

FROM MO‘OLELO TO MANA‘O: TRANSFORMING POSTSECONDARY SUPPORT
SYSTEMS FOR NATIVE HAWAIIAN TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS
(AN ACTION RESEARCH NARRATIVE INQUIRY)

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DEDICATION

To My Parents

Earl Nathan Kanoelani Thompson

and

Suelily Ann Del Toro Thompson

My first loves ~ My first teachers

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One of my favorite quotes from Maya Angelou is, “I’ve learned that you shouldn’t go through life with a catcher’s mitt on both hands; you need to be able to throw something back.” I have been blessed to be on the receiving end of unwavering love, support, guidance, patience, and belief in my potential as an educator and a scholar.

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Abstract

In the realm of higher education, a national and local priority in the United States and Hawai'i is the push for timely degree completion. Of particular concern are the retention and degree completion rates for Native Hawaiians. Interactions with counseling and advising professionals have the potential to significantly impact the quality and efficiency of the student college experience and degree attainment. Framing the research around critical race and post-colonial theories and adopting life history and Indigenous relationality approaches, this action research narrative inquiry answers the research question: What can we learn about supporting Native Hawaiian Teacher Education students by examining the educational life history experiences of Native Hawaiian students from Leeward Community College's Associate in Arts in Teaching (AAT) program?

Fifty Native Hawaiian students who attended the AAT program between 2006 and 2016 shared their mo'olelo (i.e., stories) and mana'o (i.e., thoughts, ideas) by completing a qualitative survey. From the 50 students who completed the survey, a purposeful sampling of 6 students were interviewed and shared artifacts that represented their impactful educational experiences. Lastly, a focus group of Native Hawaiian AAT students was convened to solicit suggestions for program improvements.

Findings revealed the importance of a Native Hawaiian identity, the value of achievement in an educational context, and how the development of Native Hawaiian, student, and future teacher identities impacts self-efficacy. Findings may benefit teacher education programs that serve minority and Indigenous students or any educational professional who supports Native Hawaiian students.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments.....	iv
Abstract.....	viii
List of Tables.....	xii
List of Figures.....	xiii
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
My Mo‘olelo.....	1
Professional Context.....	3
Voice as Context.....	5
Statement of Problem.....	8
Purpose of Study.....	14
Research Questions.....	15
Significance of Topic.....	16
Conceptual and Theoretical Frameworks.....	17
Context of Deficiency.....	18
Strengths-Based Response.....	22
Establishing Connection Through Nā Piko ‘Ekolu.....	27
Definition of Terms.....	30
Overview of Chapters.....	31
Nā Piko ‘Ekolu - Chapter 1.....	31
Piko Po‘o - Chapter 2 and Chapter 3.....	32
Piko Waena - Chapter 4 and Chapter 5.....	32
Piko Ma‘i - Chapter 6.....	33
CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	34
Understanding the Achievement Gap.....	35
Why is it Important?.....	37
Causality of the Gap.....	38
Closing the Gap.....	40
Achievement Gap and the Native Student.....	42
Native Hawaiians and Education.....	43
Ka Wā Kahiko.....	44
Missionary Arrival and Influence.....	45
Post-Colonial Aftermath.....	49
Reclaiming Indigenous Education.....	50
Support Systems in Higher Education.....	53
The Role of Advising.....	54
Addressing the Needs of Minority Students.....	56
Indigenous Student Barriers to College Success.....	58
Understanding the Native Hawaiian College Student.....	60
Support Systems in Teacher Education Programs.....	61
Leeward Community College’s Teacher Education Program.....	63
Leeward Community College’s Teacher Education Support Services.....	65

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY	68
Guiding Mana‘o.....	70
Interpretivism.....	70
Indigenous Methodology.....	71
Type of Study.....	72
Qualitative Case Study.....	72
Action Research.....	73
Narrative Inquiry.....	75
Design of Study.....	77
Hui O Nā Leo.....	77
Participants in the Study.....	79
Hui O Nā Mana‘o Haumāna.....	79
Hui O Nā Mo‘olelo Haumāna.....	80
Hui Ho‘oholomua.....	82
Kanaka Noi‘i.....	83
Data Collection.....	85
Reports and Documents.....	86
Survey.....	86
Interviews.....	87
Focus Group.....	89
Data Analysis.....	91
Reviewing the Data.....	91
Focusing the Analysis.....	92
Coding and Patterns.....	92
Interpreting the Data.....	94
Quality Considerations.....	95
Reflexivity.....	95
Trustworthiness.....	96
Limitations of the Study.....	98
CHAPTER 4. MO‘OLELO	101
I am Aloha.....	102
My Reflection on Aloha.....	108
I am Alaka‘i.....	109
My Reflection on Alaka‘i.....	116
I am Ho‘oulu.....	117
My Reflection on Ho‘oulu.....	126
I am Mālama.....	127
My Reflection on Mālama.....	136
I am Maika‘i.....	138
My Reflection on Maika‘i.....	146
I am Kamaha‘o.....	147
My Reflection on Kamaha‘o.....	165
Reflecting on Mo‘olelo.....	166
CHAPTER 5. FINDINGS	167
Moena Makaloa - A Petition for Change.....	167
Research Questions.....	170

Hui O Nā Mana‘o Haumāna (Survey Results)	170
Connection to Hawaiian Culture.....	170
Connection to Education.....	182
Hui O Nā Mo‘olelo Haumāna (Interview Results).....	197
Essentiality of Achievement	197
Exposure to Meaningful Teaching Strategies	199
Someone Believed Before I Believed	201
Cultural Impacts on Educational Clarity.....	203
Power of Money.....	205
Identity and Self-Efficacy	206
Hui Ho‘oholomua (Focus Group Results)	209
Reasons for Choosing the AAT Program	209
Experiences in the AAT Program.....	210
De-motivating Factors to Enter the Teaching Profession	211
Barriers to College Degree Achievement	213
Mechanisms of Persistence	215
Suggestions for Program Transformation	217
Elements of Moena O Nā Haumāna (Summary of Findings).....	226
Summary of Hui O Nā Mana‘o Haumāna (Survey Results).....	227
Summary of Hui O Nā Mo‘olelo Haumāna (Interview Results)	230
Summary of Hui Ho‘oholomua (Focus Group Results)	234
CHAPTER 6. IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION	236
Weaving Moena O Nā Pua.....	237
Culturally-Sustaining Identity of Achievement Model.....	239
Piko Po‘o (Ancestral/Spiritual Connection)	243
Piko Waena (Present Wisdom/Connection to Self).....	243
Piko Ma‘i (Connection to Future Generations)	244
Culturally-Inclusive Collaboration	245
Model Application to my Doctoral Journey.....	247
Recommendations.....	252
Recommendations from Nā Pua	253
Recommendations from Kanaka Noi‘i	257
Implications for Future Research.....	262
My Mana‘o.....	264
APPENDICES.....	268
Appendix A: IRB Approval	268
Appendix B: Leeward Community College Approval.....	269
Appendix C: Leeward CC Teacher Education Program Approval	270
Appendix D: Recruitment Flyer.....	271
Appendix E: Consent Form	272
Appendix F: Survey Questionnaire.....	274
Appendix G: Interview Protocol and Questions	276
Appendix H: Focus Group Protocol and Questions.....	278
GLOSSARY OF HAWAIIAN TERMS	280
REFERENCES.....	281

List of Tables

<u>Table</u>		<u>Page</u>
1.1	Comparison Chart of Leaver Graduation Rates (2006–2015).....	13
3.1	Demographic Profile of Interview Participants.....	80
3.2	Demographic Profile of Focus Group Participants.....	82
5.1	Survey Responses - Native Hawaiian Practice Categories.....	177
5.2	Survey Responses - Native Hawaiian Values.....	180
5.3	Survey Responses - Motivations for Becoming a Teacher.....	189
5.4	Survey Responses - Influential People in Becoming a Teacher....	192
5.5	Survey Responses - Native Hawaiian Teacher Role Models.....	195

List of Figures

<u>Figure</u>		<u>Page</u>
1.1	Conceptual and Theoretical Framework.....	18
2.1	AAT TLC Network (Teaching-Learning Connection).....	65
3.1	Design of Study - Hui O Nā Leo.....	78
4.1	Achievement Award.....	113
4.2	Enemy Pie Art Project.....	114
4.3	“Love is...” Cartoon.....	115
4.4	Ho‘oulu’s Artifacts.....	121
4.5	Maika‘i’s Artifacts.....	142
4.6	Kamaha‘o’s Artifacts.....	157
5.1	Moena Makaloa Protest Mat of 1874.....	169
5.2	Survey Responses - Number of Years Residing in Hawai‘i.....	171
5.3	Survey Responses - Connection to Hawaiian Culture.....	175
5.4	Survey Responses - Participation in Hawaiian Practices.....	176
5.5	Survey Responses - Familiarity with the Hawaiian Language.....	178
5.6	Survey Responses - Frequency of Practicing Hawaiian Values.....	179
5.7	Survey Responses - Importance of Obtaining Degrees.....	186
5.8	Survey Responses - Native Hawaiian Teacher Role Models.....	195
5.9	Makaloa Sedge (Cyperus laevigatus).....	227
6.1	Culturally-Sustaining Identity of Achievement Model.....	241

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Nā Piko 'Ekolu

“E ala! E alu! E kuilima!”

“Rise! Together! Join Hands!”

A call to come together to tackle a given task.

‘Ōlelo No‘eau, Number 258 (Pukui, 1983, p. 32)

As with most Hawaiian words, mo‘olelo carries with it several meanings including “story, tale, myth, history, tradition, literature, legend, journal, log, fable, essay, chronicle, or record” (“Nā Puke Wehewehe ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i,” n.d.). Originating from the words mo‘o, which means succession, and ‘ōlelo which means language, speech, or talk, mo‘olelo is literally translated as a succession of talk (“Nā Puke Wehewehe ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i,” n.d.). The mo‘olelo of my haumāna¹ in Leeward Community College’s Associate in Arts in Teaching program are key elements to understanding the pilina² they have built with education and their Native Hawaiian³ culture. By exploring and understanding these relationships and their origins of development, we can begin to identify ways in which we can nurture and strengthen the pilina our Native Hawaiian students share with their education, culture, and educators in order to facilitate the successful progression in postsecondary environments.

My Mo‘olelo

I began this educational endeavor by reflecting on my own mo‘olelo. This research bears personal meaning for me. Just as I challenged my haumāna to reflect on their relationship with education and culture through their lived experiences, I embarked

¹ Student or pupil (“Nā Puke Wehewehe ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i,” n.d.)

² Relationship, connection, or association (“Nā Puke Wehewehe ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i,” n.d.)

³ In this paper, the term Native Hawaiian refers to the aboriginal people of Hawai‘i who “prior to 1778, occupied and exercised sovereignty in the area that now comprises the State of Hawaii” and their descendants (“Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian-serving institutions - 20 U.S. Code § 1059d,” n.d.).

on the same exercise in self-contemplation. I am a Native Hawaiian, born and raised in Halawa, Hawai‘i on the island of O‘ahu. I am the fourth and youngest daughter of Earl and Suelily Ann Thompson. My sisters Terry, Susan, and Lori are twelve, ten, and eight years my senior respectively. I am succeeded by my two children, Treyton and Shaelyn, who are growing up in an environment that encourages an understanding, connection, and celebration of their own cultural diversity and identities; something that I did not experience.

I am of Boricua (i.e., Puerto Rican), Spanish, Portuguese, English, Irish, Scottish, and Native Hawaiian descent. My father identified with being a Native Hawaiian and my mother connected with her Boricua heritage, therefore, I have always been most connected to these two cultures. However, both my mother and father grew up in an era in Hawai‘i where they were taught to replace their own cultural languages, customs, and traditions with speaking only Standard English, practicing Western values, and pursuing the American dream. As a result, I grew up in an identity chasm between my ethnic heritages and being an American, never fully or authentically identifying with either.

Reflecting on my relationship with my Native Hawaiian culture revealed that I lived by Hawaiian values and attitudes, but lacked exposure to Hawaiian historical traditions, practices, and the native language. I do not speak conversational Hawaiian, yet I incorporate common Hawaiian words and phrases into my colloquial vernacular. I can speak pidgin⁴ moderately well and use this dialect when a social or professional situation warrants it. Thanks to Sharon O‘Calvey, my Maryknoll Grade School Hawaiian

⁴ According to the Merriam-Webster online dictionary (n.d.), pidgin is defined as “a simplified speech used for communication between people with different languages.” In Hawai‘i, pidgin is referred to as Hawai‘i’s Creole English and combines words, ideals, and sayings from a variety of cultures dating back to the late 1800s during the influx of immigrants brought to the islands to work on plantations.

Studies teacher, I know the colors, flowers, and songs of each of the Hawaiian islands, some Hawaiian mythology, one or two chants, and have danced hula kahiko⁵ and ‘auwana⁶ in elementary and high school May Day programs. That was the extent of my connection to my Native Hawaiian culture and until recently, I thought it was enough.

Several years ago, while sharing my childhood experiences with a colleague, she exclaimed, “So you grew up with no culture! That is so sad!” I was puzzled. I was local⁷ and I was a Thompson. Those were my cultures. Was I missing another key component that should frame my outlook on the world? In what ways could my practice as a counselor and educator be improved were I to learn, embrace, and fully integrate my Native Hawaiian culture into my personal way of living? These questions served as the catalyst for my cultural awakening, especially in regards to exploring my Native Hawaiian identity and its impact on my relationship with education. During this self-actualization process, I revived my passion to provide quality service, education, and guidance to all of my students, especially my Native Hawaiian students, with the intent of helping them build positive relationships with education that support their success as college students, Native Hawaiians, and future teachers.

Professional Context

The motivation for this study also stems from my passion to see Native Hawaiian students successfully complete their college education. I have been with the University

⁵ Kahiko means old or ancient (“Nā Puke Wehewehe ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i,” n.d.), therefore, hula kahiko references an ancient, pre-Western contact style of Hawaiian dance usually accompanied by oli (chant) or mele (song) and traditional instruments.

⁶ ‘Auana means to wander or drift (“Nā Puke Wehewehe ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i,” n.d.) and references a modern, free-flowing form of Hawaiian dance usually accompanied by mele (song).

⁷ The “local” reference in this context refers to one who has grown up in Hawai‘i or is familiar with local customs, traditions, literacies, practices, humor, and idioms that incorporate various ethnic influences that are prevalent in Hawai‘i, including but not limited to Hawaiian, Caucasian, Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, Spanish, Korean, Portuguese, and Samoan.

of Hawai'i Community College (UHCC) system since 1996 and am currently the program counselor and part-time instructor for the Associate in Arts in Teaching (AAT) program at Leeward Community College (Leeward CC). I started with the AAT program in its first year of student enrollment, and have watched it grow from 24 students in 2007 to 432 declared majors in 2016. Over the past eight years, we have graduated 455 students and our Native Hawaiian student enrollment has increased to 30% of our student population, making it our largest ethnic demographic. The AAT program was developed to build an open-access, *home-grown* teacher education option, especially for the Leeward coast on the island of O'ahu. Although we have graduated 117 Native Hawaiian students, more needs to be done to support the retention and persistence of our Indigenous students who want to pursue a teaching career.

In my twenty-year faculty career, I have served on numerous committees charged with assessing and improving student retention and completion rates. There is usually one *token* student who is selected to serve on the committee as a representative of the collective student voice. In truth, it is rare that this *student voice* offers anything substantial in terms of affecting policy change or project development. This is not a reflection on the individual student representative, but rather a system where the student can provide opinions but has no voting rights, or has a vote, but is easily outnumbered by committee members who believe they know what is best for the student.

I suggest there is a parallel between higher education institutions creating policy and programs to benefit students with little to no student input to that of the Euro-centric culture that imposes Western values and norms for the perceived betterment of an Indigenous people. In both instances, an outsider group is making impactful decisions

for another group in which they cannot possibly be fully integrated into because they are not living and experiencing life as a member of that group. Realizing the potential for unintentional injustice in both instances, this study provides the necessary opportunity for students to share *meaningful voice* as Indigenous people in a Euro-American dominated educational culture as well as college students in a bureaucratic, neoliberal policy-driven educational setting. In both instances, there exist power imbalances. This study attempts, on a small scale, to rectify that by sharing the voice of one particular group of Native Hawaiian Teacher Education students at Leeward Community College.

Voice as Context

Given my personal and professional motivations, it became evident that what was driving me to do this research was the opportunity to offer a platform where my students' voices could be heard. This concept of voice is often discussed in Indigenous circles, especially those which have survived hegemonic histories. In fact, the significance of voice resonates with any group that has experienced marginalization, oppression, or has been forced into silence. For example, speaking our truth is only a part of the equation towards self-determination. Being heard, acknowledged, and recognized validates that truth beyond our own internal knowing. I suggest that when marginalized "truths" are exposed for all to hear, discuss, debate, challenge, and reflect on, then we as a collective people can expand our thinking and positively impact social progress and justice.

The dissertation process is one such mechanism for voice. Whether it is the meticulous quantitative academic who has uncovered an anomaly or the methodical qualitative researcher who presents a compendium of wisdom offered through lived human experiences and meaningful stories; the final outcome is a testament to voice.

Through research, we can pay homage to the rational and indeterminate voice of the data, the context, the participants, and the researcher. The purpose of this dissertation is to embody this praxis. It is the vehicle by which Native Hawaiian student voices are spotlighted and celebrated; voices that are rarely heard yet hold the key to developing strategic action and institutional change that supports their educational journeys.

For the purposes of this research, I call on the strong, courageous, and sagacious voices of my haumāna to discuss a problem that academia has struggled with for decades, but has not yet been able to rectify: low college persistence and completion rates, especially for Native Hawaiian students. This study focuses on the lived experiences of current and former AAT⁸ students of Native Hawaiian ancestry at Leeward Community College. Although many Native Hawaiians choose the community college as their entry to postsecondary education, there is a lack of literature examining the Native Hawaiian community college student experience (Hagedorn, Lester, Moon, & Tibbetts, 2005).

I posit that obtaining a 2-year degree may have a significant impact on the overall academic, professional, and personal success of the Native Hawaiian student. Specifically with the AAT degree, this program strives to provide a solid foundational understanding of the craft of teaching, a safe, supportive environment that scaffolds learning, and resources to facilitate the successful navigation through the challenges presented in a postsecondary educational setting. Furthermore, completion of the AAT provides these students with the self-esteem and self-determination to continue to a bachelor's program, obtain a living wage in the teaching field, and influence other family or community members to attend college.

⁸ Throughout the paper, the program descriptors AAT and Teacher Education will be used interchangeably.

In this action research narrative inquiry study, I surveyed current and graduated Native Hawaiian AAT students who attended the program between 2006 and 2016. From the 50 students who completed the survey, I then selected a purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009) of 6 students to represent diversity in gender, age, marital status, geographical location, and progress within the AAT program. These identified interviewees shared artifacts that they felt depicted their impactful educational experiences. Preliminary data collected from the surveys and interviews was presented to a focus group of Native Hawaiian AAT students with the purpose of improving program supports specifically for this student demographic.

Throughout the research process, I revered my haumāna as my source, as my kumu⁹. Serving as the participants' professor, academic counselor, and partner in research, I openly and humbly welcomed this role reversal in the customary counselor to student relationship. They were the experts and I was their pupil. The purpose of this endeavor was to enlighten myself and the larger educational community about who these students really are, where they come from, and what they need from those of us in higher education in order to realize a better future. From the beginning of this study, my kuleana¹⁰ was to ensure integrity throughout the research process and present their stories and ideas in a way that honored their contributions. This was achieved by clearly explaining the significance of the research to my participants, creating a safe space that promoted candid discourse, and encouraging feedback before finalizing participant narratives.

⁹ Commonly referred to as teacher and sometimes used to describe the type of teacher (e.g. Kumu hula is a hula teacher). Also referred to as the source, beginning, or foundation ("Nā Puke Wehewehe 'Ōlelo Hawai'i," n.d.).

¹⁰ Responsibility, charge, duty ("Nā Puke Wehewehe 'Ōlelo Hawai'i," n.d.).

Through an Indigenous lens, the cultivation of any narrative consists of more than just the original storyteller and the context. It also includes the experiences, context, and voice of the researcher as an author or storyteller (Wilson, 2008). Therefore, I have purposefully selected a first-person orientation and voice because this research is a living entity from which I choose to not separate myself. This work embodies me, my haumāna, and our relationship to our ‘aumakua¹¹, our kupuna¹², our kamali‘i¹³, and our future mo‘opuna¹⁴, all with the intention to give back to our lāhui¹⁵.

Each of us experience and interpret reality via a personal lens which is tinted with our backgrounds, influences, and values. When these varying ontologies within a culture are expressed and shared, it can create a richness in diversity that provides a deeper understanding and appreciation of the complexity of that culture. Similar to the kumu hula who may interpret the same mele through their own lens, resulting in distinctive, yet equally mesmerizing, dance interpretations and choreography, this study aims to uncover, share, and learn from the varied viewpoints and educational experiences of Native Hawaiian Teacher Education students. Together, we stand as a diversified, yet unified, Indigenous voice.

Statement of Problem

In the realm of higher education, a national and local priority in the United States and Hawai‘i is the push for timely degree completion. The growing concern for

¹¹ Family or personal gods; deified ancestors who guide and protect future generations (“Nā Puke Wehewehe ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i,” n.d.)

¹² Most commonly referred to as grandparent, but can also refer to any ancestor or a person from a grandparent’s generation. Kupuna are revered and keepers of ancestral and cultural knowledge to pass down to the next generations. (“Nā Puke Wehewehe ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i,” n.d.)

¹³ Children (“Nā Puke Wehewehe ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i,” n.d.)

¹⁴ Grandchild or descendants of two generations later (“Nā Puke Wehewehe ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i,” n.d.)

¹⁵ Nation, race, tribe, people, nationality (“Nā Puke Wehewehe ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i,” n.d.).

substandard college persistence and completion rates has prompted postsecondary institutions to review strategic plans, budget allocations, and personnel assignments to ensure that programs and supports are in place (Thomas, Kana'iaupuni, Balutski, & Freitas, 2012). The University of Hawai'i (UH) system, Hawai'i's only public higher education system, is a 10-campus consortium comprised of three universities, one college, six community colleges, and community-based learning centers. The UH system's focus on timely degree completion is evident in marketing initiatives such *Agree to Degree* and *15 to Finish* campaigns¹⁶ where students are encouraged to make a commitment to their college education by signing a pledge to persist or enrolling in more than a full-time credit load each semester.

Of particular concern are the retention and degree completion rates for Native Hawaiians, the Indigenous people of Hawai'i. According to the American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015) for the state of Hawai'i, the educational attainment of Native Hawaiians trails behind Caucasian, Asian, and Filipino groups in the completion of nearly every degree level within higher education. Specifically, whereas 25.9%, 22.7%, and 15.6% of Caucasians, Asians, and Filipinos respectively earn bachelor's degrees, only 7.8% of Native Hawaiians complete their 4-year degree. The trend continues in graduate level education with Caucasians toting a 17.2% completion rate and Asians a 8.7% completion rate, while Native Hawaiians lag behind with a mere 4.7% attainment rate (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015).

¹⁶ The 15 to Finish marketing campaign is a UH System effort to promote students to take 15 credits each semester in order to ensure timely graduation (e.g. 2 years for an Associate degree, 4 years for a Bachelor's degree). The Agree to Degree campaign is a UHCC initiative where students, faculty, and staff sign individual contracts stating their support for doing their part to help students graduate "on time."

Native Hawaiian postsecondary success is a particular concern for the University of Hawai‘i’s Community College System (UHCC). This seven-campus community college system, which is a part of the larger UH System, enrolls the largest number of Native Hawaiians in the United States and yet reports an alarming 65.4% college dropout rate and a 15.2% college completion rate for this student demographic (Hagedorn et al., 2005). Leeward Community College, the second largest community college in the system, is located on the West side of the island of O‘ahu and services those residing in a span of nearly four moku¹⁷ (i.e., Hawaiian divisions of land) including Wai‘anae, ‘Ewa, Waialua, and a portion of Ko‘olau Loa. Although there is controversy regarding the accuracy of U.S. Census data reporting on race demographics, the Wai‘anae moku alone includes some of the most heavily populated Native Hawaiian communities such as Wai‘anae, Mā‘ili, Nānākuli, and Mākaha. An estimated 98,000 Native Hawaiians reside in Leeward Community College’s service areas (Levine, 2011).

As of Fall 2016, UHCC system enrollment data confirmed that with 1915 students, or 26% of the student population, Leeward CC serves the largest number of Native Hawaiian students in the community college system (Leeward CC Office of Policy, Planning, and Assessment, 2016). As a result, Leeward CC has made it a priority to define the needs of this Indigenous group and “advance the educational goals of all students with a special commitment to Native Hawaiians” (“Leeward CC Mission,” n.d.).

¹⁷ Hawaiians did not originally divide or own land. It was believed that the ‘āina belonged to all Hawaiians and therefore, property lines and rights were not necessary. With the introduction of foreigners to the Hawaiian Islands, it became necessary for Hawaiians to divide up the land via the The Mahele. Moku, or island districts, were created and housed several ahupua‘a (i.e., pieces of land extending from mountain to ocean).

With an institutional commitment in place and an acknowledgment that not enough has been done to support Native Hawaiian students in postsecondary institutions, the time is prime for evaluating praxis in curriculum, instruction, and support services. In Leeward CC's Associate in Arts in Teaching program, faculty introduce concepts such as contextualization, culturally-responsive pedagogy, and the importance of facilitating meaningful connections between students and instructional content. However, what transpires in the classroom is only one part of the students' college experience. Interactions with individuals in counseling and advising, admissions and records, financial aid, student life, health services, computer labs, learning resource and tutoring centers, cultural spaces or student safe-havens, peer mentor programs, and first year experiences are examples of areas outside of the classroom that may factor in creating the total college experience.

Every year, Leeward CC participates in the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) survey to determine service benchmarks and ways in which the Leeward CC student engagement and experience can be improved. In 2014, Leeward CC administered the CCSSE survey to 165 students over a random sampling of more than 20 courses from various disciplines. In the area of *Support for Learners*, the data revealed that nearly 75% of the students surveyed felt that Leeward CC provided "quite a bit" or "very much" of the support needed to succeed in college ("CCSSE: Leeward CC report," 2014). The highest ranking factors for student support and engagement included an 83% participation rate in new student orientation and a 71.3% successful enrollment in courses prior to the start of the semester. In contrast, 48.5% felt that Leeward CC provided the financial support necessary to persist in college, 45.1%

stated that Leeward CC helped them thrive socially, and a mere 34.4% of survey respondents believed that Leeward CC's support staff helped them cope with their non-academic responsibilities (e.g., family, work, etc.). Given this, Leeward CC seems to perform best in the initial phases of the student's educational journey, however, beyond orientation and enrollment, support services are either not as well-developed or marketed to the student population. Therefore, the question becomes, "Are we doing all that can be done to support completion rates of our college students, especially our Native Hawaiian population? And if not, then what do we do?"

Specifically in the AAT program, leaver graduation rates¹⁸ are used as one indicator of program success. In Table 1.1, located on the following page, there are three data sets offering comparisons of leaver graduation rates between student groups and programs. The first data set provides an overview of the leaver graduation rates for all AAT students, Native Hawaiian AAT students, and Non-Native Hawaiian AAT students from academic years 2006–2015. The second data set is the 2015 leaver graduation rates for Leeward CC's Associate in Arts in Liberal Arts degree, including a breakdown of Native Hawaiian and Non-Native Hawaiian students. The last data set presents the 2015 leaver graduation rates for all Associate in Arts degrees in the University of Hawai'i Community College System.

¹⁸ The number of graduates divided by the number of currently enrolled is called the "Leaver Graduation Rate" since it indicates the percentage of majors leaving the program because they have graduated. This does not indicate the amount of time it takes to degree completion, but rather measures those who successfully complete the degree.

Table 1.1

Comparison Chart of Leeward CC's Associate in Arts in Teaching (AAT) Program Leaver Graduation Rates for Academic Years 2006–2015

Leeward CC Graduation Rates (2006–2015)

Associate in Arts in Teaching (AAT)

Year	AAT Majors (A)	AAT Grads (B)	% Grad Rate (B/A)	Native Hawn AAT Majors (C)	Native Hawn AAT Grads (D)	% Native Hawn Grad Rate (D/C)	Non-Native Hawn AAT Majors (E)	Non-Native Hawn AAT Grads (F)	% Non-Native Hawn Grad Rate (F/E)
2006	1	0	0.0%	0	0	0.0%	1	0	0.0%
2007	71	1	1.4%	19	0	0.0%	52	1	1.9%
2008	224	8	3.6%	62	3	4.8%	162	5	3.1%
2009	327	16	4.9%	89	2	2.3%	238	14	5.9%
2010	440	43	9.8%	134	12	9.0%	306	31	10.1%
2011	438	45	10.3%	143	13	9.1%	295	32	10.9%
2012	477	49	10.3%	161	10	6.2%	316	39	12.3%
2013	488	53	10.9%	150	11	7.3%	338	42	12.4%
2014	506	67	13.2%	159	21	13.2%	347	46	13.3%
2015	456	57	12.5%	139	20	14.4%	317	37	11.7%

Leeward CC Graduation Rates (2015)

Associate in Arts in Liberal Arts (LBRT)

Year	LBRT Majors (A)	LBRT Grads (B)	% Grad Rate (B/A)	Native Hawn LBRT Majors (C)	Native Hawn LBRT Grads (D)	% Native Hawn Grad Rate (D/C)	Non-Native Hawn LBRT Majors (E)	Non-Native Hawn LBRT Grads (F)	% Non-Native Hawn Grad Rate (F/E)
2015	4117	409	9.9%	1213	117	9.7%	2904	292	10.1%

UHCC System Graduation Rates (2015)

All Associate in Arts Degrees in the UHCC System

Year	All AA Majors (A)	All AA Grads (B)	% Grad Rate (B/A)	Native Hawn All AA Majors (C)	Native Hawn All AA Grads (D)	% Native Hawn Grad Rate (D/C)	Non-Native Hawn All AA Majors (E)	Non-Native Hawn All AA Grads (F)	% Non-Native Hawn Grad Rate (F/E)
2015	16104	1398	8.7%	4803	428	8.9%	11301	970	8.6%

In reviewing the historical data for Leeward CC's AAT program, leaver graduation rates have steadily increased since 2006, which would be expected for any new program that is exponentially growing. The 2015 data shows that over 30% of the AAT student enrollment consists of Native Hawaiians and the AAT leaver graduation rate for the Native Hawaiian AAT student population is 14.4%, which is higher than both the overall AAT graduation rate of 12.5% and the Non-Native Hawaiian AAT graduation rate of 11.7%. However, the higher Native Hawaiian percentage may be due to a drop in Native Hawaiian student enrollment. In 2015, the number of Native Hawaiian AAT majors dropped by 20 students whereas the number of graduates only dropped by 1 student, resulting in a Native Hawaiian leaver graduation rate that seems to indicate greater student success, but really may have been the result of lower Native Hawaiian student enrollment.

Still, the AAT program's overall, Native Hawaiian, and Non-Native Hawaiian leaver graduation rates exceed those of the college's Associate in Arts in Liberal Arts degree as well as the combined graduation rates of all Associate degrees in the University of Hawai'i Community College System by several percentage points. Given this, it is evident that the AAT program is on the right track in supporting college completion but there is more that needs to be done. A 14.4% Native Hawaiian AAT student leaver graduation rate is not an indication of success; it is an indication of a beginning.

Purpose of Study

This study focuses on the voices of Native Hawaiian students in Leeward Community College's AAT program with the purpose of understanding the educational and cultural experiences that have shaped their views of education and motivations to

enter the teaching field. Through examining the relationship between Native Hawaiian Teacher Education students' views of education and their Indigenous culture, I hope to deepen understanding of how support systems can be modified to create meaningful impact for this specific student population. Using the lens of our haumāna, we will be able to identify what systems in place are currently working and discover what can be done to better support this group of students. In this study, their voice matters.

In fact, other than myself and my haumāna, this study does not present the voice of any other faculty, administrator, community partner, university personnel or professional who has a vested interest in the success of Native Hawaiian Teacher Education students. This is not an oversight, but a purposeful strategy. This paper is not a program evaluation nor a summary of best practices or challenges. Rather, it is a student-focused, student-centered, collaborative endeavor. This study is specifically designed to provide the time, space, and opportunity for Indigenous student voices to be heard, acknowledged, and celebrated. My haumāna have an uninterrupted venue where they can share what is best for them and advocate for relevant, meaningful support services. Furthermore, by sharing their stories and being able to reflect on their experiences and purpose, my hope is that they will gain a deeper understanding and greater appreciation for their Native Hawaiian, student, and emerging teacher identities.

Research Questions

The research questions explored in this dissertation in practice are the following:
What can we learn about supporting Native Hawaiian Teacher Education students by examining the educational life history experiences of Native Hawaiian students from Leeward Community College's Associate in Arts in Teaching (AAT) program?

Sub-Question #1: What specific Native Hawaiian beliefs or values have influenced their relationship with education?

Sub-Question #2: What can be learned from the educational life history stories of Native Hawaiian AAT students?

Sub-Question #3: What institutional supports do Native Hawaiian AAT students identify as being beneficial to their success in postsecondary environments?

Significance of Topic

There is a growing scholarly interest in student retention and persistence, especially as it relates to non-White college students in American postsecondary institutions. Through the lens of student development theory, much has been done to understand the minority student experience in higher education (Bensimon, 2005). However, there is a lack of literature on the Native Hawaiian community college student experience and how Indigenous culture, values, and identity interweave and influence their relationships with education. Acknowledging that the classroom experience is a major component to a student's success in college, it is also not the only contributing factor. This study primarily looks at the support functions, outside of the classroom, for the Native Hawaiian student and what can be learned from examining their individual mo'olelo through a strengths-based lens, rather than making stereotypical, deficit-based assumptions about Native Hawaiian college students.

This study focuses on Native Hawaiian college students who are pursuing careers in teaching. This unique sub-set of participants adds a layer of depth to the study because these students, who are products of a Euro-American educational system that is oftentimes antithetical to their own ontologies, epistemologies, and axiologies, are

choosing careers that potentially perpetuate this Western way of being, knowing, and learning. This research explores their motivation to re-enter this system, no longer as haumāna, but now as kumu to future generations. What are the struggles that they faced as haumāna? How has that impacted their views of education and their desire to maintain or modify the American educational system? How have their experiences as students and Native Hawaiians influenced the development of their teaching craft? Understanding how to support the Native Hawaiian Teacher Education community college student from admissions through graduation has the potential to impact the success of current and future Native Hawaiian students at all grade levels.

Conceptual and Theoretical Frameworks

My conceptual framework builds upon the historical relationship that exists between the American educational system and minority and Indigenous, specifically Native Hawaiian, students. There are two parts to the framework that work in constant tension with one another: the context of deficiency and a strengths-based, voice-centered construct. The context of deficiency provides a national and local historical perspective to better understand the academic environment in which Native Hawaiian students currently reside. The theories that problematize the context of deficiency are critical race theory and post-colonial theory.

In response to this deficit model construct, my study looks through a lens informed by culturally-sustaining pedagogy (Paris & Alim, 2014) and Indigenous ways of knowing and being (Smith, 1999; Wilson, 2008). Theories that frame the strengths-based response of this framework include life history (Cole & Knowles, 2001; Goodson, 2001) and Indigenous relationality (Wilson, 2008). Finally, at the apex of the framework,

guiding the effort to address past and present injustices, is the convention of voice as presented in this study via the mo‘olelo and mana‘o of my haumāna and achieved by the establishment and perpetuation of authentic pilina between myself and the participants of this study.

STRENGTHS-BASED RESPONSE TO NATIVE HAWAIIAN STUDENT PERSISTENCE



Figure 1.1 Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

Context of Deficiency

Despite postsecondary institutional efforts to promote the façade of genuine racial equity through marketing campaigns that include pictures of people of color, the

development of equity training seminars, or the inclusion of diversity initiatives in college strategic plans, the disheartening truth is that there is a persistence of unequal educational outcomes for racial and ethnic groups that have experienced discrimination within the American higher education system (Bensimon, 2005). Policies and programs that view these minority students as being less than their White, traditional counterparts promote a culture of deficit thinking where the focus “emphasizes students’ inabilities rather than their abilities” (Green, 2006, p. 24). Hart (2010) agrees that society demands that students achieve within a Eurocentric model of education or risk a life of poverty and welfare as the uneducated and unemployable. In other words, “we are regularly forced to validate the colonialist’s mythology” (Hart, 2010, p. 4). The deficit model is further fueled by national and state-level statistical and historical data that support the existence of an *achievement gap* where minority achievement is measured by (and falls short of) the dominant White, privileged norms of success. Further discussion of this ‘achievement gap’ and the historical relationship between Native Hawaiians and Hawai‘i’s educational systems will be presented in chapter 2.

As a professional educator, I am an advocate for social justice, equity, and opportunity. Therefore, it is difficult to admit that racism via deficit model thinking is an ingrained part of the social, academic, and philosophical fabric of postsecondary learning. Racism within higher education institutions can be overtly prejudicial and discriminatory, but more often, deficit model thinking in higher education is presented in more subtle undertones of how faculty, administrators, and even other students perceive or stereotype students from certain racial and ethnic backgrounds (Green, 2006). For example, course assignment rigor could be slightly lowered due to the student racial composition of a

particular class or broad assumptions of behavior could be made by counselors or coaches due to a student's ethnicity, rather than examining the individual strengths and talents of the student (Cushman, 2005).

Addressing the perpetuity of unequal treatment and educational outcomes for racial and ethnic groups with a history of past discrimination in postsecondary education begins with engaging the institutional actors, such as faculty, administrators, and counselors, in processes that will shift cognitive bias in how minorities in higher education are perceived (Bensimon, 2005). To discredit or minimize its existence is not only naïve, but weakens the legitimacy and complexity of the minority student struggle. Acknowledgement is the first step. Examination and reflection with the intent to understand and act sets the foundation for real, meaningful change to take place.

Critical race theory. The theoretical frameworks used to challenge the foundation and context of deficiency in my conceptual framework are critical race theory (CRT) and post-colonialism. CRT has heavily influenced the design and execution of my study. It attempts to “provide unique ways to examine, analyze, and explain the roles, rules, and recognition of race and racism in society” (Beachum, 2013, p. 923). With its origins in the 1970s, when many felt the progression of the civil rights movement had begun to stall, CRT offered an alternative strategy for scholars, legal professionals, and activists to respond to the subtler forms of racism that were prevalent in society (Delgado, 2012). Grounded in legal and feminist applications, CRT has since evolved as a means to understand and define inequities in educational settings ranging from affirmative action to disciplinary procedures (Delgado, 2012). Critical race theory provides the theoretical insight needed in order to “analyze racism and include the voice

of people of color, those who were most impacted by racism's results" (Beachum, 2013, p. 923). For the purposes of this study, the application of critical race theory provides a supplementary lens by which I can examine the racial inequities that exist within higher education for Native Hawaiian Teacher Education students. CRT also validates alternative means of research, such as the counter-narrative of people of color, aligning with my Indigenous approach that emphasizes voice in scholarship via the mo'olelo and mana'o of my haumāna.

Post-colonialism and coloniality of being. Post-colonialism and the coloniality of being encompass the idea that Hawai'i and its Indigenous people exist in a perpetual post-colonial state of being. From the moment Captain James Cook *discovered* the Hawaiian Islands in 1778 and the subsequent colonization from missionary groups in 1820, the state of the thriving multi-island community of over a million self-sufficient Native Hawaiians would be forever altered. As a result of this hegemonic encroachment, Native Hawaiians suffered grave losses in population numbers, 'ōlelo Hawai'i¹⁹, and traditional, cultural ways of learning, knowing, and being.

Post-colonial theory "calls for justice and seeks to speak to social and psychological suffering, exploitation, violence and enslavement done to the powerless victims of colonization around the world by challenging the superiority of dominant perspectives and seeking to re-position and empower the marginalized and subordinated" (Parsons & Harding, 2011, p. 1). Childs and Williams (2014) suggest that there exist complexities surrounding post-colonialism, including determining at what point a nation is considered post-colonial, especially if the colonizers and their ideals still permeate

¹⁹ Hawaiian language.

throughout the socio-economic, cultural, philosophical fabric of the Indigenous society. Quinteros (2015) further explains the concept of coloniality of being as referring to the everyday experience of the colonized person, particularly in terms of their feelings and relationships with the physical, natural, and spiritual world in which they exist.

Acknowledging the multi-generational effects of colonization in Hawai‘i and that Native Hawaiians potentially experience life through this subaltern perspective demands a sensitivity as an Indigenous researcher and provides the platform by which we can begin to address and eliminate ignorance and racism in our educational systems.

Strengths-Based Response

Given the context of this study, I felt a deep sense of kuleana to approach my study through a counter-narrative, strengths-based lens that challenges the American academic landscape of deficiency in which minority students have been perceived for decades. I have thoughtfully chosen constructs of culturally-sustaining pedagogy, honoring my Indigenous ways of knowing and being, and allowing the opportunity for student voice to be a change mechanism in how Native Hawaiian students are perceived by the educational community.

Paris and Alim (2014) state that deficit approaches in the American educational system view the languages, literacies, and cultural ways of being in communities of color as deficiencies to be overcome and be replaced by the perceived superior dominant, White middle-class norms. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, culturally-relevant and responsive pedagogies were developed to challenge this alleged pattern of deficiency (Paris, 2012). Even though these approaches marked a substantial progression towards viewing the languages, literacies, and culture of communities of color as being equal to,

but different from, dominant teaching and learning norms, the goal was still “to bridge toward the dominant with little attention to maintaining the heritage and community practices of students and families” (Paris, 2012, p. 94). Inspired by these resource pedagogies and principles, Paris (2012) offered the construct of culturally-sustaining pedagogy, which “seeks to perpetuate and foster - to sustain - linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic schooling process” (Paris, 2012, p. 95). Culturally-sustaining pedagogy requires supporting students’ cultural competencies of their communities while also offering access to dominant cultural competency (Paris, 2012). It recognizes the constant evolution of culture and the amalgamation of traditional and contemporary cultural languages and practices, which may include other ethnic influences outside of their own. In this respect, culturally-sustaining pedagogy strives to perpetuate a pluralistic educational environment that honors within-group and across-group cultural practices (Paris, 2012).

