What is the North Shore Ethnographic Field School?

Directed by Professor Ty Kāwika Tengan, the North Shore Ethnographic Field School (NSEFS) works with community elders of Waialua, O'ahu to train graduate and undergraduate students to conduct place-based processes to record oral histories.

Trust and Consent

Before recording devices are ever turned on, the NSEFS works with community advisors to host both formal and informal events to explain and receive feedback about the program, and build relationships between program organizers, student interviewers and narrators.

Community Archives and Exhibits

After recording, NSEFS hosts events where students present on the oral histories to narrators, their extended family and community. Narrators may choose to share records with a repository or to retain them for family use only.

Public presentations and exhibits (pictured left), as well as oral history recordings that are and controlled by narrators and their families, ensure information is accessible and useful to the communities they come from.

Images and student presentations can be viewed at northshorefieldschool.org.

Community-Based is Ongoing

In-depth, ongoing, and iterative community-based work like that of the NSEFS is a model many archives can learn from.

My Question: How should the NSEFS model be transformed into a community-based heritage center?

Sample of exhibit displayed at NSEFS events based on narrators’ oral histories. Through conversation and interaction with narrators, their family, and other community members the NSEFS discussion shifted from recording and sharing individual narratives to connecting and contextualizing these narratives within the community.

Poster Created by: Rachel Greiner

Special Thanks to University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Museum Studies Department for providing me with the opportunity to share this work.

Iterative Community-Based Archival Processes