WHY I GOTTA LEARN DIS?! Do you feel apathetic about school? Is it hard to care about what you are supposed to learn? This is a common problem not just in Hawai‘i, but across America and other countries, too.

Researchers studied school boredom and found that 2 out of 3 students are bored in class at least once a day, and 17% are bored in every class. In response to why they are bored, 3 out of 4 students said “the material wasn’t interesting,” 39% said “the material wasn’t relevant to me,” and 31% cited “no interaction with the teacher.”

SO WHY BOTHER? In some places in the world, in the past and today, only a few people are selected to learn, while others must live in ignorance. In ancient times in Hawai‘i knowledge was for everyone and addressed their innate talents. Because all words and learning have mana (power), some education was kapu (forbidden) to some people when the ali‘i ruled. One had to be chosen to become a kahuna (an expert). The choice was based on a child’s mana.

Mana is said to be the invisible force that flows from the most senior spirits to energize everything in the universe, whether it be the wind, the growth of a plant, or the surge of an ocean wave. Mana becomes manifest in humans as outstanding talents, intelligence, strengths, and leadership charisma.

KEY CONCEPT:
Power
Ability to do or act; influence or authority; capacity to exert force

POWERFUL WORDS:
* APATHY – lack of interest; indifference
* A‘O – Hawaiian for teaching or learning
* MANA – Hawaiian for supernatural or divine power
* CHARISMA – power to inspire others; exceptional charm; divine talent
HOW POWERFUL IS MANA?  Kūpuna teach us “Words may be sacred, may fly through the air, may cause life or death.” Imagine, as happened to a high chief in Hawai‘i long, long ago, that you flee from your island, end up in a shipwreck, and drift onto foreign shores. You would be considered an enemy and your death would be certain. Fortunately, one such chief remembered his genealogy chant, and the islanders he met recognized the names of his ancestors. His lineage traced all the way back to the gods, and so his life was spared.

SO WHAT HAPPENED TO MY MANA?
The great spirits are ancestors of the people and of all life. In this way people are related to all other living things. Now, in the time of the people, such spirits are invisible, appearing only through the many manifestations of their mana, such as your ‘aumakua (spiritual guardians). Some believe kanaka (people) who forgot their genealogy lost much of their mana.

In ancient Hawai‘i words and names held power. (They still do, but this knowledge is kept very private.) Each name in a genealogy chant carried the mana of the ancestors. All names were linked by birth. The longer this link of names in the chant, the more mana. The accumulation of power, which was sacred, could lift a person to the ranks of the gods among mortals.

CAN ANYONE GET MANA?
Yup. The power of knowledge and words, and using them to have good thoughts and do good acts, can be anyone’s. Seeking knowledge is a good start, but looking within is also very important. Hawaiians say you are born with certain traits and abilities which give you great mana. Finding what these are is not boring, and it can happen anywhere – even school!

COOL WAYS TO HARNESS YOUR MANA:

- **VISIT SACRED PLACES** - you can learn about & feel mana at a heiau (altar)

- **TRY LEARN** - Hawaiians value knowledge; honor your potential abilities

- **BE PONO** - do what is right ...care for the ‘āina, others & yourself

- **SEEK KILO ‘UHANE** - kūpuna say spirituality comes from articulation with the forces of the cosmos ...the 1st element in knowledge is prayer & chant

A 15 year old visitor from New Jersey spent time at the Ulupo Heiau in Kailua. As the site is restored, more people are gathering to work there and to experience its power.
NAME: ____________________  CLASS: ______

MANA READING: QUESTIONS/ACTIVITY

Directions: Answer the questions below by writing &/or drawing with notes, or form groups and act out the answers like a radio show, improv theater or talk show. Be prepared to share with the class.

1. Think of a time when you saw someone say something really cool or powerful. What did you see? What was said? Give details!

2. What is the most powerful thing you have ever said, done or written? How do you know it was powerful?

3. What is the most powerful thing you have ever read? How did it change you, your life or what you think?

4. How can school help you to have more mana? What good, or bad, will you do with the mana you gain in school and elsewhere?