The strengths-based response of my conceptual framework is also built upon Indigenous ways of knowing and being. Hart (2010) contends that whereas Indigenous academics have traditionally been faced with separating their indigeneity and academic personas, researchers such as Meyer (2008), Smith (1999), and Wilson (2001) have demonstrated how to conduct respectful, culturally-sensitive research that authentically incorporates Indigenous epistemologies, ontologies, and axiologies. Knowing that I felt a deep sense of kuleana to conduct my research in a way that honored an Indigenous worldview, I had to ask myself the difficult question, “What does indigeneity mean to me - the person who grew up, as someone once told her, with no culture?” I wrestled with the idea if having Native Hawaiian blood running through my veins was enough to claim

the positionality of being Indigenous. In other words, “*Was I worthy enough to employ an Indigenous orientation and apply it purposefully and authentically to my research?*”

Feeling this sense of dissonance prompted me to reflect on my worldview and the principles instilled in me from my childhood. Growing up in a blended culture infused with local and American influences, I was surprised that I chose all Hawaiian words, rather than English, to describe my values orientation. It validated that my culture has provided me with a foundation on which I intend to build a deeper understanding and appreciation of who I am as a Native Hawaiian. The following are the five values that are the cornerstones of my essence.

- *Aloha* encompasses my desire to feel and share genuine, authentic love for all;
- *Hō‘ihi* is my deep sense of respect for all and my pledge to honor all life of the past, present, and future;
- *‘Ohana* is my unconditional devotion to my family who are not only defined by my ancestors, parents, siblings, extended ‘ohana, and my children, but also my AAT family, my doctoral cohort family, my network of friends, my community, my surroundings, my Earth, and my cosmos;
- *Kuleana* is my sense of responsibility to leave this world a better place than I found it and to honor all who have come before me by helping and supporting those who will come after me; and
- *Pilina* is my need to make meaningful connections and sustained relationships with all around me. Closely tied to all the values listed, pilina is the acknowledgement that I am a small part of a larger whole in both a time and space continuum.

My rudimentary explanations of what these words represent to me do not adequately describe the profundity of feeling and meaning that I associate with each value. Although I may not be able to convey these terms satisfactorily to the reader, my life is rooted in these values and for the purposes of this study, my understanding is enough. It is also important to note that the concept of pilina is the philosophical thread that is woven throughout each chapter of this study as I explored the relationships my Native Hawaiian AAT students have developed with education and their culture. My role as a counselor, educator, and researcher is grounded in the pilina I am able to nurture with my haumāna. Establishing and sustaining meaningful pilina served as the mechanism that allowed the authentic voice of my haumāna to be shared and heard.

The construct of voice and the counter-narrative of Indigenous students were key components in this study and therefore sit at the top of the conceptual framework. Green (2006) suggests that studies need to “move beyond simply collecting numerical data (such as enrollments, grades, and test scores)” and instead engage in surveys and interviews with the academically successful minorities, which will provide researchers and educators with “a more complete picture of the academic culture, resources, attitudes, and behaviors that promote or hinder achievement” (p. 26). As an action research study, there is a shift in a “locus of control in varying degrees from professional or academic researchers to those who have been traditionally called the subjects of research” (Herr & Anderson, 2014, p. 2). Utilizing voice in this study helped to describe the phenomenon of the Native Hawaiian student experience in the American educational system and used this knowledge to provide recommendations primarily to those institutional actors within

Leeward Community College's Teacher Education program, but also to anyone who supports and serves Native Hawaiian college students.

Life history approach. The theoretical frameworks that support the strengths-based response are life history approaches and Indigenous relationality. The life history methodology captures the lived experiences of an individual and serves as a means to create identity by giving voice, in the form of the counter-narrative, to those who are marginalized and unheard (Tierney, 2000). In this approach, the researcher obtains the mo'olelo or stories from an individual and describes and comments on these life narratives in whole or part in an attempt to understand how these experiences have shaped the individual (Tierney, 2000). In addition to providing an opportunity to advance the understanding of individuals' lives and the contexts in which they are lived, life history invites the reader to engage, connect, and interpret the narrative text as viewed through their own personal lens (Cole & Knowles, 2001). Goodson (2001) claims that when done appropriately, life history can disrupt stereotypical thinking held about groups of people and instead offer alternative, and sometimes multiple, truths and viewpoints. This approach aligns with the orientation of this study that seeks to reduce, if not eliminate, judgmental and oftentimes unfounded assumptions about Native Hawaiian community college students.

Indigenous relationality. The second theoretical framework used to support the strengths-based response is one that I call Indigenous relationality. Indigenous people share a unique ontology, nearly antithetical to Euro-American ways of viewing the world and our place in it. Whereas post-modern American culture is based on individualism, capitalism, and serving individual interests, Indigenous orientations are inclusive,

familial, and universal. The Indigenous perspective is one that sees the individual as a small part of the whole and one's ontology is often defined by any and all relationships that develop with the world in which we live. In fact, Wilson (2008) describes Indigenous epistemology as the development of ideas through the formation of relationships and therefore, there is no one definite reality; rather, reality is defined by a set of relationships. These relationships can be with people, animals, plants, inanimate objects, words, or concepts. It is our relationship with this cosmos that helps to define our place and purpose in the world. Wilson (2008) gives the example of the perception of one's relationship with a chair. Whereas someone may view the chair as a place to sit, another may use it as a door stop or a place to stack books. Reality is defined by the relationship of that person to the chair and neither is more accurate or authentic than the other. In this case, all realities are validated because a relationship exists.

Native Hawaiians experience this sense of relationality not only with what exists in current time and space, but also a connection to those from before and those who will succeed us. For my study, Indigenous relationality from a Native Hawaiian perspective is portrayed by the concept of Nā Piko 'Ekolu which permeates throughout every aspect of my research.

Establishing Connection Through Nā Piko 'Ekolu

In the highly revered Native Hawaiian cultural reference book, *Nānā I Ke Kumu: Look to the Source* (2001), Mary Kawena Pukui shares the concept of Nā Piko 'Ekolu or the three piko explaining that there are three places on the human body that speak to the connection that one has to all within our cosmos, transcending place and time. The literal translation of piko is the navel, navel string, or umbilical cord, but it can also connote

blood relatives or an attachment, connection, and relationship to others (“Nā Puke Wehewehe ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i,” n.d.). The acclaimed Native Hawaiian educational philosophy statement presented in *Kumu Honua Mauli Ola* (2009) prefaces the description of Nā Piko ‘Ekolu with an explanation of mauli Hawai‘i which is the “unique life force which is cultivated by, emanates from, and distinguishes a person who self-identifies as a Hawaiian” (‘Aha Pūnana Leo & Haka ‘Ula o Ke‘elikōlani College of Hawaiian Language, 2009, p. 17). The mauli of a person is comprised of four elements that reside in various parts of the human body. Ka ‘Ao‘ao Pili ‘Uhane is the spiritual element that is seated at one of the most sacred parts of our bodies, the head. Its strength lies in the ability to create relationships with all in the universe, both seen and unseen. Ka ‘Ao‘ao ‘Ōlelo is the language element that is found in the ears, mouth and tongue and has the ability to pass on mauli to future generations. Ka ‘Ao‘ao Lawena is characterized as the physical behavior of an individual and is found in the limbs of the body as demonstrated through gait, posture, and non-verbal mannerisms. Finally, the Ka ‘Ao‘ao ‘Ike Ku‘una is the sacred traditional knowledge element, seated in the na‘au²⁰ or gut and serves as the conduit to express traditional Native Hawaiian values and practices such as hula, poetry, or prayer (‘Aha Pūnana Leo & Haka ‘Ula o Ke‘elikōlani College of Hawaiian Language, 2009).

Nā Piko ‘Ekolu describes the three metaphysical points on the human body that link the centers of mauli within an individual and more importantly, to those who have come before, those who are with us now, and those will succeed us. The piko po‘o

²⁰ The na‘au is regarded as the place where one’s wisdom, emotions, and authentic knowledge reside such as in a gut feeling (‘Aha Pūnana Leo & Haka ‘Ula o Ke‘elikōlani College of Hawaiian Language, 2009).

(head), located at the top of a person's head or the posterior fontanelle in the skull of an infant, is thought to be the connection between mortal man's 'uhane (spirit) and the spiritual realm where one's 'aumakua or ancestors are immortal, ever-present guardians. The piko waena (navel), which covers the na'au or gut, represents the remnant of one's intrauterine umbilical connection to parents in the present. Lastly, the piko ma'i is the genitalia of a person, representing the connection to one's descendants and future generations. In this way, Native Hawaiians see their existence as part of a continuum in relation to all that exists, has existed, and will exist in the future.

Through this lens, I grounded my work in recognizing the importance of pilina and fostering authentic connections in all aspects of my scholarship. Identifying and building meaningful, respectful, and reciprocal relationships with my participants was a priority. Just as integral to my research process was the awareness and nurturing of my relationships with my spiritual ancestors who provided me with inspiration and direction (achieved through mediation and prayer), with my makua²¹ and mentors who provided guidance and support (achieved through regular intervals of discourse in sharing the progress of my work), and my kamali'i and haumāna, whose daily presence reminded me that the purpose of my research is meant to serve future generations. Nā Piko 'Ekolu has resonated with my soul and impacted my worldview. Therefore, it seemed a natural and appropriate construct on which to base my approach and organization of this study.

²¹ Parent or any relative of the parent's generation ("Nā Puke Wehewehe 'Ōlelo Hawai'i," n.d.)

Definition of Terms

The following are terms and acronyms that will be referred to throughout the study.

Achievement gap refers to the phenomenon of educational performance, achievement, and attainment disparity between two or more groups of students usually defined by race, ethnicity, gender, and/or socioeconomic status.

Advising, for the purposes of this study, is a general term meant to encompass a comprehensive approach to meeting college students' needs by providing counseling, mentoring, and coaching.

AAT is the acronym for the Associate in Arts in Teaching program, a 2-year Associate degree teacher education program offered at Leeward Community College.

AAT TLC Network, also known as AAT Teaching-Learning Connection, refers to the AAT program's comprehensive model of support for students.

Ka Wā Kahiko refers to ancient times or the pre-Western contact era in Hawai'i, prior to 1778.

Leaver graduation rates is one measure used to determine the persistence of community college students. It is calculated by dividing the number of program graduates by the number of currently enrolled students at a given time.

Leeward Community College and Leeward CC are used interchangeably throughout this document to indicate the University of Hawai'i community college that primarily serves students on the Leeward and Central areas of the island of O'ahu. In this study, participants also refer to the college as *LCC and Leeward*.

Nā Piko 'Ekolu is a Hawaiian construct that describes three metaphysical points on the human body (i.e., Piko Po'ō, Piko Waena, and Piko Ma'i) that connect kānaka

‘ōiwi to those who have come before us and are guardian ancestors, those who are with us now, and those who will succeed us.

Native Hawaiian refers to the aboriginal people and their descendants who inhabited Hawai‘i prior to 1778. Kānaka ‘ōiwi and kānaka maoli are terms that will also be used in this study to indicate Native Hawaiians.

Post-colonial indicates the era after the first Western contact was made in 1778 in Hawai‘i. Post-colonial historical and societal impacts include but are not limited to economic, religious, educational, and psycho-social issues.

Strengths-based orientation is an approach that focuses on the self-determination, self-efficacy, and strengths of individuals, especially when faced with adversity.

UH System stands for the University of Hawai‘i System, which is Hawai‘i’s only public higher education system comprised of three universities, one college, six community colleges, and community-based learning centers.

UHCC System or the University of Hawai‘i Community College System is comprised of the six community colleges and is a part of the larger UH System.

Overview of Chapters

Using the model of Nā Piko ‘Ekolu, I have divided this study into the following four major sections.

Nā Piko ‘Ekolu - Chapter 1

Chapter 1 encompasses the essence of Nā Piko ‘Ekolu providing an overview of the study, its purpose, and significance. I have also introduced the research questions, the professional and personal contexts that I bring to the research, and the conceptual and theoretical frameworks that served as my guiding mana‘o throughout this process.

Piko Po‘o - Chapter 2 and Chapter 3

Chapters 2 and 3 are represented by Piko Po‘o as I turn to the wisdom of past scholars, both Indigenous and Western, to build upon what has already been explored, discovered, and shared. In chapter 2, I present a review of the literature that includes the nuances of racism and the achievement gap that exist in American educational systems, the historical relationship between Native Hawaiians and education before and after colonization, the role of student support systems in postsecondary institutions and specifically in teacher education programs, and an overview of the Associate in Arts in Teaching program at Leeward Community College.

In chapter 3, I provide a description of my qualitative study that includes an overview of the narrative inquiry and action research orientations. In addition, I explain the design of my study in terms of my role as researcher, Indigenous and interpretivist methodologies, how I selected my participants and a description of them, my data collection and analysis methods, and how I ensure validity and reliability in my research.

Piko Waena - Chapter 4 and Chapter 5

Chapters 4 and 5 are represented by the Piko Waena where we look to our na‘au, our gut, and our present for the connections that are currently happening. It is the space in which we are mindful, willing, and open to receive that which is generously being revealed to us. In chapter 4, I share the mo‘olelo of six haumāna to preserve and honor the integrity of their voice.

In chapter 5, I present my analysis of the data collected via multiple interpretative methods. Employing cross-case analysis, I identify common themes revealed through the surveys, interviews, and focus group participants.

Piko Ma'i - Chapter 6

Lastly, chapter 6 is represented by Piko Ma'i to remind us that what we do is for the perpetuation of our culture and for the betterment of future generations. In chapter 6, I synthesize the study's findings to determine where the greatest needs are in supporting Native Hawaiian Teacher Education students and make recommendations to improve student support systems for this particular demographic. In addition, I provide suggestions for future studies to continually support the needs of Native Hawaiians in higher education.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Piko Po‘o

“O ke kahua mamua, mahope ke kūkulu.”

“First comes the foundation, then comes the building.”

Learn all you can to create a solid foundation of knowledge
and then proceed and practice.

‘Ōlelo No‘eau, Number 2459 (Pukui, 1983, p. 268)

As presented in the previous chapter, the issue of sub-standard Native Hawaiian college completion rates within the University of Hawai‘i system is a prominent and documented problem of practice. However, scholarship indicates that pre-contact Native Hawaiians excelled in sophisticated oral, community-based, and life-long educational structures and at one time, the Hawaiian kingdom was considered to be one of the most literate nations in the global community (Au & Kaomea, 2009; Kawakami, 1999; Laimana, 2011). Since the late 1700s, when Europeans first made contact with the Hawai‘i nation, the literature on Hawaiians has positioned them as an inferior race resulting in the “pervasiveness of an educational atmosphere in which some educators may (consciously or unconsciously) hold low expectations for the achievement of Native Hawaiian students” (Au & Kaomea, 2009, p. 572). This deficit thinking has been used to reinforce a prejudicial viewpoint regarding Native Hawaiian students’ lack of success in higher education.

One solution to repositioning the societal subaltern view of the Native Hawaiian student’s potential in postsecondary education is to address institutionalized and systemic racism in higher education. I suggest that a leading cause of Native Hawaiian lack of achievement in college does not lie with the deficits in the student, but rather our inability as institutional actors (Bensimon, 2005) to understand, acknowledge, and act on the cultural orientation of our Native Hawaiian students in order to build an educational

system that speaks to the strengths of their Indigenous axioms. This study provides the counter-narrative to the deficit orientation lens in which Native Hawaiian students are traditionally viewed. It unearths the complexities of the Native Hawaiian college student relationship with education, in their own words and from a strengths-based orientation.

In this literature review, I begin with a historical account of the *achievement gap* in America, which is linked to the institutional, systemic racism that has pervaded all levels of American education for decades. To understand the context of today's Native Hawaiian college student, I present a chronology of the relationship Native Hawaiians have shared with education during both pre and post-Western influences. I describe the role that student support services has played in higher education and its impact, both positively and negatively, on student persistence and achievement. Lastly, I provide an overview of Leeward Community College's Associate in Arts in Teaching program and current support services.

Understanding the Achievement Gap

American axiology is grounded in concepts such as freedom, equality, individualism, and capitalism (Reel, 2005). For more than 200 years, the promise of the *American dream* and the belief that a strong work ethic, tenacity, and hope leads to an elevated socio-economic status has been the impetus for advancement amongst disadvantaged groups such as immigrants and ethnic minorities. With the exception of Native American Indians, Alaskans, and Hawaiians, America is a country built on the foundation of immigration as evidenced by an estimated 55 million immigrants who have come to the United States since the Revolutionary War (Alfred, 2003). Trask (1999) bluntly refers to the United States as an existing settler colony of a "strange Spanish,

French, British amalgam” (p. 25). Despite the narrative that America is a *mélange* of different peoples, the truth is that the homogenous, elitist practices of *white privilege*²² still exists in American society (Pulido, 2015). With the conclusion of the Second World War and the onset of the civil rights movement, overt formal structures of White supremacy and racial discrimination were weakened. However, as Pulido (2015) stated “white privilege revealed how, despite softening racial attitudes and practices, the U.S. was still characterized by massive racial inequalities” (p. 810). America has attempted to create policy and legislation to address equity issues in areas spanning but not limited to citizenship, remuneration, human rights, and education. However, at the time of this writing, protests are happening across the United States in response to the newly elected President, Donald Trump. Many people feel that the platform that defined his presidency will move America backwards with regards to civil liberties, rights for LGBTQ folks, immigrants, and people of color.

Despite the gains in racial equity across institutions in America over the last forty years, attempts to *level the playing field* within the American educational system have been futile. In 1966, the report on Equality of Educational Opportunity²³, also referred to as the Coleman Report, brought national attention to the inequitable educational outcomes of White and minority students which prompted decades of related empirical studies (Lee, 2002). General research findings validated the existence of a significant, ongoing disparity in academic performance and educational attainment between White

²² A concept that emerged in the 1990s to explain how White people benefitted by their White status (Pulido, 2015).

²³ Mandated by the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Coleman Report provided extensive survey research which exposed inequitable educational opportunities within the public school system for five minority groups when compared to their White student group counterparts. The report labelled these five minority groups as Negro, American Indian, Oriental American, Puerto Rican, and Mexican American (Coleman, Campbell, Hobson, McPartland, Mood, Weinfeld, & York, 1966).

students and minorities. Aptly labelled as the *achievement gap*, this phenomenon is defined by its consistency and persistence as an observable, stable trend enduring over time (Great Schools Partnership, 2013). In K–12 educational settings, the achievement gap most often refers to standardized test results where Caucasians and Asians score markedly higher than African American, Latino, and Native²⁴ students. In the context of higher education, achievement gaps may include reference to a wide variety of data sets including graduation rates, college-enrollment rates, course grades, dropout rates, and other categories of systematically-tracked student achievement data (Great Schools Partnership, 2013). The student group comparisons may include Whites and minorities, males and females, American and international students, learning disabled and non-learning disabled, and varying socio-economic backgrounds. This study focuses on the achievement gap as it pertains to minority students in higher education.

Why is it Important?

Eliminating the achievement gap in order to create educational equity amongst America's ethnic groups is not only a societal moral responsibility; there is also a direct benefit to the nation's well-being (Lynch & Oakford, 2014). Census predictions indicate that underrepresented student groups in higher education, primarily African American and Latino students, will soon be America's new majority of students ("Step Up and Lead for Equity," 2015). It is argued that closing racial and ethnic achievement gaps in higher education will have a ripple effect of raising individual and household incomes, increasing tax revenues, and ensuring the nation's longevity in a growing globally competitive community. Furthermore, the potential gain in tax revenues of \$4.1 trillion

²⁴ In this context, the Native student refers to Alaskan Native, Native American Indian, and Native Hawaiian.

over the course of forty years would provide ample funding for any government-sponsored initiatives aimed at closing the gap (Lynch & Oakford, 2014). Educational improvements for minority students would benefit all students, increase social benefits such as better health outcomes, and provide the foundation for a multi-generational pattern of academic achievement (Lynch & Oakford, 2014). This has significant potential especially since “rising income and wealth inequality has had the largest negative impact on communities of color, exacerbating longstanding inequities in education, earnings, health, and wealth” (Lynch & Oakford, 2014, p. 4). Acknowledging the critical correlation between the achievement gap and the American economy and its continued sustainability leads to an exploration of why this phenomenon has occurred.

Causality of the Gap

For as long as there has been the acknowledgement of an achievement gap, especially in terms of race and class, there have been attempts to understand its origins and sustaining elements. In the 1990s, the controversial book *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life* postulated that student and life achievement could be predicted based on an individual’s genetic makeup and natural ability (Herrnstein & Murray, 1996). Many experts since then have discredited this assertion and have opted to examine environmental influences, such as opportunity gaps and learning gaps²⁵ as lead indicators of substandard educational achievement (“Achievement Gap,” 2011). Understanding why the achievement gap exists cannot be determined by studying one or two factors in isolation. Social, economic, historical, and

²⁵ Opportunity gaps refer to the unequal or inequitable distribution of resources and opportunities. Learning gaps refer to the disparity of what students are expected to know and what they demonstrate they have learned at any given age or grade level (Great Schools Partnership, 2013).

political dynamics contribute to the sustainability of inequitable educational achievement. The complexity of the issue warrants investigation of a “broad range of factors from multiple data sources” to “examine their interactive, joint influences on the achievement gap” (Lee, 2002, p. 10).

A review of the literature reveals that a host of societal, institutional, and cultural factors may influence the breadth of the achievement gap. Income and wealth inequities often result in a lack of early childhood educational experiences, academic resources, adequate health care, proper nutrition, and physical and emotional health (“Achievement Gap,” 2011; Lynch & Oakford, 2014; Viadero & Johnston, 2000). In addition, societal influences such as parenting practices, peer pressure, and community and family structures may impact minority academic achievement (Lynch & Oakford, 2014).

Poverty, although a major factor, is not the only influential element for low minority academic achievement. The American educational system exacerbates the gap that it seeks to minimize. Lack of school resources, high teacher turnover rates, teacher quality and expectations, differences in school quality and rigor, and even lack of encouragement from school personnel for minority students to challenge themselves in advanced placement (AP) or honors courses have been suggested to influence the achievement gap (“Achievement Gap,” 2011; Lynch & Oakford, 2014; Viadero & Johnston, 2000).

Lastly, how ethnic minorities see themselves in the context of American society and educational systems impacts their academic achievement. Ogbu (2000) posits that there are “two sets of factors influencing minority school performance: how society at large and the school treats minorities (the system) and how minority groups respond to

those treatments and to schooling (community forces)” (p. 156). Foster (2005) states that involuntary minorities²⁶ “have developed responses and behaviors that emphasize their distrust of and opposition to the dominant society and its institutions, including schools” (p. 373). Given the expanse and variety of influential factors on minority academic achievement, it is clear that the achievement gap is not an isolated issue affecting one’s position in American society, but rather one measure by which we can see that inequities still prevail in our educational systems.

Closing the Gap

For half a century, America has attempted to eliminate or at least reduce the achievement gap. However, the complexity of this multi-faceted social welfare issue coupled with an American history fraught with hypocrisy and racism, has resulted in nominal progress. Although touted as a nation built on the ideology of equality, the historical reality is that social, political and educational constructs and practices supported overt, generational, and oftentimes brutal discrimination.

In the late 1800s, the passing of the Thirteenth through Fifteenth Amendments attempted to address racial discrimination and inequity by abolishing slavery, providing due process and equal protection under the law, and extending voting rights to all regardless of race (“History: Brown v. Board of Education Re-enactment,” n.d.). Despite this federal legislation many states, especially in the United States South, passed their own legislation commonly referred to as Jim Crow laws, which mandated segregation of

²⁶ Ogbu (1990) defines involuntary minorities as “people initially brought into the United States through slavery, conquest, or colonization” which leads to “resenting the loss of their former freedom and perceiving the social, political, and economic barriers against them as part of an undeserved oppression” (p.145). Voluntary minorities are those who have chosen to move to the United States or some other society believing that this change will “lead to an improvement in their economic well-being or to greater political freedom” (p. 146).

Blacks and Whites. In the 1930s, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) attempted to dismantle the Jim Crow laws, specifically targeting education reform. The NAACP represented several cases²⁷ focused on access and admission of Blacks to higher education institutions, specifically law schools. In 1951, five African American families with the support of the local NAACP chapter in Topeka, Kansas filed a lawsuit that would lead to the landmark case of *Brown v. Board of Education*, resulting in the desegregation of Black and White students in public schools (“History: Brown v. Board of Education Re-enactment,” n.d.). Although access to public education was now federally mandated, this did not solve the issue of equitable educational opportunity for minorities.

In the K–12 educational arena, Federal policies such as No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the U.S. Department of Education’s *flexibility* waivers sought to minimize achievement gaps by requiring more standardized testing and taking punitive actions against schools and their constituents with poor results (Darling-Hammond, 2015). At state levels, task forces convened to explore and make recommendations to minimize the gap. Even states with historically strong academic achievement records proposed recommendations such as increased recruitment and retention of teachers of color, expanding early childhood education programs, exploring alternative disciplinary actions to suspensions and expulsions, and offering professional development specific to teachers in low-performing schools and districts, to contend with persistent gaps (Wixom, 2015).

²⁷ *Murray v. Maryland* (1936), *Missouri ex rel Gaines v. Canada* (1938), *Sweat v. Painter* (1950), and *McLaurin v. Oklahoma Board of Regents of Higher Education* (1950) were cases filed and won by the NAACP.

Although racial and ethnic groups are experiencing increases in student graduates, inequities still exist. One indicator is the amount of developmental courses entering college students must take in order to reach college level English and Math. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2009), 43% of African American and 43% Latino students were required to take three or more developmental community college courses, compared to only 22% of White students (“Step Up and Lead for Equity,” 2015). In terms of graduation rates, the American Council on Education reported that as of 2008, 38% of White students ages 25–34 had earned at least an associate degree compared to only 26% African American and 18% Hispanics (“Issues A-Z: Achievement Gap,” 2011). A gap also exists in time to degree completion. The Editorial Projects in Education Research Center (2011) stated 78.4% of White college students in the class of 2008 graduated on time compared to only 57.6% of Hispanic, 57% of Black, and 53.9% of Native American Indian students.

With minority students continuing to lag behind White students in all levels of education, efforts to rectify educational inequities may require policies beyond just education reform (Lynch & Oakford, 2014). Could a multi-pronged strategic approach from national, state, and school district levels provide the remedy to this issue? Or does the problem of unequal outcomes reside with the institutional actors such as the faculty, counselors, and administrative team and the “cognitive frames that govern their attitudes, beliefs, values, and actions” (Bensimon, 2005, p. 100)?

Achievement Gap and the Native Student

Since the Coleman Report of 1966, discussions and data of the achievement gap have focused on the comparison of White student groups with African American and

Latino students. Only within recent decades have there been more studies that incorporated Native American, Alaskan Native, and Native Hawaiian students. Similar to their minority group counterparts, native students trail behind White students in college enrollment, completion rates, and college readiness ("Step Up and Lead for Equity," 2015). However, the history of the native student, and specifically the Native Hawaiian student, within the context of the American educational system varies greatly from the experience of the African American and Latino student. In the next section, I present a historical perspective of the Native Hawaiian student and how the unique political, socio-economic, and educational history of Hawai'i has impacted and shaped today's Native Hawaiian college student.

Native Hawaiians and Education

Although Hawai'i has been linked to American governance for nearly 200 years, the relationship between the United States government and Hawaiians differ from that of American Indians. Native Hawaiians have not been afforded the same legal and political status as their Native American Indian counterparts (National Caucus of Native American State Legislators, 2008). Although treaties established between Native American Indian tribes and the United States government in the 18th and 19th centuries were executed in incongruous and contradictory ways to international treaties, they were grounded in the acknowledgment of Native American Indian sovereignty and autonomy (Prucha, 1994), a recognition that still eludes kānaka 'ōiwi today. As Native Hawaiians work towards building a sovereign nation, the reality is that they are often lumped together with Pacific Islanders or Asian Americans for national demographic studies and census reporting (National Caucus of Native American State Legislators, 2008). This simple example of

misappropriated race classification and identification on a survey indicates a larger axiom that although Native Hawaiians are not discounted, they are not fully acknowledged either.

Most Native Hawaiian students face the same achievement gap as Native students on the North American continent and where there is a higher concentration of Native students, there tends to be lower achievement rates (National Caucus of Native American State Legislators, 2008). One common observation among Native students is that schools seldom highlight and honor Native cultures and languages (Demmert, 2001; McCarty & Lee, 2014; Muzzin, 2015). Therefore, if postsecondary institutions are to offer effective support structures and practices that will aid in the graduation rates of Native Hawaiian students, effort must first be made to understand, honor, and weave cultural values and practices into the fabric of postsecondary experiences. Reflecting on the historical relationship between Native Hawaiians and their pre- and post-colonial educational structures provides the foundation by which educators can begin to identify the cultural values and attitudes that support Native Hawaiian learning.

Ka Wā Kahiko

There have been textbooks and literature touting the efforts of missionaries who came to Hawai‘i in 1820 to Christianize and *educate* the Native people. Prior to the arrival of the American missionaries, in what was referred to as Ka Wā Kahiko²⁸ times, Native Hawaiian children and adults thrived under an organized, scaffolded, community-oriented, and strengths-based learning structure. Children participated in lifelong learning based on what their family kuleana was, what they excelled in, and what they

²⁸ Usually referred to as ancient era, pre-colonization times, pre-Western contact, or time of old.

were interested in (Pukui, Haertig, & Lee, 1972). Education was further enhanced by the influence of chant and song, the opportunity to observe multi-generational family members, and the encouragement to develop talents of memorization (Pukui et al., 1972). Schools in the Western sense, where haumāna were sent to one location for general education, did not exist. However, places like hālau hula provided the time and space for haumāna to master the art of traditional dance (Au & Kaomea, 2009).

Everyone in the community was a teacher and the subjects taught included practical survival skills such as harvesting, fishing, and healing practices, community skills such as carpentry, food preparation, and kapa²⁹ making and the perpetuation of traditions in hula, mele, and navigation (Pukui et al., 1972). Genealogy and philosophical ideologies, oftentimes expressed through mo‘olelo and oli, served to define the kānaka ‘ōiwi³⁰ and their place within the cosmos (Pukui et al., 1972). Even a child’s age was not a definitive number, but rather approximated and described based on what the child had learned and was capable of contributing to the community. In their teachings, Native Hawaiians used an oral tradition, the spoken word, to hand down knowledge from one generation to the next. Pukui et al. (1972) aptly summarized ancient Native Hawaiian educational practices in the following way, “All this he learned. Respected elders were his teachers. The spoken word and the long memories of seniors were his texts” (p. 57).

Missionary Arrival and Influence

In 1778, Captain James Cook did not *discover* the Hawaiian Islands and its savage people, as has been postulated in countless Euro-American history textbooks. Rather, the English navigator stumbled upon a thriving nation of nearly one million kānaka ‘ōiwi,

²⁹ Hawaiian cloth.

³⁰ Native Hawaiians.

grounded in deep spiritual connection to their island home, governed by a sophisticated kapu³¹ system that provided order and structure, and organized around the innovative, resourceful ahupua‘a system of community subsistence (Trask, 1999). However, his touted *discovery* led to growing global interest to explore and exploit these resource-rich islands.

In 1820, the first Protestant congregational missionaries from Boston arrived on the brig, *Thaddeus*. Sponsored by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), the motivation for the movement was to convert Hawai‘i’s native people to Christianity through education and literacy so that they might be able to read the works of God (Au & Kaomea, 2009; Kaomea, 2000; Pukui et al., 1972). By August 1820, the Hawaiian alphabet was created, not by the missionaries as has been commonly believed, but more likely by the first Native Hawaiians who mastered and taught the English language (Laimana, 2011). Within the next decade, a mass educational network of schools “provided the infrastructure that would transport the Hawaiian population from a near zero literacy rate in 1820 to a conservative estimate of 91 percent literacy and perhaps as high as 95 percent by 1834” (Laimana, 2011, p. 10), surpassing all major countries around the world, including America. In 1840, the Kingdom of Hawai‘i required all children 14 years of age and older to attend the public schools which were established in villages populated with 15 or more school-aged children (Pukui et al., 1972). This educational mandate marked a profound cultural change for the Hawaiian people. Pukui et al. (1972) describes this impact on the Hawaiian learning experience:

³¹ Forbidden, prohibition (“Nā Puke Wehewehe ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i,” n.d.)

Education of the child had officially moved out of the home. Eventually, parents and grandparents would no longer be his teachers. The child's world would, in time, cease to be bounded by 'ohana (extended family); he would have another personal universe within the four walls of the schoolhouse. (p. 60)

With a formal Westernized education structure firmly in place, kānaka 'ōiwi began to experience a threat to sustained native belief systems, practices, and language. An *English-mainly* campaign gained momentum in the second half of the 19th century beginning with legislation requiring that laws be printed in both Hawaiian and English. The forfeiture of Hawaiian language and culture was further perpetuated by the socio-economic climate of the late 1800s, when second-generation missionaries experienced a shift from religious priorities to pecuniary ambitions. Land acquisition and entrepreneurial aspirations led to the development of an agriculture-based economy and the need for workers to operate these thriving plantation ventures. The growing number of English public schools became the ideal vehicle to validate and disseminate curriculum designed to assimilate and socialize Native Hawaiians and plantation-working immigrants and provide instruction in low-level manual training and skilled labor (Beyer, 2012). With English fast becoming the medium of instruction, Hawaiian schools diminished in number from 169 schools in 1878 to 69 schools in 1888, whereas English schools increased from 11 to 63 schools during that same 10-year period (Au & Kaomea, 2009).

In 1896, only three years after the illegal overthrow of Queen Lili'uokalani and the Hawaiian Kingdom, the *English-mainly* initiative advanced to an *English-only*

campaign. The new Republic of Hawai‘i passed the law Ma Ke Kauoha: Kanawai 57, Pauku 30 (Official Decree: Act 57, Section 30) that would ban the use of Hawaiian in school venues if that educational institution wished to continue receiving federal funding support (Balutski, 2011; Lucas, 2000). The 1896 report further described the potential extinction of the Hawaiian language merely as a sentimental loss; the use of English only would be a greater benefit to the Hawaiian people (Lucas, 2000). This law fast-tracked the decline of Hawaiian-medium schools and by 1902, the last Hawaiian language-based school closed its doors. ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i, now banned from use in school and government forums, was also highly discouraged in some Native Hawaiian home environments (Au & Kaomea, 2009). Accounts of various forms of reprimand for using the native tongue ranged from shame and mocking to physical maltreatment (Pukui et al., 1972). Kānaka ‘ōiwi had become involuntary minorities in their homeland, which Ogbu (1992) describes as a state in which those colonized are forced to adopt the culture and language of their oppressors and in doing so, risk losing their sense of cultural identity, community, and self-worth. In response to these burgeoning cultural losses, many Native Hawaiian families made concerted efforts to preserve the native language and encourage its use in homes, churches, and Hawaiian organizations (Wilson & Kamanā, 2006).

The American educational system was used to develop a skilled workforce for the dominant colonizers, promote a collective consciousness that Native Hawaiians were inferior to their haole³² counterparts, disassociate a native people from their cultural epistemologies and ontologies, and sustain generational transference of political and economic power from the Kingdom of Hawai‘i to the United States (Benham & Heck,

³² White, American, Caucasian, Englishman, of foreign origin (“Nā Puke Wehewehe ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i,” n.d.)

1998). In other words, the educational system that was a result of the missionary and Western influences played a critical role in the dominance and oppression of the Hawaiian people (Beyer, 2012). It promoted the propaganda that Hawai‘i was a better nation under the jurisdiction of American governance and that Native Hawaiians were better off as a people because of the haole influence. As a result of this ethnocide, generations of Native Hawaiians for the next century would experience a severe loss in native language, culture, and identity.

Post-Colonial Aftermath

Educational systems alone did not solely account for the oppression of Hawai‘i’s native people. Trask (1999) argues that Hawai‘i has become an intensely commercialized, militarized, and colonized outpost where Native Hawaiian culture has been cheapened and reduced to American versions of pop culture suitable for tourism markets. Still, the evidence shows that Hawai‘i’s public education system was built to develop a semi-skilled workforce with little to no opportunity for social and economic mobility (Au & Kaomea, 2009; Benham & Heck, 1998). Kamehameha Schools, a private school established by Princess Bernice Pauahi Bishop and Charles Reed Bishop in 1887 for the purpose of educating students of Native Hawaiian ancestry, was an extension of missionary influence and in its early years provided instruction solely in English, banned ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i and hula traditions, and emphasized manual training (Beyer, 2012). Other private schools, such as Punahou School, were created to educate the children of congregational missionaries (“Punahou School: History,” n.d.), which allowed them to assume positions in the upper echelon of political and economic venues.

Although private and public school systems in Hawai‘i did not outright promote segregation by race, the socio-economic reality of who could afford the luxury of a private education coupled with those who could pass English-standard entrance examinations, served to effectively segregate and channel Native Hawaiian students to educational pathways that led to middle-class careers at best. This correlation between Hawai‘i’s post-colonial educational systems and the perpetuation of the Native Hawaiian subaltern collective cultural perception has existed for nearly two centuries and unfortunately, continues to influence the internal belief systems of many Native Hawaiian college students today.

Reclaiming Indigenous Education

The Native Hawaiian ethnocide experience of the 18th and 19th centuries had a residual impact on subsequent generations of kānaka ‘ōiwi. Although there would be losses in language and cultural practices, the resiliency of the Hawaiian people and their determination to perpetuate their culture, despite systemic colonization, would live on in informal educational settings. Kawakami (1999) recounts that Native Hawaiian students participating in Western educational systems had to “leave their culture at home and assume the values and behaviors associated with success in the Western world” (p. 18). Recognizing the critical need to revitalize a language and a culture through the mechanism of education, the non-profit organization ‘Aha Pūnana Leo worked to establish Pūnana Leo preschools which were modeled after the Kōhanga Reo, the “language nest” educational structure established in Aotearoa to revitalize and preserve the Māori language (“A Timeline of Revitalization - Aha Pūnana Leo,” n.d.).

In 1984, after more than 80 years of banishment from Hawai‘i’s educational landscape, a Hawaiian school, Pūnana Leo O Kaua‘i, opened its doors in Kekaha, Kaua‘i to teach the native language, traditions, and values to preschoolers. Hawaiian leaders lobbied in 1986 to amend the English-only colonial educational policy of 1896 and lift the ban on Hawaiian language in schools (Au & Kaomea, 2009; Lucas, 2000; Wilson & Kamanā, 2006). Since then, advancements with the Hawaiian-Immersion educational movement include the creation of Pre-K through 12th grade Kula Kaiapuni Hawai‘i or “Hawaiian environment schools” on O‘ahu, Maui, Hawai‘i, and Moloka‘i, the establishment of Ka Haka ‘Ula O Ke‘elikōlani College of Hawaiian Language at the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo which offers instruction and degrees in Hawaiian up to the doctorate level, partnerships with the relatively untouched Native Hawaiian Ni‘ihau community for summer Pūnana Leo experiences, and cultural exchanges with students and leaders from Kura Kaupapa Māori language immersion program (“A Timeline of Revitalization: Aha Pūnana Leo,” n.d.).

Within the educational realm, language revitalization has played a key role in cultural awareness, appreciation, pride, and sustainability. Today, Hawaiian language and culture is experienced in P–20 classroom environments more than they have been since Western influences entered the isolated Hawaiian Islands more than two centuries ago. With that initial subjugation of what was natural and native to the Indigenous people of Hawai‘i, the colonizers set up the islands’ political, socio-economic, and educational landscape to marginalize and oppress Native Hawaiians. Fortunately, organizations and educational institutions such as ‘Aha Pūnana Leo, Nāwahīokalani‘ōpu‘u, Ānuenuē, Ke Kula ‘O Samuel M. Kamakau, Ka Haka ‘Ula o Ke‘elikōlani, Kamehameha Schools,

Hawaiian Lexicon Committee, and the families of Kula Kaiapuni Hawai‘i have worked diligently over the past forty years to revive, revitalize, and return classrooms and curriculum to native influences. This culture-based orientation grounds modern educational practices in the language, traditions, and values of Native Hawaiians.

As historical review suggests, Native Hawaiians successfully knew how to support and educate other Native Hawaiians during pre-colonial contact as well as in Hawaiian schools prior to *English-only* colonial educational policies and the development of an Americanized, economically-driven statewide public school system that marginalized and oppressed minorities. In Ka Wā Kahiko, Native Hawaiians realized the importance of contextualized, scaffolded, community-based, and applied learning techniques. The classroom was not bound by four walls; it was an unbound and free flowing space intricately connected to the haumāna so that with an open heart, they could hear, see, taste, touch, smell, and feel the lessons revealed. In truth, our Native Hawaiian ancestors were not only ahead of their time, they were ahead of ours.

Given this, what can we, as higher education professionals, learn from the historical relationship between Native Hawaiians and education in Hawai‘i? What can be applied from the teachings of Ka Wā Kahiko and the lessons learned from our colonized history in order to inform and improve student support practices? Before exploring what more can be done to support Native Hawaiian college student success, a review of what has already been implemented at postsecondary institutions must take place. The next section reviews the postsecondary institutional response to addressing college student barriers for minorities and Indigenous students at national and local levels, with a special

focus on what is occurring within Leeward Community College's Teacher Education program on the island of O'ahu, Hawai'i.

Support Systems in Higher Education

Developing effective approaches to supporting student needs requires a clear understanding of the obstacles preventing college persistence and completion. These barriers may vary tremendously based on college factors (e.g., admission and degree requirements, high tuition costs, lack of personnel and support program availability), student factors (e.g., ethnicity, culture, lack of family support, and academic or mental health struggles) and community factors (e.g., low employment rates, high crime rates, or high cost of living). Postsecondary support structures outside of the classroom can aid in addressing these barriers, rendering them just as impactful to student success as what happens inside of the classroom (Drake, 2011; Hughes & Karp, 2004).

