samantha was looking for. She particularly appreciates the consistent format of the enCORE worksheets across different topics.

“My students know what to expect with the repetitive format in enCORE, which creates a sense of routine and predictability for them.” She rigorously assesses student progress three times per unit – pre-, mid-, and post-assessments – to track their growth effectively and make data-based instructional decisions.



A TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE: FAVORITES AND FREEDOMS

For Samantha, enCORE has been a game-changer. She loves the adapted library books, which expose her students to grade-level content in an accessible way. Additionally, the resources within enCORE, especially the student-led tech lessons, are invaluable. The curriculum's comprehensive nature means the majority of her lesson preparation is ready to go, **significantly reducing her prep time** and allowing her to focus on instruction. She even leverages her new Smart Board to display worksheets, making lessons more interactive and engaging for students.

When she's out, having a substitute step in for her is stress-free: “I can simply direct them to the pre-organized folder I have put together for the week, knowing the differentiated and scripted lesson plans in enCORE are easy to follow.”

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT & TANGIBLE OUTCOMES

Following implementation of enCORE, student engagement has soared. Social Studies lessons, especially those where students can relate content back to their lives, are a big hit, as are the Science experiments. Presentations where students are able to present their new knowledge in front of their peers is also a class favorite. One of the most compelling outcomes has been the remarkable academic progress, according to Samantha:

“When two of my current 11th graders were in 8th grade, they scored at the lowest possible level on their alternative assessments in Math, Science, and ELA. **After three years of consistent enCORE use, one of these students just achieved "Exceeds" in Math and "Meets" in Science and ELA, while the other scored "Exceeds" in Math and ELA and "Meets" in Science.**”

For context, a score of "Exceeds" indicates that the student knows more than the alternate test provides and would need to take regular testing if they were to test again.”

“This dramatic improvement showcases that my students can do so much more than others give them credit for.”

A POWERFUL RECOMMENDATION

Samantha's message to other teachers considering enCORE is clear: “A new curriculum can be scary - it's a big change, but I encourage you to try one lesson. Use the scripted and differentiated lessons as a guide, but still incorporate the creative flair that makes you the teacher you are. **enCORE will empower you to deliver high-quality instruction that leads to academic growth and a powerful sense of belonging for your students.**”