

## Island Pacific Academy Students Study Space Exploration

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Students at Island Pacific Academy in Kapolei are involved in high tech challenge.

This week, they took over a radio telescope to measure energy emissions from Jupiter.

The central theme of the class is space exploration. Monday, the students had the chance to take remote control of the Goldstone Apple Valley Radio Telescopes.

"So the kids then were on line, they were actually controlling a 34 meter diameter telescope. So if you can imagine how huge that is, the kids were actually controlling the telescope, they were telling it what to point to in space," says Jen Higa, Science Teacher.



When we watched a class studying radio waves, we noticed ALL the students were engaged.

"Even the ones who normally throwing pencils at the ceiling or whatever - they're not doing it in here. We have zero discipline problems. They're so engaged in this very high tech, very interesting, very right now, very relevant information," says Higa.

Higa describes herself as a sci-fi nut and passes along her enthusiasm to her students. They took an overnight field trip to the Makakilo observatory to watch the rocket and satellite search for water on the moon. Her colleague, Michelle Bradley shares that fervor.

"I became a NASA space grant fellow which involves a lot of applying. And I have a terrific mentor and she and I collaborated to bring culture and space travel together, Hawaiian culture and space travel," says Michelle Bradley, Science Teacher.

The teachers have actually established a curriculum they call Astronaut Academy. They engage the students in a lot of hands on activity - the slinky is used to illustrate the difference in the amplitude of radio waves. Students who are quick learners help those who may struggle. The quick learners strive for the mastery level.

"And it's very hard to attain, but the mastery level is only attained by us seeing them teaching another student. So it's a real world curriculum that we're teaching here," says Bradley."

Demonstrating their commitment to their students, Bradley and Higa travel to mission control in Houston in February for a refresher course.