Postsecondary support systems vary greatly depending on the type of institution and its mission, strategic plan, funding, location, and student demographic. Services can include but are not limited to counseling and advising, recruitment and outreach, financial aid, admissions, transfer, job placement, mental health counseling, tutoring, peer mentoring, student life, and health center services. Although it is difficult to pinpoint which of these services has the greatest impact on student success, Drake (2011) contends that four decades of research consistently identify the following three areas to be critical to student persistence: early introduction to learning support systems, first-year experience programming, and most importantly, solid academic advising. This action research study serves to inform and transform current student support practices for the Associate in Arts in Teaching program at Leeward Community College, with a focus on

the academic advising component as identified by Drake (2011). As such, addressing the college achievement gap will be examined through the lens of reviewing advising practices that exist for general student populations, native students, teacher education students, and students in Leeward Community College's Teacher Education program.

The Role of Advising

In the literature, a variety of terms are used to describe the function of college advising including developmental or prescriptive counseling (Coll, 2009), coaching and mentoring (Zachary, 2011), and academic advising (Gordon, Habley, & Grites, 2011). For the purposes of this study, I use the general term, advising, which is meant to encompass a comprehensive approach to meeting college students' needs by providing effective counseling, mentoring, and coaching that "should help students to identify personal strengths and interests related to their educational and career goals" (Webber, McKinley, & Rubie-Davies, 2016, p. 2). Academic advisors are oftentimes the first to engage with new college students as they share information about college and degree requirements, applicable courses, financial supports, and transfer possibilities (Gordon et al., 2011). Additionally, effective advising practices can provide college students with the social capital needed to navigate through higher education, especially since advisors will have access to information and resources that can aid student persistence (Packard & Jeffers, 2014). But does advising, especially at the community college level, actually make a difference in student persistence?

The answer to that question has been a topic of debate for over fifty years. Clark (1960) introduced the controversial concept of the *cooling out process* whereby advisors provide alternate choices for struggling students that can lead to lesser degree attainment,

vocational certificates, and other academic achievements that support low-wage employment opportunities. Clark (1960) couched the concept as a means to alleviate the stress associated with academic failure by gradually disengaging the student from the original professed academic goal to a less demanding academic and professional pathway. However, the cooling out concept has sparked social justice and student persistence concerns, questioning if historically disadvantaged racial and ethnic groups are the most common targets due to advisor preconceived notions and biases associated with the academic potential of these student groups.

Findings (Deil-Amen & Rosenbaum, 2004; Pascarella, 2005) suggest that if the cooling out process has been actively present in higher education over the past fifty years, today it exists in a much diminished capacity, especially in institutions that serve a large percentage of minority students. In a study of first-time freshmen enrolled in 107 California community colleges, Bahr (2008) contradicts Clark's description of the active role advisors play in the cooling out process and instead posits that "advising is actively beneficial to students' chance of success, and all the more for students who face academic deficiencies" (p. 704). Light (2001), in his study of over 1600 recent college graduates from 90 institutions across America, emphasizes the importance of academic advising concluding that "good advising may be the single most underestimated characteristic of a successful college experience" (p. 81). Drake (2011) further states that good academic advising also "provides perhaps the only opportunity for all students to develop a personal, consistent relationship with someone in the institution who cares about them" (p. 10). Hughes and Karp (2004), noting many positive findings for academic counseling, suggest that it helps students to understand their goals and the academic steps

they need to take to achieve those goals. McCusker and Osterlund (1979) summarize the impact of college advising, stating that when successful, it sets a positive tone for the rest of the student's educational experience.

Counselors and advisors need to know the potential impact their interactions with students can have on student success. This consciousness should extend beyond just knowing the immediate needs of students, but also acknowledging, appreciating, and interweaving who they are and where they come from. The next section addresses this concept of acknowledging support systems for the minority student and how that might add an additional layer to an effective advising approach.

Addressing the Needs of Minority Students

According to Johnson (2012), general barriers to college completion for young Americans include deficient basic knowledge and understanding about college, an inability to finance the cost of higher education, and a lack of opportunity, particularly for those who are economically or educationally disadvantaged. Minority students face additional barriers revolving around their socio-economic conditions and ethnic orientations. Tinto (1993) suggests that students' academic skills as well as family, personal, and cultural influences may positively or negatively impact the students' abilities to assimilate into postsecondary environments. As such, Tinto (2006) recommends that these backgrounds and influences must be considered when implementing retention interventions.

Due to the affordability and the open-access nature of community colleges, advisors in these higher education institutions tend to service a larger amount of minority students when compared to their university counterparts. Ensuring that community

college counseling and advising services are delivered in an academically and culturally responsive way is necessary in order to meet the needs of these diverse student populations (Orozco, Alvarez, & Gutkin, 2010). Xiong, Allen, and Wood (2016) suggest that community college advisors can serve as academic and interpersonal validation agents to minorities, affirming students' academic and personal capabilities while building caring counselor-student connections. Unfortunately, despite the benefits of counseling and advising supports, students of color may exhibit reluctance or harbor negative perceptions about these services, resulting in low utilization of resources from the students who need it most (Orozco et al., 2010).

Institutional agents, such as counselors, influence how students socialize at the college as well as how and to what degree they are exposed to support services (Tovar, 2014). One approach is the development of culturally-focused student resource centers and programs that provide a safe haven for students who are struggling to sustain their ethnic values and practices within American higher education systems. These centers and programs offer resources tailored to the needs of a specific minority demographic and more importantly, present the information in a way that will encourage student participation and engagement. For example, to support Black male student success, the Community College of Philadelphia created a resource center replicating the atmosphere of a barbershop, which in the African-American community symbolizes "an open, supportive environment in which ideas are exchanged and strong friendships are forged" (Phillip, 2011, p. 7). When working with Latino students, Santiago-Rivera (2002) encouraged the application of interpersonal, culturally sensitive etiquette that infused

Latino values such as respeto (i.e., respect), confianza (i.e., confidence), and dignidad (i.e., dignity) with counseling practices.

It should be noted that being culturally-responsive to minority students' needs must go beyond being an element in educational planning such as offering cultural workshops or designating ethnic celebratory months (Rios-Ellis, Rascón, Galvez, Inzunza-Franco, Bellamy, & Torres, 2014). Although an important first step to understanding and meeting the needs of minority students, these efforts superficially scratch the surface of culturally-sustaining action planning. Fully interweaving cultural awareness, appreciation, and sustainability practices into the way a college “does its business” (Rios-Ellis et al., 2014, p. 51) will be the key to promoting the success of minority students in higher education.

Indigenous Student Barriers to College Success

There is an overabundance of literature attesting to the specific challenges faced by Indigenous students that are a result of the historical inequalities and prejudices experienced by these colonized groups (Wilson, Hunt, Richardson, L., Phillips, Richardson, K., & Challies, 2011). Although native and minority students experience some of the same barriers in American postsecondary systems, broad-sweeping, generic proposals cannot be expected to effectively support the categorical needs of each ethnic group. Even within native and Indigenous populations, student groups do not share the same cultural values, histories, and practices. However, the literature shows that Native Americans, Māori, and other Indigenous groups share similar struggles in self-determination and maintaining cultural integrity and therefore, is instructive in

understanding Native Hawaiian retention strategies (Hagedorn, Tibbetts, Moon, & Lester, 2003).

In a recent study examining Native American student retention from a psychosocial cultural lens, Thompson, Johnson-Jennings, and Nitzarim (2013) found that separation and alienation from community, lack of coping skills, and an inability to navigate the educational system were the biggest barriers. In a survey conducted at Northern Arizona University, Native American students identified cultural pressures, financial hardships, poor academic preparation, strong desire to live close to family, and obligation to participate in religious activities as the leading causes for attrition (Minner, 1995). When examining gendered cultural issues among Native Alaskans, Reyes (2001) also found additional barriers such as inadequate childcare, lack of affordable housing, and cultural hesitancy to speak up and participate in class. In a phenomenological study of Māori university students, Phillips (2003) reported that being the first family member to enroll in higher education, part-time enrollment, family commitments, and failing papers all contributed to drop out rates. However, students cited the most influential factor was the university's homogenous and alienating culture that permeated throughout its curriculum and practices.

Phillips (2003) findings lend itself to the larger issue that higher education institutions often point the finger at Indigenous *student* deficiencies. College retention strategies tend to focus on the *symptoms* of low completion rates such as academic unpreparedness, low attendance rates, and student disengagement from the postsecondary environment. Instead, the focus should be on the *cause* of the problem, which according to Maldonado, Rhoads, and Buenavista (2006) is an educational system that perpetuates

Western epistemology, goals, and values, regardless of who their students are and where they come from. The system privileges a Euro-American way of knowing and understanding and therefore, those who are predisposed to these epistemologies have an advantage over those who are grounded in antithetical cultural values and practices. Agbo (2001) suggests that this cultural discontinuity, where Indigenous people experience reality that is completely different from the dominant culture, can be devastating to the Indigenous student's sense of self and place in the world. It is this deviance from the colonized norm that can result in low achievement rates for Indigenous populations. Evolving in thought and practice from a student deficit orientation to acknowledging the responsibility to sustain student diversity in postsecondary's culturally monochromatic environment is a first step to developing supports that address the *causes* rather than the *symptoms* of Indigenous students' low achievement levels (Pidgeon, 2008).

Understanding the Native Hawaiian College Student

Native Hawaiians share much in common with their Native American, Alaskan Native, and Māori brothers and sisters in terms of colonization, oppression, and resulting subaltern self-perceptions that have largely been rooted in and perpetuated by Western educational systems. Although Native Hawaiians can be found around the world, the majority reside in Hawai'i (Hagedorn et al., 2005). Nearly two centuries of systematic marginalization have resulted in the Native Hawaiian people being "on the wrong side of almost every agreed upon indicator of well-being, including educational attainment" (Thomas et al., 2012, p. 337). Hagedorn et al. (2005) report that despite Native Hawaiian students, and other underrepresented groups, utilizing community colleges as a gateway

to postsecondary education, there exists a dearth in the literature exploring Native Hawaiian community college student experiences and the causes of low college retention and completion rates.

In a study of a 376 Native Hawaiian students who graduated from Kamehameha Schools between 1993–1995, Hagedorn et al. (2003) found that financial aid plays an important role in Native Hawaiian college completion, students who attended college on the mainland completed university degrees more than those who remained in Hawai‘i, and those who began their higher education pathway at a community college were much less likely to attain a bachelor’s degree. These findings, although reporting what was happening, did not specify why this was happening. Hagedorn et al. (2005) further stated that literature specific to Native Hawaiians in postsecondary settings is virtually nonexistent outside of the University of Hawaii system. What does exist focuses mostly on the 4-year university student. Given that many more Native Hawaiians find themselves at community colleges at the start of their postsecondary careers, there is a need to conduct more studies not only on Native Hawaiian college students, but specifically Native Hawaiian community college students. With additional research, community colleges that service the Native Hawaiian population can develop targeted retention and advising strategies that address the cause of low achievement rates and not just the symptoms.

Support Systems in Teacher Education Programs

Similar to the research on Native Hawaiians, there exists a paucity of research on support systems for teacher education students. What can be found in the literature focuses on what occurs in the classroom in terms of teacher candidate assessment and

evaluation, professional development, learner-centered strategies, culture-based pedagogies, ethics and morals, and research designs. Although most of the research is focused on teacher education programs at the university levels, the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (2002) acknowledges the value of community college teacher preparation programs and encourages articulation developments with four-year campuses, mentoring programs for minorities, and alternative teacher certification pathways. In addition, community colleges are recognized for their role in addressing critical teacher shortages since oftentimes these occur in the rural areas where the community colleges are located (King & Minchew, 2010). In their study of 141 community college transfer students and 59 native students, King and Minchew (2010) further reported that community college transfer students who become licensed teachers most often return to their communities to teach and that college advisors “should encourage graduates to enter the teaching field” and “return to their communities when they could contribute to reducing the teacher shortage in rural areas” (p. 273). As a result of this study, recommendations for education fairs, student life educational clubs, and early field experiences at community colleges are encouraged.

There is sparse research on the support systems for teacher education students and what is identified is limited to teacher education cohorts and assigned faculty mentors and professors during student teaching experiences (Clark, 2010; Seifert & Mandzuk, 2006). Furthermore, these few studies primarily target teacher candidates and student teachers at the university levels. Studies that focus exclusively on Native Hawaiian students enrolled in community college teacher education programs and their advising support services are nonexistent in the current literature.

Leeward Community College's Teacher Education Program

In fall 1968, Leeward Community College opened its doors as the first University of Hawai'i system community college not linked to a pre-existing technical school. Under the direction of Provost Leonard Tuthill, the college welcomed approximately 1600 students in its first semester. Since then, the college has grown to service more than 8000 students per semester and has expanded to a two-campus system with the main campus in Pu'uoloa (Pearl City) and a satellite campus in Wai'anae, located on the West side of the island of O'ahu. Leeward CC's vision and mission are the following.

Vision

Leeward Community College is a *learning-centered* institution *committed to student achievement*.

Mission

At Leeward Community College, we work together to *nurture and inspire* all students. We help them *attain their goals* through high-quality liberal arts and career and technical education. We foster students to become *responsible global citizens* locally, nationally, and internationally. We advance the educational goals of all students with a *special commitment to Native Hawaiians*. ("Leeward CC Mission," n.d.)

From its inception, Leeward CC was considered to be *innovative*. That tradition of thinking outside of the box and generating new ideas serves as a core principle in all aspects of the college's services. In 2005, 37 years after Leeward CC opened its doors, the creation of the Associate in Arts in Teaching degree was the first of its kind at the campus to act as both a terminal degree leading to immediate gainful employment as well as a liberal arts transfer degree that staged a pathway to a bachelor's teacher education program and teacher licensure. In only a decade, the program has grown exponentially from 24 students and five faculty and staff positions to nearly 500 students annually, a staff of eleven professionals, and three robust workforce development programs:

Associate in Arts in Teaching degree, Alternative Certification for Career and Technical Education licensure tracks, and a Special/Inclusive Education Certificate and 3+1 licensure track. For the purposes of this research, I focus on our largest and most established program, the Associate in Arts in Teaching.

The AAT program's faculty and staff demonstrate commitment to student success by offering quality career and technical teacher education instruction, fostering a student-focused, family-oriented environment, and providing support services that meet the changing needs of our students. As the counselor for all of the teacher education degrees and certificates, I strive to nurture my students' abilities to self-reflect, self-direct, and ultimately, achieve their goals. My personal mission aligns with my college's mission and this is what drives my interactions with my students every day.

The Associate of Arts in Teaching is a 62 credit degree program intended to either provide the first two years of a baccalaureate program in elementary, secondary, or special education or prepare the student for employment as an educational assistant. The AAT program consists of 43 credits in liberal arts coursework and 19 credits of education courses that provide a solid foundation for future educators. The program also includes a field experience component whereby students engage in a minimum of 45 hours of observation and participation in a school classroom. This allows students to synthesize and practice the skills they learn in the education courses.

Every individual in our eleven-person team is dedicated to the Teacher Education program objectives and our students. We recognize the importance of recruiting and retaining *locally-grown* students who live in the Leeward and Central O'ahu areas. We are committed to identifying and providing the necessary knowledge, tools, and support

so that these students can give back to their communities as contributing citizens, role models, and ultimately, teachers.

Leeward Community College’s Teacher Education Support Services

As educators, we know that student success is nurtured and developed both in and outside of the classroom. To show that the AAT program was more than just a degree, I developed a model of support that provides a proactive approach to student achievement, retention, and persistence. I called this comprehensive, overarching umbrella of services and resources the TLC Network, which stands for *teaching learning connection*, but can also represent the *tender loving care* nature of the AAT program.



Figure 2.1 AAT TLC Network (Teaching Learning Connection/Tender Loving Care)

This model addresses three areas of student development: academic development, personal/social development, and professional/career development. The services and resources that support students while in the AAT program fall into four distinct categories: counseling and advising, instructional support, career/professional opportunities, and campus/AAT resources. The development of these support services for the AAT program was built on past institutional recommendations and practices. Yet how do we know if it has been effective?

In an inaugural study of 57 graduates from a 2013–2014 cohort of Leeward CC's Associate in Arts in Teaching program, Silva (2014) found that students chose this program because of the tuition costs, close proximity to home, and transferability to four year programs. The greatest barriers to their success included time management, limited financial resources, and engagement in extensive remedial coursework. Academic advising was listed as the greatest institutional support factor for these students and Silva (2014) reiterated that “since advisors are usually the first point of contact with the student, it is imperative that they create a welcoming and relaxed space” (p. 131). Recommendations that focused on the advising component of the AAT student experience included continuing advising and mentoring support beyond graduation and providing workshops on financial aid, scholarships, and time management strategies. Specifically for Native Hawaiian students, Silva (2014) recommended “providing specific and culturally appropriate support for Native Hawaiian future teachers by reaffirming cultural and familial identities” (p. 137).

The current array of support services offered in the AAT program include tutoring, peer mentor programs, mandatory new student program orientations, resource centers,

and counseling and advising. These are typical strategies that higher education institutions employ to facilitate student success. But do these generic student support services take into account Native Hawaiian students' perspectives and needs? Does the delivery of services or the educational environment set by the faculty and staff of the AAT program promote or minimize cultural discontinuity? What, if anything, more can be done to tailor the existing support services, specifically my own counseling and advising practice, to better meet the needs of Native Hawaiian Teacher Education students at this community college?

A need has been determined to address the gap in the literature in regards to Native Hawaiian community college teacher education students' perspectives on effective support systems. However, to me, the greater need is finding out what can be done now to better support their goals of attaining a college degree. It is no longer acceptable to recruit Native Hawaiian students into our Associate in Arts in Teaching program without ensuring that we have the proper supports and practices in place that are derived directly from the voices, mo'olelo, and mana'o of the very students that these supports are intended to help. And so this study was born.

In the next chapter, I present the study's guiding mana'o, the type of study, research questions, design of study, data collection and analysis methods, role of the researcher, and quality considerations such as trustworthiness, reflexivity, and ethics.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

Piko Po‘o

“*A‘ohe pau ka ‘ike i ka hālau ho‘okahi!*”
“All knowledge is not learned in just one school.”
One can learn from many sources.
‘Ōlelo No‘eau, Number 203 (Pukui, 1983, p. 24)

Research paradigms are “labels that are used to identify sets of underlying beliefs or assumptions upon which the research is based” (Wilson, 2008, p. 33). For decades, academic scholarship relied on conservative, positivist, and objective approaches to studies that observed and reported about the *other*, usually identified as the non-dominant, non-White demographic group. In this context, research is something that is done *to* the group being studied, rather than being done *with* those being researched. Today, it is argued that this type of Eurocentric research has actually aided in the colonization, oppression, and exploitation of Indigenous peoples (Arbon & Rigney, 2014; Smith, 1999; Wilson, 2008). Whereas in the past, the validity of Indigenous approaches to academic scholarship was overshadowed and invalidated by Eurocentric epistemic orientations, we are now seeing an influx of Indigenous scholars, participatory, inclusive research practices, and the trend to offer opportunities for the Indigenous to describe their own realities in their own words (Hart, 2010; Meyer, 2008; Smith, 1999; Wilson, 2008).

The purpose of this study is to elucidate the educational life histories of Native Hawaiian Teacher Education students at Leeward Community College that have shaped their views of education in order to gain insight on how best to support these haumāna. I developed and distributed a survey to Native Hawaiian current AAT students and graduates who had been enrolled in the program between the years of 2006–2016. I purposefully did not include students who had dropped out of the program as the focus of

this strengths-based study is perspectives and experiences of Native Hawaiian Teacher Education students who persisted and graduated or who are still enrolled in the program. Of the 50 students who completed the online survey, 9 were willing to be interviewed, 1 was willing to participate in a focus group, and 23 were willing to participate in either an interview or focus group. With an overwhelming 66% of the participants indicating their interest to participate further in the study by either sharing their stories or suggestions for improvement, it is evident that these students appreciated a venue where they could be heard.

From the 32 students who expressed a willingness to participate in an interview, I did a purposeful sampling (Merriam, 2009) and chose 6 participants who represented a diversity in backgrounds and experiences. Lastly, I conducted a focus group with 4 survey participants, sharing initial findings about Native Hawaiian higher education students, and soliciting their candid advice about what is working and what is lacking in terms of postsecondary supports.

The nature of this research demands a qualitative study (Merriam, 2009) grounded in the practices of action research (Glesne, 2011; Herr & Anderson, 2014) and narrative inquiry (Atkinson, 2009; Clandinin, Pushor, & Orr, 2007; Huber, J., Caine, Huber, M., & Steeves, 2013). My use of an interpretivist approach (Glesne, 2011) is accompanied by an ontological belief that research “portrays a world in which reality is socially constructed, complex, and ever changing” and requires an “exploratory, open mindset to the variety of perspectives and issues that might arise” (p. 8). Further guided by an Indigenous methodology that reveres *research as ceremony* (Wilson, 2008), I have

purposefully interwoven my values of aloha, hō‘ihi, ‘ohana, kuleana, and pilina in every aspect of my research process.

In this chapter I present the guiding mana‘o of interpretivism and Indigenous methodology, type of study used for my research, research questions, design of my study, participants of the study, data collection procedures, data analysis techniques, and quality considerations of trustworthiness, reflexivity, and limitations.

Guiding Mana‘o

Interpretivism

The central purpose of the interpretivist paradigm, also referred to as constructivism, naturalism, phenomenological, and hermeneutical, is to understand and interpret “the social world from the perspectives of those who are the actors in that social world” (Glesne, 2011, p. 8). Acquiring the perspectives of members from the same social group about a phenomena can indicate socially constructed realities which can also reveal shared cultural patterns of thought and action (Glesne, 2011). Interpretivists believe that knowledge is subjective and that “truth lies within the human experience” (Chilisa, 2011, p. 33).

Interpretivism aligns with my authentic way of being, which is to honor all voices in order to gain deeper understanding, acceptance, and harmony in our global community. It also satisfies my inquisitive nature to understand the perspectives of others, interpret these perspectives with humility and gratitude, and describe them for others to appreciate. I do not believe that there is one absolute truth but rather that everything (and every perspective) is truth in itself as well as part of a larger universal truth. The interpretive methodology allows me to conduct my research in a way that parallels my own personal

way of being. By doing so, I can work from a strengths-based model and allow a platform that esteems my students' individual truths but also celebrates the collective ideals, values, and attitudes of the Native Hawaiian student voice.

Indigenous Methodology

In congruence with an interpretivist paradigm is the Indigenous influence on my methodology. Interestingly, Wilson (2008) points out that Indigenous researchers, positioned in academia as the *Other*, often have to explain how their research approaches differ from that of dominant system scholars, whereas dominant scholars have not needed to provide similar justifications in order to conduct their research. Smith (1999) explains that Indigenous methodologies “tend to approach cultural protocols, values and behaviours as an integral part of methodology” (p. 15). She discusses the importance of being open with the research process and design, practicing reflexivity and reciprocity, and disseminating the knowledge gained as a result of the research to the participants who contributed to its development (Smith, 1999). Weber-Pillwax (2002) discusses the importance of trust and the necessity to have a deep sense of responsibility to uphold that trust throughout the research process. She also emphasizes the significance of relevancy in Indigenous research stating, “I cannot be involved in research and scholarly discourse unless I know that such work will lead to some change out there in that community, in my community. This is the most important aspect of research to me” (Weber-Pillwax, 2002, p. 169). The principles of Indigenous methodology, as presented by these respected scholars, have inspired me to conduct dutiful, purposeful, and reciprocal Indigenous research grounded in the values of respect, trust, relationality, humility, spirituality, and generosity. As Wilson (2008) shares, “It is the knowing and respectful reinforcement that

all things are related and connected. It is the voice from our ancestors that tell us when it is right and when it is not. Indigenous research is a life changing ceremony” (p. 61).

As explained in chapter 1, the Native Hawaiian concept of Nā Piko ‘Ekolu has resonated with me as a construct on which to base and organize my study. It supports the notion of a cosmologic continuum of connection to one’s native, ancestral past (Piko Po‘o), mindful present (Piko Waena), and future generations (Piko Ma‘i). This ontology has provided me with an awareness of my *significance* in this research in terms of fulfilling my kuleana not only to my haumāna and my program, but to all Native Hawaiians who have been marginalized, oppressed, or otherwise wronged by our educational system in the past, present, and future. Conversely, Nā Piko ‘Ekolu has reminded me of my *insignificance* in this research in terms of knowing that I am just one of many in a continuum of my Native Hawaiian indigeneity. Although the results of my research will help improve my individual practice, it will not eliminate the struggle Native Hawaiians face in higher education systems. Knowing this allows me to humbly and gratefully position myself as the receiver of knowledge from my haumāna.

Type of Study

Qualitative Case Study

This research is a qualitative case study and according to Merriam (2009), these types of studies are characterized by “the search for meaning and understanding, the researcher as the primary instrument of data collection and analysis, and inductive investigative strategy, and the end product being richly descriptive” (Merriam, 2009, p. 39). The case study is an “in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system” (Merriam, 2009, p. 40). It refers to *who* is to be studied, rather than *how* the study will be

conducted (Glesne, 2011). In this research, the bounded system is the Native Hawaiian Teacher Education students of Leeward Community College's Associate in Arts in Teaching program. This case study is not only descriptive, providing a "rich, thick description of the phenomenon under study" (Merriam, 2009, p. 43), but also heuristic in nature, whereby the research findings inspire understanding and "bring about the discovery of new meaning, extend the reader's experience, or confirm what is known" (Merriam, 2009, p. 44).

As the counselor for the Teacher Education program, I seek a deeper understanding of my Native Hawaiian Teacher Education students' relationships with education and what they believe is necessary to succeed in college. This multiple-methods study which included a qualitative questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, and a focus group session allowed the time and space for students to share their experiences, thoughts, and suggestions for program improvements.

Action Research

Action research was developed in the mid-1990s by Kurt Lewin who grounded this theory in a positivist paradigm, separating the researcher and the researched, and providing a model to evaluate interventions on existing practices (Glesne, 2011). Action research applications have migrated from corporate business to educational settings and from positivist to interpretivist paradigms. They are used as a way to improve practice through qualitative interviews and surveys, data interpretation and reflection, reports of findings, and discussions of next steps (Glesne, 2011). Herr & Anderson (2014) note that there exist a plethora of coined terms to describe this type of research, but most agree on this definition:

Action research is inquiry that is done by or with insiders to an organization or community, but never to or on them. It is a reflective process, but is different from isolated, spontaneous reflection in that it is deliberately and systematically undertaken, and generally requires that some form of evidence be presented to support assertions. (p. 3)

Although traditional doctoral research encourages distancing the researcher from the researched, action research places the practitioner scholar at the center of the research, allowing the insider/practitioner to conduct studies that are professionally and personally meaningful and that exist within the researcher's own context (Herr & Anderson, 2014). The tendency for action researchers to be insiders to their professional settings makes them "at once both researcher and practitioner" (Herr & Anderson, 2014, p. 3). This shift from conducting a *study of* to conducting a *study with* research participants is growing in popularity, especially within fields of education, nursing, and social work (Herr & Anderson, 2014). According to Joyner, Rouse, and Glatthorn (2012), "action research is usually undertaken by a researcher who is deeply involved in the processes of identifying and solving an educational problem. Some action researchers study their own teaching or leadership processes. Others focus on colleagues or students" (p. 123).

Although the tendency is for action researchers to be insiders to their professional settings, Herr & Anderson (2014) caution that "action research should always be collaborative regardless of whether the researcher is an outsider or insider to the setting under study" (p. 2). Parsons and Harding (2011) describe the significance of Indigenous action research, especially in the context of post-colonialism:

For too long, the voices of those whose lives were, and continue to be, impacted by colonialism have not been attended to well enough in schools. Educators, more than any other professional, must be positioned to address, reflect, and create spaces where action research processes, focused through a post-colonial lens, can illuminate lingering biases and stereotypes, and where racism and ignorance can be analyzed, challenged, and ultimately eliminated. (p. 5)

In this study, I strive to learn about my students in order to improve my practice as their counselor and advisor. To do this, I work alongside my students, deferring to their expertise on the student experience. I define action research as engaging in meaningful collaboration with my study's participants for the purpose of making recommendations for practice improvements. This action research study may be able to make a difference in our shared community by acknowledging the value of this symbiotic relationship.

Narrative Inquiry

As counselor and advisor, my line of work revolves around the ability to build and sustain authentic relationships. Every day, I listen to the stories of my students attentively, synthesize the information shared, and use my knowledge of resources and support systems to present them with options that will hopefully address their needs. I use my communication skills and intuition to go beyond college course selection, schedule building, and short and long term academic planning. I look for ways in which I can guide my students to better lives. In my office, their voices count. However, the reality is that there is only so much of a life story that can be shared in a 45 minute appointment,

especially when there are other academic priorities and tasks to accomplish. Beneath the surface, there is so much more to each of my students. There is a wisdom, resilience, creativity, beauty, and soul that can go unrecognized and unappreciated if not given the opportunity to reveal itself.

According to Goodson and Crick (2009), “narratives provide and create space for ‘pedagogic moments’ in which people can connect with themselves, their own culture and tradition, their hopes and aspirations and ultimately with an intentional, mentored construction of knowledge which serves their personal and public trajectories” (p. 225). The term narrative inquiry in education was first introduced by Connelly and Clandinin (1990) who state:

The main claim for the use of narrative in educational research is that humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and socially, lead storied lives. The study of narrative, therefore, is the study of the ways humans experience the world. This general notion translates into the view that education is the construction and reconstruction of personal and social stories; teachers and learners are storytellers and characters in their own and other’s stories. (p. 2)

Narrative provides opportunity for engagement, growth, and social interaction as well as allows individuals to construct meaning and develop a sense of self through the stories that are told and retold (Goodson & Crick, 2009).

Indigenous ways are rooted in storytelling, oral traditions, and relationships (Goodson & Crick, 2009; Smith, 1999; Wilson, 2008). Due to the legacy of colonization, marginalization, and oppression, Indigenous stories have been silenced and histories

devalued, dismissed, and ignored (Chilisa, 2011; Smith, 1999). For this reason, the use of narrative inquiry in this study as a means to conduct educational research is not only in alignment with traditional cultural practices, it is a mechanism for social justice in an educational system that has failed Native Hawaiians.

To facilitate the construction of narrative, the practice of artifact sharing was employed in this study. Merriam (2009) describes artifacts as “physical objects found within the study setting” (p. 146) that can be used to represent forms of communication. In this case, the study setting is the reality my haumāna experience, both on and off the college campus. In anthropological terms, the hidden stories of artifacts can “give alternative insights into the ways in which people perceived and fashioned their lives” (Hodder, 1994, p. 173). However, in this study, the artifacts have been selected by the participants in order to enhance the storytelling experience. In empowering their selection of artifact, students are able to share the mo‘olelo that they want most to be heard.

Design of Study

Hui O Nā Leo

This action research narrative inquiry celebrates cooperative collaboration while still honoring the individual experience. The study allows the voices of my haumāna to be shared in three ways: qualitative online surveys, interviews, and a focus group. There are three distinct student groups or hui that are defined by their purpose in this research: Hui O Nā Mana‘o Haumāna (Group of Student Thoughts), Hui O Nā Mo‘olelo Haumāna (Group of Student Stories), and Hui Ho‘oholomua (Group to Make Progress). Together,

all three hui, along with myself as kanaka noi'i or researcher, comprise the overall Hui O Nā Leo (Group of Voices) for this study.

The following diagram depicts the relationship of each hui to one another and to me as the kanaka noi'i. The Hui O Nā Mana'o Haumāna is the largest circle as it represents all who participated in the study by completing the qualitative surveys. The Hui O Nā Mo'olelo Haumāna and Hui Ho'oholomua represent those students from the survey pool who agreed to also participate in interviews or a focus group. The colors of the three circles are vibrant indicating the significance of their voice in the process. As the kanaka noi'i for this study, my voice is necessary as an interpretive role; it is not the focus. Therefore, my circle is blended to match the overall collective voice of Hui O Nā Leo and my interpersonal exchanges with each of the groups is reflected by dual-direction arrows.

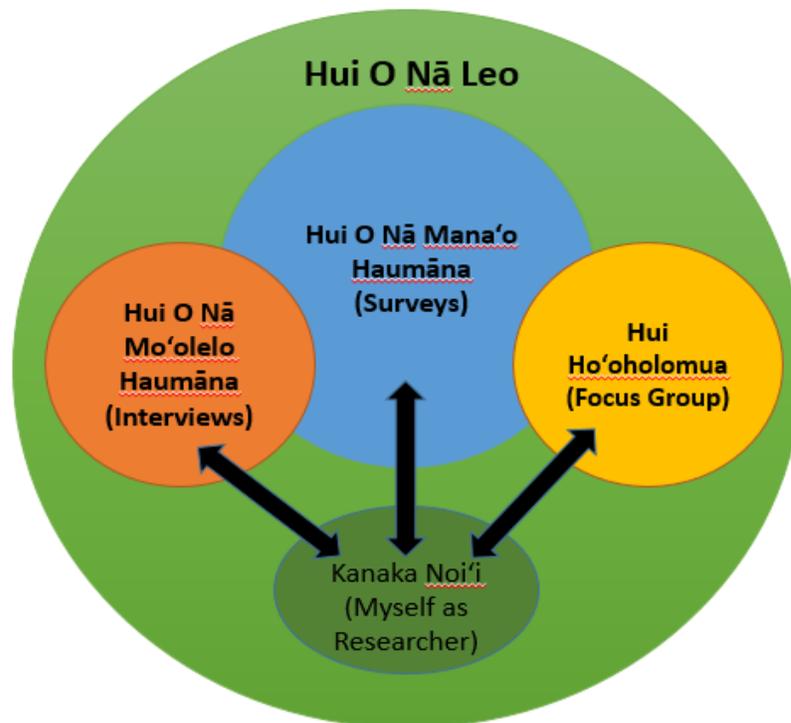


Figure 3.1 Design of Study - Hui O Nā Leo

Participants in the Study

Hui O Nā Mana‘o Haumāna

This particular hui refers to the 50 participants who completed the online qualitative survey. Hui O Nā Mana‘o Haumāna is the group of students who shared their thoughts, experiences, and ideas about their Native Hawaiian culture and education. The study participants came from all across the state of Hawai‘i, including the islands of Kaua‘i, Maui, O‘ahu, and Hawai‘i. In addition, several students were born on the continental United States including California, Nevada, and Virginia. The majority of participants (46%) have lived in Hawai‘i for 20–30 years followed by 36% of participants residing in the state for more than 30 years. With 82% of the participants residing in the islands for at least twenty years or more, participants may have had time to gain awareness, albeit in varying degrees, of the Native Hawaiian culture and Hawai‘i’s educational systems.

The purpose of the survey was to provide baseline data on any shared educational and Native Hawaiian cultural experiences, values, or beliefs that impacted the students’ views of education and the teaching profession. From this survey, I was able to identify those willing to participate further in the study via in-depth interviews and formulate questions around the use of artifacts to describe their specific impactful educational memories. A brief summary of the initial survey and interview findings was shared with the focus group members to provide the context in which they could develop suggestions for program support improvements tailored to the needs of Native Hawaiian AAT students. The purposeful sequencing of data collection through qualitative surveys, life

history interviews, and then a focus group session added to the richness and relevance of honoring student voices throughout the research process.

Hui O Nā Mo‘olelo Haumāna

Hui O Nā Mo‘olelo Haumāna or Group of Student Stories refers to the participants who completed the qualitative survey and were purposefully selected to participate in semi-structured interviews where they shared their experiences as both Native Hawaiians and students. The following table depicts the diversity of the group.

Table 3.1
Demographic Profile of Interview Participants

Student	Gender	Age	Birth Place	High School	Family Status	Status at time of interview (summer 2016)	Status as of summer 2017
Aloha	Female	23	Mākaha (O‘ahu)	Homeschool (Mākaha, O‘ahu)	Not married, no children	AAT Graduate	BA earned, pursuing MA
Alaka‘i	Male	30	Honolulu (O‘ahu)	Campbell High School (‘Ewa Beach, O‘ahu)	Not married with children	AAT Graduate	BA earned, licensed teacher
Ho‘oulu	Female	28	Wailuku (Maui)	Kamehameha High School (Honolulu, O‘ahu)	Not married, no children	AAT Graduate	Pursuing BA and teacher licensure
Mālama	Female	29	San Diego (California)	Scripps Ranch High School (San Diego, CA)	Married with no children	Current AAT Student	AAT earned, pursuing licensure
Maika‘i	Male	44	Honolulu (O‘ahu)	General Education Diploma (GED)	Married with children	AAT Graduate	Pursuing BA
Kamaha‘o	Male	49	Pāhala (Hawai‘i)	Ka‘ū High School (Pāhala, Hawai‘i)	Not married, no children	Current AAT Student	AAT earned, pursuing licensure

Of the 32 students who were willing to be interviewed, these 6 students were selected as participants based on their diversity in age, gender, location, primary and secondary educational institutions, family responsibilities, and whether they were current AAT students or graduates. Although each individual's AAT program status is what was shared at the time of the interview, by the completion of this dissertation, all interviewees have successfully completed the Associate in Arts in Teaching and have either completed or are pursuing their bachelor's degree and careers in education. Names of the students have been changed to protect confidentiality.

Although foundational data about the Native Hawaiian Teacher Education community college student experience and perspective could be gleaned just by the qualitative surveys collected, I felt it was important to enhance the research by including student stories and histories. Being able to "provide the counter-narrative has been an essential survival skill since contact with Europeans and continues to hold cultural and educational significance today (Au & Kaomea, 2009, p. 572).

As part of the interview process, I asked participants to bring three items or artifacts to represent the most impactful school memories or stories from their lives. The first artifact represented a story about a time in their past (e.g., K-12 school experiences) that shaped their views on education. The second artifact represented a story about why they came to college (and the AAT program) or a story about their college experiences. The third artifact represented a story about how they see their future selves, particularly as it pertained to their relationship with education. The use of artifacts is something that our Teacher Education students are familiar with and is also a way to evoke deeper reflection, connection, and storytelling.

Being allowed to engage with my students and their mo‘olelo was probably one of the most powerful, unforgettable, and life-changing experiences for me. As such, I decided that these stories should not just be analyzed for thematic similarities, but more importantly shared as individual and whole narratives for all to enjoy and learn from.

Hui Ho‘oholomua

Supplementing data collection methods such as surveys and interviews, focus groups are often “used to solve a wider array of ‘real world’ problems” (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2013, p. 2). The Hui Ho‘oholomua or Group to Make Progress was comprised of four Teacher Education students, other than those who participated in the interviews, who indicated on the qualitative survey their willingness to participate in a focus group. To protect confidentiality, names of the students have been replaced by identifiers reflecting the numbers one, two, three, and four in Hawaiian.

Table 3.2
Demographic Profile of Focus Group Participants

Student	Gender	Age	Birth Place	High School	Family Status	Status at time of meeting in summer 2016	Status as of summer 2017
‘Ekahi	Female	49	Honolulu (O‘ahu)	Kamehameha High School (Honolulu, O‘ahu)	Married with children	AAT Graduate	BA earned, licensed teacher
‘Elua	Female	19	‘Ewa Beach (O‘ahu)	Kaimuki High School (Honolulu, O‘ahu)	Not married, no children	AAT Student	Current AAT Student
‘Ekolu	Male	23	Waipahu (O‘ahu)	Waipahu High School (Waipahu, O‘ahu)	Not married, no children	AAT Graduate	Pursuing BA and teacher licensure
‘Ehā	Female	36	Hilo (Hawai‘i)	Pāhoa High School (Pāhoa, Hawai‘i)	Not married with children	AAT Student	AAT earned, pursuing licensure

Once again, purposeful sampling (Merriam, 2009) was employed to select a diversified focus group. The purpose of Hui Ho‘oholomua was to address the concerns with Native Hawaiian college student success and as such, they were tasked with brainstorming and suggesting improvements to postsecondary supports, specifically in the AAT program. I intentionally limited my focus group participants to students because this study’s goal is to highlight student voice. While it seems logical to include faculty, community members, or educational leaders in these focus groups, doing so would change the dynamic and possibly the outcomes. Also, I wanted the students to be as creative, open, and unlimited in their ideas to help improve student success. In essence, I wanted the ideas of Native Hawaiian AAT students to inform ways in which we can better serve Native Hawaiian AAT students.

Kanaka Noi‘i

In this action research narrative study, I am also an integral part of Hui O Nā Leo. As researcher and interpreter, I partner with my haumāna to ensure the integrity of their voice, thoughts, stories, and recommendations remains intact. However, even though my approach to the study is one of humility and open-mindedness, I am my participant’s counselor and instructor and I needed to be sensitive to the fact that they may regard me in a position of authority. Understanding my positionality, including maintaining awareness of my strengths, weaknesses, and biases throughout the research process was key to ensuring that I conducted a trustworthy and ethical study.

Schön (1983) describes competent practitioners as those have the capacity to reflect on their intuitive knowing about their practice and use this ability to cope with and improve the uniqueness of their professional situations. These types of “insider case

studies of practitioner learning” possess advantages (i.e., in terms of research practitioner tacit knowledge of the study’s setting and participants) as well as disadvantages (i.e., potential for assumptions, bias, and impressionistic perspectives) (Herr & Anderson, 2014, p. 44). Therefore, understanding positionality is a vital component of any research endeavor, but especially that of an action researcher. Schön (1983) believes that “when a practitioner becomes aware of his frames, he also becomes aware of the possibility of alternative ways of framing the reality of his practice” (p. 310). For the purpose of this study, I claim multiple positionalities: insider collaboration with insiders and as an outsider-within.

My primary orientation is one of being an insider collaborating with insiders (Herr & Anderson, 2014). As the counselor for Leeward CC’s Teacher Education program for over ten years, I understand program requirements and what we offer our students in terms of instruction and support. In addition, I have endeavored to build genuine rapport with my student population. For this action research study, collaborating with my students is the key component to seeking improvements and effectuating change in higher education support systems.

However, I am also an outsider-within (Herr & Anderson, 2014). My perspective is strictly from the faculty viewpoint, not from my students’ perspective. I have only second-hand knowledge, based on what my students tell me, about what it is really like to experience the AAT program as a Native Hawaiian student. Being positioned so closely to my research and my participants requires that I be cognizant that no matter how much I reassure my students that I am there to learn from them, a power dynamic exists. Some students may find it difficult to say what they truly feel if they believe it could impact our

existing counselor-student relationship. Others may hesitate to share due to cultural practices of respecting elders or those in positions of authority. Cultural limitations could also reflect a hesitancy to share success stories as some may view that as being in direct conflict of maintaining humility, a value that is so important in the Native Hawaiian culture.

Herr and Anderson (2014) posit that “knowledge production from all positions is valid as long as one is honest and reflective about the limitations of one’s multiple positionalities” (p. 59). My awareness of my multiple positionalities prompted me to work diligently to promote a relationship with my student participants that focused on freedom, openness, and humility. I shared with them my feelings of gratitude and how I considered them to be my kumu, my source of knowledge, and I was their haumāna. I have encouraged this inverse relationship by being transparent in my research process, emphasizing the importance of their input not only for me but for future Native Hawaiian Teacher Education students, and inviting them to learn of the results of the study.

Being aware of who I am as kanaka noi‘i is largely dependent on the relationships that I build with each of the hui and with the research itself. Knowing my place and my role within the research process provided me with the foundation on which to construct my data collection and analysis methods. The relationships formed between myself as kanaka noi‘i, the three different hui, and the research itself demonstrated an interconnected, interdependent bond that together created Hui O Nā Leo.

Data Collection

The data collection process consisted of reviewing reports and documents, distributing an online qualitative questionnaire, conducting interviews, and facilitating a

focus group. The following section highlights the various methods of data collection used for this study.

Reports and Documents

As the education counselor, I have access to college historical documents, program reports, and student demographic data stored in the University of Hawai‘i student information system called Banner. In addition, I was able to work with the Leeward Community College Office of Policy, Planning, and Assessment which provided a comparative data analysis of leaver graduation rates for our program.

I gained written permission from the Coordinator of the Teacher Education Program and the Chancellor of the college to conduct the study (see Appendices B and C for copies of the signed approval memorandums). Although not required, I felt it was important to garner departmental and campus support for this study, especially since the results will be used as a foundation to improve services for Leeward CC students. Culturally, this inclusive approach strengthens the idea that this study is not done solely for my own benefit, but for the benefit of current and future Leeward CC Teacher Education students.

Survey

An online qualitative survey was created and disseminated to 234 Native Hawaiian Teacher Education students who were either currently enrolled or graduated from the program between the years of 2006–2016 (see Appendix F for a copy of the survey questions). Thirty-one emails were immediately returned stating that the address was no longer valid. This left a total of 203 email invitations sent to 86 AAT graduates

and 117 current students. Fifty students completed the survey rendering a 25% participation rate.

The recruitment for the study was done via email notification using the school email addresses provided in the Banner system. A flyer was attached to the email along with a thorough explanation of the purpose, procedures, and time commitment that would be required of participants (see Appendix D for the recruitment flyer). A link to the online survey was provided along with the notice that completing the survey indicated the student's consent to participate in the study. Two reminders were sent via email to encourage completion of the survey. Participants were made aware that responses were confidential and that participation was strictly voluntary. Participants could refrain from answering questions or withdraw from the study at any time. The final question asked students to indicate if they were willing to participate further in an interview, focus group, or both. Those who participated at this stage of the study are the Hui O Nā Mana‘o Haumāna.

Interviews

The Hui O Nā Mo‘olelo Haumāna consisted of six participants who were willing to share their stories and histories as Native Hawaiian students. Questions in the semi-structured interviews focused on the students' backgrounds, artifacts that represented their educational experiences, perspectives on education through a Native Hawaiian lens, and experiences in the AAT program (see Appendix G for interview protocol and questions).

Students were initially contacted via email and provided with instructions on what to bring and what to expect at the interview session. Scheduling the interviews was done

either via email or via text, depending on the student's preference. As stated by Clandinin et al. (2007), "all events take place someplace" and therefore, "a narrative inquirer needs to think through the impact of each place on the experience" (p. 481). The date, place, time, location, and even what food would be shared at the interview session was based solely on the students' preferences. Of the six interviewees, three chose to meet at my office, one chose to meet at a restaurant, and the remaining two chose to meet at my home.

The importance of sharing food cannot be denied in Native Hawaiian culture. A meal shared with family and friends allows time for conversations and bonding to take place, nourishing both body and soul. Food is a key component to celebrations and sharing hospitality, thus, it was incorporated as part of the interview process. Prior to the start of each interview, both the participant and I shared a meal together as a means to build rapport and evolve the interpersonal dynamic from that of a counselor-student relationship to colleagues discussing Native Hawaiians and education.

For the three students who came to my office, I bought Hawaiian food or breakfast. One student met me at a favorite local restaurant for breakfast and two students came to my house for breakfast or lunch. Especially for those who came to my home, I could actually see our dynamic changing as the meal progressed. Whereas initially it might have been slightly awkward to let a student into my personal space and conversely for my student to come to their counselor's home, these feelings subsided on both sides as the meal and the visit progressed. By the time we commenced with the actual interview, my students were ready and eager to share their stories. A box of candy and a gift card was given to each participant as a token of appreciation for their time and

effort. As *kanaka noi'i*, I wrote personal reflections following each interview to record my impressions. Interviews lasted approximately 90 minutes per session and were audiotaped and then transcribed in preparation for analysis. Drafted transcriptions were then sent to the students to complete a member check (Merriam, 2009). This allowed my students the opportunity to ensure the accuracy of information shared as well as to edit or redact any information that they were no longer comfortable including in the study's findings. With member checks of the transcripts completed, the last part of the data collection process could commence: the focus group.

Focus Group

Hui Ho'oholomua or Group to Make Progress consisted of four student participants who were tasked to discuss how the Leeward CC Teacher Education program could improve supports for its students. Unlike those students who were interviewed, obtaining their individual stories was not the primary objective but rather a by-product of the process. Hui Ho'oholomua was presented with a brief summary of initial findings from the surveys and interviews regarding how Native Hawaiian AAT students felt about their culture and education, barriers they experienced, and motivations for entering the teaching field. Hui Ho'oholomua members were asked to reflect on their own experiences in the AAT program and to use that as a means to suggest ways in which their journeys could have been better supported (see Appendix H for focus group protocol and questions). They were given the *kuleana* to advocate for future Native Hawaiian AAT students, their brothers and sisters in teaching, by looking beyond what had been done before or what seemed feasible and instead, naming what is needed.

To set up the focus group, I initially contacted all students via email. I wanted to build a sense of community even prior to the focus group session so that they would feel comfortable with one another to have a productive brainstorming session. To do this, I did a group email to all four participants explaining the purpose of the focus group and their critical role. I asked them to ho‘olauna or introduce themselves via email and share some information about themselves as well as post a picture. This act of ho‘olauna was a critical component that aided my haumāna in building pilina or relationships with one another, even prior to meeting in person. This step created a sense of unity and purpose prior to their focus group session. Together, the group decided the date and time of the meeting as well as holding the session at the Leeward CC campus. They encouraged one another via email and stated that they looked forward to meeting one another in person.

As with my interviewees, I provided a dinner for the participants and we spent the first 30 minutes of the session sharing food and getting to know one another better. Following the model of Indigenous focus groups presented by Romm (2014), I oriented my students to this process by using her explanation that “re-search is a process of re-looking at issues by taking a fresh look together. And so we search again. Focus group sessions are one way for people together to take a re-look” (p. 14). This approach supported the Indigenous, communal, and participatory foundation of the study. The focus group meeting was audio recorded and lasted approximately 90 minutes. The session’s recording was then transcribed and sent to each member via email to ensure accuracy. Participants were also able to redact any of their statements. The final approved transcription was then used for data analysis.

Data Analysis

This section describes the process used to analyze the data collected from the qualitative surveys, interviews, and focus groups. Content analysis and interpreting narrative data were used for all three data collection methods enlisted in this study (Taylor-Powell & Renner, 2003). Creswell (2012) posits that forming codes and categories represents “the heart of qualitative data analysis” (p. 184). Creswell (2012) further describes this process as one that “begins with the development of the codes, the formation of themes from the codes, and then the organization of themes into larger units of abstraction to make sense of the data” (p. 187). With multiple modes of data collection, it was imperative to develop a foundational sequential structure for the data analysis that also allowed flexibility and creativity in order to make meaning of the messy ambiguity that qualitative research presents.

Reviewing the Data

I began the process by getting to know my data. For this initial step in the data analysis process, Taylor-Powell and Renner (2003) recommend getting familiar with the data by reading and re-reading the transcripts and texts, listening to audio recordings several times, and writing down impressions. I started my data analysis by reviewing the survey responses and transcripts. In the review of the interviews and focus groups I read the transcripts while simultaneously listening to the recordings. For this first review, I did not take any notes of themes or categories, but instead wrote down my impressions, feelings, or ideas. Next, I reviewed the survey and transcript data looking specifically for any data related to my research questions. Lastly, I looked at the texts again, making note of any themes or categories.

Focusing the Analysis

Taylor-Powell and Renner (2003) suggest that once the data has been reviewed, analysis should be focused and organized by topic, time period, or event. For the Hui O Nā Mana‘o Haumāna and Hui Ho‘oholomua data, I chose to focus my analysis by the topic and the questions asked either in the survey or focus group session. For the Hui O Nā Mo‘olelo Haumāna data, I chose to look at each individual contributor as their own case study. As suggested by Ollerenshaw and Creswell (2002), I focused my analysis of these narratives by reviewing the interviews and artifacts, retelling these stories and rewriting them into a chronological sequence, and incorporating the context of the participant’s experience.

Coding and Patterns

Merriam (2009) states that “data analysis is the process of making sense out of the data” (p. 175). In qualitative studies, coding the data means identifying themes or patterns and organizing them into broader categories. Taylor-Powell and Renner (2003) acknowledge this process as being labor-intensive but also the “crux of qualitative analysis” (p. 2). The qualitative data analysis software program called MAXQDA was employed during the data coding process to organize the voluminous amounts of raw data generated by three modes of data collection. To address the multiple case study orientation of Hui O Nā Leo, there were two stages in the data analysis. The initial stage involved a within-case analysis where “each case is first treated as a comprehensive case in and of itself” (Merriam, 2009, p. 204). The *cases* in this study were identified as the three hui and within the Hui O Nā Mo‘olelo Haumāna, each interview participant also represented its own case. Once the analysis of each case was completed, I conducted a

cross-case analysis seeking to build inductive abstractions across the cases (Merriam, 2009).

For this study, I adopted Creswell's (2012) use of "lean coding" where I began with a short list of five or six codes and then expanded and added codes as needed each time I reviewed the data (p. 184). I wanted this study to be first and foremost about the voices of my haumāna, therefore, I did not create preconceived or pre-set categories. Rather, I chose to allow the categories or themes to reveal themselves as I continued to code and reflect on the data. Merriam (2009) refers to this method as open coding because "you are being open to anything possible at this point" (p. 178).

Once I had determined main themes gleaned from the data of each hui, I organized them into larger categories, where appropriate. I also looked at the relative importance of the categories based on the number of times that a theme came up. Taylor-Powell and Renner (2003) stipulate that in qualitative studies it is not as important to list the actual number of times a theme appears as it is just to make note that the repeated theme can lend itself to revealing general patterns. However, for some of the data, especially gleaned from the qualitative survey, I did quantify the frequency of times that certain answers were given in order to provide a sense of what common beliefs or practices existed among the students. In naming the codes and themes, I did a combination of creating my own descriptors for each category and using *in vivo* codes, which are names based on the exact words used by my participants (Creswell, 2012). With the cross-case analysis of codes completed, I was then able to move toward the interpretation of the data.

Interpreting the Data

In qualitative research, interpreting the data entails attaching meaning and significance to the analysis by abstracting beyond the emergent codes and themes (Creswell, 2012; Taylor-Powell & Renner, 2003). Although the process began with coding and listing the discovered themes, the next step required that I synthesize the data and look beyond the categories to see a larger picture of what the data was trying to tell me about my students, but also about my service as their counselor and what I could do to improve my practice. I began to see the data as its own participant, ready to reveal its collective story or voice to me, but only if I was worthy and alert enough to receive that message.

To prepare myself for this, I reflected on what I wanted to know and what would be useful, relevant information not only to improve my practice but to broaden the understanding and appreciation of Native Hawaiian Teacher Education students' experiences and perspectives. I contemplated what I believed I already knew about my students and opened myself to learning more, accepting the fact that I may be biased or inaccurate in my perceptions. I then stepped away from the data and took time to just reflect on myself as a Native Hawaiian, student, and an educator.

During this period, I often found myself outdoors, alone, and with the intent to quiet my mind in order to listen to those who came before me (piko po'o), my authentic self (piko waena), and those who were to come (piko ma'i). In addition, I decided to answer the questions on the distributed qualitative survey. In order to honor the haumāna perspective, my input is not included in the findings of this study, however, this self-reflection was a key component in my data analysis process as it removed me from my

own positionality, if even for a moment, as a counselor and a researcher and instead, placed me at the heart of my own data, my purpose, and among my haumāna as part of the collective whole. Once I did this, I went back to my data with a fresh perspective and reviewed my thematic findings in order to bring relevance and meaning to my data. The findings resulting from this process will be discussed further in chapter 5.

Quality Considerations

In any kind of research, there is a necessity to address quality considerations of validity and reliability. These parameters strive to produce unbiased, objective, transferable, and repeatable research. Although qualitative research has long been touted as a “soft science” with anecdotal data, subjective influences, and researcher bias, Cope (2014) contends that “qualitative research is not inferior research, but a different approach in studying humans” (p. 89). In an action research narrative inquiry, where the researcher is placed in the midst of the data and the qualitative data findings are often specific to the needs and the population being addressed, the terms validity and reliability do not quite fit the orientation of the study. Therefore, in this section I have chosen to address the quality of the study through the concepts of reflexivity and trustworthiness and lastly, present the limitations of the study.

Reflexivity

Creswell (2012) describes the concept of reflexivity as being one in which “the writer is conscious of the biases, values, and experiences that he or she brings to the qualitative research study” (p. 216). He depicts reflexivity as a two-part process where the researcher talks about personal experiences with the phenomenon and then discusses how these past experiences shape the researcher’s interpretation of the phenomenon.

The reflexive process is especially applicable and pertinent to this action research narrative inquiry. Being aware of my positionality and my real and perceived relationships with my haumāna heightened my sensitivity and intuition, especially in terms of my written, verbal, and non-verbal communication exchanges. I started off email correspondence with a professional, yet friendly approach emphasizing the impact that their participation would have on current and future Native Hawaiian AAT students. In subsequent email correspondence, my tone was much less formal and laced with authentic gratitude. When conducting interviews and focus groups, I dressed comfortably, used my casual, personal vernacular which is a mix of pidgin and standard English, and keenly observed my participants and adjusted my wording, non-verbal gestures, physical positioning, and tone to ensure the maintenance of their comfort level throughout the session. Being reflexive was not just helpful to my study; it was an integral part of conducting a study centered on trustworthiness.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness addresses the issue of validity and speaks to the truth value, applicability, consistency, and neutrality of a study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It challenges the researcher to examine the methodology and research processes to determine if the study is worth paying attention to. According to Erlandson (1993) “establishing trustworthiness enables a naturalistic study to make a reasonable claim to methodological soundness” (p. 131). Lincoln and Guba (1985) provide four components of trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility. Credibility refers to the truth of the data and is often represented by naturalistic methods such as prolonged engagement, observation, triangulation, member

checks, and reflexive journaling (Erlandson, 1993). In this study, I engaged in the triangulation of data through using multiple methods of data collection including document reviews, surveys, interviews and a focus group. In addition, I conducted member checks on all audio recorded data. Lastly, I engaged in reflexive journaling at various points throughout the research process in order to be aware of my own impressions, biases, and feelings as they were evolving.

Transferability. Although generalizing the findings to be applicable beyond the scope of the participants is not the objective of this study, the results are reported in such a way as to elicit connection and “meaning to individuals not involved in the study” so that “readers can associate the results with their own experiences” (Cope, 2014, p. 89). This was achieved by presenting detailed descriptions of the participants and their experiences, conducting purposive sampling, and keeping a reflexive journal (Erlandson, 1993). Providing background information, context, and descriptions of the AAT program and myself as *kanaka noi‘i* also allows readers to discern if the findings are transferable to their own situations (Cope, 2014).

Dependability. The reliability of the data and findings refers to the extent by which the research findings can be replicated. This philosophy is built on the positivist lens that a study is more valid if repeated procedures and observations yield the same results (Merriam, 2009). However, in qualitative and Indigenous research this is problematic since human behavior is not static and truth is not validated by recurring outcomes. What many experience is not necessarily more reliable than what one individual may experience (Merriam, 2009). Wolcott (2005) challenges why there is a

need to address reliability at all in a qualitative context since it is an inappropriate measure of assessment for this type of research.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) were the first to reframe the concept of reliability to one of dependability and consistency. The purpose of dependability is not to determine whether the study can be replicated to produce similar findings, but rather are the findings of the study consistent with the data collected (Merriam, 2009). Achieving dependability in this study was supported by methods triangulation or data collection via multiple methods and the creation of an audit trail to document “how the data were collected, how categories were derived, and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry” (Merriam, 2009, p. 223).

Confirmability. Confirmability ensures that the data represents the voices and responses of the participants, not the biases or perspectives of the researcher (Cope, 2014). This is especially relevant in this study as the purpose is to illuminate the viewpoints of Native Hawaiian Teacher Education students. This is achieved by reflexive journaling which can help the researcher become aware of and minimize any influences or biases regarding the data and by including rich participant quotes that support emergent categories and themes (Cope, 2014; Erlandson, 1993). In addition, confirmability can be ensured by using rich descriptions and presenting descriptive quotes that support the categorical findings of the study.

Limitations of the Study

In every research endeavor, limitations exist. The following list describes the limitations that are specific to this study.

- 1) This is a bounded case study where the findings are directly applicable to the study's participants (Merriam, 2009). Findings will not be definitively generalizable to larger groups but may provide insight to those who work with similar groups or in similar contexts.
- 2) The haumāna that agreed to participate in the study were either currently enrolled or completed the AAT program. There were no participants who failed to persist in the program. This was intentional because this strengths-based study focused on the *successful* orientation of Native Hawaiian AAT students. However, this is a limitation because the voices and mo'olelo of those who did not complete the program could also provide insight as to their motivations and reasons for leaving and what, if anything, could have been done to prevent the departure.
- 3) Although invitations to participate in the survey were sent to all current and graduated Native Hawaiian AAT students, without utilizing purposeful sampling in the survey process, the sample size of the 50 haumāna who did participate in the study may not have been large enough to hear the voices of those who completed a bachelor's degree and are now teaching, completed a bachelor's degree but are not teaching, or those who decided not to complete a bachelor's degree.
- 4) My relationship with the research participants is another limitation. Earlier discussions point to the perceived and real power dynamics that exist between student and counselor. My awareness of this limitation has guided my actions to minimize this impact to the best of my ability.

I have been in this position as Leeward CC's education counselor for more than a decade and am primarily responsible for the development and coordination of all support services offered to Teacher Education students. Being willing and open to the possibility of hearing students criticize or state their dissatisfaction with current services requires acceptance, humility, and a touch of bravery. It entails a shift in a mindset from possibly feeling threatened and defensive to genuinely welcoming any suggestions to improve. It also requires being in a constant state of self-awareness so as not to intimidate the participants, react to any negative comments, or discourage constructive criticisms.

This limitation can also be viewed as advantageous to this study. My employment with this program has allowed me in-depth knowledge of its history, purpose, and vision. As the education counselor, I have established rapport with most of the research participants and for those who I did not know, I was able to create a safe, open environment conducive to sharing. As a Native Hawaiian doctoral student, I can relate to some of the cultural issues and values that emerged from the data as well as understand the challenges associated with juggling family, work, school, and civic commitments. What may be perceived as limitations in this study has actually helped me to create the space for the emergence of authentic data. As a practitioner scholar, this unique positionality is what has given purpose and power to my study.

In this section, I shared the study's guiding mana'o, design and type, participants, data collection and analysis methods, and quality considerations. The next chapter will focus on the narratives of the Hui O Nā Mo'olelo Haumāna and a description of the artifacts they presented to illustrate their past, present, and future relationships with education.

CHAPTER 4. MO‘OLELO

Piko Waena

“*A‘ohe mea koe ma kū‘ono.*”

“Nothing remains in the corners.”

Referring to the extreme generosity of the haumāna who share their mo‘olelo freely and without reservation.

‘Ōlelo No‘eau, Number 187 (Pukui, 1983, p. 23)

This chapter provides the mo‘olelo of six haumāna who agreed to bring in three artifacts to their interview session. Each artifact represented a specific incident or story in their lives that impacted their views on education. The first artifact illustrated a memory from their elementary or secondary school experiences. The second artifact signified why they came to college or their experiences in a postsecondary setting. The final artifact embodied how they viewed their future within the educational context.

To protect the identities of each of the participants, I asked each of them to select one word that would best describe their relationship or connection with education. The word they chose to describe this relationship is what I have used as their pseudonym throughout their narratives. Four of the six haumāna chose Hawaiian words to describe their relationship with education. For the other two, I translated their selected English word into a closely matched Hawaiian word. My purpose for doing this was to provide a consistent language and selection process for the participants’ pseudonyms. Also, because this dissertation is written in English, I believed it would be confusing to the reader if an adjective (e.g., Incredible) was used as a participant’s name. Therefore, Hawaiian words are used as the pseudonyms for each interviewee.

At the end of each narrative are explanations for their word choice as well as my own journal reflection on the interview experience. Although these accounts are interpreted and shared through my personal literary lens, I have incorporated many of their direct quotes in

order to preserve the spirit of each narrative. These are the mo‘olelo of my haumāna and in these stories, the mana of their words live on.

I am Aloha

We were always encouraged to love learning, and so I think just by seeing the meaning of it and seeing it come alive, and just experiences, learning is something that's fun. It's something that I love. It's something that, I guess the best I could say is it's not a negative. It's just a really positive experience, something that you're going to be doing for the rest of your life. It should be something where you go out and you read a book just because you want to read a book, or you go out and study something, whether that's going on a hike or going somewhere else, but just doing it because you want to do it. I think that's what's been encouraged. That's kind of how I see it now. (Aloha)

Aloha was born twenty-three years ago in Mākaha, O‘ahu. When asked to describe who her ‘ohana is, she initially struggled stating that her family consists of so many uncles and aunts that are not even blood. After a brief pause, she described the nucleus of her family as her parents, two older brothers, and her maternal grandparents who lived a mile down the street. She also acknowledged her paternal grandparents who live in Illinois.

As the youngest and only girl in her immediate family, Aloha credited her two older brothers, five and seven years her senior, as providing a competitive spark in her that prompted her to always “keep up and outdo them.” Aloha’s perspective allowed her to thrive in the face of challenges, especially in college, stating that, “I think for college, some of the barriers, they're not. I think I like barriers, so then when I see a barrier, it's like, ‘Let's just jump over it.’ It doesn't stand out super strong in my mind.” This fearless, can-do attitude developed over time as Aloha faced prejudices associated with being a homeschooled Native Hawaiian growing up in Mākaha.

Aloha has twelve ethnicities, but most closely identifies with Native Hawaiian, Chinese, and Polish. When reflecting on her Native Hawaiian identity and growing up on the Wai‘anae Coast on O‘ahu, she acknowledged that there are a lot of stereotypes to break down. In fact, Aloha felt a great motivator to do well in school was to disprove the negative stereotypes.

It's kind of hard to separate, because there's so many stereotypes with just being in Wai'anae and the aspect that you're Hawaiian and you're in Wai'anae, too. I feel like there's a lot of stereotypes of maybe you're not expected to get a college degree, especially for Wai'anae. Most of the students just stop at high school. There's so many students where they were saying, "Yeah, I'm the first one to pursue college." Probably that stereotype of the Caucasians, and they're the ones that get a college degree, or Chinese are really smart. They're the mathematicians, versus I feel like the Hawaiians is more of, I don't know, that you're supposed to just be a farmer or something.

Besides the prejudices of being a Native Hawaiian growing up in Mākaha, Aloha dealt with the stereotypes associated with being homeschooled and how it was looked down upon.

It was like, "Why would you homeschool? Do you even know what you're doing? What qualifies you as a teacher?" There's a lot of maybe public backlash as to, "You can't do that. Your child is going to come out, they're going to graduate, and they're not going to be prepared for anything."

Aloha comes from a well-educated family. Her mother has a bachelor’s degree in nursing while her father has a doctor of medicine (MD). Her grandfather has a master’s degree and her grandmother was a nurse. On her father’s side, she shared that they all have

doctorate degrees. From Aloha's point of view, education beyond high school was not a pressured expectation; it was the natural progression of one's life learning experiences.

Aloha's education began at home. Along with her two brothers, she was homeschooled by her mother from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. Her eldest brother went to Kamehameha at Kapālama for high school, while Aloha and her other brother remained under their mother's tutelage until graduation. Aloha explained that the homeschool experience differs for everyone but in her case, her mother chose from a variety of curricula and tailored the lessons to fit the interests and needs of Aloha and her brothers. They participated in homeschool co-ops where they would partner with other families from around the island to provide group interaction and diversity in learning experiences. As an example, when they would explore the unit on different cultures, they might spend a few weeks exploring the Native Hawaiian culture and then the next few weeks focusing on the Chinese culture. They also incorporated hands-on learning like playing the ukulele, sewing, and participating in field trips to enhance the lesson plans.

One area in which Aloha excelled was in speech and debate. She conducted hours of research for one debate; however, the hard work paid off. Scoring exceptionally well in a local speech and debate competition, Aloha and her homeschooled team travelled to Ohio for a national competition. In her junior and senior years of homeschool, she also attended Hawaii Pacific University, a private university in Honolulu, and enrolled in online English and Communication courses. She eventually transferred to Leeward Community College because it was cheaper, closer to home, and offered a teacher education program. Now as a graduate of the AAT program, Aloha has earned her bachelor's degree and contemplates her next step of continuing her education in graduate school or gaining practical teaching experience possibly starting as a substitute teacher. Looking back on her educational

journey, Aloha shared three photographs, each representing impactful moments throughout her academic career and shaping who she is as a future educator.

The first artifact depicts a typical Thanksgiving scene with a Hawaiian twist. The picture is set in the backyard of Aloha's Mākaha home. Adults and children of all ages, dressed in pilgrim and Native American garb, gathered around a giant, wooden picnic table filled to the edges with at least twenty or more succulent authentic and modern Thanksgiving food dishes. Although worn and slightly blurry, the old photograph portrayed a happy event that Aloha recalls fondly.

I don't know if it was based off of the families or just if you wanted to be a pilgrim or an Indian, that's what your costume was. We got to make the costumes, and put the beads on the deer skin and different things like that. Then I remember we set up a tepee. I really liked that, just because for me, I remember it because it made learning come alive. Usually when you're little you don't remember a lot of these experiences, but I really remember that one.

For Aloha, this Thanksgiving event “sparked that fire for education, just seeing that learning was something that was real.” Another example of applied learning that was shared in the homeschool environment was when the group was studying the history of Hawai‘i and the arrival of Captain Cook.

We turned our deck into Captain Cook's ship. We hung sheets from our mango tree to make it into sails and stuff. It just made learning come alive. It was just something that rather than it being an abstract thing, you could actually experience it.

These homeschool experiences showed Aloha that learning took place everywhere, not just in a classroom. This influenced her perspective on education ever since.

Wherever you went, you're learning, whether you went to another state and you got to go to a museum there, or you just got to see some of the different aspects of that state or another country. I think that really just made learning come alive and made me want to learn.

The second artifact that Aloha shared represented why she pursued and persevered in education. It was a picture of herself and her two brothers surrounding her maternal grandfather, affectionately referred to as "Tutu," who is sitting down in the backyard. In this picture, Aloha is no more than five years old, wrapping her tiny arms across the shoulders of her Tutu and the dog he holds in his arms. To Aloha, this photo represented the impact that her maternal and paternal grandparents had on her decision to go to college.

They encouraged us to get an education and just to go to college. I knew it was something where I didn't have to go if I didn't want to. If I wanted to go a different route, I could, but it was just kind of something that was expected. I knew that it's the next step. Once you finish high school, just go to college. Then my mom always encouraged us like, "Don't worry about the name. If you start off at a community college, that's perfectly fine. You'll end up saving so much money, instead of spending it at Harvard or just out of state." I think they're probably the biggest impact as to why I went to school or college.

Many of Aloha's cousins have doctorate degrees so there is definitely that pressure to do well. However, she emphasized that her parents have been supportive and never pressured her to go to a prestigious university or even into the medical field as many in the family did. Instead, they taught Aloha that getting a bachelor's degree would open many doors for her and to choose her own path. Her reflection on why she chose teaching resulted in the following response.

I think just because my mom taught us. I know sometimes [homeschooling] is looked down upon, but it was just something where I knew it was an area where you could have a lot of impact. I think going back to the Thanksgiving Day feast, just being able to experience it and just all the experiences that we had growing up, just wanting to have that or give that to kids as well. That's probably why I was like, "Ooh, teaching."

The significance of this artifact is the encouragement and support she received from her family. It is the type of support she hopes to pass on to her own students.

I think that just encourages me, just the power that I guess education has, and just the encouragement, there's a lot of students that don't necessarily have that opportunity. Whether you provide that on a small scale or a larger scale, whether it's one person or a whole class, it can make a huge difference in that person's life.

Aloha struggled finding an artifact to depict how she saw her future self in education. She attributed that to where she is in her life at this moment, a recent graduate with a bachelor's degree now deciding whether to continue with graduate school or enter the workforce. She then presented a picture of a young boy in Nepal, playing with a white balloon on the steps of a dilapidated schoolhouse. He is surrounded by children, adults, and elders who are sitting or talking, but he notices none of them. Rather, he is fixated on his balloon and the joy it brings to him. Aloha shared that her artifact reminded her of her passion to teach overseas, possibly in Bangladesh, at a school or an orphanage.

The kids there...that would probably be just the biggest dream would just be to impact the students who don't have that maybe physical potential. Their school isn't at that level where they can really prepare them. Just because you hear about all these stories where the girl just learned how to

*sew, it's something as simple as that. It can completely change their life.
Just the power that education has.*

With her future self, Aloha wants to be faithful in whatever area she is meant to be doing, whether it is continuing her education or teaching others. When asked to reflect on her experiences and provide one word to summarize her relationship or connection with education, Aloha's answer was simple. Love.

My Reflection on Aloha

This interview took place in my office. Due to time constraints there wasn't time to share in a meal, however, we did spend a good amount of time just *talking story* and catching up before the interview started. For this particular interviewee, I had known this student about two years and worked with her on both an academic and professional level. She has always been one of my most trusted and diligent students. Definitely serving as a role model to others, she was a young professional in a student station. She has a calm demeanor, a casual, ever-present smile and an energy that brings peace to those who are around her. So wise and so easy-going, this interviewee was able to speak about her past and future, but she was at a crossroads just having graduated. Because I knew her very well, my priority was creating a safe space where she understood that whatever she said in the interview was welcomed and appreciated. Through our conversation, I learned so much about homeschooling and her views on education. I knew she valued education but did not know the reasons why. It was rewarding to gain greater knowledge about this student.

I also learned an important lesson from this study's first interview experience. With the location of the interview being in my office, it may have reinforced a counselor-

student dynamic and therefore, may have impacted the initial formality of her responses. However, being aware of this, I made sure to emphasize that there were no right or wrong answers. I assured the student that I didn't even know what I was looking for or what I would find in this research and so it was important that she know that everything she said, or did not say, was just as it should be. I think this helped to ease any nervousness or tension she may have felt and I found the interview to flow nicely as she would often go into detail about her experiences, feelings, and viewpoints.

The only regret is that due to time constraints, we did not share a full meal together. I bought food for her and makana (i.e., gift), but the time and space to share in the meal was not adequately allotted for. We did have some time to talk before the interview recording started but I think being able to share in a meal could have created an even greater sense of having a comfortable, conversational exchange of ideas versus feeling like a traditional research interview. Because this was my first interview, I used this lesson to adjust to the remaining interviews and ensure that the time and space for sharing a meal together was incorporated. It was an important learning moment for me.

I am Alaka'i

*My mom would always tell me...you need to lead and not follow. You need to be a good example and not follow the bad kids. You need to be the good kid and you need to teach other people and lead. I know hearing it over and over and over again it definitely shaped who I am today. I'm a teacher.
(Alaka'i)*

Alaka'i is a graduate of the AAT program and earned a Bachelor's degree in Secondary Education. He currently works in a high school as a licensed vocational instructor. Despite his demanding full-time teaching position and family responsibilities

of raising three children, Alaka‘i continued to pursue his education at the Master’s degree level. Without a doubt, education has played a significant role in his life and much can be attributed to his upbringing.

I always valued education because it was ingrained in me [from childhood] from my mom and then my uncle. I always knew I had an importance for academics and education was drilled into me.

Alaka‘i was born at Queen’s Medical Center in Honolulu, Hawai‘i. He is of Filipino, Japanese, and Native Hawaiian descent. Although his exposure to Native Hawaiian practices has been limited, Alaka‘i identifies with Native Hawaiian values and when asked to indicate his ethnicity on surveys, he always selects the Native Hawaiian/Part-Hawaiian box when available. For the first two years of his life, he and his single parent mother lived in the city of Honolulu. The small family then moved to Waipahu, a 40-minute drive westward, and stayed there until Alaka‘i was in 5th grade. During that time he attended Honowai Elementary School. In 6th grade, Alaka‘i and his mother moved to Kunia, an adjacent neighborhood to Waipahu. The move put Alaka‘i in a different public school district and he attended Kalei‘opu‘u Elementary for his 6th grade year, away from his friends and his budding “career” as a Junior Police Officer (JPO). Alaka‘i reminisces tongue-in-cheek about the disappointment of not being able to fulfill his JPO responsibilities and be promoted to “captain,” but really alludes to the fact that he had to adjust to several schools in his youth.

After his year at Kalei‘opu‘u Elementary, Alaka‘i attended Waipahu Intermediate for 7th grade and then he and his mom made their final move to ‘Ewa Beach, located on the western plains of the island of O‘ahu. He changed schools once again and in 8th

grade attended 'Ewa's Ilima Intermediate. From there, he would go on to attend Campbell High School and graduate in May 2003.

As the only child of a single parent mother, Alaka'i recalls taking on the role of the man of the household and "doing the male thing, cutting grass and taking out the trash." A hānai³³ uncle served as his father figure growing up. Both adults had a profound impact on his connection to education. Alaka'i is a self-proclaimed nerd, stating that "I nerd out on things. I just like to study, pretty much that's it all the way through. I had good grades and all the honor roll, perfect attendance, all that kind of stuff." He attributes this connection with education to his mom and uncle.

It stems a lot from my mom though, because my mom was really strict. I guess being a single parent and only child, so she spent a lot of time on me. I didn't really have an opportunity to be anything else but a nerdy schoolboy because that's what she trained me to be. It was good though....He [uncle] does some industrial type work and he always tells me too, just like my mom. Not on a daily basis, but on the weekends when I visit uncle. He'd always tell me, "Hey, you better study hard, you don't like work hard like uncle, you know." [I would say] "Oh yes, yes, okay uncle." Until that one time he actually took me to work with him. We had to fill up the wheel barrel with sand, rocks and wheel that barrel to the job site and wheel it back. After an hour, I was done. I couldn't even [work anymore]. I was so tired. I was sweating and the next day I was hurting even worse than the day that I worked. That's when I put [things] into perspective. Study hard, you don't like work hard like how uncle got to work to make a living.

³³ In Hawaiian, hānai means to raise, rear, or care for and usually refers to an adopted or foster relative. It is used as a term of endearment for close family friends who are treated as part of the 'ohana.

Through the influences of his mom and uncle, Alaka‘i developed an appreciation for education that stayed with him throughout his academic career. He first expressed an interest in teaching in the 8th grade. Working at the Boys and Girls Club as a junior leader, Alaka‘i found joy in organizing and conducting recreational games for the children. He continued this line of work with the City and County of Honolulu’s Parks and Recreation department. The director of the program recognized Alaka‘i’s affinity with children and encouraged him to apply as a lifeguard where he would also instruct toddlers through seniors on how to swim. As he advanced in this field, he became certified to train other lifeguards and his teaching skill evolved from informally teaching swimming skills to presenting official, scripted curricula for lifeguard certifications. Alaka‘i recalls, “There was a life guarding binder and I had to teach from the lessons on how to life guard. That was when I knew already I liked teaching.” This was one of several life experiences that influenced Alaka‘i’s perspectives on education as both a student and future teacher. The following artifacts symbolize what he identified as impactful educational moments throughout his academic career.

The first artifact he shared was an award of educational achievement that he received in his senior year of high school from the Southern Regional Board State Vocational Education Consortium. Alaka‘i recalls with astonishment that this is an award that he did not expect or apply for. Rather, his high school counselor helped him by enrolling him in college preparatory courses and four years of automotive technology classes which would lead to this award. He reminisces with fondness the diligence of his counselor setting up an educational plan for him that would lead to something more than just a high school diploma.

The first one is award of educational achievement, so it felt good to get an award for something, just generally speaking. Anytime to be congratulated or awarded for something, it felt good, especially that I didn't even know....I had no idea that I was working towards something.

With further reflection, Alaka‘i realizes that even though he sometimes has mixed feelings about the education system, “there are people in there, I would say I guess myself too, that are looking out for the best interest of the students.” This educational achievement award represented the efforts of one counselor who believed in him when he did not even necessarily believe in himself. She saw his potential, directed him on a path that nurtured his potential, and ultimately, Alaka‘i reaped the benefits.



Figure 4.1 Achievement Award

Alaka‘i’s second artifact symbolized another achievement in his educational career, his first lesson plan completed in a college teacher education course. In his Introduction to Art, Music, and Movement course at Leeward CC, he created a lesson

from the book called *Enemy Pie* by Derek Munson. Alaka‘i explained that the premise of the story is that a young son tells his father about an enemy at school. The father then explains that they will make the enemy a pie. Thinking that the pie will be filled with horrendous ingredients, the young boy is surprised when his father creates delicious fruit pie for the enemy instead. The lesson in this story supports the notion that the best way to beat an enemy is to befriend the enemy.

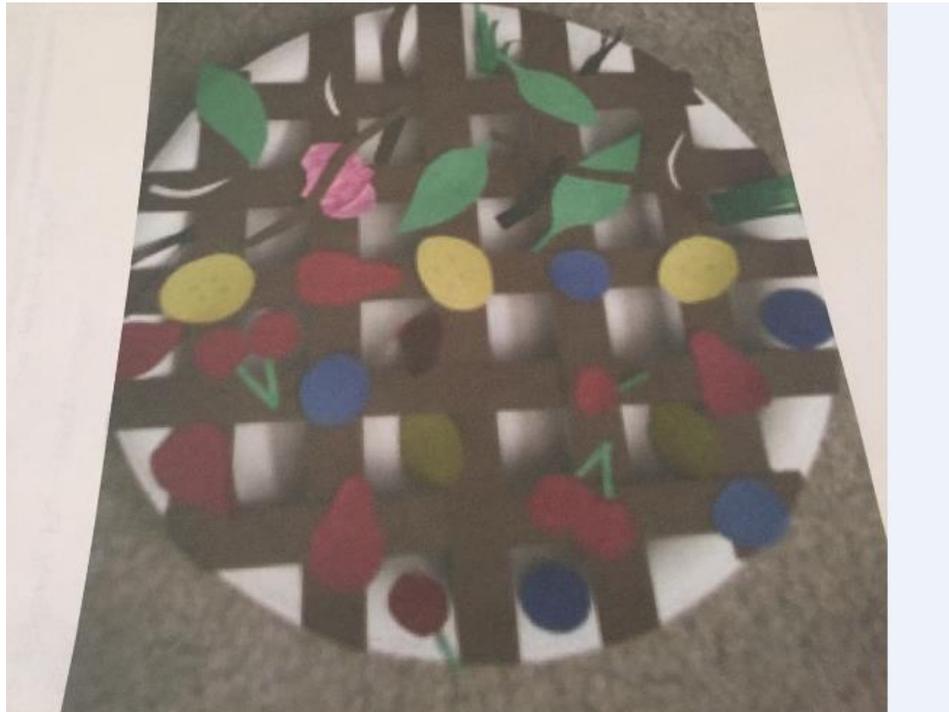


Figure 4.2 Enemy Pie Art Project

After providing the story’s synopsis, Alaka‘i excitedly described his approach to developing the lesson and showed the art project that he would have the kids replicate. He proudly stated that this was the first official lesson he created and that he even had the opportunity to teach this lesson with a group a students at ‘Ewa Elementary. Reflecting on this accomplishment, Alaka‘i shares the feelings he has associated with this experience.

I'm just proud that I actually created something and I guess the real reward was actually teaching a lesson and seeing the kids get it and enjoying the actual lesson. At the end of the lesson it was like, "Oh wow!" It all tied together and it was a success. It was my first lesson, first of all, and then it being a success, I didn't have to fail and redo the lesson. I nailed it the first time. It made me feel good about education and I wanted to teach. I figured, "Hey, if I can do this the first time, then this must be my calling or my knack for teaching people, students."

The third artifact, intended to represent how Alaka'i sees himself as a future educator, is a cartoon picture that Alaka'i downloaded from the internet with the saying "Love is...teaching the next generation." The crumpled, worn paper shows that this is a clipping that has been with Alaka'i for a while. He admits that he keeps this on his computer and every so often, the cartoon captures his attention and reminds him why he is in this profession.



Figure 4.3 "Love is..." cartoon

Because I love to teach and it's a responsibility that I feel that's what I'm supposed to do. I would be doing a disservice to the community and to the world if I was doing anything else. I think so. If I had gone into automotive technology, I might have been a darn good automotive technician and maybe then I would have made a lot of money, be successful. [But] I think I can make the most impact and change by teaching and impacting the lives of all ages, I mean, students and even adults. That's why I think, yes, I guess that loving, caring, and sharing. Because I love it. That's my passion or my love.

Lastly, when asked to reflect back on all of his educational experiences and select one word to depict the relationship Alaka‘i has built with education, he chose the word alaka‘i, which in Hawaiian means leader. Alaka‘i has made the effort to lead by example and to show his students that a local boy, who started with humble beginnings in a single parent household, can grow up to make a difference, to lead, and to teach.

My Reflection on Alaka‘i

Alaka‘i is my former student, an AAT graduate, and now a licensed teacher. I actually remember the first time he set foot in my office 9 years ago, contemplating a career in teaching. Together we explored the possibilities of Elementary Education and becoming a vocational high school instructor. Alaka‘i was one of those rare individuals who would thrive in either work setting, but in the end he decided to meld his passion for automotive technology with his love of teaching. Seeing him now in my home, as a father of three working in a stable teaching position and providing for his family, elicited a deep sense of pride in my na‘au.

Alaka‘i was one of the interviewees who chose to come to my home for the interview. When he arrived, he was still a bit preoccupied with his work and the

activities associated with closing out the school year. However, as we sat down at the dining room table to share a meal, we proceeded to talk about his family who had just come back from a trip and a possible job opportunity at a different school. He was excited as we talked about what he intended to do with his young family this summer and how he might prepare for his new job. This was one of the first times I had any student in my own home and in my personal space. The first few moments may have been a little awkward on my part, but as the conversation and the meal progressed, I relaxed and in turn, so did he.

By the time we were ready to begin the interview, there was a sense of trust, respect, and ease, especially as Alaka'i began to share his artifacts. What impressed me most was how grown up Alaka'i had become. It hit me that this "kid" who came to my office years ago trying to find his way, had succeeded in finding his path. He was living his dream and changing the world. He was speaking the lingo and the acronyms used by those within Hawai'i's public school system. He was talking about budgets, personnel, curriculum, and procurements and I couldn't be prouder. It was during this interview that our relationship officially transformed from a counselor-student connection to two educators passionate about creating positive changes in our school systems.

I am Ho'oulu

My ultimate dream is to....be like Oprah where I open my own school and I take control of my own school. I didn't know that you could do that. I didn't know you could be your own principal that you could take care of what comes in, what goes out, what you feed your kids, if they do yoga in the morning or regular classes, so to actually know that you can make that much of a difference, that's the ultimate dream. But I have to get there.
(Ho'oulu)

Ho‘oulu was born in Wailuku on the island of Maui. When she was two years old, her family moved to the Wai‘anae coast on the island of O‘ahu and then moved to Mililani when Ho‘oulu was eight years old. She is the second eldest sibling in a family of five girls. When asked who she considers to be her ‘ohana, Ho‘oulu enthusiastically replied, “Everybody!” She continued to explain that she has three families: her mother’s family and her father’s family, both from Maui, and her step-father’s family. She says she knew her step-father since she was born and so “even though we are through marriage, we all treat each other like blood because a lot of his side – a lot of my cousins were hānai, or his brother and sister were hānai so it’s just like okay, we all fit in anyway.” Currently, Ho‘oulu lives with her mom, her step-father, her sisters, a sister’s boyfriend, and a nephew. Ho‘oulu is Hawaiian, Filipino, Japanese, Portuguese, Korean, and Chinese. She identifies most with her Native Hawaiian and Filipino identities, depending on where she is and who she is surrounded by. She explains that “when I’m on Maui, definitely Filipino but when I’m here [on O‘ahu], definitely Hawaiian.”

Education has played an important role throughout her life. She attended Mākaha Elementary for preschool and kindergarten where she fondly recalls that they were called the “surf riders.” Halfway through 1st grade, her family moved to Mililani and Ho‘oulu attended Mililani Waena Elementary through 2nd grade. In her 3rd grade year, her family moved to ‘Ewa Beach and then in 4th grade they moved back to Mililani and Ho‘oulu attended Mililani Uka Elementary for 4th and 5th grade. The following year, she attended Mililani Middle School and in 7th grade she was accepted to Kamehameha Schools at Kapālama where she stayed until she graduated. After high school, she went to Forest Grove, Oregon to attend Pacific University for three semesters, came home and took a six

year break from school, and then enrolled in Leeward Community College where she earned her AAT degree. She is currently on track to graduate with her Bachelor of Education in Elementary Education.

Teaching was only one of three careers Ho‘oulu originally explored. When she was in kindergarten and adults would ask her what she would want to be when she grew up, Ho‘oulu would reply, “A doctor, lawyer, and teacher.” She actually explored all three careers throughout her K–12 educational experiences. In elementary school, she watched medical dramas. In middle school she dissected a pig in her biology class which, unfortunately, eliminated the doctor career pathway from her list of possibilities. In high school, Ho‘oulu was actively involved in the speech and debate team. Although she loved and excelled in this activity, she realized the time commitment dedicated to the legal field was more than she wanted to pursue. She then decided to explore teaching. Through her coaching and babysitting experiences, Ho‘oulu realized that she had a talent for connecting with children. Each career aptitude test she took suggested coaching or teaching career fields. In addition, the caring, supportive dispositions of her own teachers inspired Ho‘oulu to seriously pursue a career in teaching.

It's great to see that impact on me, because I think if it wasn't for their [teachers] help, I wouldn't really be guided in the way that I was...it's good to be corrected by your teachers, and to see that they are like your second family. It was good.

She credits her family for having the biggest impact on her decision to pursue and do well in education. Although her grandmother wanted Ho‘oulu to become a nurse, her mother did not have a preference and just wanted her to be happy and her stepfather just

wanted her to earn high grades. Ho‘oulu affectionately remembers that it was her sisters who pushed her to go back to school after her six year break from college.

I talked to my older sister and I was like, “I don't know where I want to go with my life.” And she's like, “Just go back to school.” [My sister], the one below me, it was her that got me into the [college counseling] office, and then the two younger ones they encouraged me to be better, so I feel that all my sisters definitely helped me keep my passion and remind me to keep a level head. To just stay with my passion and my passion is definitely getting to our future, the little kids, because I love babies, I love kids. They [my sisters] are my babies. They are the most inspirational thing because I grew up taking care of them and now they are growing up taking care of me, so it's a whole roundabout thing.

For her first artifact, intended to depict an impactful experience early in her educational journey, Ho‘oulu presents her high school diploma from Kamehameha Schools. She names several reasons why this artifact is particularly meaningful to her. First, she feels blessed and honored to have been able to attend Kamehameha from 7th through 12th grade. She recognizes how difficult it is to be accepted to this prestigious school whose admissions policies give preference to those of Native Hawaiian descent. Once admitted, students are exposed to a wealth of resources and curricula designed to provide a comprehensive, college preparatory, and culturally relevant learning experience. Ho‘oulu speaks with a sincerity about the impact Kamehameha Schools had on her academic and personal development.

Kamehameha [Schools] has taught me so much. They told me how to be studious, they told me how to use my intellect, how to be intelligent, how to use my resources, how to go about being organized, what to expect out of life. Just being a part of a private school that's so huge and that really

dives into culture, I really miss that and that's the experience that I bring out from my education is, I'm going to live my culture, I'm going to implement it as best as I can because we forget.



Figure 4.4 Ho‘oulu’s Artifacts

Ho‘oulu’s second artifact, representing an impactful college experience, was her Associate in Arts in Teaching diploma from Leeward Community College, where she also earned the honor of being on the Dean’s list. She recalls her first introduction to Leeward CC’s Teacher Education program. She accompanied her sister who had scheduled an initial advising appointment with the education counselor, but as the session progressed, Ho‘oulu began to take interest in the program and decided that this was an avenue she wanted to pursue for herself.

I actually didn't think I was going to come back to school, so when I saw you [education counselor] it was really awesome because you got me so hyped up to get back into it. I actually was there for my sister...and then it started being about me...so I was like, "It's my turn!"

Ho‘oulu appreciates the tools, methods and strategies she was taught while in the program, sharing that she felt well-prepared for the transition to her university and in some cases, even better-equipped to succeed than her peers who had only attended the university. Ho‘oulu attributes this in part to her competitive disposition sharing that “I feel that I was always a go-getter and I have to be on top, so if I'm not the number one [or] in the 90th percentile, I kind of go crazy.” However, she also acknowledges that the support she has received from the AAT ‘ohana also impacted her success.

It's just good to have that support and that love, I really never wanted to leave Leeward, I really wish Leeward was a four year accredited school so I could get my bachelor's there, because the professors there are amazing. I don't know how to explain it because they really are like family because they open their hearts to you, they open up their - they just open up...like, be with you on your path like you [education counselor] told me on that first day. You were like, "It's not just as soon as you graduate you're done, it's as soon as you start we are going to be with you forever." And that has been the most impact because I'm not alone.

Ho‘oulu’s third artifact is her textbook from an introduction to classroom management course. To Ho‘oulu, this book represents her future in education and a foundational aspect of being a teacher: the importance of effectively managing a class.

Every time I go to any class I'm like, classroom management, so it's definitely something to dive into. I see myself I guess I bring a book too, and this one because every single classroom I take, every single class I take the first thing that comes out of my mouth is the whole classroom management. How are you going to handle it? How are you going to handle the behavior?

As she enters her student teaching semester, Ho‘oulu explains that she has the first two weeks of her class already planned out and that the practicum courses she is enrolled in now are helping her to build on that foundation. However, she also recognizes that teaching is a lifelong learning profession.

As a future teacher, I know I'm never going to be prepared enough, but I see myself being prepared where I can manage. So it's going to be okay and then I just have to like, breathe.

Ho‘oulu’s disposition and approach to teaching is grounded in authenticity, compassion, and hope. She is aware of the kuleana that comes with being a teacher for future generations and the reciprocal relationship that must exist between herself and her haumāna.

We're not [just] there for them, they are there for us and we are there for them. They are getting the education that we have to provide and that's a lot of pressure because you guys are helping produce the future. You have to teach them those morals, those foundations, those values because sorry to the world, but it's corrupt, and if we are able to slightly change that with the students we have now, they're going to help make it better. They're going to help us make it better so we're not going to be the only ones fighting to make things right. They're going to be fighting along our side. I want to do that. I want to fill them in or I guess fill myself up with so much impact and so much passion that I can attack any situation that does come my way.

Reflecting on each of these experiences, Ho‘oulu shares that collectively they have inspired her to be more courageous and take a stand. She shared that growing up she would sit in the front of the class but act like the students who would sit in the back of the class by not raising her hand and not participating. She was afraid to speak up in

class until she came to Leeward CC's AAT program, where she learned that it was encouraged to take a stand and that her words had value. She learned the impact of how a teacher could reword statements in order to keep students encouraged, even if their answers were not exactly what the teacher was looking for. This gave her the confidence to share her thoughts in class and the results were very positive.

The more and more I've shared throughout the years it's like I have all my classmates tell me, 'Wow, I didn't even think about it like that!' I'm like, 'Really?' It's good too, as a student, it's good to know that you can express yourself without being reprimanded. It's definitely a good feeling.

Ho'oulu's educational experiences have also impacted her self-perception as a Native Hawaiian. She believes, to the core of her being, that she was meant to teach and make a difference in Hawai'i.

I was going to get my degree here or actually get my degree in Oregon and stay in Oregon but after God brought me back here, He made me realize, I'm not needed there. I'm needed here. The only reason I'm needed here is because I experienced Hawaii. I know how it is to grow up in a rough home. I know how it is to grow up in a disciplined home. I know how it is to grow up a little bit of homeless, a little bit of broken. I've been there, and a lot of these kids are going through it or they have gone through it. The only best way to be a teacher is to know what you're students are going through and that's through experience. If you have that experience you can connect to them, better than someone who came, sorry to say, who came from the mainland who knows nothing about the culture, who knows nothing about the background who had never lived on the beach, who has never had their family divorce. They're not going to understand that.

Culturally, she feels that her Native Hawaiian background has taught her to respect the island's resources and not to take them for granted. Take what you need, not

what you want, and live with respect. She shares that respect is a key component in all areas of life including how one deals with land, family, the community, and yourself.

That's where my passion is going to drive me. [I tell myself], "You need to take care of yourself and then you can take care of the land." You just have to...just respect. That's pretty much what my culture has taught me. It's the respect. You respect your elders, you respect everything around you. There's more to just like respecting authority but it's more like your surroundings.

When asked to provide one word to summarize her connection or relationship with education, Ho‘oulu selects the word “inspire.” She explains that she has been inspired and in turn, wants to be an inspiration to others.

There's so much that comes with being an inspiration or being inspired, like there's hope, there's determination, there's support, encouragement. You know this one word impacts all those others. I got the support, I got the encouragement, I got the love, I got the care and that's what it means to be inspired because it's all about your passion. If you can drive all that, they're going to see it, they're going to feel it. I was inspired by my teachers because I felt their passion, I felt their kindness, and I want to be able to inspire my students to feel what I feel for them so they can inspire others. It's like the whole pay it forward concept. Definitely inspire.

Melding her passion for her culture and educating future generations, Ho‘oulu shares her ultimate dream: to open her own school. Ho‘oulu knows what she wants and knows what needs to be done to make her dream a reality. She has already begun the path to inspire greatness in herself and in others.

My Reflection on Ho‘oulu

We met at the Zippy’s, a local family style restaurant, in the town of Mililani for breakfast. I came a little early to secure a corner of the restaurant that I felt would offer a quiet atmosphere. Ho‘oulu arrived and cheerfully approached me wearing a MARVEL sweatshirt and shorts. She warmly hugged me and we proceeded to talk about how her experiences were going in her university teacher education program. It had been about a year since she left our program and she was in her second semester of teacher observations. She was thriving at her university teacher education program and told me how she was selected as an officer for an Honors Society club. We talked about her schooling, what she was doing in her life, and when she was graduating.

When the food arrived, we continued to talk about our lives and catch up with one another. The conversation seemed to come easy. Toward the end of the meal, I proceeded to audiotape. The interview flowed easily, despite the people around us and the loud noise of babies crying. Maybe that also added to the setting that this was more like two people sitting down for breakfast than conducting a formal interview.

My impression of Ho‘oulu while she was in the program was that she was a bright, focused, and outgoing student. Always well-prepared for our counseling sessions, Ho‘oulu knew what questions to ask, diligently followed through with whatever I asked of her, and always had a plan. However, this may have been one of the first times that I really got the opportunity to appreciate the person that Ho‘oulu was evolving into. What struck me most was her level of confidence. She was so secure in what she was sharing and in her path and in what she had accomplished and what more was left for her to do. It was as if a niece were telling me her hopes and dreams. The role was no longer that of

student and counselor...it was two people coming together in respect and aloha, sharing, and envisioning a brighter future for our island keiki. It seemed more relaxed and less formal than if we had met in my office. It was such a nice visit and a chance to learn more about a fascinating human being.

I am Mālama

It [mālama] means to take care, I know, but there's so much more to that. It's to take care of one another. It's to take care of every type of relationship that you have. So I think maybe mālama would be my educational word of the day because of the relationship that it comes with. You take care of something, it will take care of you. (Mālama)

Mālama describes her birthplace of Mira Mesa in central San Diego, California as being located “not close to the beach, but not too close to the border.” Her parents and grandparents grew up on the island of O‘ahu and then moved to San Diego before she was born. Growing up, Mālama’s family consisted of her mother, father, three siblings, and a “small zoo” of pets that included hamsters, birds, chinchillas, snakes, lizards, and a black lab chow mix named Hōkū. She refers to her grandparents as the support system and core of the `ohana while also considering her cousins, uncles, and their families as part of her family unit. Reflecting on her role within the `ohana, Mālama describes herself as being the responsible one.

I've always been the responsible one in the family. My sister, being the oldest girl, she got lots of the attention, and none of the responsibility, so all that responsibility fell onto me. I was always the one babysitting, picking up kids from school, running kids around, just constantly babysitting.

While in San Diego, she attended Hage Elementary and then transferred to Wangenheim Middle School which was considered a “rough” public school, located in the economically-disadvantaged side of the neighborhood. Mālama recalls, “We had shootings, we had gangs, we had pregnancies. It was a rough middle school.”

For high school, she lived within the district radius that allowed her to attend Scripps Ranch High School, a notably more affluent, blue ribbon school serving upper class students. Mālama recalls that only a handful of students from her 8th grade class at Wangenheim attended Scripps Ranch, whereas the majority of her class attended Mira Mesa High School. Although a public school, Mālama describes it as being an “expensive” school and gives the example of regulated parking to emphasize her point.

We had regulated parking. The parents were upset that their children’s cars were getting dinged, so the parking was structured by how expensive your car was. Yes. The area that it’s in is just a very high income area, so lots of the students, the parents were doctors, or lawyers, or plastic surgeons, or they were very, very wealthy, so they donated a lot to the school. They had a lot of say of what went and what happened in the school.

Mālama remembers feeling comfortable at Wangenheim Middle School with all of her peers. However, she likens her move to Scripps Ranch to the iconic 1995 American coming-of-age film, *Clueless* (Rudin, Heckerling, Silverstone, Rudd, & Paramount Pictures Corporation, 1995).

I went to Scripps, and it was completely like Clueless. It was the movie Clueless, where the girls walked around in the miniskirts, and that was my high school. I was the one wearing the baggy pants, and loose fitting clothes, and I was such a tomboy. All of the 20 of us that went from Wangenheim to Scripps, we all kind of stuck together.

Although there were no other Native Hawaiians in her school, Mālama states that there was a big Pacific Islander population and she grew up playing soccer with Guamanians and Samoans. Her closest circle of friends was a cosmopolitan mix of Caucasian, African American, Filipino, and Mexican ethnicities. She fondly describes them as “the weird group of girls that you’d see walking, and everybody’s a different color, a different shade.”

Once Mālama graduated from high school, she made the decision to attend the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa to study pre-nursing. Her father agreed to pay for her college if she pursued a nursing degree. The move to Hawai‘i was also prompted by her desire to learn more about her Hawaiian culture and language. While in Hawai‘i, she stayed with her uncle for two semesters and then lived in the college dormitory for an additional semester. Even though she loved science, Mālama recalls struggling in college. Once she got a job, she realized that working was a better option. She took a six year break from academics and returned to Leeward Community College, originally with the intent of taking classes to earn her liberal arts degree.

It was at a family party that the idea of teaching was first introduced to Mālama as a possible career option. At that family function, there were a total of 13 nieces and nephews on her husband’s side of the family who were playing while the adults were conversing. The children began to get boisterous and started to throw things. Mālama got them together, made them sit down, and had them work on art projects. Noticing this, Mālama’s sister-in-law offered advice that would forever change the course of Mālama’s career path.

She's like, "You need to be a teacher. The way you interact with them, the way you make them think, that you don't just hand things over to them. You

make them think about their decisions, and what they're gonna do." She's like, "You need to put that to use." She told me that night. She's one of the ones I'm closest with, so I took that to heart a little bit, and then realized, "Why not?"

Continuing to explore this option, Mālama decided to find out more about Leeward CC's Teacher Education program and attended a program information session.

I decided to go to one of the AAT meetings [information sessions]. Walking into the meeting, and I think you [education counselor] were the first one that greeted me, and you just gave me this big hug. You didn't even know me. I could've been a stranger, and you just gave me this big hug. Just the way the AAT puts themselves together, it's a family. It was just an introductory meeting. It wasn't like, "Hey, you're my student already. Let's get this done." It was like, "Welcome. Everybody that comes in this room is welcome, and treated just like family." I think that really stuck with me.

Mālama completed the Associate in Arts in Teaching degree and is currently pursuing her Bachelor of Education in Elementary Education and teacher licensure. She hopes to also teach special education. While reflecting on her childhood, Mālama had a revelation about the impact her mom had, working as a librarian at an elementary school, on her motivation to teach. Mālama remembers hanging out in the library with her mom after school and during the summer months. Slowly, she made her way through the different classrooms and at a young age she realized that the way they taught there was different from her own elementary school. Mālama attributes this in part to the lower socio-economic district the school served and student demographic.

My elementary school, I don't know. We were all well-behaved, and the teacher said, "Do this." We did that. In that school [my mother's school], the teachers say, "Do this." They [the students] just kind of look at

you....like, "What? You want me to do that?!?" They really had to get [to] a whole new level with those students because of their background. It was just so much fun being in the classroom with them.

Mālama affectionately described the hands-on approach of these teachers at her mother's school as being "cuckoo." She reminisced about one particular teacher who would show up in periodic clothing to engage his students in his history lessons. Even though unorthodox for the time, Mālama proudly stated that the way that these teachers approached their students and learning resulted in higher standardized test scores and increased student participation. She did not realize it at the time, but her early exposure to innovative and fun instructional strategies at her mother's school would later have an impact on her view of effective instructional strategies.

When sharing her artifacts, Mālama presents three photographs. The first picture, representing the education she received outside of the formal classroom experience, is of her grandparents sitting in a family-style restaurant. The two kupuna³⁴ are leaning into one another, with relaxed happy grins gracing their faces. He wears a long sleeve shirt with a local print on it and a "Senior Olympics" baseball cap. She wears a floral top while jade and Hawaiian bracelets accentuate her outfit. Looking at the picture would immediately make one smile and exclaim, "Oh, how cute!" as they both exude a kind, but kolohe³⁵ demeanor. Mālama explains that in the picture, her grandpa is 82 years old and her grandma is 10 years his junior. She is trying to get them to smile for her picture. The significance of this artifact is the foundation that they provided for her growing up. She

³⁴ Grandparent, relative, or close friend of a grandparent's generation.

³⁵ Rascal or mischievous

specifically refers to her grandfather and the work ethic and cultural responsibility that he instilled in the 'ohana.

He really taught us kuleana growing up. He really taught us about respect, about how you need to respect not just other people, but everything around us. You see trash on the floor, you pick it up. You see an animal on the side of the road that's been hit, you either take it home, take care of it. We have lots of stray pets, by the way, or you help it get onto whatever is going to happen. He was the one who really taught us about the Hawaiian culture, even though we weren't in Hawai'i.

Although Mālama is of Filipino, Native Hawaiian, Chinese, French, Tahitian, and German descent, she connects most with her Hawaiian culture. She attributes this to her grandfather. When they moved to San Diego, they brought the culture with them in practice but also in shelves of Hawaiian music. Mālama reminisces that as a child, when she was sick or it was nap time, her grandfather would play Hawaiian music to calm her. She jokes that even today, when she is at a party and Hawaiian music is playing, her Pavlov reflexes kick in and she begins to yawn.

When guests from out of town would come to visit her grandfather, they knew to bring a big bag of poi and no one was allowed to touch it. He would eat the poi over the course of three days. Mālama realizes that it was in her home that her culture lived, even though she grew up in San Diego. As a teenager who was focused on typical pubescent concerns, she admits that the Hawaiian culture was not something that she consciously connected to. However, as she got older, she wanted to learn as much as she could about her Native Hawaiian roots.

Her second artifact further demonstrates this interest to learn more about her culture. Mālama presents a picture of three women from her 'ohana: her mother, her

mother's cousin who Mālama refers to as her "aunty," and her aunty through marriage. All three ladies pose with their arms around each other in a lush and tropical backyard garden. They are dressed in Hawaiian floral prints and wearing flowers in their hair or lei around their necks. Smiling comfortably, it is clear to see the genuine affection these women have for one another. Mālama explains that her mother's cousin, who is a Hawaiian studies teacher who chants and practices hula, has had a significant impact on her own interest in learning more about her Native Hawaiian culture.

She came to stay with us for like a week or two, maybe it was my junior year, and just her and her daughter. They were at the house, and they were just sitting there talking, [and] speaking in Hawaiian. I'm like, "What are you guys doing? What is that?" They were slowly explaining the culture, how it is in Hawai'i. What I call it is a preview, what we had in San Diego. I feel like I had the proper upbringing, and there was Hawaiian stuff thrown in and around, but they had the full experience living. When they came to visit, I was sitting next to them at all times, trying to absorb everything I could, and I think that's really what made me want to come here [to Hawai'i].

From that picture, Mālama also states that her mother is one of the "artifacts" that she wishes to present. Mālama attributes growing up in her mother's school library and having access to the elementary school teachers greatly influenced her interest in teaching.

Growing up in her library, and having the access to all the different elementary school teachers, really, really influenced a lot of my reasoning to becoming a teacher, which was really hidden under the surface of life, because I didn't realize how connected I was, how comfortable I'm in in special education classrooms. That was one of the favorite classrooms I loved going to.

As Mālama reminisces about her childhood educational experiences, both at her mother's school and at her own elementary school, she starts to connect her exposure to special needs students with her comfort level and passion to work with this population. She recalls talking and playing with students who had Down syndrome, cystic fibrosis, and other disabilities. Growing up in an inclusion classroom and frequently visiting her mother's school made it normal for her to work with, play with, and learn with students with special needs. It was only when she became a working adult in Hawai'i did she begin to realize that working with special needs students could be her calling.

When I moved here, working at [my retail job], I found out that a lot of people aren't comfortable with special needs people. I was just completely fine with it. I was like, "Maybe that can be my skill, my special talent, because I am comfortable with them, I can communicate with them."

The third artifact that Mālama presents is a beautiful black and white photograph of her and her husband at their wedding. The couple is on a veranda, with foliage and the ocean in the background. They are engaged in a loving embrace and kiss, with his arms around her waist and her hands gently caressing his head. It is the perfect wedding picture, representing the hope and excitement of beginning a new life together. Mālama shares that her husband's experience in education impacted her on a professional and personal level, shaping her vision of what kind of teacher she wants to be. Diagnosed at a young age with severe dyslexia, Mālama's husband Nicolas credits his ability to graduate from high school to his special education teacher, Jason.

Mālama shares Nicolas' story and how he experienced many ineffective special education teachers, none of which helped him. Jason, was the first and only one who made a difference and he did so using a seemingly unorthodox method.

Jason taught him how to surf. That was his icebreaker. Taught him how to surf. He loved it. Jason slowly started integrating surf magazines. "Okay, you gotta read this." It became surf biographies, about different famous surfers, and then slowly, he started developing the confidence needed to read by himself. He [Nicolas] still has a hard time reading out loud with people he's not comfortable with, but Jason is the one that helped him graduate high school. He gave him the tools he needed to succeed, basically. They're still close. They still talk to each other all the time, but just knowing that he had somebody that was able to help him succeed, and help him realize his self-worth.

Mālama knows her husband to be outgoing, friendly, happy, loud, and the “life of the party.” Reflecting on the mo‘olelo of his childhood and how his dyslexia caused him to become withdrawn and isolated elicits an emotional response where she exclaims, “To picture him shelled up like that because of a disability, it just breaks my heart.” Mālama credits Jason for changing Nicolas’ life.

He was able to connect with Nicolas in a way that none of the other teachers could. He also took the time out of the classroom, so he took him surfing. He took Nicolas to dentist appointments. He took him to doctor appointments. He really just let Nicolas be himself, and he was able to grow from there.

With conviction, Mālama explains that her experiences have helped her determine what kind of teacher she wants to be. First, she says she wants to be qualified. Some of the special education teachers at her mother’s school were not qualified and therefore, there was a burnout and a high turnover rate. Recognizing that change is hard on any student, but especially those with disabilities, Mālama wants to ensure she is confident

and trained to be an effective special education teacher. She also wants to be able to connect with students, the way Jason did with Nicolas.

I want to be able to connect with students. I want to be able to break down walls. All the other teachers at my mom's elementary school, I want to be that crazy teacher that dresses up... Yeah, just open up the students' eyes, so they can see how well they can succeed if they just were able to connect to what they're learning.

Lastly, she wants to incorporate Hawaiian culture into the classroom, regardless of where she would be teaching.

I do want to incorporate Hawaiian culture into the classroom. I think that's one of my really strong goals, even if it's something as small as responsibility. I think a big thing in Hawaiian culture is responsibility, and it's such a broad term, and it could be covered so easily in a classroom. Personal responsibility, social responsibility, environment responsibility. I think those are all very important things, especially here in the islands, that we can teach in the classroom, and it'd be so simple. It would be something the children or the students would be able to connect with super easy, and it just integrates the culture into it.

When asked to provide one word to describe her relationship, feeling, and connection with education, Mālama first responds with the word responsibility or kuleana, but then decides that mālama is a more appropriate word. Mālama is a natural born nurturer. Responsibility, respect, and relationships are the essence of who she is as a student, a Hawaiian, and a teacher.

My Reflection on Mālama

Mālama came to my home. I had breakfast waiting including chocolate chip scones, Portuguese sausage, and fruit and yogurt; it is the perfect mix of healthy and

unhealthy breakfast items. We immediately started to serve and then sit down to eat. We talked about school, future goals and plans, and then my research and the experiences that I had with it. We shared about our families, her future job prospects, and her change in universities. The conversation was easy. It was like having breakfast with a friend.

After we ate our fill, we put away our dishes and then sat back down at the dining table. Because we had just been *talking story* it was easy for me to say that we would be recording this because I have short term memory and we joked about that. We then started talking and it was so nice to learn about her family. There is such a tight bond with family and it was amazing how location didn't matter in terms of how connected she was with her Hawaiian culture. All it took was one person, her Poppa, to make sure they stayed true to their culture.

After the interview ended she asked if she could be taped again. She had one more story to share. It was important to her that she do so. Here is her story in her own words.

Okay, really crazy story. When I first moved here [to Hawai'i] I was staying with my uncle. My mom was still here. She stayed with me a whole week before she went back to San Diego. He [my uncle] took me over to one of the beaches in Kaneohe on the Marine base. It was the first beach [I had been to] after I landed [in Hawai'i]. We went and as we're swimming in the water I feel something rubbing up against my leg and I kind of freak out because I'm like, "What is that?!?" I'm just standing in the water and I feel something rubbing and it goes from my leg to my hip to my stomach because I'm in chest high water. The next thing you know, there's a baby hammerhead shark just in front of me and I go like this, I'm holding it, and I go, "Mom look, it's a baby!" She started freaking out, "Put that down!" I'm like that's so weird because I feel like it was saying hello to me....Of course right after it happened she's like, "When we get home you have to call Papa [grandfather]." I tell him what happened and

that's kind of when the flood gate opened....because he didn't like talking about the past and that's when he opened up his flood gate about his Hawaiian culture, his Hawaiian experience. His family's 'aumakua is a hammerhead shark. When I told him that I picked up a baby hammerhead shark he kind of ... I thought the phone went dead. There was silence and then after that he's like, "Baby, you need to immerse yourself. You really need to learn everything you can [about your Hawaiian culture]." From that point on I was like, "Okay you need to give thanks when you go camping. You need to make a plate [as an offering]." I feel like my way of giving back, my personal way of giving back to my blood line is to always give thanks.

Like so many of my haumāna, Mālama is a gifted storyteller and I was honored that she felt comfortable enough to share a piece of who she was in my home. In fact, those haumāna who chose to share their mo'olelo at my residence were warned that my house would not be sparkling clean, but tidy enough. I was welcoming them into my home, my personal space, and with that action, also sharing a part of me. It made me feel like, "Wow, is this too much? Am I being too familiar?" But this is what I do. Opening my space to others is an extension of who I am and what I do with many. Why wouldn't I do this with the haumāna I care so much about as well? The fact that a couple of my haumāna took me up on it made me feel like maybe it was good to offer that option. It solidified in me that the path I was taking as kanaka noi'i was a pono³⁶ one.

I am Maika'i

...not all knowledge comes from one teacher, not all knowledge comes from one belief, not all knowledge comes from one mindset. For me, education really made me see a lot of things differently. It made me look at

³⁶ Righteous, goodness, virtuous, uprightness ("Nā Puke Wehewehe 'Ōlelo Hawai'i," n.d.)

myself like 'Wow. Are you really that one dimensional?' It just continues to, it just opens up for me. It can open up the mind if you really allow it to. For me, education is maika'i. (Maika'i)

Maika'i is of Native Hawaiian and Japanese descent, although his aunties have suggested that he could also be Tongan or Chinese. He considers himself to be a "Wai'anae boy," even though he was born at Kaiser Hospital in Honolulu, Hawai'i and then lived in his grandmother's house in Papakōlea for the first six years of his life. However, Maika'i spent the majority of his life living in Wai'anae Valley on Hawaiian homestead property and now lives in Mā'ili, a neighborhood on the Wai'anae coast. When asked to describe his 'ohana, Maika'i names those relatives that are still living, including his mother, two younger sisters, a younger brother, grandmother, uncles, nieces, nephews, and his own children ages 21, 18, and 10. Only one of his sisters lives in Wai'anae whereas his youngest sister lives in Hilo, Hawai'i and his brother lives in Seattle, Washington.

Maika'i's educational experiences have included both private and public school systems. He first attended Ma'ema'e Elementary School in Honolulu for one year and then when his family moved to the Leeward coast on the island of O'ahu, he attended Wai'anae Elementary School. For intermediate school, he attended the affluent private school Mid-Pacific Institute for one year and then transferred to St. Louis School, an all-boys Roman Catholic school for six months. He returned to Wai'anae Intermediate in the latter part of his 8th grade year and continued on to Wai'anae High School, until his senior year when he dropped out before graduating. When asked why he decided to drop out so close to graduating, Maika'i candidly shares his struggle with drugs.

Started doing drugs and just felt I never had future in school. For me, football was possibly my ticket. Stay in school, play football, maybe I can go college and do something with my life, do that role. But I started doing drugs, started losing interest in school and just felt I wasn't going to make money in school. The way I was going to make money was either with drugs or go work, so I just left school.

The lure of drugs and what it offered Maika‘i financially is linked to the first artifact that he presents: a dollar bill. This artifact represents money, something which he confesses has always played a big part in his life. One of Maika‘i’s first school memories is directly linked to money and happened on the Wai‘anae Elementary school playground when he was only six years old. Due to the poverty level of most of the school children and their families, the vast majority of students qualified for financial assistance in the form of free school lunches. Since Maika‘i’s father worked in construction and his mother was a teacher, Maika‘i’s family did not qualify for free lunch tokens and instead, he would bring the required quarter every day to pay for his lunch. He was chastised, beaten up, and his lunch money was stolen. This caused him to tell his mom how he hated school and wished he could also get free lunch tokens, but he never told his parents how he was bullied because of money. Maika‘i shares that this school memory was not so much about the importance of money, but it was his introduction to its existence.

By the time Maika‘i was a teenager, the value of money became more apparent. At the age of 16, he was introduced to using and selling drugs.

I guess the value of money really took over me at the time. It was a bad era, especially with drugs. For me, anyway, where I grew up, everybody wanted to be “the man,” the guy with a nice car...I was smart, I was

making money without going work and I had the freedom of staying home doing what I like.

Although Maika‘i dropped out of high school, he earned his General Education Diploma (GED) while working intermittently in the construction industry. However, drug dealing became his primary source of income and earning money was his main goal, regardless of what needed to be done to get it. When Maika‘i was 22 years old, the birth of his first child prompted him to focus on gaining steady employment in the construction industry. Slowly he began to change his perspective about selling drugs.

It's [drug dealing] a way but it's not a way if you're trying to raise a family. You're trying to teach your children what is right and wrong and in the meantime, you're still doing this way of life where you're making money but it's not only illegal but it's also, the way I see it now, I've never seen it at that time was, I'm only adding to the problem of everything especially towards our own Hawaiian people. I'm not a person that's trying to eliminate this problem. I'm just another person that's adding to this problem and making money off of this problem.

Maika‘i remained in the construction industry for 20 years, married, and had two more children. Throughout this time, he admitted to struggling with gambling, drinking, and affording a home. These stressors eventually took a toll on his family and at one point, his wife took their children and left him. Once again, he turned to drugs to ease his pain. He also found solace in a new hobby, dirt bike riding. With this sport, Maika‘i was able to take his mind off of his personal hardship. However, this ended tragically when he crashed and broke both ankles in two separate dirt biking accidents. After the second accident, Maika‘i had an epiphany.

Then, when I broke my second ankle, my left leg, I think after that surgery, that's when I was at home and then, that's when I guess, my wife, we were talking again. Then, for me, I was like, "Yeah. I got to do things over."

And he did. With his wife as the breadwinner for the family, Maika‘i played a more active role in raising his youngest daughter and engaging in her educational experience at the Hawaiian Immersion school, Pūnana Leo o Wai‘anae. At this point in his mo‘olelo, Maika‘i presents his second artifact, his makau or fishhook, which he made out of cow bone.



Figure 4.5 Maika ‘i’s Artifacts

Maika‘i explains that the hook represents how he was “hooked” into a different lifestyle from what he had experienced from the time he was 16 years old. He explains that the “Hawaiian hook” pulled him away from his money-centric, materialistic value system and allowed him to look at life from a different perspective, eventually leading

him to pursue a college education. In essence, Maika‘i shares that his Hawaiian culture saved him from “just a lot of nonsense I was doing for a long time in my life.”

When I was born, we wasn't practicing how to live Hawaiian style I guess. It's almost like playing Hawaiian music, dancing hula, going to work, work in construction, and drinking beer and getting into fights. It was almost like I kind of had that idea of that's what it meant to be Hawaiian.

Slowly, he began to question all that he had believed in for the past twenty years.

All these beliefs I had of how things should be and what I should do. I was like, “Nothing is working. Nothing is working.”

Through his daughter’s education, Maika‘i began to learn more about Hawaiian values, beliefs, practices, the value of the family system, and most importantly, how ancient Hawaiians accomplished so much without money.

They [Maika‘i’s daughters] was learning the [Hawaiian] language and they was learning the [Hawaiian cultural] stories but I felt they and me, we weren't living that life. We was just learning it but was living an American life. We didn't practice anything outside of just learning it. Since I learned it, I wanted to try and live it, put it into my life.

The school provided a welcoming atmosphere not only to the students, but also to the makua (i.e. parents). Encouraged to stay and learn alongside his daughter, Maika‘i had a change of heart in what it meant to be Hawaiian.

We work under the land, we belong to the land, we are connected to the land. As a human, your responsibility is to the land. You take care of the land...whereas today's human is more [like] "I got to make as much money as I can. I got to buy the biggest house or even buy the land and buy this.” That's my opinion. It seems like [I have to] buy this, acquire this and then, that makes me a prosperous human. Whereas Hawaiians’ beliefs was as

long you return the land or leave the land the same way it was [before you came]you did your job. You continued the land for the next human and that was their kuleana as one human too, to pass it on to the next humans.

The Pūnana Leo school environment offered Maika‘i an extended support network that included the students’ parents, some of whom graduated from Leeward Community College at the Wai‘anae campus. These parents encouraged him to go back to school, introduced him to the counselors, and told him to sign up for a free summer course. Maika‘i felt a responsibility to do well in school because the makua had helped him so much in getting started in his college career. After taking just one class, he realized that college was something that he could do well. Maika‘i worked diligently and earned his Associate in Arts in Teaching degree and then transferred to the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa to earn his Bachelor of Arts degree in Hawaiian Studies and Hawaiian Language. Much of this success he credits back to his culture.

Yeah. You could say the culture saved me not just in my mind, in my beliefs but it saved me into this. I can provide and learn and still, I guess, start one new journey. Which brings me up to my third item I guess. This is aho.

Maika‘i’s third artifact, his aho or cordage which he had woven from the ‘ili or bark of the hao tree, represents his perspective on his future in education. He explains the symbolism and strength of the woven aho as it relates to what he is striving for in his life.

If you get one strand, it's easy to break but if you braid in a bunch of strands, it becomes stronger. It's braiding that's kind of trying to braid in all these cultural knowledge, academia knowledge, life knowledge and even everybody's knowledge. Because school for me, what I learned is, not only I learned it from the book, I learned it from myself but I also learn from other people. Just from watching them or even listening to them....So

this is my future. All the knowledge, all the barks, put them all together; weave them into one aho such as this. One thing with the aho, you can keep adding to them. It's almost like it's never ending like the ancient Hawaiians.

Maika‘i’s attitude towards education and learning has morphed from one of disinterest to authentic passion that has fueled his own desire to become a teacher. He expresses that his goal is still to become a teacher but given his past legal issues, he is unsure whether he can contribute his talents in a typical public school K–12 school setting. He is instead exploring other settings, possibly private or non-profit organizations in which he can specifically educate others about Hawaii and “all things Hawaiian.” Regardless of these potential obstacles, Maika‘i’s aho is a reminder of where Maika‘i has come from and gives him hope for the future.

This [aho] also represents there's no end to this weaving of knowledge or this weaving of 'ili. It also serves as a connection. Kind of gives you an idea of what you started and how far and how long your aho becomes. It kind of shows how long, in my opinion, how long your life. Right now, it's short. Because even with the aho, almost anything in life takes time and takes dedication and sometimes, sacrifice. As my new saying too, “If there's a will, there's a way!”

When asked to describe his connection to education, Maika‘i chooses the word maika‘i, which means goodness or righteousness. To illustrate his point, he shares the ‘Ōlelo No‘eau *‘A‘ohe pau ka ‘ike i ka hālau ho‘okahi* which translates to *All knowledge is not learned in just one school*. With humility and grace, Maika‘i opens his heart and learns from everything and everyone around him. Through the Hawaiian culture, Maika‘i

has found his voice and is at peace with who he is as a Native Hawaiian, a student, and a future teacher.

My Reflection on Maika'i

Of all of my interview participants, Maika'i was the student I knew least. Residing on the Wai'anae coast and taking most of his coursework online, Maika'i successfully navigated through college and our program with little support. I do remember teaching him in my ED 295 (Field Experiences in Education) capstone course and my impression was that he was a quiet, reflective, and a soulful contributor to class discussions. However, what I remember most was that he was the first student who ever called me kumu. I remember feeling honored and a little self-conscious; not fully believing that I had earned that revered title since I had only met him once or twice in person throughout his time at Leeward CC. But I do recall that this one action he did, referring to me as his kumu, touched and inspired me to be a better teacher for him and all of my haumāna. I do remember that.

For our interview, Maika'i chose to meet in my office for lunch. I bought us food and we ate together. Because we did not have the same history, connection, or rapport of some of my other interview participants, the conversation started off as a means to get reacquainted with one another. It had been several years since he had been in my course and so our dialogue started off being very polite and to be honest, a little superficial although not inauthentic. As we continued to eat and talk, we started to share more about our lives. I shared with him my goals and hopes while attending school and he shared what he was learning at the university. I was amazed at how he was striving for fluency in 'ōlelo Hawai'i. He shared that it was a hard language and he was struggling, but he

was going to keep up with it. I admired his resiliency and listened intently as we discussed Hawaiian history, politics, cultural values, sovereignty, and implications of each on the future of our own keiki. It was a passion we both shared and I found myself hanging on his every word because I so appreciated his viewpoints, which were refreshingly raw, honest, and uncensored. Once we finished lunch, we began our interview.

Again, because we allowed time to *talk story*, transitioning to the interview seemed like a natural progression and words seemed to flow easily for both of us. I think what struck me most was Maika'i's honesty. Here I was, someone who had never really gotten the chance to work with him and build a solid rapport with while he attended our program, and yet, he was pouring out his life story to me as if we were old friends. It was an honor to bear witness to his storytelling. After the interview, he called his wife for a ride home, but he would have to wait a while for her to get to him. Given all we had shared in the past several hours, it seemed natural to offer him a ride home to Wai'anae. We continued our conversation on the hour-long drive to his home. Again, we entered the experience as strangers or at best acquaintances, and left as friends.

I am Kamaha'o

Sometimes I just amaze myself and I don't claim to know everything, but I find that experiences from my dad, from watching my two brothers, seeing what my sister went through, seeing how my mom had done stuff, I just draw upon all those experiences and it just works out. All of the hardships and the trials and tribulations that they went through...what they had done in their lives and their struggles and their successes. I just draw upon all of their experiences and I share it with the kids [that I teach]. (Kamaha'o)

Kamaha‘o grew up in Pāhala, located on the southeast side of the island of Hawai‘i in the Ka‘ū district. He knows with certainty that he is Hawaiian and Portuguese, but his birth certificate also states that he is Chinese. There is some question to the validity of this claim and he explained that on his mother’s side of the family, there are 15 siblings and each had a different ethnicity on their birth certificate. For instance, his aunt’s certificate listed Hawaiian and French and another aunt’s certificate stated Hawaiian and German, while all of the uncles’ certificates just list Hawaiian as the sole ethnicity. Kamaha‘o explained this puzzling practice.

It wasn’t until 2003 when I found out that it was common practice that, people back in the day, the Hawaiians, always felt that you could never make it in life if you’re just Hawaiian.

This practice of adding on European ethnicities to their birth certificates made it nearly impossible for Kamaha‘o to truly know where he came from.

We were doing this genealogy thing and then when we looked at it, I said, “I don’t know where that [ethnicity] came from!”

Raised in a modest, single-income household, Kamaha‘o takes pride sharing that his father was a police officer and his mother was a homemaker. From early in their marriage, Kamaha‘o’s parents had an understanding that someone needed to stay home to help raise Kamaha‘o and his three siblings, which included a sister and two older brothers who are 10, 8, and 5 years his senior. Kamaha‘o credits much of what he learned to the efforts of his mother.

My mom stayed home and she was the one that taught all of us how to play sports. I still credit her for teaching me how to play football and basketball, she taught me how to dribble between my legs, and how to

throw a tight spiral and how to kick and punt a football, everything. Taught me how to be an artist, how to draw and then it was music, so that was the binding thing for all of us. We had a family musical group then and they're still around and when we do try to get together people ask us to play music and so we going play.

He reveled in his mother's spirit and passion to learn music without the help of a teacher or mentor.

She was very musical, she loved music. She was self-taught. She had brothers that were very well-versed in music and as a child [when] she was growing up, she would sneak in and observe them and watch them. When they would leave they would un-tune all of the guitars and she would go back and re-tune them and just practice and play, and just taught herself how to play music. Then when they became adults, and we would have family parties, she simply would just show up and start playing and everybody was wondering like, "Where did you learn how to do it?" She was always self-taught, she was a self-taught artist.

As a result of her influence, Kamaha'o learned to play the bass from his mother and then later continued his musical studies in high school. To this day, Kamaha'o still plays from time to time although he admits he plays by ear, rather than by reading music. In essence, she was one of his first teachers.

His formal school experiences began at Pāhala Elementary and then he attended the 380-student Ka'ū High School, graduating with approximately 60 classmates. After graduation, Kamaha'o's father told him that he could no longer live at home and asked Kamaha'o what he planned to do. Kamaha'o's high school counselor, who was also his former English teacher, told him that he wasn't "college material" and that he should consider joining the military instead. Since both of Kamaha'o's brothers were in the Navy, joining the military seemed like a viable option. In March of Kamaha'o's senior

year, an Air Force recruiter came to talk to Kamaha‘o and invited him to O‘ahu to do the required examinations. Kamaha‘o had passed all requirements and was ready to sign the contract when the recruiter realized that Kamaha‘o had a previous football injury and subsequent surgery that disqualified his admission. This devastating news left Kamaha‘o unsure of his future.

My counselor told me I'm not college material, this guy is telling me I can't join the military. The only thing they had back in Ka'u was a sugar mill which wasn't doing that well, and there was macadamia nuts they were growing there and that's like...well, I just knew that I couldn't stay there. When I graduated I had no idea what I was doing and I thought, "You know what? I'll just go and apply at UH Hilo."

It was the day after Kamaha‘o’s high school graduation that he received another wake-up call. His father made it clear that since he was now a “man” at 18 years old, he needed to move out of the house. Kamaha‘o had until the end of summer to figure out what he was going to do and where he was going to live. In the meantime, he worked in the sugar cane fields where some of his friends were talking about how they had received their acceptance packets to the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo. This prompted Kamaha‘o to look at applying to college as well. Unfortunately, the application deadline was months earlier and Kamaha‘o was told that he would have to wait until the following semester to be admitted. This was unacceptable as Kamaha‘o needed to find other housing arrangements by the end of summer. His father then saw a television commercial from Hawai‘i Pacific College who was advertising open enrollment for the fall semester. Once again, Kamaha‘o flew to O‘ahu, but this time it was to enroll in

college not because this was part of his plan, but because he had felt like he was running out of options.

At that time I had no idea what in the world I was doing, I was just doing it because everybody else was doing it. I was just worried that, “What would people think of me? That here I am, I'm the guy that played football and everybody looks up to me.” When we were graduating I was the guy that had no idea people were going to college, guys were going off into the military, people had jobs lined up for them. I just seemed to be the only guy that had no idea what to do and so I was scrambling just trying to find something. I just felt like I couldn't stay there and if I stayed it was like I was a failure. I felt we were coming up here to Honolulu, going to school it might be a change and something different.

Unfortunately, the exorbitant tuition costs of this private university was beyond what Kamaha‘o and his parents could afford, but they took out a loan with the understanding that Kamaha‘o would have to repay it. What Kamaha‘o did not realize is that after taking placement exams, he was advised to sign up for 99-level developmental college courses (i.e., courses below the 100 level) to get him to college-ready level coursework. After a year, when he tried to transfer his credits to the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo, he was told that nothing transferred.

I was like, “Oh my gosh, I just spent thousands of dollars on 99-level courses which I could have probably taken, later on I found out, at a community college and it could have helped me.” That just made the whole process just frustrating for me.

Kamaha‘o did not realize that the tuition at the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo would be much more affordable than a private university. Thinking that it would be a comparable cost to Hawai‘i Pacific College, he found a summer job at a t-shirt company

and worked as much as he could to save up money for tuition. He was pleasantly surprised when he learned the actual tuition costs of his new university.

While I was working there [in Hilo] I saved up as much money as I could and I think I saved up just under \$2,000. I was like, “Okay, at least I can make some payments but I’m going to have to take another loan.” When I went to go and apply for my classes [at UH Hilo] the lady told me it was \$248 for 12 credits. I was like, “Are you serious?” Then she’s like, “Yeah, is there anything wrong?” “No there’s nothing wrong” I called my dad folks, “You’re not going to believe this but I got it, and I can pay for this stuff.” They’re like, “Okay, thank God, just do something then.”

Kamaha‘o stayed at UH Hilo for a year until his high school football coach encouraged him to play football for the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. He tried out but when he was not accepted on the team, he chose not to pursue it further. This also affected his view of college.

I just took it as like, “Oh my God I’m never going to make it,” but I could have still tried [for the football team] but I just realized I don’t know if I can put in that kind of work to do it. I ended up not going and just sticking with college.

After a year at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, Kamaha‘o was introduced to the field of graphic design. He left school to pursue work in that field and did not return to college until decades later. In reflecting on his educational journey, Kamaha‘o comes to a self-realization.

I was always under the assumption that I need to know things before, rather than just simply admit that I don’t know something and ask “Can you help me?” I was always afraid of people telling me, “What? You don’t know? You don’t know how to do this?” Just that embarrassment. Rather

than go through that, I was always trying to figure out things on my own and I would always fall behind and I could never get ahead, and I was always missing out on stuff.

This hesitation to ask for help is reflected in the first educational experience and artifact that Kamaha‘o shared which is a book titled *The Call of the Wild* (London, 1903). To me, Kamaha‘o is a master storyteller and therefore, I believe that this mo‘olelo is best told in his own words.

When I was entering the 8th grade, the very first day walking into class somebody told me that my best friend, Saul, had flunked. That freaked me out because you always hear that, if you don't study, you're going to be held back, they're going to hold you back.

You hear about it, but you never see it, and that was the first time I ever saw someone get held back and that freaked me out. I walked out of the class, walked down the hall, looked into the other room and there he was. He was sitting with all the 7th graders. I was shocked. I couldn't believe it. I remember just standing in the hallways thinking like, "Oh my God, why him? It should be the both of us because we stayed together, we did things together, and we didn't study and stuff. We'd always be goofing around and doing clown kind of stuff and why did it catch up to him and not me?" Then I thought that I am not going to say anything because they might catch me too. "Oh, I forgot about you, you're back to 7th grade too."

I tried to lay low and not say nothing...then it was a few weeks into school and every Wednesday we'd, all of our friends, we'd go to the gym on Wednesdays. Wednesday was like a short day so we could go out to the gym and play basketball. As I was walking up towards the school, he [Saul] was walking home. I was like, "Saul, where are you going?" He's like, "I got to go study." I started to laugh and I was like "Study? When have you ever studied?" Then he said, "Well, when you fail." Then I felt

embarrassed like “Oh sorry, I didn’t mean it that way.” Then he said, “No, no, I just got to go home, I got to study.” And so he left.

When I saw him make that commitment....I said [to myself that] I knew I was smarter than this guy, I cannot let him beat me. Here I am, I’m not doing anything. I just started the year, I’m not doing any of the work, I’m not doing anything and here he is making an effort to study.

*That motivated me to try to study and one of the first things that I was doing was reading the book, *The Call of the Wild*. Up to this point in my life I never read. We had books and stuff we had to do, I’d never do nothing. I can remember 4th and 5th grades we had books we had to read. I never did it and I don’t know how in the world I got through those classes but never read it. I looked at this point and I was like, “Maybe I should try and read and see what’s this all about.”*

When I started reading I was completely blown away. It was like a video playing in my head. It took me 3 or 4 days to read it, the book, but I was just blown away. Then I was like, “No wonder people love to read, this is amazing, this is incredible.” Every morning I would walk to school and when you’re approaching you’re coming into the campus, on the right side would be the library.

I remember looking at the library with a renewed view of it like, “Holy smokes, the thing is loaded with books. Oh my God, I cannot wait to go and just check it out. Wow this is so awesome!” Then in the class, the lady that was teaching it, my 8th grade English teacher was also the art teacher.

Kamaha‘o explains how this teacher taught 8th grade English as well as an art course for juniors and seniors. She had a reputation for being strict but inspiring.

Kamaha‘o always had a love for art and he would frequently walk by the art class to see what the upperclassmen were working on. One of his brother’s classmates who was taking the art class told Kamaha‘o to be sure to take art from this particular teacher

because she would show Kamaha‘o how to become an artist. Another student, who would paint beautiful flower pictures, gave Kamaha‘o one of her pieces because he would always admire her paintings and ask questions about her floral artwork.

For years, it was Kamaha‘o’s intention to take this art class once he was old enough, but for now, she was his 8th grade English teacher. She told Kamaha‘o and his classmates that they would be placed into groups of three and given an oral examination on the assigned book, *The Call of the Wild* (London, 1903). Kamaha‘o was not only ready for the exam, he was eager to participate and show his teacher that he was no longer going to be the student who made jokes in class and did not do his work. He wanted to show her that he had changed; he had actually read and enjoyed the book.

I’m like, “Pick me, I’m ready.” She’s like, “No Kamaha‘o, in due time I’ll call you.” She finally did and I went with these two other girls and the girls were a little apprehensive of going. I said, “I’ll go first, I’ll walk in.” So I walk in and I’m a little nervous. I’m standing next to her by her desk and so she starts asking me questions about the book. I’m like, “Wow, I actually know the answers!” I’m a little bit nervous but I started to tell her about the book. Then there was one part where she tried to switch the characters and I caught her and said, “Hmmm, that’s not the guy, this is the guy that did it.” She was like, “Oh, pretty good,” and so she is writing notes.

Then as she is writing it down, she finally turns to me and she tells me, “Kamaha‘o, next time what you should try to do is you should try to actually read the book versus asking your friends about it.” I said, “I read the book.” And she’s like, “You didn’t read the book.” I said, “No, but I did.” She said, “I don’t know how you did it Kamaha‘o but you didn’t read the book.” She gave me a D. From there, I hated her. I never took (pause), I never took art from her (pause), and I never cared for her.

I actually hated her for about 15 years and in high school, I never took art and I never read again because of that.

At this point in the story, Kamaha‘o’s demeanor changes. He is thoughtful, reflective, but most of all, there is an undertone of a broken heart and wounded spirit. It has been more than three decades since this incident happened and it still makes him weep. Over the years, he has reconciled his feelings, taken responsibility for the incident, and shared the lesson learned with his own students.

I couldn’t blame her, it wasn’t her fault. I tell the kids that it’s human nature that if people lie to you all the time and suddenly they come up and tell the truth, it is hard to believe. They cannot trust you. I tell the kids, my character and integrity at that time was bad and she could only go on the past and she couldn’t figure out how I was doing it. I got to be cheating. I never read before even in her class, so why now?

Given this experience, Kamaha‘o understands the power of words from teachers and counselors and its potential impact on students. In his own classroom, he shares his mo‘olelo with his own students in order to guide, support, and inspire them on their own pathways. Another story he shares with his students is about who inspired him. He brings out his second artifact which is his Ka‘ū High School yearbook.

This mo‘olelo is centered around Kamaha‘o’s long-time friend, Ethan, who actually designed and drew the cover of the school yearbook. They knew each other since they were four years old and he was Kamaha‘o’s neighbor and classmate. When they were in the 6th grade, Ethan’s mom was developing early onset Alzheimer’s disease at the age of 32. The disease progressed quickly and she was in a care home within a couple of years. By the time she was 38 years old, the disease consumed her and she

could no longer move. Kamaha‘o remembers that this was not a topic that he and Ethan ever talked about; it was their unspoken rule.

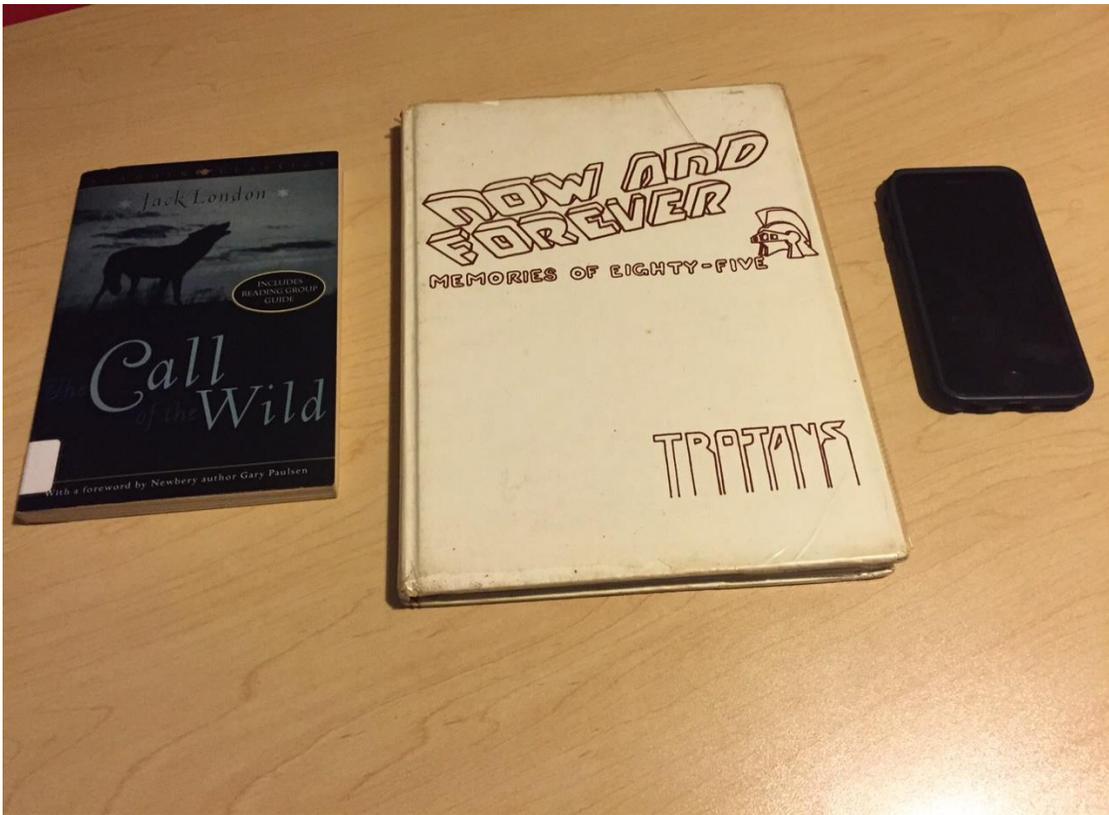


Figure 4.6 Kamaha‘o’s Artifacts

One evening, when they were juniors in high school, Ethan called Kamaha‘o and asked if he could come over. Kamaha‘o said of course, thinking that they would talk about girls or school.

Then he just told me, “Me and my brother and my sister we went and we took the test.” I said, “What test?” He said, “We took the test to see if we had the same gene as my mom and we all test positive.” I said, “What does that mean?” He said, “The doctor said that there is a huge chance that all of us gonna get it, we’re going to be like my mom. There may be a chance that maybe two of us might get it, there is a chance that maybe only one of us can get it, but there’s absolutely no way none of us not going to get it. Somebody’s going to get this disease.”

The two teenaged boys cried together for about an hour. Out of frustration and anger, Kamaha‘o came up with a plan.

“You know what? We’re going into our senior year we got to make this one awesome time. We got to go all out and this is one chance we’re going to get at this.” And he [Ethan] said, “Yeah, yeah we’re going to do something.” I said, “We got to do whatever we can.” And he said, “Okay!”

Kamaha‘o explains that for the past couple of years, he had been trying to get his friend to play on the football team. However, Ethan always refused as he was focused on his academics and as a scrawny kid, never played organized sports in his life. But this time when Kamaha‘o asked him to play football in his senior year, Ethan agreed. The only thing holding him back was that he did not have the proper shoes.

I [Kamaha‘o] said, “Wait a minute, if I find shoes for you, you going play?” He’s like, “Yeah, I would try.” So I said, “Jump in the car man and let’s go!” Went up to my friend’s house who had a younger brother. I told the younger brother, “Take off your shoes, I like see what it is.” He took them off and I said “Ethan, put them on.” He said, “It fits,” and I said, “You’re on the football team, let’s go!” and we went down to his first practice. He had absolutely no idea how to play, his first thing, he’s trying to back up, trip over, fall down, walking sideways, fall down. He’s running around and he doesn’t know what’s going on, but he’s trying.

Kamaha‘o shares that years later, well into his adulthood, he saw their football coach at a party who shared that he remembered Ethan because during their spring ball season, their team was very young and inexperienced. In an attempt at an inspirational

speech, the coach asked that each player fight hard and give 110%. After the speech, Ethan asked if he could speak to the coach.

“Coach, can I speak with you? I don’t think I can give you 110%, I think I can give you 78%.” He [the coach] was like, “78%?!?”

Ethan explained that he has to go to school and that he can try to run in the morning, but that giving 100% just to the football team would be nearly impossible if he also wanted to keep up with his grades. The coach was incredulous.

“What the hell are you talking about?!? Come here...you’re the most honest guy I’ve ever known. Look at all those clowns out there, you just get out there and do your best!”

And he did. Heeding Kamaha‘o’s advice, Ethan continued to practice football during the spring and started lifting weights over the summer before the start of the regular season. He was taking a class at the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo the summer before his senior year to earn early college credit. Kamaha‘o remembers that Ethan came back from summer break in shape and with muscles. For their first two games, Ethan did not do as well as he would have hoped and each time he told Kamaha‘o that he believed he should quit. Kamaha‘o refused to let him quit, reminding him that this was the very first time in his life that he had ever played the game. Ethan agreed to stay on the team and in their third game, Ethan made the tackle of the season bringing down the competitor’s biggest running back.

The following Monday morning when Kamaha‘o and Ethan came to the school campus, someone saw them and yelled out Ethan’s name and started clapping. Within seconds, the whole campus erupted in applause for Ethan. Confused, he turned to Kamaha‘o and asked what this was all about.

I [Kamaha‘o] was like, “It’s you, man! You crossed the threshold. You was the valedictorian and you had no business, man, being on this side of the thing, but you crossed over and you’re playing football now. Nobody has ever done that. I can’t crossover and be a valedictorian, you’re messing with my side of the field!”

Kamaha‘o chuckles as he explains that this one incident changed Ethan’s entire life. Ethan started to go out more with friends, was elected to the homecoming court, participated in conferences and off-island trips as the student government representative, and even started a long-distance relationship with a girl from O‘ahu that he met at one of the conferences. He attended the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa and then transferred to Oregon State University where he graduated with a degree in graphic design. After college, he worked for major corporations like Dark Horse Comics, Nike, and Microsoft, doing storyboarding and design. Throughout his career, he worked with the actor Dennis Hopper, the professional basketball player Michael Jordan, and the acclaimed director Spike Lee.

However, even with all his success, Ethan could not escape the disease his mother had. In fact, by their late 30s, all three of the siblings showed signs of early onset Alzheimer’s. Ethan’s fighting spirit would not let him go down easily. As his disease progressed, Ethan would stick post-it notes around his apartment to remind him to do daily activities such as brushing his teeth and using the bathroom. He would draw maps to help him navigate to and from the curbside trash can so that he would not forget where his apartment unit was. Neighbors and friends helped as much as they could until the disease progressed so much, he had to return to the island of Hawai‘i to live with his father. Once back in the islands, Kamaha‘o made a special trip to visit his old friend.

I went to go and see him and I was surprised that he remembered me. He was just kind of, “Hey, Kamaha‘o” and I was like, “You remember me?” He was like, “Yea, I know you, I know my classmates, I know I graduated from Ka‘ū. I just can’t remember what I did yesterday.”

After a four-hour conversation, the childhood friends said their final goodbye.

I told him I had to go and then he told me, “Hey Kamaha‘o, I got to let you know, man, that I am sorry.” I said, “For what?” He said, “I’m not going to remember that you even stopped by.” I told him, “Okay, don’t worry. I will remember for the both of us.”

Ethan died at the age of 45 years old. Years later, Kamaha‘o ran into Ethan’s high school girlfriend from O‘ahu, who he believed had broken off the relationship with Ethan right before their senior prom. Kamaha‘o asked her why she discontinued the relationship. With surprise, she told him that she did not end the relationship; Ethan did. Kamaha‘o makes a revelation about his long-time friend, stating:

That’s when I knew, man, that guy from our senior year in high school had already made that choice. You are not going to have a girlfriend, you are not going to get married, and you are not going to have kids. If this disease comes and takes him, he is taking it with him and he is going to do this by himself. He is not going to pass it on. I was blown away. I could never have made [a decision] like that. I wasn’t ready for that kind of stuff and here he was making a lot of decisions. Every day now when I teach, I go to my classes every day and I open up my back door and I always tell him. “What’s up, Ethan?” I always talk to him, and I always feel like he is here with me.

Kamaha‘o revels in the determination and fortitude of his childhood friend and uses his memories to share lessons with his own students.

I tell the kids about the time that we have. I could never do all the things that he [Ethan] had done in his lifetime and it was a short time. He knew in his junior year already that he tested positive for this thing. If he had stayed home and did drugs and just drank and just hang out and did nothing and just wait for the inevitable, I would have totally understood. It would have made total sense. But he did otherwise. He was like, "I will do something." In his own way it was fucking incredible. He got to meet Dennis Hopper and Michael Jordan and Spike Lee and it's like I don't even think these guys even know themselves who they was meeting and what he had done and what he's accomplished and what he was going through. He was simply amazing.

Listening to Kamaha'o's story and feeling his devotion to Ethan throughout their school experiences, it is easy to understand why Kamaha'o incorporates his friend's essence into his own teachings. But just as Ethan did not see himself as a football player until Kamaha'o convinced him it was possible, Kamaha'o did not see himself as a teacher, until others convinced him of this calling.

In his third artifact, representing hope and his future in education, Kamaha'o presents a cell phone. Kamaha'o explains that his journey into teaching started with a phone call. The year was 2013 and Kamaha'o, now living on O'ahu, had just gone through a divorce. He moved back to Ka'u and his family home. Although supportive, his father reminded him that Ka'u was not where he belonged. He could visit as long as he needed, but his life's calling was elsewhere. One night, Kamaha'o was going to a friend's house for a party and he received the phone call that would change his life. It was his former graphic design employer calling to say that his former colleague, Bruce, was looking for Kamaha'o. After the party, Kamaha'o was sitting in his car in the dark and on the side of the road in Kea'au, Hawai'i. He called his friend Bruce, who on

numerous occasions had tried to convince Kamaha‘o to become a teacher. Kamaha‘o declined every time exclaiming that he is not teaching material. However, something was different this night. Once again, Bruce tracked Kamaha‘o down and asked him to teach. This time Kamaha‘o’s reply surprised Bruce.

I told him, “Dude, if you think I can teach then, you know what, I got nothing going on, I’m going to do it if you say I can do this.” He said, “Really, for real are you serious?” I said, “Yes.”

By August of that year, Kamaha‘o was a part-time teacher at a high school. Reflecting on what transpired after that fateful phone call on the side of the road, Kamaha‘o feels as if he has found his calling.

It’s unfolded to being almost like it was meant to be. There are so many things that I had questions of in the sense that I don’t have any biological kids, my wife and I couldn’t have kids, but then it’s almost now as if I am being blessed with an overabundance of kids. I can see every conceivable thing that I could possibly be as a parent or a mentor is coming about.

Kamaha‘o admitted that he draws upon his own experiences as well as those he had observed from family and friends in order to divulge wisdom that can be shared when teaching and supporting his students.

All of the hardships and the trials and tribulations that they [my family and friends] went through....what they had done in their lives and their struggles and their successes. I just draw upon all of their experiences and I share it with the kids...It’s these life experiences that I’ve just been blessed with, good or bad, that I can now share it with the kids.

Kamaha‘o also makes it a point to advise his students beyond the assigned curriculum in his courses. He uses his experiences as an 18 year old who struggled to be

situated in college or work after graduating from high school. He tells his students to consider going to a community college.

You can go on to University of Hawai‘i and get your 4-year degree, but you pay a lot of money for it, or you can at least get your first 2 years, save money, get the same if not better education at a community college and transfer there and then go to the university. When you get your [bachelor’s] degree, it’s not cut in half saying half of this is from a community college. It will say University of Hawai‘i on it. That’s the same paper.

Finally, Kamaha‘o emphasizes to his students the importance of giving back.

I tell the kids that you got to go out and learn, but then at some point in time, you got to turn around and you got to share what you learned...if you just only keep it to yourself and you’re only thinking of yourself and you’re only doing it, you’re only doing it on your own. But when you can go out and support and show somebody else how to do it, preserve it, it just reaffirms yourself and strengthens you.

When asked to reflect on his relationship with education as that young boy falsely accused of cheating on an English exam, as a youth who supported his friend through the formative teenage years, as a recent high school graduate struggling to make it in college, and now, as a secondary teacher in public high school, Kamaha‘o does not hesitate with his answer. “Probably ‘incredible;’ it just speaks volumes.” It does not surprise me that Kamaha‘o picks this word. To me, it is the perfect descriptor of how he has lived his life, his demeanor, his outlook, and his wisdom that he brings to the classroom as both a student and teacher. Kamaha‘o is the embodiment of incredible.

My Reflection on Kamaha‘o

My interview with Kamaha‘o was held after work hours. He had finished teaching at the high school and I had finished up my last student counseling session for the day. Everyone had left the office building. Due to the time we were meeting, I decided to get dinner for Kamaha‘o and I and we shared the meal before getting into our interview. We talked about work, my family, his family, our ethnicities, and our likes and dislikes. In explaining my research, he then mentioned a comedic commentary on youtube.com from John Oliver about the validity of scientific studies. We watched the whole 20 minute video together and laughed so hard that tears were streaming down our faces. We then decided that it was time to proceed with the interview as it was getting dark outside.

I do recall that in all of my interviews, there was always a moment or two when I choked up as my haumāna relived a touching moment, a pivotal, life changing experience, or a deep-rooted feeling from their past. As kanaka noi‘i, I did my best to stifle my own emotions during their mo‘olelo, not wanting my own reaction to distract or influence what they said next or how they said it. I took great care to honor the flow of their mo‘olelo. However, with Kamaha‘o this was not the case. Kamaha‘o possesses a wealth of knowledge that he willingly imparts to anyone who could benefit. He proceeded to share two very personal, very poignant recollections that impacted his life deeply. A gifted storyteller, Kamaha‘o leaves no details out. When recounting his stories about his 8th grade English experience and his high school friend, Ethan, there was no holding back the tears. The sentiments shared were so raw, as if they recently happened. It was one of the few times I openly cried with a student. Acknowledging that pain, hope,

and joy together solidified the bond of understanding, empathy, and mutual respect between us.

Reflecting on Mo‘olelo

Taking the time to listen to the mo‘olelo of my haumāna made me realize how I don’t know my students as much as I thought I did. I do not necessarily know what they endure, not only to complete a degree, but to survive life. With a caseload of 500 students, I can help them identify and reach their goals by providing resources, advice, and support tailored to their specific needs. However, there is so much more to learn and appreciate about my haumāna when I take the time to look at their mo‘olelo and uncover all the layers that shape their narratives. If I am lucky, doing so may reveal the subtlest of hints as to who these wondrous, complex human essences really are.

In this chapter, I shared the mo‘olelo of six haumāna and their educational experiences and aspirations within the teaching profession. With every student I learned something new about who they are and who I am because of my relationship with them. They truly are my kumu and I am in awe of the wisdom they have entrusted to share with me. The next chapter will provide findings from the three groups in this study: Hui O Nā Mana‘o Haumāna, Hui O Nā Mo‘olelo Haumāna, and Hui Ho‘oholomua.

CHAPTER 5. FINDINGS

Piko Waena

“Ma ka hana ka ‘ike.”

“In working one learns.”

Through immersion of self in the data, lessons are learned.

‘Ōlelo No‘eau, Number 2088 (Pukui, 1983, p. 227)

Although education has been linked to societal advantages, it has also been suggested to play a “significant role in the construction of an Indigenous identity that is rooted in racial inferiority;” where Indigenous students are expected to be “bicultural” and adapt to the dominant culture in order to succeed (Muzzin, 2015, p. 59). This study explores the phenomenon of the Native Hawaiian Teacher Education student who has chosen a career in an industry that has historically perpetuated White dominant norms and therefore, could be portrayed as antithetical to the healthy development of cultural identity. Through a strengths-based approach, it seeks to ascertain how their life history cultural and educational experiences have influenced their relationship with education. With these discoveries, the intent is to inform and enhance current support practices at Leeward Community College’s AAT program.

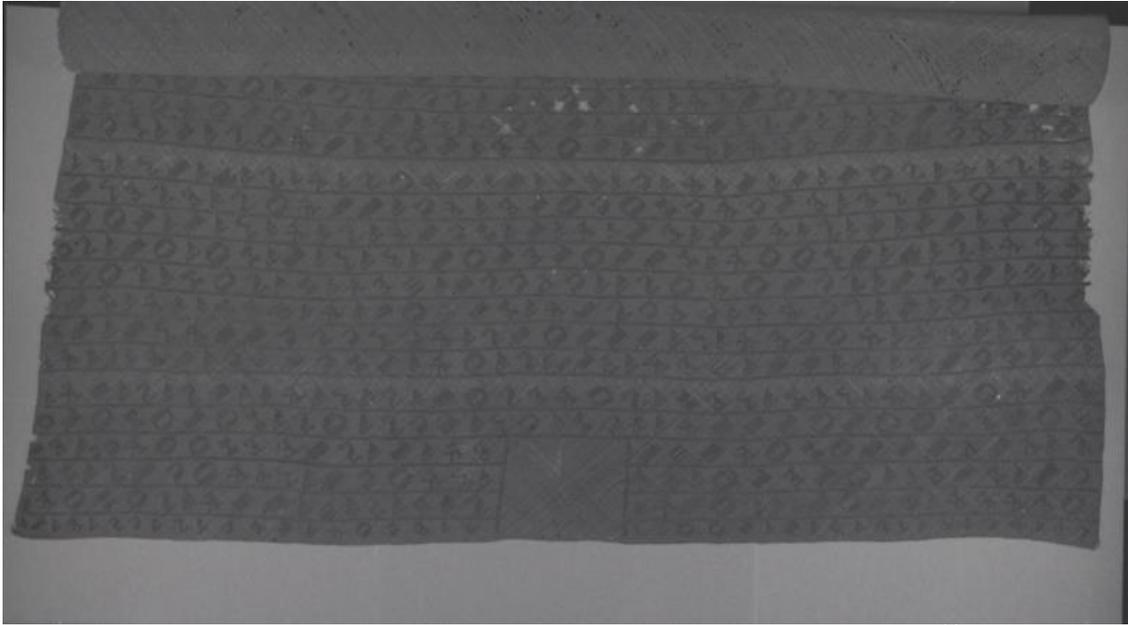
Moena Makaloa - A Petition for Change

The way in which I chose to present the findings for this study has been influenced by the mo‘olelo of Kalaiokamalino³⁷, an 80 year old Ni‘ihau native and a courageous master weaver of moena makaloa (i.e., a woven mat made from the makaloa sedge or *Cyperus laevigatus* plant) in the mid-nineteenth century. Since Captain Cook’s arrival in 1778, Native Hawaiians have protested, overtly and subtly, against Euro-

³⁷ Although newspaper, journal, and Bishop Museum website sources have listed the weaver’s name as Kalaiokamalino, another possible interpretation of the name could be Kala‘iokamalino (Rose, 1990).

American, puritanical mechanisms of change adversative to the prosperity, righteousness, and longevity of the lāhui (Rose, 1990). Kalaiokamalino embodied the strength and resiliency of the Native Hawaiian spirit in a time where Western influences presented an ongoing threat to the perpetuation and practice of Hawai‘i’s Indigenous language, cultural arts, and ontologies. In 1874, with the help of her husband, Kalaiokamalino endeavored in one of the more artistic, inspiring acts of resistance, the creation of a moena makaloa intended to be gifted to then monarch King William Charles Lunalilo but was instead received by his successor, King David Kalākaua upon Lunalilo’s untimely death (Rose, 1990). Known for her skill in this particularly tedious and exclusive material arts form, Kalaiokamalino took 11 months to create the unique and beautiful masterpiece. Her husband was believed to have helped her with the project until his death one month before its completion. Kalaiokamalino used the pāwehe³⁸ technique to intricately weave a message in ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i into the mat, expressing disapproval of changes that had taken place since the rule of Kamehameha I and petitioning for amendments to animal taxes and other Western-influenced and enforced laws (“A Valuable Gift,” 1874). According to Rose (1990), “Although intended for another occasion, the mat with its petition nonetheless proved to be a timely gift, for three days after receiving it King Kalākaua convened the legislature of 1874” (p. 94) which resulted in the establishment of Bishop Museum in “an attempt to preserve the kingdom’s vanishing material heritage” (p. 93).

³⁸ Generic name for colored, geometric motifs as used in the design of makaloa mats from Ni‘ihau (“Nā Puke Wehewehe ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i,” n.d.)



Photograph by Christine Takata, Bishop Museum Archives³⁹

Figure 5.1 Moena Makaloa Protest Mat of 1874

Kalaiokamalino's moena makaloa represents the interweaving of Native Hawaiian thought, opinion, and experience in order to produce a strong, clear message petitioning for change. In this way, the findings of this research serve a paralleled purpose. Through the process of interlacing the mana'o and mo'olelo of today's Native Hawaiian Teacher Education student, whose context resides in a generationally oppressive, discriminatory, and hypercritical educational landscape, a metaphorical moena of our students' voices can emerge. Like Kalaiokamalino, the moena of our students will provide commentary on the times and petition us, their educators, for change.

The emblematic makaloa sedge or findings in this chapter are organized by the three data collection methods employed in this study: survey results, interview results, and focus group results. The final section presents a summary of what is learned from the

³⁹ Copyright and reprinting permission granted by Bishop Museum Archives on April 26, 2017.

data with the intent to identify those elements that will be used to weave a metaphorical Moena O Nā Pua in chapter 6.

Research Questions

This study explores the following research questions.

What can we learn about supporting Native Hawaiian Teacher Education students by examining the educational life history experiences of Native Hawaiian students from Leeward Community College's Associate in Arts in Teaching (AAT) program?

Sub-Question #1: What specific Native Hawaiian beliefs or values have influenced their relationship with education?

Sub-Question #2: What can be learned from the educational life history stories of Native Hawaiian AAT students?

Sub-Question #3: What institutional supports do Native Hawaiian AAT students identify as being beneficial to their success in postsecondary environments?

Hui O Nā Mana‘o Haumāna (Survey Results)

There were 50 Native Hawaiian Teacher Education students who completed an electronic qualitative survey that focused on their connections to their Native Hawaiian culture in terms of language, practices, and values, as well as their views on education and their motivations for entering the teaching profession. The survey findings are presented in the categories of Connection to Hawaiian Culture and Connection to Education.

Connection to Hawaiian Culture

Of those who participated in the study, 70% (35 students) were from O`ahu, 12% (6 students) from Hawai‘i island, 8% (4 students) from the continental United States, 6%

(3 students) from Maui, and 4% (2 students) from Kaua‘i. A majority of 82% of the students resided in Hawai‘i for more than 20 years and with 36% of this group residing in Hawai‘i for more than three decades, there is an indication that even minimal exposure to the Hawaiian culture during this time is probable. The following figure provides a breakdown of how long each participant has resided in Hawai‘i.

How many years have you lived in Hawai‘i? (50 responses)

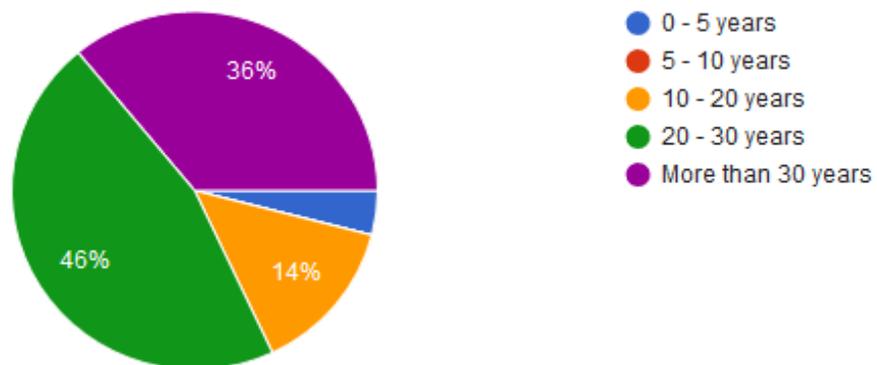


Figure 5.2 Survey Responses - Number of Years Residing in Hawai‘i

Defining a Native Hawaiian identity. Delving into the essence of their Native Hawaiian cultural orientation, questions regarding how the haumāna defined Native Hawaiian identity as well their perceptions of the importance of engagement in the Native Hawaiian language, practices, and values were presented. Cited by 18 participants, having Native Hawaiian blood or genealogy was the most common answer to the question, “What does it mean to have a ‘Native Hawaiian identity?’” Some of the more direct responses spoke about ancestry, bloodline, and genealogy.

To have a Native Hawaiian identity means to have Hawaiian ancestry in your family history.

Bloodline and culture.

To be Native Hawaiian by blood and acknowledge the culture.

Being a Native Hawaiian to me means that I am a descendent of the first settlers of Hawai'i. That Hawai'i is my home, even if I was ever to move to another state or country, Hawai'i would always be my home!

There was no mention of blood quantum and whether one needed a certain amount of Hawaiian blood to have a Native Hawaiian identity. This aligns with the concept of ancestral memory that Kaiwi (2006) learned from Aunty Pua Kanahele's 1995 article "Ke Au Lono i Kaho'olawe, Ho'i (The Era of Lono at Kaho'olawe, Returned)" (*Mānoa: A Pacific Journal of International Writing*, 7, 152–167). Kaiwi (2006) shares that "our Hawaiian identity stays in our DNA! It doesn't matter how much or how little Hawaiian blood our students have—it takes only one ancestor to connect students to the many who came before" (p.33).

In addition to bloodline, survey responses regarding Native Hawaiian identity included the context of who they were in relation to those around them.

It means to have a special connection to the past, present, and future people with the same Hawaiian heritage as me. It also means that I can connect both spiritually and culturally with my Hawaiian ancestors.

To me it means to have a connection with my ancestors through the land, mountains, and the sea. It also has a lot to do with respect, be respectful to everyone and everything.

What it means to have a Native Hawaiian identity is representing who I am as a Native Hawaiian and the people I represent like my family, friends, and ancestors.

It means LIFE that will go on forever through my keiki and mo'opuna.

Thirty-eight percent of the participants referenced the importance of knowing, cultivating, and perpetuating their cultural values and practices as a necessary component to the development of their Native Hawaiian identity.

In my opinion having a Native Hawaiian identity means knowing your culture and perpetuating it.

It means practicing the culture, whether that is hula, lawai 'a, mahi 'ai, lapa 'au, and most important 'ōlelo Hawai 'i. A native Hawaiian identity means thinking like a Hawaiian, where family and responsibility to this place we live is what we fight, live, and breathe for.

To be Native Hawaiian means carrying on the traditions of a proud people. Carrying on the views and voice of our kupuna past, keiki our future, and within the present.

To have a connection to your culture; land, people, practices, language, mo`olelo.

To know the Native Hawaiian culture, understand our history, and to perpetuate that culture and learned history through our lives.

When a person can understand and practice this Hawaiian proverb, "He ali 'i ka 'āina, he kauwā ke kanaka." The land is chief, man is the servant.

An underlying theme throughout all responses was the idea of being proud of their Native Hawaiian roots. In fact, 28% (14 students) of the study's participants,

explicitly stated a sense of pride when describing what it means to have a Native Hawaiian identity.

Knowing one's historical and cultural background and being proud of it.

Means I'm a rare, special breed.

Mostly being proud to be Hawaiian and knowing you come from this land is something special. Being in a modern day society knowing how to use your identity as a Hawaiian in Western society as well.

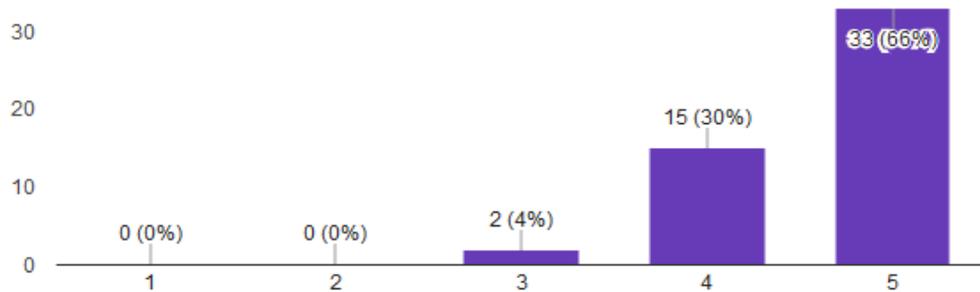
To have a Native Hawaiian identity makes me proud because of all that so many Native Hawaiians have accomplished so far.

It also means that I suffer with what all my other Kānaka Maoli suffer with. From the beginning of time until this very day. I am proud of that. I am proud that I can be recognized as a Native Hawaiian to some people not only because of my Polynesian facial features (lol) but because my family (especially my mom) has taken the time to instill in me that I should be proud to be a Kanaka Maoli because it is my heritage and in my blood. God has made me to be Hawaiian. I could have been Maori, Fijian, Tahitian, or any other race, but I am Hawaiian. He Hawai'i au.

Feelings of cultural connectivity. When asked how important it was for the haumāna to feel connected to their Hawaiian culture, an overwhelming 96% (48 students) gave a rating of 4 or 5, which expressed that it was either important or very important to be connected to their Hawaiian culture. However, when asked how connected they actually felt to their culture, only 70% (35 students) rated the question with a 4 or 5 rating, indicating a feeling of being connected or very connected. The remaining 30% (15 students) felt some to no connection to their Hawaiian culture.

An examination of each individual survey response revealed that 44% of respondents gave the same rating for how connected they feel to their Native Hawaiian culture and how important it is to be connected to your Native Hawaiian culture. However, 18% of the haumāna listed their connection to their culture at two or more levels below their rating of how important it is to be connected to their Native Hawaiian culture. This shows a discrepancy in how connected they feel and how connected they feel they *should* be.

5. How important is it for you to feel connected to your Hawaiian culture?
(50 responses)



4. How connected do you feel to your Hawaiian culture? (50 responses)

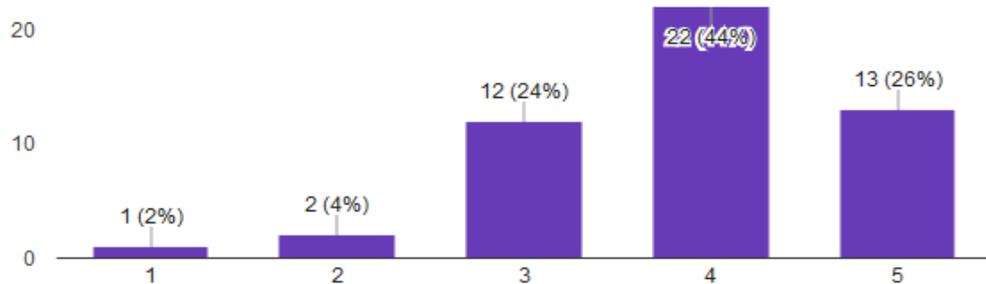


Figure 5.3 Survey Responses - Connection to Hawaiian Culture

Knowing that developing a strong connection with their Native Hawaiian culture is important to our AAT students as well as realizing that a significant number of them feel that they are lacking the knowledge and experiences to adequately connect to their Indigenous culture, creates an opportunity whereby Leeward CC's AAT program may be able to make a difference.

Participation in cultural practices. Connecting to a culture can be fostered by knowing and perpetuating the culture's practices, language, and values. Therefore, the next set of questions focused on the level of involvement the haumāna experienced with each of these areas. Participants were asked how often they participated in Hawaiian practices and then to share which practices they engaged in regularly. Results revealed a fairly even distribution ranging from those who participated very often (i.e., one or more times per week) to those who rarely (i.e., less than six times per year) to never engaged in Hawaiian practices. In fact, 24% of the haumāna (the highest number of responses) selected a rating of 1 to this question, indicating that they rarely to never participated in Hawaiian practices.

6. How often do you participate in Hawaiian practices (e.g. hula, working in a lo'i, surfing, etc.)?

(50 responses)

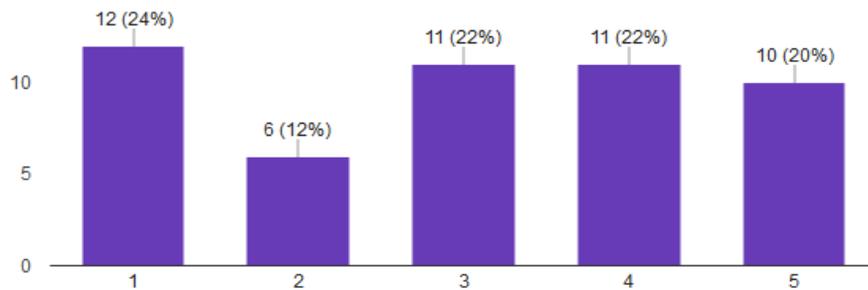


Figure 5.4 Survey Responses - Frequency of Participation in Hawaiian Practices

Those who indicated their participation in Hawaiian practices were asked to share what specific cultural activities they engaged in. The following table shows a synopsis of the practices shared.

Table 5.1
Survey Responses - Native Hawaiian Practice Categories

Native Hawaiian Practice	Number of Citations
Arts-Based	28
‘Āina-Based	18
Kai-Based	15
‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i	14
Cooking	7
‘Ohana-Related	2
Spiritual	2
Medicinal	1
Teaching Hawaiian Values to Others	1
None	5

Most practices listed were arts-based such as participating in chanting, mele, playing instruments like the ukulele, making haku and feather lei, making kapa, and storytelling. However, hula dancing was the most commonly cited arts-based practice with 50% of the participants indicating that they either actively dance or have danced in the past. The next most commonly cited categories focused on having a connection to island surroundings. ‘Āina (i.e., land) and kai (i.e., ocean) activities were cited 18 and 15 times respectively. Examples of these included working in the lo‘i or irrigated taro terrace, restoring fishponds, and volunteering for other acts of mālama ‘āina with community organizations. Ocean-based activities included surfing, canoe paddling, swimming, diving, and laying net or fishing. Speaking the Hawaiian language was the third most commonly noted practice, cited by 14 haumāna. Whereas a few indicated fluency, the majority indicated that they only used certain Hawaiian words or phrases or

heeded the lessons found in ‘Ōlelo No‘eau or Hawaiian proverbs. In fact, the majority of survey respondents (48%) indicated a rating of 3 to this question, meaning that they felt somewhat familiar with the Hawaiian language.

9. How familiar are you with the Hawaiian Language? (50 responses)

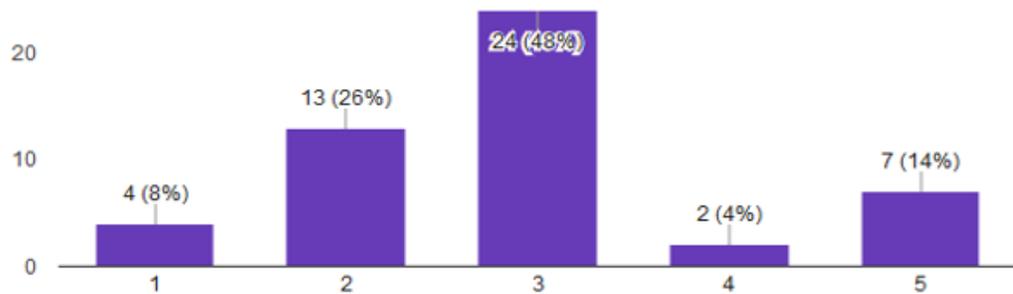


Figure 5.5 Survey Responses - Familiarity with the Hawaiian Language

Less cited practices like pule or prayer, employing traditional cooking methods like cooking in an imu and poi pounding, and using la‘au lapa‘au or traditional Hawaiian healing practices were also listed. However, 10% (5 students) of those surveyed indicated that they have never and were not currently engaging in any Hawaiian practices. These findings provide an opportunity for postsecondary support systems to consider the infusion of more culturally-sustaining activities that are already familiar to haumāna (e.g., hula or mele) or the introduction of less familiar practices (e.g., lā‘au lapa‘au) to help build a stronger sense of Native Hawaiian identity.

Living Hawaiian values. Whereas the frequency of incorporating Hawaiian language and practices into life routines varied greatly among the haumāna, it was evident that the cultural values were consistently practiced by nearly all who were

surveyed. An overwhelming 94% of respondents selected a rating of 4 or 5 to indicate that they practiced Hawaiian values regularly.

8. How often do you practice Hawaiian values (e.g. Laulima, Aloha, Kuleana, etc.)?

(50 responses)

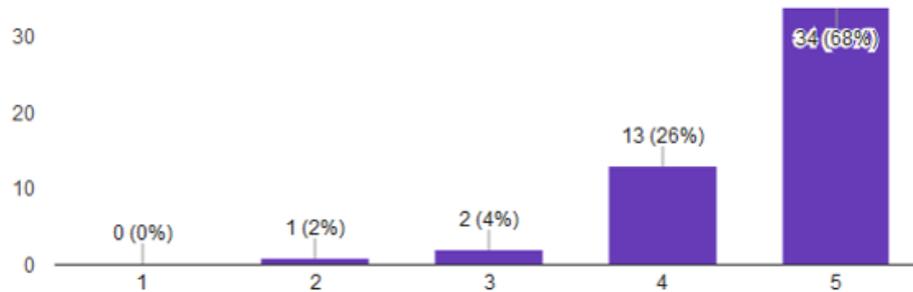


Figure 5.6 Survey Responses - Frequency of Practicing Hawaiian Values

When asked to list which Hawaiian values they practiced or lived by, the respondents presented a total of 23 different Native Hawaiian values. The top three values cited from the haumāna were aloha, kuleana, and laulima. Mālama was a close fourth value that was cited. All haumāna knew at least one Hawaiian value and no one stated that they did not practice any Hawaiian values at all. Those who were more fluent in the Hawaiian language were able to list additional values and use vocabulary that might not be as common knowledge. Given this, it is evident that regardless of how connected nā haumāna feel to the Native Hawaiian culture, how often they engage in Native Hawaiian practices, or how fluent they are in ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i, they live by the values of their Indigenous culture. The cultural values have found a way to be sustained through the lives of these Native Hawaiian Teacher Education students, regardless of where they were born or raised or how much exposure to their “Native Hawaiian-ness” they have been privileged enough to receive. One possible implication of this finding

would be to consider the integration of these values throughout the support systems and curriculum of Native Hawaiian Teacher Education students at Leeward CC. Table 5.2 illustrates the various values listed and the frequency in which they were cited. All values cited by the haumāna were stated in Hawaiian and therefore a simplistic, cursory definition of each value is also given in parentheses.

Table 5.2
Survey Responses - Native Hawaiian Values

Native Hawaiian Value	Number of Citations
Aloha (Love)	37
Kuleana (Responsibility)	33
Laulima (Cooperation)	23
Mālama (To Take Care of)	15
‘Ohana (Family)	8
Hō‘ihi (Respect)	8
Pono (Righteousness)	4
Kokua (Help)	4
Ha‘aha‘a (Humility)	3
Lokahi (Unity)	2
Kūpono (Honesty)	2
Ho‘omaopopo (Understanding)	1
Pa‘ahana (Industrious)	1
Ho‘oponopono (Correct)	1
Onipa‘a (Steadfast)	1
Ha‘aheo (Pride)	1
Imi Na‘auao (To Seek Knowledge)	1
Mahalo (Gratitude)	1
Ulu Hou (New Growth)	1
Ho‘omau (Persist)	1
‘Ike Pono (To See Clearly)	1
‘Auamo (Sharing in the Burden)	1
Ho‘ona‘auao (To Educate)	1

Cultural role models. Where do these values and cultural practices originate from? Who is perpetuating this knowledge with these haumāna? Findings to this question revealed that an overwhelming 60% of haumāna (30 of the 50 respondents)

stated that the most influential person in sharing the Hawaiian culture with them was a family member, usually a parent or grandparent.

My grandmother was instrumental in sharing the Hawaiian culture with me. She embodied the principal values of the Hawaiian culture including love, respect for the land, 'ohana first, spoke the language.

My mom taught us traditional cooking practices, spiritual traditions, and taking care of the 'ohana. She spoke fluent Hawaiian but refused to teach her children because she believed that we would not get a job if we spoke "broken English."

My Papa [grandfather] who raised me. He was one of few who was able to maintain the Hawaiian language and raised us in Hawaiian immersion before we transferred out and into Kamehameha. He raised culturally sound, well-rounded grandchildren.

Some were also influenced by their aunts, uncles, siblings, or cousins. Those who were exposed to the culture through their education at Kamehameha Schools or charter Hawaiian-immersion schools credited their kumu for providing the knowledge needed to perpetuate the culture. Three students mentioned either coursework or support that they received at Leeward Community College through the Hawaiian Studies, AAT, and Hālau 'Ike O Pu'uloa (Native Hawaiian Student Support Programs) as impacting their Native Hawaiian knowledge base. However, one student described it best, articulating how it was difficult to identify only one source of influence.

I'm not sure if there was one specific person who influenced me more than another because in the Hawaiian culture everyone is like one big 'ohana or family. For example in one community or ahupua'a it was like a sense of unspoken duty for everyone to help take care of each other and help

teach the keiki everything that they might need to know. So with that being said the community and 'ohana that I grew up with all taught me the things that I needed to know about my Hawaiian culture. My aunty and uncle taught me the importance of being self-sustainable and taught me farming and food making of old Hawai'i (how to take care of the lo'i, harvest/cultivate Hawaiian plants, fishing and food making). My grandparents taught Hawaiian values. My cousins and parents taught me how to surf, paddle, and dance hula.

Connection to Education

Along with exploring my students' connections with their Native Hawaiian culture, I endeavored to learn more about their viewpoints on education, especially since they were choosing the teaching profession. As presented in chapter 2, Native Hawaiians have a unique historical relationship with education that has morphed over time due to despotic Euro-American influences that left little room for cultural integration and sustainability. Knowing how these Native Hawaiian students define and value education within this context as well as the influential players who shaped their attitudes about education can provide the necessary foundation to better understand who these students are and how we can support them.

Defining education. The first open-ended, broad-based question asked the haumāna to define the word "education" and what it meant to them. Although definitions varied, the themes that emerged all stemmed from the benefits and outcomes of what education could provide for individuals as well as communities. Cited by 52% of the respondents, the most commonly shared opinion in regards to education was that it provided the necessary learning and knowledge in order to succeed in life. Education

was defined not merely as the academics learned within the confines of a classroom, but rather any experience that cultivated growth.

Education is the learning a person gains through instruction or an experience.

Education is an ongoing process. I don't think you will ever stop educating or being able to learn. As human beings we are constantly growing and discovering. Life is truly about being a lifelong learner and it is something I want my students to be.

Education is learning in general it doesn't have to be about school it can be about anything that you want to learn about.

To me, education is the best tool in the world. I love learning. Education is described as the Hawaiian value I wrote 'Imi Na'auao. It means to grow, learn, try it out, figure it out, taste it, paint it, cook it, whether it turned out bad or good you had learned something from it that will benefit you in this life that you are living.

In their responses, not only did nā haumāna indicate a sense of responsibility to continue to learn (i.e., lifelong learning), they also cited the importance of sharing their acquired knowledge with others.

Education is passing on knowledge from one person to another. It means passing on traditions and information important for one to be successful and independent.

Sharing knowledge. Education is a duty, to share what you know.

I would define education as learning and it means to teach others and learn more.

Although acquiring and sharing knowledge was a commonly held value among the haumāna, the next most cited definition for education recognized the possibility of personal gain, especially in terms of improving one's station in life.

Education to me is a stepping stone for me to get a better job and eventually provide a better sustainable life for my family and I.

Education is important because it shows who you are as a person. When you are educated, a lot of people look up to you.

Another personal benefit was the intrinsic, introspective rewards education offered. This appreciation of how education could shape a person's values, spiritual orientation, and moral nature was expressed by 14% of the respondents.

Education is the key to a fruitful and meaningful life.

Education to me is being able to find yourself. You learn all kinds of things until you find something that you like. You then continue in that path that you became fond of. Ultimately education is to survive.

I define education as "the cycle of life". I believe that you learn things 24/7. No matter if you're in a classroom, or in the middle of the sea, you WILL learn something.

Education is extremely important to me. When you are educated, you know where you are, what you stand for. There's a Hawaiian proverb, I 'olaolā no ka hūewai i ka piha 'ole; the gourd will sound when it is not full. Speaks of a person who is uneducated, they're the loudest ones.

Something I need to survive.

Once again, nā haumāna in this survey look beyond serving just their needs. Even though they recognize that education benefits the individual, the real benefit comes when they are able to use their gifts towards societal improvements.

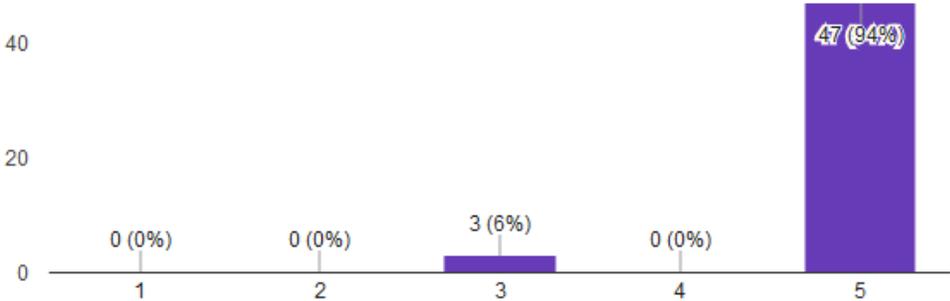
Education is a tool that helps you become a better person and move society in a better and forward direction.

Education is a whole body and mind experience that develops individuals into productive members of society.

It is the key for the Native Hawaiians to move forward in righteousness.

Value perspectives of education. As evidenced by the students' comments in the previous sections, education is viewed as a necessity in terms of realizing beneficial outcomes at individual, community, and global levels. Furthermore, the Native Hawaiian college students in this study have chosen teaching as their intended major and profession, indicating their regard for the merits of education. Given this, it is not surprising that the qualitative survey results revealed that Native Hawaiian AAT students place great value on obtaining educational degrees at both the high school and college levels. In fact, an overwhelming 94% (47 students) felt it was very important to obtain a high school diploma. In addition, 90% (45 students) stated that it was either important or very important to obtain a college diploma. As indicated in Figure 5.7 on the following page, no students stated that obtaining a degree at the high school or college level was of little to no importance.

12. How important is it to obtain a high school degree? (50 responses)



13. How important is it to obtain a college degree? (50 responses)

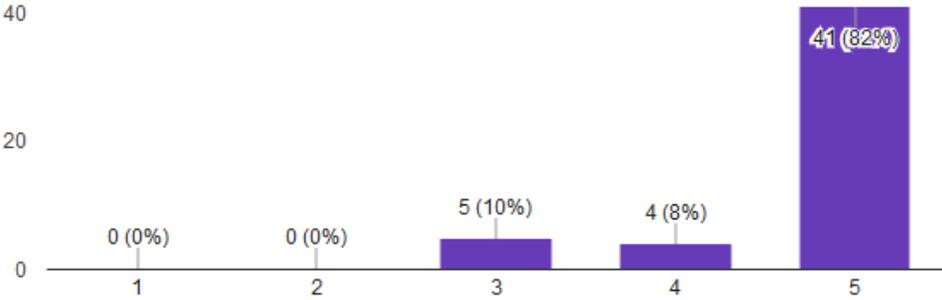


Figure 5.7 Survey Responses - Importance of High School and College Degrees

Influences on educational viewpoints. When asked to share who had been the most influential person in shaping their views on education, once again, the majority of students (64%) stated that family members had the most significant impact. More than half of these students specifically named their mothers as having the biggest influence on their views of education and its significance.

My mother was a huge help in shaping my views of education. My mother would take me walking around the neighborhood to observe everyone. We

did this once a week till I graduated high school. At first, I took it as bonding time but when I graduated high school she asked me what I observed and what kind of goals I had for my future children. It was then that I realized how important being educated was and how much more important it is to support my children in everything they do.

My lovely mother of course. My family became broken when I was a young age. School seemed to be the only thing I could go to learn whatever I can however I can. I was the only child out of 3 to graduate from high school with honors. It wasn't my best and I could have done more but my emotions got in the way to exceeding more in school. My mom, through it all tried her best to stick me by her side and work with me as best as she could while balancing everything life gave to her. To me she's more than Wonder Woman, she's literally my Super Mom.

Although family members tended to emphasize the socio-economic benefits of obtaining higher education, they also recognized the intrinsic benefit of obtaining more knowledge. For some of the haumāna, knowing that their family members never had the opportunity to pursue education was a motivating factor to persist. For others, education was necessary in order to provide a better life for their children.

My Papa. After years of no school, he went back to school and obtained his degrees in Diesel Mechanics, Hawaiian Studies (Masters from UH Hilo), Criminal Justice, and Political Science. He has been in school ever since I can remember and has always told us, "There is no such thing as too much knowledge."

The most influential person on my view of education would have to be my Papa. He didn't get to graduate from high school or go to college. So graduating from Kamehameha High School and going to college was something very important to him and I. I knew I had to do this not only for

myself but for him. All he ever wanted was to see me grow up and do something successful with my life. Knowing that I'm making him proud in the process is what made my education so much more important to me.

My father, he told me to make use of the brain that God has given me and learn as much things as I can for myself instead of just believing in what people say or tell me.

My children have been the biggest influence when it comes to education. I look at them and I feel that they deserve better than what I am able to give them now but the only way to do that is to get a college degree.

Besides family, the next most commonly cited influences (28% of the survey responses) were teachers and counselors from various grade levels. One student identified a teacher from elementary school, 4 students spoke of support staff from their high schools, 4 students identified their teachers and counselors without indicating grade level, and 5 students spoke about the support they received from Leeward CC's AAT program.

My elementary teacher really helped me see how important education is. She showed me that teaching was more than just teaching kids math or social studies, it was about creating relationships with students and creating a safe environment for students to come to, to express themselves and learn.

Former high school teacher. She planted the seed of being a lifetime learner well before that phrase ever became part of a GLO [General Learning Outcome].

The educators and counselors in the AAT program at LCC opened my eyes to the many opportunities that children aren't always afforded in education today and motivated me to want to implement those changes for the betterment of all the children.

Lastly, some students' views of education were influenced by the work place, community members, themselves, or no one at all. These combined responses made up less than 10% of the survey results. This shows that when it comes to influencing our Native Hawaiian AAT students about the importance of education, family members have the greatest influence, distantly followed by professional educators and counselors.

Motivating factors to enter the teaching profession. A common question asked of anyone entering the field of teaching (or any career pathway) is “What motivated you to pursue this career?” Especially in a time where the quality of public schools are criticized, teaching practices scrutinized, and learning outcomes standardized, this underpaid profession is normally not considered a desirable career pathway. I have had my haumāna tell me that family members, friends, and even their own elementary and high school teachers have discouraged them to become teachers. Still, they enroll and pursue their dream of becoming a teacher. Why? Responses to this open-ended question produced a variety of answers and the following themes emerged.

Table 5.3
Survey Responses - Motivations for Becoming a Teacher

Motivations for Becoming a Teacher	Number of Citations
Kuleana to the Community/Future Generations	29
Give Back	13
Share My Passion for Learning/Subject	6
Always Been My Dream	5
Improve on What Currently Exists in Education	4

Knowing that the Hawaiian value of kuleana or responsibility was the second most cited Hawaiian value that this group of haumāna live by, it is no wonder that the primary motivator for 58% of the respondents was the feeling or sense of duty to teach and guide the next generation of learners, especially in terms of perpetuating Hawaiian values, culture, and language.

I want to be a bridge for the next generation. I want to teach important life skills through my lessons and help build my community.

I want to be able to help the community, the children, and pass on Hawaiian values.

I want to continue on my native language as well as educate students in the Hawaiian cultural practices so that they are not lost.

I want to become a teacher so that I can teach and help educate the next generation.

I want to perpetuate the Hawaiian language and raise a new generation of Hawaiian language speakers that become doctors, lawyers, teachers, business owners, etc.

Within the context of serving their communities or fulfilling their duty to future generations, several haumāna also mentioned the satisfaction of being the teacher who could help students realize their potential.

I want to become a teacher so that I can encourage children to reach their fullest potential. In my field classroom I find so many students discouraged for one reason or another and I talk to them about believing in themselves.

What an individual learns will enable them to be a successful citizen and positive contributor to society and I'd like to be the one who makes that impact upon another individual.

I wanted to become a teacher because I enjoy working with kids. I like the idea that the one year I get with them could get them one step closer to their dream career.

Because it is a profession that reaches-out, impacts, and more so changes the mind-thinking of each individual to become someone they thought was impossible to become.

The second most frequently mentioned motivator for entering the field of teaching, cited by 26% of the haumāna, was the idea of being able to give back to their communities or to those who helped them in throughout their lives.

I became a teacher because I have had great teachers in my educational career who really inspired me to learn in school and try my best. I wanted to be that role model to someone else!

I want to become a teacher because as a student I struggled with majority of my educators, but I had 3 very impactful teachers who helped me become the person I am today. I decided if a child could just have one influential teacher they could have the opportunity to be successful.

So many have given me opportunities to forward myself in life. Teaching is the best way I know how to give back and thank those who've helped me all my life.

Another less-cited but still valid motivating factor was the joy these haumāna found in sharing their passion for learning or for a particular subject with others.

I never thought of wanting to become someone to put up with attitudes of hormonal changing teens, or booger sniffing smart mouth 5 year olds, but my mom spoke to me once about finding what I love to do and use that to change the world. I love music, singing, dancing and all that jazz, so she mentioned that I should major in music and teach it to others. At first, I was stubborn, thinking I know how it's going to be, as if I taught for 30 years already (lol), but when I had gotten into the AAT program in LCC, that did change my whole outlook to want to try. I needed to find out that I actually love being with those little children who I assumed were booger sniffing smart mouth 5 year olds (lol). I have worked with students for a [school] and have changed my whole perspective of teaching, which I am grateful for the experience I have had to this day.

Others simply stated that pursuing a career in teaching has always been their dream. “Always been a dream of mine since I was little” and “From a young age I’ve always wanted to be a teacher, I truly enjoy working with young children. I might as well get paid for it too.”

In terms of who were the most influential and supportive people that helped these haumāna choose a career in teaching, the responses included family members, teachers and counselors, and community members. The breakdown of responses is provided below.

Table 5.4
Survey Responses - Influential People Regarding Decisions to Become a Teacher

Influential People Regarding Becoming a Teacher	Number of Citations
Education Professional (Teacher/Counselor)	20
Family Member	14
Community Members/Friends	6
Myself	5
God	1
No Answer	4

Although I have had informal conversations with students stating that they are entering the teaching profession despite warnings from family, friends, and teachers, it is evident that these same groups can also be the most influential and supportive people in a prospective teacher's life. More than half of the respondents indicated the influential role that educational professionals and family members had on their decision to pursue teaching as a career.

When I first graduated high school I had no idea what I wanted to do with my life, the only thing I knew for sure was that my mom is making me go to college. My mom then came up with the idea that I should go into the education field. She influenced me to become a teacher because she knew how much I liked the days off and how well I am with kids and at first I thought this is a horrible idea, but the more time I spent walking down this pathway the more I realized that this is something that I can do and love for the rest of my life. If I didn't go down this path, I couldn't have found the passion that I have for wanting to make a positive change in the education community.

[My mother] is truly amazing to guide me to become a teacher. I never thought of that, however she gave me reasons of why I should. As life kept going she also had me change in what area of teaching I'd like to be in, which is Special Education, for my nephew (that she has adopted) is diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome. It opened my eyes and heart a little more to be there for him and learn more of him to help him achieve such great goals that makes his heart happy. My mom makes me want to do the right things for the right reasons in God's way.

My aunty gave me the idea of teaching. The thought never crossed my mind until she mentioned it during dinner and I never once looked back!

Native Hawaiian teacher role models. Throughout the United States, there is a disproportionate ratio of students of color and the faculty of color who teach them. In Hawai‘i’s statewide public education system, Native Hawaiians and Filipinos represent the largest student demographic in a system primarily taught by Caucasian and Japanese educators (Moniz, 2008). According to the National Center for Education Statistics’ report on *The Condition of Education* (2016) students of color comprise 48% of the American postsecondary population and yet only 20% of the teaching workforce includes teachers of color. In his address to Howard University faculty and students on March 8, 2016, Education Secretary John B. King, Jr. expressed his concern for the lack of teacher workforce diversity by stating:

Without question, when the majority of students in public schools are students of color and only 18 percent of our teachers are teachers of color, we have an urgent need to act. We’ve got to understand that all students benefit from teacher diversity. We have strong evidence that students of color benefit from having teachers and leaders who look like them as role models and also benefit from the classroom dynamics that diversity creates. But it is also important for our white students to see teachers of color in leadership roles in their classrooms and communities. The question for the nation is how do we address this quickly and thoughtfully? (“The State of Racial Diversity in the Educator Workforce,” 2016)

Although Native Hawaiian pre-kindergarten through postsecondary teachers do not comprise the majority of Hawai‘i’s teacher workforce, these educators do exist. In

the spirit of a strengths-based orientation, I specifically asked my Native Hawaiian Teacher Education haumāna if they had any *Native Hawaiian* teacher role models while in school. Given the dearth of Native Hawaiian teachers in Hawai‘i’s public education system, it was a pleasant surprise that nearly 60% of the students stated that they had Native Hawaiian teacher role models.

17. Were there any Native Hawaiian teacher role models for you in school?
(50 responses)

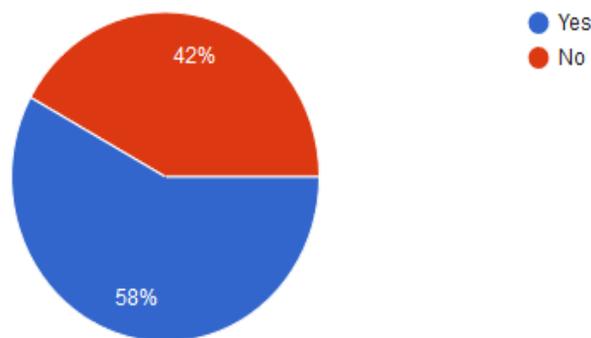


Figure 5.8 Survey Responses - Native Hawaiian Teacher Role Models

When asked to describe their Native Hawaiian teacher role models, haumāna most often cited appreciation for their teachers’ Hawaiian cultural knowledge, feelings of aloha, kind yet strict dispositions, and passion for their teaching craft.

Table 5.5
Survey Responses - Description of Native Hawaiian Teacher Role Models

Role Model Descriptors	Number of Citations
Hawaiian Knowledge/Culture-Based	12
Feeling of Aloha/Loving	7
Kind (yet strict)	3
Passionate about Teaching and Learning	2

Other characteristics mentioned, though less frequently, included being straightforward, compassionate, positive, joyful, understanding, and empathetic.

Knowledgeable and made that connection to life, land, and students.

Overall powerful feelings or vibes from my Native Hawaiian teachers.

Also very kind and helpful, and fun.

My Native Hawaiian teacher role model practices Hawaiian values in everything that she does daily in a subtle way that doesn't seem overwhelming and preachy.

My role model was my Hawaiian Language teacher in high school. She incorporated the culture into our class. We chanted before every class. I now pule every morning before I start my school day. I pray that my students will be present and ask God to be present throughout the day. She also made us do projects that made us apply our learning of the culture and the Hawaiian language. For example, we all became newscasters and filmed ourselves reporting news "I maka 'ōlelo Hawai'i." I loved the idea of applying learning to projects so I do the same in my classroom as well.

Professor (Kumu) is nothing but true aloha spirit. She explains her characteristic which impacted my life as her student being part of the AAT Teaching Program.

Through the efforts of Hui O Nā Mana‘o (i.e., survey respondents), the beginnings of a figurative moena of our haumāna emerges. Continuing to gather more materials for our moena, the next section examines the life history educational experiences of the six members of the Hui O Nā Mo‘olelo (i.e., interview participants) to see what more can be learned about this student phenomenon.

Hui O Nā Mo‘olelo Haumāna (Interview Results)

In chapter 4, the mo‘olelo and life history educational experiences were presented on behalf of six Native Hawaiian AAT students who agreed to share artifacts representing their relationship with education. Although each individual mo‘olelo provides an undeniable richness in construction, this section presents the common themes that emerged when looking at their individual experiences through a collective lens and how their educational experiences helped to develop their sense of self. The six themes that emerged are: *Essentiality of Achievement*, *Exposure to Meaningful Teaching Strategies*, *Someone Believed Before I Believed*, *Cultural Impacts on Educational Clarity*, *Power of Money*, and *Identity and Self-Efficacy*.

Essentiality of Achievement

The essentiality or importance of achievement was the most common theme revealed in all six interviews. Whether the students spoke of their own achievements or those of others, being able to complete something, and be acknowledged for that accomplishment, impacted their view of education and their place within it. That is not to indicate that the haumāna displayed a sense of being boastful for their achievements; in fact, it was the contrary. They portrayed their accomplishments with a matter-of-fact reticence and deep sense of gratitude while speaking of the accomplishments of others with an air of awe and genuine respect. Two of the artifacts shared were diplomas, each representing what was achieved and more importantly, what was learned in the process of attaining the degrees.

Why I brought this [high school diploma] is because Kamehameha has taught me so much. They told me how to be studious, they told me how to use my intellect, how to be intelligent, how to use my resources, how to go

about being organized, what to expect out of life. It definitely prepares you for college in a sense of, you know, in the whole academic-wise. (Ho‘oulu)

Definitely my Leeward diploma...my experience with that is it's amazing- the tools and the methods and the strategies that are taught to us here, especially the AAT program is amazing. I feel I'm well prepared, especially when I transition to [the university] because I feel those students at [the university], they're still- they're not clueless, but I'm more equipped than they are. (Ho‘oulu)

Another artifact presented by Alaka‘i depicted his achievement in creating his first lesson plan and the resulting sense of satisfaction and pride. In addition, he speaks about how he uses what he has learned from this achievement today in his teaching practice.

This was my very first lesson plan that I made, so it's kind of special to me because it was my first lesson that I ever made. I actually presented it to some students where I was teaching part-time at [an elementary school], so I got to actually give this one a test runFelt good! Accomplished! I've taught things, but I never had an official curriculum. I've always instructed, teach kids how to do stuff, but this is my first official lesson plan that was made. Why I chose this too is because I actually use the same, I guess you could call it 'lesson planning', but I use the same 'into, through and beyond' that [an AAT instructor] taught me. I use it currently today to help me guide my lessons. (Alaka‘i)

Conversely, when our haumāna have been faced with instances of non-achievement, especially as it pertained to lack of teacher support, it had a devastating impact on their educational pursuits. Kamaha‘o’s mo‘olelo of his experience with an 8th grade English teacher, who incorrectly assumed, based on Kamaha‘o’s past academic

hardships, that he did not read a book assignment, reflects the immense impact a teacher can have on a student's ego and relationship with education.

I said, "I read the book" and she's like, "You didn't read the book" I said, "No but I did" and she said, "I don't know how you did it Kamaha 'o but you didn't read the book" and she gave me a D. From there I hated her, I never took (pause), I never took art from her (pause) and I never cared for her. I actually hated her for about 15 years, and in high school I never took art and I never read again because of that. (Kamaha 'o)

Mālama shared a similar experience when she was taking 'ōlelo Hawai'i courses at a university. The feeling of inadequacy and lack of achievement in the class was enough to have her reconsider continuing on with her language studies.

I actually finished two years of Hawaiian language and my first two semesters were amazing. The teachers were wonderful, and I was so connected. I loved it, and then the next two semesters after that, we had student teachers teaching us, and I felt kind of discriminated against, I guess you would say, because I had the Hawaiian name, I looked the way I looked, but I wasn't catching on as fast as the other students. They treated me kind of like I was supposed to know everything already, and one of the girls was really harsh on me. If I couldn't pronounce something, she was like, "What? You never know?" So I think teachers really do make a difference." (Mālama)

Exposure to Meaningful Teaching Strategies

A second theme that emerged from the interview artifacts was that these haumāna had been exposed to and impacted by model teaching practices and strategies, whether in a direct capacity or by observing what other students were experiencing at their schools.

One of the artifacts presented was a picture of the participant's homeschool environment where she fondly remembers a sense of community as well as an excitement for learning.

It [the homeschool activities] just made learning come alive. It was just something that rather than it being an abstract thing, you could actually experience it... It's with the families. You have kids of all different ages. You always have a friend, just because there's at least somebody who's maybe a year older or a year younger. (Aloha)

For her artifact, Ho'oulu presented a textbook from one of her AAT education courses on classroom management. This course had driven home the importance of developing skills to build an organized, supportive, and community-based learning environment. Ho'oulu's experience with classroom management principles has carried over into her university classroom and practicum teaching experiences.

Every time I go to any class I'm like "Classroom Management" so it's definitely something to dive into... every single class I take the first thing that comes out of my mouth is the whole classroom management. How are you going to handle it? How are you going to handle the behavior? (Ho'oulu)

Exposure to meaningful teaching strategies did not only happen directly to the participants. In some cases, as with Mālama, she tells the story of her husband who struggled with dyslexia and the teacher who brought him out of his shell by genuinely caring about him and contextualizing his learning. Using an unorthodox method of taking his student surfing, the teacher was able to introduce reading via surf magazines and then surf biographies and eventually help Mālama's husband develop the confidence needed to succeed and graduate from high school.

He [the teacher] gave him the tools he needed to succeed, basically. They're still close. They still talk to each other all the time, but [it was good] just knowing that he had somebody that was able to help him succeed, and help him realize his self-worth. (Mālama)

Mālama was also influenced by the creative and unconventional teaching practices of the elementary school teachers who worked with her mother, who served as a school librarian. Mālama fondly recalls the impact these special education teachers, although not her own, had on her views of what education should entail.

I was always at [my mother's] school, and I started off in the library first, and then I slowly made my way through all the different classrooms. The way they teach there is so different from my elementary schools. The teachers were always hands-on. They were kind of cuckoo. One teacher would show up in periodic clothing, but they were able to raise all of the kids' scores, and participation increased, and they just had a completely different style of teaching. (Mālama)

Someone Believed Before I Believed

A third emergent theme was the importance of having someone who believed in the potential of these haumāna, whether it be as a student or future teacher. Just as Kamaha'o shared his disappointment and frustration when his 8th grade teacher did not believe he completed his assignment, he also shared the impact his friend Bruce had on him when he repeatedly urged him to become a teacher. Kamaha'o presented a phone as his artifact, representing the fateful night that Kamaha'o finally returned Bruce's phone call, forever altering his career path.

He has asked me countless times, and I always told him, "Bruce, I don't teach, it's crazy." Once again he'd come and ask and he'd say, "You look like a teacher." I told him, "Dude, if you think I can teach then, you know

*what, I got nothing going on, I'm going to do it if you say I can do this.”
He said, “Really, for real are you serious?” I said, “Yes.”*

Alaka‘i also experienced that same sense of having someone believe in your potential even before you recognize it for yourself. For his artifact, Alaka‘i presented an award he received in high school. The unique aspect of this award is that Alaka‘i was not even aware of its existence, nor was he aware that his high school counselor was scheduling his classes in such a way that he would be viable contender for the honor.

I have an award of educational achievement for; it says, 'Southern Regional Education Board State Vocational Education Consortium.' This was an award that I had no idea that I was getting. That's why I wanted to share this with you today because pretty much my counselors and my teachers helped me, guided me to getting this award. They had set me up with courses that I had no idea. I didn't know there was a set pathway that I was taking and they had set me up for that. (Alaka 'i)

For Aloha, it was her family, particularly her grandparents, who believed that she would be successful in college and therefore, instilled an expectation that she would go to college after high school. This expectation was not done in a way that caused her angst or pressure as Aloha knew that if she did not want to pursue college, then her family would still support her. It was more like a matter-of-fact, natural progression and expectation that once Aloha completed high school, then she would obviously go to college. Her family knew she could do it and believed that college was for her long before Aloha thought about it.

I'd probably say just my grandparents, on both my dad's side and my mom's side. They encouraged us to get an education and just to go to

college....I knew that it's the next step. Once you finish high school, just go to college. (Aloha)

It was Mālama's sister-in-law who made the suggestion that she become a teacher after observing Mālama at a family party interacting with the family's children.

She's like, "You need to be a teacher. The way you interact with them, the way you make them think, that you don't just hand things over to them. You make them think about their decisions, and what they're gonna do." She's like, "You need to put that to use." She told me that night. She's one of the ones I'm closest with, so I took that to heart a little bit, and then realized, "Why not?"

Cultural Impacts on Educational Clarity

Using Native Hawaiian proverbs, metaphors, or values to help clarify and express one's relationship with education was another emergent theme. One of the most poignant artifacts presented was from the haumāna, Maika'i, who shared his aho, his cordage made out of hao bark, to depict his perspectives on education and how learning comes from all different sources, not just the classroom.

It's like I guess that stick theory or, if you get one strand, it's easy to break but if you braid in a bunch of strands, it becomes stronger....Trying to braid in all these cultural knowledge, academia knowledge, life knowledge and even this everybody's knowledge. Because school for me, what I learned is, not only I learned it from the book, I learned it from myself but I also learn from other people. Just from watching them or even listening to them. (Maika'i)

Maika'i also uses the metaphor of the aho to explain what contemporaries and academics call *lifelong learning*.

All the knowledge, all the barks, put them all together, weave them into one aho such as this. One thing with the aho, you can keep adding to them. It's almost like it's never ending like the ancient Hawaiians.... This also represents there's no end to this weaving of knowledge or this weaving of 'ili. (Maika'i)

In Maika'i's situation, he even states how culture saved his life by "making me realize that it saved me from the nonsense beliefs...just a lot of nonsense I was doing for a long time in my life." The Native Hawaiian culture has impacted Maika'i's perspective on education as well as his worldview.

Alaka'i also expressed the impact the Hawaiian culture, specifically cultural values, have had on his views of education. As revealed by the survey results, kuleana was the most cited Hawaiian value that our haumāna practiced. Alaka'i has incorporated this value into his teaching regimen.

To me, what I feel is kuleana or responsibility. I always felt I was always taught this and I also teach this to my students is, "When you know something, your responsibility to share and teach someone else." In that, I myself like to learn and I like to gain a lot of experience and I like to share it with other people. (Alaka'i)

Mālama has especially felt the presence of Hawaiian values such as kuleana and hō'ihi permeate throughout her life as a result of the teachings of her grandfather. Two of her artifacts were pictures that included her grandfather and aunty, both key individuals in planting the seed of curiosity in Mālama to learn more about her Hawaiian culture.

He [grandfather] really taught us kuleana growing up. He really taught us about respect, about how you need to respect not just other people, but everything around us. (Mālama)

She [aunty] speaks Hawaiian language fluently, she chants, and she does hula. (Mālama)

Power of Money

The impact and influence of money was another theme that emerged from the data. Ironically, it was in an educational setting on a school playground where Maika‘i was first introduced to the power of money. At only 6 years old, his first educational memory was repeatedly being bullied by jealous classmates who took his lunch money and chastised him for not having free lunch tokens. He soon learned that the majority of the children at his school were in a low socio-economic bracket that qualified them for public assistance whereas his parents were in a higher earning bracket. This began to impact his views of where he came from and the role money would play in his life.

For me, that was my first remembrance of, not the importance of obtaining money but how money was part of my life now....I guess everybody in Wai‘anae was poor [and] compared to my other friends, yeah, I would see myself as we wasn't poor but as I grew up in my teenage years, I guess the value of money really took over me at the time. (Maika‘i)

With money being a driving force in his life, Maika‘i made choices (i.e., selling drugs) that although dangerous, would allow him to acquire a lot of money quickly. Still, he was not fulfilled. It was not until later in life, when he was exposed to his Hawaiian culture and how his ancestors lived, did Maika‘i begin to see the power of money differently.

All these beliefs I had of how things should be and what I should do. I was like "Nothing is working. Nothing is working." From Pūnana Leo o Wai'anae and the teachers there, so then I started to learn more about Hawaiian values, Hawaiian way of life, Hawaiian beliefs, Hawaiian

family system. Just how they did everything without money. My belief before, I thought everything was "Oh, money first. Money first." Whereas Hawaiian belief, they already did it without money. (Maika 'i)

Although Maika'i's relationship with money is the most prominent of all the interviewees, Ho'oulu also makes an indirect reference to the value and power of money, especially in terms of financing an education. In her case, Ho'oulu expresses heartfelt gratitude for being able to attend Kamehameha Schools where there were many resources offered to students with little to no cost to the families. "It's just a blessing with all the resources they provide, with all that free stuff they provide. The school, the children take it for granted, they do, without realizing it until they graduate."

Identity and Self-Efficacy

The final theme that emerged from the interview data was the idea that a developed sense of understanding education and one's role within it has the potential to influence the self-efficacy of the Native Hawaiian Teacher Education student. Having a clear vision of what they wanted to achieve as a future teacher and having the confidence to be the kind of teacher they envision for themselves was evident in several of the interviews.

For her third artifact, Aloha presented a picture of a school setting in Nepal. This picture represented her dream to teach overseas at a school or orphanage where resources and staff are limited, but the potential to make a difference is tremendous. Aloha is clear on her goals of being "faithful" in her career pursuits and has a well-developed sense of what education means to her.

I was thinking about education. I think a lot of times we put it in a box, but it's really not what it is. It's something where it does happen in the

classroom, but then it also happens outside of the classroom. Just being faithful to do whatever I'm supposed to do well, whether that is to go back to school and get a master's, or whether that's to teach college students or elementary students, my own students. Even just I see friends who are impacting their nieces or their nephews, sharing what they learned with them. You have parents who go back to school and they want to teach their own kids, or they want to teach other kids. You have grandparents who are teaching. Just being faithful in whatever area I am in. (Aloha)

Alaka'i shares the same confidence in how he views his role as a teacher. He found his grounding philosophy and his place in the teaching profession in the simple, yet wise, wording of a cartoon. "The third one [artifact] I have is a little cartoon...it says, "Love is loving, caring, and sharing." (Alaka'i)

I love to teach and it's a responsibility that I feel that's what I'm supposed to do. I would be doing a disservice to the community and to the world if I was doing anything else. I think so...I think I can make the most impact and change by teaching and impacting the lives of all ages, I mean, students and even adults. That's why I think, yes, I guess that loving, caring, and sharing. Because I love it. That's my passion or my love. (Alaka'i)

Maika'i's introduction to his Hawaiian culture changed his focus from providing for himself to providing for his community. In his interview, Maika'i was adamant that his sense of belonging resided in his Wai'anae community.

I started foresee the importance of how I got to stay in my own [Wai'anae] community. I cannot just run away from my own community. For me, I thought I got to come back and do something good in my community but I just never; I never know how, I just knew my community was where I needed to be. (Maika'i)

Lastly, Ho‘oulu passionately expressed her views on education and what her role as a teacher will be, especially as it pertains to the infusion of culture into her practice.

What I bring out from my education is, I'm going to live my culture, I'm going to implement it as best as I can because we forget. Everyone is becoming so city-minded that we need to keep the country, country, like we need to keep exploring the backyard, we need to keep exploring the beaches. We forget the simple things in life, and that's what Kamehameha has taught us, like "Go up there to the mountain, explore, like scratch off the piece of wood, explain why this is the wood it is or like the grass or the fern." It's really good to have that concept and that experience because my sisters didn't get it and it's hard to explain some things because it's too complex for them to understand because it dives too deep into- I guess not your soul but, it dives too deep into your personality, like you really reflect on a lot more things than other people do. (Ho‘oulu)

Ho‘oulu also expresses what she intends to do in her own classroom as well as her perspectives on the relationship she wants to have with her students.

As a future teacher, I know I'm never going to be prepared enough, but I see myself being prepared where I can manage. So it's going to be okay and then I just have to like, breathe. I definitely have to know my students because learning- not just from books but definitely from experience, you have to know who your student is and the only way to do that is know their background, know their personality, know their likes and dislikes and then that's when can dive in with all this management and materials you want to pull for them to understand. It's definitely great because I want to see myself like that. I want to see myself- that I am diverse, that I am flexible, that I do understand my students. That I'm not there just for me. I'm not there for me, I'm there for them. (Ho‘oulu)

Hui Ho‘oholomua (Focus Group Results)

The third method of data collection used in this study, and the last element of our metaphorical moena, was a focus group of four haumāna whose primary purpose was to suggest improvements, seemingly feasible or not, that they as Native Hawaiian Teacher Education students believed would support the retention and persistence of Native Hawaiian AAT students at Leeward Community College. The following are the insights and suggestions provided by this four-person student team.

Reasons for Choosing the AAT Program

In the inaugural study of 57 graduates from a 2013–2014 cohort of Leeward CC’s Associate in Arts in Teaching program, Silva (2014) found that students chose to enroll in the AAT program because of the affordable tuition costs, close proximity to home, and transferability to 4 year programs. These findings were corroborated in this study where the primary reason that students chose the AAT program was that it was close to their home. On the Leeward or West side of the island of O‘ahu, there are only two public postsecondary institutions, one which is a university and the other is Leeward Community College. Commuting to another community college or university campus outside of the Leeward district could entail driving a minimum of one to two hours, depending on traffic conditions. The convenience of the community college location, and especially the Leeward satellite campus located on the Wai‘anae coast of O‘ahu meant that students could drastically reduce their commute, allowing them more time in their communities and with their families.

The second most commonly cited reason was the marketing that has been done for the AAT program. Students cited seeing flyers on campus, receiving flyers in their

new student orientation packets, visiting a website, and attending an information session. The remaining reasons listed for choosing Leeward Community College's AAT program was the availability of affordable tuition, online courses, open-access admissions, and because they wanted to earn a teaching degree that was transferable to a university. Once the students were enrolled in the program, an unexpected benefit was the level of support and quality of instruction that they received, however, this was not what initially attracted them to apply for the program.

Experiences in the AAT Program

Overall, the feedback regarding the students' experiences in the AAT program has been very positive. Each focus group member commented on the support, encouragement, positivity, and quality instruction received by the faculty and staff.

The support and how positive everyone is. For me, that's different. I wasn't used to everything so positive...Everyone is so positive. It's crazy. ('Ekahi)

I think my experience, too, everything is so positive. You just feel like you can do it. That's my experience with the AAT program. Every instructor has been positive. I think even with the core classes, I started in 2010 and then I graduated in the fall of 2012. It was the whole way, ask [counselor name], I didn't even want to leave. ('Ehā)

I like that everyone is always so positive. There's a lot of support like [counselor name] and [instructor name], the professors and the peer mentors. I've never been in a place where everybody's so positive. ('Elua)

Very great...they [AAT instructors] actually know how to deliver their information in ways that are most effective. ('Ekolu)

De-motivating Factors to Enter the Teaching Profession

Throughout the survey and interview results, haumāna had openly shared the motivating factors that influenced their decision to pursue a teaching career. However, an interesting side conversation developed among the focus group members centering on the factors that discouraged or de-motivated them about entering the teaching field. All four haumāna stated that at least one person in their life had discouraged them from becoming a teacher. In fact, one of the students who had flown in from another island to participate in the focus group shared her morning conversation with the airport rental car agent about this topic.

Yeah. The guy at the [airport rental car] counter was like, "Oh, where are you off to?" "We're going to have discussion about future teachers." He's like, "Oh, I was going to go into teaching but my dad told me not to because you don't make enough money." I was like, "Oh, okay. Well, where's my car? Have a nice day." (‘Ehā)

The issue of money was one that also came up among the students as a demotivating factor, not only in regards to low pay for the profession, but even in the lack of financial support when teacher candidates must participate in semester-long, non-paid student teaching experiences. Likening it to the paid resident doctor completing a medical school program, the haumāna questioned why the standards are different for teacher candidates.

There's been instances where we're doing student teaching, a few of us. A couple of us show up for student teaching. Teacher doesn't show up, calls in sick and there's a shortage on subs now, too. They [student teachers] end up teaching the class. A sub, you're getting \$160 a day. We're not allowed to get sub pay...To me, there should be at least a stipend or

something that would motivate you. Right now, I feel the only thing that really motivates us is our desire to be a teacher. Money would be nice.
('Ekahi)

Three of the focus group members continue their discussion of teacher shortages in Hawai'i, especially as it pertains to lack of teachers of color role models and the issue of money.

'Ekolu: *I think that if these students had more role models to relate to, they can see themselves in that person, and that would be awesome for them. Which is more of a reason for people like us to continually strive in this profession. Just the fact that we're not producing enough teachers, the discouragement will always be there for them. What are some other challenges do you guys think that they face?*

'Ekahi: *The [teacher] contract negotiations are coming up next year. Just the pay in itself.*

'Ehā: *It's sad to say that pay is a huge reason why I know a lot of people don't become teachers.*

'Ekahi: *It's just surviving. Being able to survive, the economy is tough.*

'Ehā: *I know a lot of teachers who have second jobs, too.*

The fact that Hawai'i systematically hires teaching personnel from the mainland to fill teaching vacancies is another de-motivating factor for the haumāna.

'Ehā: *I can tell you what's not motivating. Teachers are being recruited from the mainland and getting bonuses. Instead of being recruited for Hawai'i.*

'Ekahi: *What would be good is to give us bonuses. Not that money is the driving force.*

- ‘Ehā: Why are we putting resources to people outside of Hawai‘i instead of resources into people in our programs for teaching? It makes no sense.*
- ‘Ekahi: Especially with the shortage.*
- ‘Ehā: Language barriers. Bringing in outside people. It’s the biggest thing I think.*
- ‘Ekahi: Cultural stuff.*
- ‘Ekolu: Yeah. Not to discredit the intentions of the teachers that come from the mainland. They can’t help but be unrelatable.*

Barriers to College Degree Achievement

Although the primary purpose of convening the focus group was to collect student mana‘o on what changes could be made to program supports in order to better serve Native Hawaiian AAT students, the natural pre-cursor to that discussion was a review of the barriers currently impacting this population. As Silva (2014) indicated in her research, the greatest barriers identified were time management, cost of tuition, and the need to take remedial coursework which delayed time to degree completion. When focus group participants in this study were asked what they believed Native Hawaiian AAT students needed in order to be successful in school, two of the focus group members, ‘Ekahi and ‘Ehā, immediately said “money.” A third member elaborated on why she felt it was a barrier to success.

I think money, paying for college because college is expensive. Sometimes, I think financial aid doesn't really work out for everybody because I have friends who financially didn't really work out for them. They're paying out of pocket and student loans for school. You don't really want to take out student loans because then you're going to have to end up paying it back.
(‘Elua)

The next most cited barrier to college success from the focus group participants was that Native Hawaiian students may not feel as if postsecondary education is a place for them. They may value education but may not feel that it is meant for them, developing a sense of non-belonging even before ever setting foot on a college campus.

I feel like a lot of Native Hawaiian students feel like they maybe are not worthy of getting a degree because of their background maybe where they come from their families, the struggles they have to go through. Maybe they feel like, "Yeah. I know it's important but it's not for me. It's for somebody else. Maybe I do want to get a degree but I've been told I was stupid my whole life. Maybe that's why I shouldn't get it." ('Ekahi)

We're kinda relaxed. Just maybe laid back about it instead of feeling like, "Hey. We can be successful, too, just like anybody else." ('Ehā)

If the world thinks I'm nothing, maybe I am nothing. I will be that way. I feel like I've come across a lot of people like that, Native Hawaiians. ('Ekahi)

However, the group recognized that this is not the case for all Hawaiians. There are those who endeavor to go to college with the intent to succeed; but even then, they are sometimes met with unforeseen barriers.

I think a lot of Native Hawaiians, they know education is important. They do end up going to school but then they realize when they get there, they realize, "Oh, this is harder than I thought." Home life is not very supportive. Maybe you have somebody you got to take care of. Your mom and dad is just on drugs or something. I don't know. They're just not supportive. I think that's why a lot of people end up dropping out, too. ('Ehā)

Family responsibilities seemed to play a large part in how much time and energy a student could devote to a college education. As a result of these competing priorities, the group felt that students could still persist but might experience feelings of guilt for not being able to tend to their families, or they would simply choose not to continue with their education.

I think responsibilities, too. Some people have to work or they have families. They either have to work or they either have to go to school.
('Elua)

I agree with you that you have to weigh out getting my education or putting food on the table so your kids can have meals and survive. Sometimes, that survival takes precedence over us getting an education.
('Ehā)

The last barrier cited by the group had to do with the deluge of university and program information that they needed to search for, sift through, and decode in order to navigate through their college journey, especially when it came to financial aid and scholarships.

It takes some time and some of the information is not very helpful. You spend all that time reading it and it doesn't really pertain to you. ('Elua)

Mechanisms of Persistence

Although the haumāna in this study were easily able to identify barriers to college success, all of the students in this study were purposefully identified as those who had persisted by either maintaining their active status in the program or graduating with their AAT degree. Therefore, the discussion turned to what motivated them to persist despite any obstacles they encountered. 'Ekahi was the first to answer that question with a

simple statement, “I think it’s for the kids.” This sparked a lively exchange between focus group members corroborating ‘Ekahi’s position.

*I love special ed. I love working with my autistic kids. They're really fun.
(‘Ehā)*

I always have this innate feeling. I don't know how to describe it. I'm pretty sure that all of you guys have it, too. There's this instinct inside of you that tells you that this is your mission in life...It's my way of paying it forward. I wasn't the best student ever but I think it's really mostly about teaching these kids how to be healthy human beings. They mostly get that in school. It's not so much the academics but it's showing them how to be a functioning member of the society, being happy. (‘Ekolu)

I think what makes me want to stay is the kids. The school I'm at now is a high school. It's in town. I just love the community of kids and stuff like that. Some of them are very naughty but they're all very loving and stuff like that. Just the kids, I love it. I've heard people always tell me, you'll never really find people who say that they absolutely love their job or they love absolutely everything about it. Most people will say that they just like it, but I love it. I love all the kids, even the naughty ones. (‘Elua)

Another mechanism of persistence identified by the group was seeing that someone before them had already achieved success in school.

I think what did it for me is knowing that I've had people in my family that did it and were strong. Especially strong women because I think not only is it a Native Hawaiian thing but it can be being a woman. In my family, a lot of the men went out and got the education. My parents' generation, my dad and his brothers all got an education but the girls were expected to go to work. My dad was so proud of me for actually going to school at this age, pushing forward. He's the one that pushes me like, "You can do it." I

think there are so many other barriers not just Native Hawaiian maybe. It's also being a girl, woman. Some of those struggles I think are easier for us to obtain our degree when we look at people that we can consider like mentors or people that we look up to. Strong women, maybe like yourself. We see how successful you are. It's like, "Oh, we can do it, too." You set a good example for us. ('Ekahi)

My friend who graduated from the same program, she did it. I was like, "Oh, if she can do it. I can do it." Not that she's any less than me but because we had similar situations. She was raising her kids by herself. I'm going to school full time, working full time. I could see the stress on her but I was like, "If she can do it. I can do it." ('Ehā)

The inspiration of seeing others succeed in college was identified as a mechanism of persistence for the focus group participants' own college attainment. Through the course of discussions, the group realized that upon their own graduations and successful transition to teaching positions, they would now be able to inspire future generations of Native Hawaiian students to persist in their own educational goals as well.

I think for the students, too. They see, "She's local. She's a teacher. She got her degree. I can do it." That modeling, I can relate to her. "She understands when I talk to her." There's a connection and helps the students feel worthy. ('Ehā)

Suggestions for Program Transformation

Silva's (2014) study resulted in the presentation of profound and succinct recommendations for AAT programmatic changes in areas such as financial aid, time management, transfer advising and articulation agreements, structured field experience placements, and varied, flexible course offerings. When looking at the Native Hawaiian

student population, Silva (2014) made specific recommendations regarding timely degree completion, creating a presence on the Wai‘anae satellite campus, modeling the concept of pilina (i.e., relationships) in teaching practice, and developing culturally appropriate supports for students by reaffirming their cultural and familial identities. She challenged teacher educators to “ask themselves how to address the unique needs of the indigenous population of future teachers” (p. 137). This study serves as an aid to those willing to take on this challenge and learn about the unique needs of our Native Hawaiian Teacher Education students, from their perspectives.

Following discourse regarding the reasons for choosing the AAT degree, student experiences in the AAT program, de-motivating factors of entering the teaching profession, potential barriers to degree attainment, and mechanisms of student persistence, the focus group participants commenced with a brainstorming session to identify what they believed would be transformative supports for the Native Hawaiian AAT student. The following are their suggestions.

Development of a one-stop online resource site. The first suggestion the haumāna presented was having the program develop a one-stop resource website where they could easily navigate and refer to for information, announcements, and relevant links to on and off-campus support services. A comprehensive, resource-rich website would cut down on time wasted searching multiple websites for information specifically related to financial aid, scholarships, university program and course requirements, and admissions procedures.

It would be nice if there was some resource, a one stop resource where you could just go online and look everything that's available to you.

(‘Ehā)

I was just going to say that I agree with 'Ehā about the one stop shop thing. That would be very helpful, instead of going to multiple websites or Google. ('Elua)

'Ekahi described a scenario at her transfer university where she completed one university-sponsored online application and was awarded several scholarships based on her Native Hawaiian ethnicity.

I was going to say I wish LCC had had that... You fill out that one application. I didn't know about it. That one application, the financial aid office plugs it into hundreds of scholarships. For the first time in my life, I got 4 scholarships, my first ever.

Besides financial and scholarship information and relevant links, the haumāna also suggested incorporating topics and resources related to tutoring services, mentoring opportunities with professionals in the field, program events, inspirational stories about AAT graduates who have succeeded in the field, and transfer information about university partners. Information about the universities would not only focus on what they offered and program details, but more importantly, what are the next steps needed in order to seamlessly transfer from the community college to the university.

I noticed after I graduated, it was like, "Oh, my gosh. Now, what do I do?" There was this period where I wondered if....after you graduate here, if there's a lag because people don't really know where to jump to. ('Ekahi)

I knew the information was there [online] but there was never a help where I felt like, "Oh, this is where I want to go," because I'm being mentored to go here or go there. I thought there might be a better link to where you go after you have your AAT. ('Ehā)

The AAT program actually launched a comprehensive website in September 2013, which was after the two focus group members had left the program. The current website provides comprehensive information about the program's history, degree options, course requirements, field experience, job opportunities, articulation agreements and transfer options, however, there is no information or even links to UH System or external scholarships. Also, whereas there are general descriptions and a downloadable handout comparing program details for each transfer university partner, there are no explicit steps listed on what needs to be done in order to execute a seamless transfer. The inclusion of more links to relevant on and off campus support services would also add to the value of the website.

The second issue with the current AAT program website is that many students do not know about its existence.

For one, I didn't know that this department had its own website. I only found out about it the last semester in. I'm like, "Where was all this good stuff?" ('Ekolu)

Students are introduced to the website at the program's new student orientation, but it seems as if it is rarely mentioned beyond that instance as the source to automatically go to in order to have any program questions answered.

Reinforce the bridge between AAT and university teacher education programs. The AAT serves as both a terminal degree (i.e., where students can directly enter the workforce as paraeducators) and transfer degree (i.e., where students can opt to continue with their education to earn a bachelor's degree and apply for teacher licensure). For those who choose to transfer to a university teacher education program, the haumāna identified that a challenge has been being able to navigate through university admissions

processes. In an effort to brainstorm how best to address this issue, the focus group participants indicated that it would be helpful if the university personnel assisted them with the technical aspects of completing applications and followed-up to ensure that applications were complete. Although some might say that correctly completing a program application and turning it in on time is the responsibility of the student, it is important to keep in mind that these are suggestions directly from the students based on what they feel would be the most beneficial supports aiding in their college persistence.

Even when you have those meetings with [a university advisor], when he used to come, maybe have a letter of intent. Something that goes, "Oh, she intends." Someone there at College of Education might give us a call and say, "Hey, you didn't log on to [the online application form]. That whole [online application form] thing, that's confusing, too to try the application and all the steps. That's where the ball just dropped on me. I was like, "Whoa, this is scary." (Ekahi)

Create more cultural connections. A resounding request from all focus group members was the need to create more cultural connections in the AAT program, especially since they were going into the field of teaching. Interestingly, none of the haumāna in this group felt very knowledgeable of their Native Hawaiian culture, yet they still conveyed the necessity of bringing culture, specifically the Native Hawaiian culture, into their learning environments and those of their future students.

I think we all can appreciate the fact that we need to preserve this precious culture. It doesn't get easier as each generation goes on because I'm part Hawaiian. I don't really identify with it as much as my sister does. To me, I'm a local Filipino. My sister is, too, but she's very in touch with her Hawaiian heritage. She married a Hawaiian guy and had four kids who identify themselves as Hawaiian. I think that that would be great to

bring people in. I think it would be motivating for people in and outside the classroom. ('Ekolu)

Even though I went to Kamehameha. I wish maybe there were more connections to our culture [in teacher education programs].....Our students are from all different backgrounds. They keep telling us there's a need on the West side. Maybe if there was more that we could identify with in our culture and have a connection to where the need is, that's predominantly Hawaiian on the West Coast. ('Ekahi)

I learn a lot about my heritage and stuff through my grandma. I think it's nice when we have projects for school that you need to do it on Hawaiian culture, a culture, one of your cultures. ('Elua)

It is important. For me, it is important. I am so disconnected from my Hawaiian culture but I know that it's important enough that I wanted my kids to be more connected. That's why I'm putting them in Hawaiian language school so they can learn all those values that I never did. ('Ehā)

The main reason cited for wanting culture in the classroom was the impact it could have on the self-worth of Native Hawaiian Teacher Education students.

I think what she's getting at is that if you treat native Hawaiian culture like it's important, then they [Native Hawaiian students] in turn will feel important. ('Ekolu)

Instead of the world thinking I'm unintelligent. I must be intelligent. If you feed into that, or don't feed into it, I think that could make a difference. ('Ehā)

Fight the negative stereotypes. The members of the focus group stated that there are definite negative stereotypes associated with being Native Hawaiian, such as

being angry, lazy, unintelligent, or too relaxed. As discussions progressed, it was clear that the group members approached these stereotypes with a range of emotions from mild irritation and resignation to passionately rejecting these assumptions and demanding a call for change.

Some Native Hawaiians in general, you expect them to be bitter about stuff. Sorry. I had to go there because when other people think about Native Hawaiians, they think about all the nasty history that comes with it. There's a lot of anger involved. There's even some professors at [the university] that say that Hawaiians have every right to be hostile towards a Caucasian person. I don't know if that's true for the most part. I think that's what most people would expect from somebody. ('Ekolu)

'Ekolu then proceeds to describe an exchange he had with a coworker who shared a conversation she engaged in with her parents about the Hawai'i-born pop icon, Bruno Mars. In her discussion with her parents about the singer's genre of music, she overtly presented her thoughts about the dispositions of local people in Hawai'i. 'Ekolu retells the story.

There's this girl at my workplace. She's an Asian girl, the only child, 26 and still living with parents...They were talking about Bruno Mars and how he's from here. He gets a lot of criticism. How come he doesn't have any songs that are stylized from here or about this place? Then she proceeds to say, "Yeah. He already wrote a song about this place. The Lazy Song." I'm like, "What? Are you kidding me? You expect all of us to be laid back? A lot of us here are struggling because the cost of living is so high. Regardless of what race you are, a lot of people here are working two jobs because one job can't pay all the bills." I think that's a misconception that we all need to break. We're hardworking people,

Native Hawaiians, and I think there's just a lot of stereotypes that we're too laid back. We're lazy. ('Ekolu)

That they're [Native Hawaiians are] lazy and that when things happen, it's just a typical local acting like that. Sometimes I hear a lot of people from the mainland in general. I've seen people in schools that I've worked at and they come from the mainland. The mainland type, the stereotype that they come and they just try to take over and think that they know better. It's their way or the highway. ('Elua)

Further discussion on the topic prompted the following discourse between 'Ehā, 'Ekahi, and 'Ekolu, revealing their frustrations dealing with the negative stereotypes.

'Ehā: *I know I speak pidgin but I can turn it off if I wanted to. I feel like they look at me like, "You don't know how to talk so you must be unintelligent."*

'Ekolu: *Yeah. Well, because they come from a different world. There's these cultural barriers that really do separate us and set us apart in very petty ways. There's no hate but I'm just saying. These small things, they really separate us.*

'Ekahi: *We don't tend to speak up, too. Sometimes, I feel like we don't really have a voice. That's not that we're not intelligent or we don't have something to say but I do feel sometimes, people from the mainland, because they're so vocal, I think we tend to feel sometimes not as intelligent. For myself, but yet we know we're intelligent. We know that we're good at what we do.*

'Ehā: *When you do speak up, it's like "There goes the angry Hawaiian again," because I'm voicing my opinion now and it's different from you? Doesn't mean that I'm angry. It just means that I think.*

‘Ekolu: For people in general, it’s very hard to embrace what’s different if you’re not open-minded.

Conversely, the group was very clear on how they do want the world to see Native Hawaiians. They urge educators to be warriors of justice and equity, fighting to reduce and eventually eliminate these devastating and overarching misconceptions of Hawai‘i’s Indigenous people. Instead, when asked what message they would want to send out to the world about Native Hawaiian Teacher Education students, ‘Ekolu was the first to reply, “We’re all about love.” ‘Ekolu continues to explain his position, which then leads to the rest of the group members chiming in their thoughts about the message that they would like share regarding who they are as Native Hawaiians. The themes regarding serving their communities and feeling worthy were shared by ‘Ekolu and ‘Ekahi.

*I think bottom line, we're really all about serving our community because we put others first. There's a lot of love behind that. I'd like to think so.
(‘Ekolu)*

I was thinking of the same thing. We all want to feel that we're worthy and not living by stereotypes. Everybody whether Native Hawaiian or not, yeah. (‘Ekahi)

*Just because I speak pidgin doesn't make me less intelligent. Yeah. That goes same for all students in Hawaii. Just because they speak different doesn't mean that they're less intelligent. Some may just learn differently.
(‘Ehā)*

The group recognized that these stereotypes are not only perpetuated by those who are unfamiliar with Hawai‘i’s Indigenous culture and people, but sometimes by

Hawaiians themselves, whether on conscious or subconscious levels. Therefore, they had a message to share with their fellow Native Hawaiian students.

Go for it. Don't feel discouraged because of what they [negative stereotypes] say. We are Hawaiian. ('Elua)

If you're Native Hawaiian and you want to be a teacher, it's the best thing that would happen to a student because you can relate to them more. You can bring that cultural knowledge. ('Ehā)

Maybe that they [Native Hawaiian students] are capable. Just to give them that message because a lot of [Hawaiian] students don't feel like they're worthy or capable of accomplishing all their dreams. ('Ekahi)

If I had to give any advice, I'll just give the advice [my high school teacher] gave me. He probably doesn't remember that he said this to me. He said it doesn't matter who you are or where you come from. As long as you work hard, you can reach your goals. That's the only stipulation...you have to work hard. ('Ekolu)

Elements of Moena O Nā Haumāna (Summary of Findings)

The mo'olelo of expert weaver and Ni'ihau native, Kalaiokamalino, who created her infamous moena makaloa of protest in the mid-nineteenth century, teaches us that it takes time, patience, and meticulous attention to detail in order to sort, select, and weave together a quality moena. The tedious nature of this materials art form is reflected in accounts that it would take between 11 and 20 makaloa sedge stems (pictured on the next page) to produce merely one inch of material (Rose, 1990). Such is the presentation of this study's findings likened to the individual elements or makaloa stems of Kalaiokamalino's moena. The data from the surveys, interviews, and focus groups have

been scrupulously reviewed, sorted, and selected for presentation. The following is a summary of findings (i.e., the elements selected for the weaving of our moena) from each data collection method.



Photograph courtesy of and copyright maintained by David Eickhoff⁴⁰

Figure 5.9 Makaloa sedge (Cyperus laevigatus)

Summary of Hui O Nā Mana‘o Haumāna (Survey Results)

In reviewing the responses of the 50 Native Hawaiian Teacher Education students’ electronic qualitative survey results, there were two areas of focus: *Connection to Hawaiian Culture* and *Connection to Education*. For my haumāna, being Native Hawaiian evokes a sense of pride. It is a privilege to those who have the bloodline. The haumāna expressed a sense of Indigenous relationality where they, as Native Hawaiians, are defined by the relationship and context that bounds them to the land, to their ancestors, to their descendants, and to one another (Wilson, 2008). There exists a sense of

⁴⁰ Copyright and reprinting permission granted by David Eickhoff on April 10, 2017.

urgency and import to perpetuate the culture and to teach the future generations in order to sustain Indigenous epistemologies, ontologies, and axiologies. This finding corroborates Agbo's (2001) concept of cultural discontinuity, where Indigenous groups experience reality in a completely different way than the dominant culture. This disconnect can have a devastating impact on an Indigenous student's sense of self and place in the world. The colonization of Hawai'i, achieved in part through the introduction of the Bible and Western educational systems, brought a new civilization to the islands that devalued Hawaiian ways of knowing and sought to replace them with values more familiar to the White person (Benham & Heck, 1998). Two centuries later, what has emerged is an Indigenous people who, as a collective, may not fully know and understand their Hawaiian identity, but are innately conscious of its magnitude and aware that a dormant state of being *kanaka ʻōiwi* lies within each of them. As is evidenced in this study, the majority of *haumāna* felt it was very important to be connected to their Native Hawaiian culture, even though as many as 30% of the respondents felt little to no connection at all.

Participation in cultural practices was evenly distributed from ratings indicating no involvement to being very much involved in cultural practices. Performance arts, ʻāina-based, kai-based, and ʻōlelo Hawai'i activities were the most common forms of engagement. Regardless of one's level of knowledge and participation in cultural practices or speaking the Indigenous language, all *haumāna* stated that they lived by at least one or more Hawaiian cultural values. Aloha, kuleana, and laulima were the three top-rated values that the *haumāna* identified.

As with many Indigenous cultures and even in Ka Wā Kahiko, parents and grandparents were the greatest influences in sharing Native Hawaiian knowledge and shaping the students' cultural perspectives (Pukui et al., 1972). Kamehameha Schools, Hawaiian-immersion charter schools, and other family members have also been credited with helping to ground these haumāna in their personal and cultural contexts.

Cited by 52% of respondents, the definition of education was rooted in the benefits and outcomes that education could provide in order to support societal advances. Education is seen as learning from all that surrounds us, not just what happens in a classroom. In addition to the extrinsic and intrinsic rewards for personal gain, many haumāna expressed the responsibility to pass on the knowledge gained with others with the intent to improve society. In this regard, obtaining both a high school and college degree is considered important to very important for the vast majority of respondents. Education is valued and a necessity. Ogbu (1992) corroborates this by stating that minority groups do not lack a desire to succeed in education, as may be commonly used to explain sub-standard performance. However, he also posits that the educational climate in involuntary minority communities, such as those that are Native Hawaiian, may produce a “strong verbal endorsement of schooling as a means of getting ahead, yet very weak culturally sanctioned attitudes, efforts, and persistence supporting individual pursuit of school success” (Ogbu, 1992, p. 291).

Also reported in the survey responses was that 64% of respondents indicated that family members, especially mothers, had the greatest impact on shaping their views of education, especially understanding the socio-economic and intrinsic benefits of gaining more knowledge. Twenty-eight percent of students indicated that teachers and counselors

from kindergarten through college also impacted their views of education. Cited by more than half of the respondents, the most prominent motivational factor that influenced their decisions to become teachers was the sense of kuleana or duty to teach and guide the next generation of learners, specifically to perpetuate Native Hawaiian values and cultural practices. The next highest motivator, cited by 26% of the haumāna, was the idea of reciprocity or giving back to their communities because someone had helped them in their lives. Hart (2010) contends that this type of Indigenous worldview, as is portrayed in the responses of nā haumāna, “highlight a strong focus on people and entities coming together to help and support one another in their relationship” promoting “a sense of communitism and respectful individualism” (p. 3).

The power and influence of the ‘ohana cannot be denied as family members seem to have a strong influence on shaping the students’ views on their culture and on education. However, when it came to deciding on teaching as a potential career option, teachers and counselors at all grade levels were cited most often as having the greatest impact on whether or not a student chose this career path. Interestingly, despite a deficiency in the number of Native Hawaiian educators in Hawai‘i’s school systems, 58% of the respondents indicated that they had a Native Hawaiian teacher role model. Characteristics of these role models included being knowledgeable about the Hawaiian culture, loving, kind, strict, and passionate about their own teaching.

Summary of Hui O Nā Mo‘olelo Haumāna (Interview Results)

There were six themes that emerged from the interviews: *Essentiality of Achievement, Exposure to Meaningful Teaching Strategies, Someone Believed Before I*

Believed, Cultural Impacts on Educational Clarity, Power of Money, and Identity and Self-Efficacy.

The first and most prominent theme that was cited by all six interview participants was the importance or essentiality of achievement, especially pertaining to educational achievement. This was not simply about degree completion; it was having something tangible (e.g., a diploma or a completed class project) that represented and reminded them of the effort expended to attain a goal. In today's deficit-oriented, socio-educational landscape, "one finds in the communities of involuntary minorities cultural models that make them skeptical that they can get ahead merely through mainstream beliefs and strategies" (Ogbu, 1992, p. 291). As educators, it is important to recognize, but not placate, our students and their achievement of rigorous academics. Xiong, Allen, and Wood (2016) specifically suggest the impact that community college advisors can have on minority students by serving as academic and interpersonal validation agents. As this study shows, providing genuine affirmations of student potential and abilities is particularly impactful to the Native Hawaiian AAT student.

An overarching concept that connects the remaining five themes found in the interviews is related to the development of identity and self-worth. Early exposure to meaningful teaching practices left lasting impressions on Mālama and Aloha, propelling both to seriously consider the profession when they got older. For all of the participants, having someone they trust believe that they could be successful as a teacher played a significant role in their decision to pursue this career path. It is known that societal influences and family structures may impact minority achievement (Lynch & Oakford,

2014; Viadero & Johnston, 2000) and for these haumāna, having this belief and support from a trusted source made the successful pursuit of this career path seem feasible.

Other themes that emerged were the impacts that the Hawaiian culture and money had on student self-perceptions and experiences, especially pertaining to education. For those who already lived by the principles of Hawaiian culture on a daily basis or were exposed to it through influential family members, explaining educational concepts, strategies, and ideals using Hawaiian metaphors, mo‘olelo, and experiences helped them to clarify their own understanding and better articulate their viewpoints about education. However, even those who were not as knowledgeable about their cultural practices still minimally infused Hawaiian values in their vernacular and into their teaching philosophies. For these students, it is as if they knew what they believed in, but never really gave considerable thought to why they had these belief systems and where they originated from.

Money also seemed to play an influential and dichotomous role in the development of student self-perceptions and opportunities. It was the motivator for going to college and earning a degree in order to find a living wage occupation and create more career opportunities. However, money was also needed to fund the college education and acquiring those funds were not easy. Among some of the most cited college barriers to success has to do with money in the form of limited financial resources, lack of affordable housing, and rising tuition costs, all of which oftentimes require students to split their time between school and work responsibilities (Minner, 1995; Phillips, 2003; Reyes, 2001). There never seems to be enough readily accessible resources to fund a student’s college education, provide competitive teacher salaries, or be allocated to public

schools in order to create healthy, innovative learning environments. For some, like Maika'i, money was the most important aspect that defined who he was and led him to a life of selling narcotics, which was antithetical to the Hawaiian culture and teaching profession he would later grow to value. It was not until he learned to shift his life's focus from money (i.e., taking) to the Hawaiian culture and teaching (i.e., giving), did he begin to experience a sense of peace with his life choices. This feeling of knowing his purpose leads to the last theme found in the interviews titled, *Identity and Self-Efficacy*.

A shared trait among the student participants was that they possessed a sense of who they were or who they were becoming. It is important to reiterate that all of those interviewed had either graduated or were close to graduating from the AAT program and therefore, may have possessed a clearer vision of their educational and professional aspirations than if the interview had been done when they first started the AAT program. Still, the lesson from this finding is that those who had a clear understanding of their relationship with education and the Hawaiian culture as well as an awareness of how they came to develop that relationship, exhibited a strong sense of who they wanted to be as Native Hawaiian teaching professionals. Uncovering this finding presents a tremendous opportunity and responsibility to counseling and advising professionals who seek to assist Native Hawaiian students as they navigate the treacherous waters of postsecondary education. One of the greatest benefits of academic advising is that it can help students to understand their goals and the academic steps they need to take to achieve those goals, while building meaningful and lasting relationships (Hughes & Karp, 2004; McCusker & Osterlund, 1979). However, this study's finding challenges me to go beyond goal-setting and academic planning. It suggests that taking the time to guide the student through the

process of self-discovery by defining their own relationship with education and their culture has the potential to provide the student with a better understanding of who they are as Native Hawaiian students, where they hope to be as Native Hawaiian teachers, and how postsecondary education can help them get there.

Summary of Hui Ho‘oholomua (Focus Group Results)

Knowing that the role of an advisor can positively or negatively impact a student’s college experience, the goal of the focus group was to garner suggestions to transform program support services. Leading up to the students’ suggestions, organic discussions took place and as a result, focus group members additionally shared their reasons for choosing the AAT program and their experiences, factors and barriers that discouraged pursuing a career in teaching, and mechanisms of persistence.

The primary reasons students choose the AAT program was due to the close proximity to home, marketing notices, and affordable tuition. Their feedback on the experiences within the program focused on their feelings of support, encouragement, positivity, and quality instruction. However, the haumāna also experienced discouragement from those outside of the program regarding their choice to pursue a career in teaching. Other barriers cited by this group were lack of financial resources, a sense that college is for others and not for them, conflicting family responsibilities, and confusing application processes for financial aid. Each of these barriers have been noted in multiple studies on Indigenous and minority students, specifically highlighting lack of financial resources (Minner, 1995; Reyes, 2001), feelings of separation and alienation from dominant culture and campus community (Reyes, 2001; Thompson et al, 2013), struggles with balancing school and family commitments (Phillips, 2003), and difficulty

with navigating the postsecondary environment (Thompson et al, 2013). Finally, the two primary mechanisms of persistence were possessing a genuine passion to teach children and seeing someone similar to them succeed in the same educational goal that they were pursuing.

Upon reflecting on their experiences in the AAT program, the haumāna were then given the opportunity to recommend ways in which the program could further develop support services tailored to the specific needs of Native Hawaiian AAT students. The group made four recommendations which included the development of a one-stop online resource site, strengthening the bridge to transfer between community college and university teacher education programs, creating more opportunities for students to connect to their Hawaiian culture, and making a commitment to fight the negative Native Hawaiian stereotypes perpetuated, either consciously or subconsciously, by faculty, students, or community members.

Through examination of the mana‘o and mo‘olelo of 50 Native Hawaiian AAT students, a wealth of information regarding their values, experiences, motivations, challenges, and aspirations has been acquired. With each of these elements clearly defined, we can begin to weave together these choice pieces, melding the mana of each individual strand to create a gestalt of our nā pua⁴¹ and a moena sonorous with their message. In chapter 6, the implications of the study are discussed along with recommendations that include the voices of nā pua and suggestions for future research.

⁴¹ Flower, blossom, child, progeny, descendent (“Nā Puke Wehewehe ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i,” n.d.). At this point, I see a transformation in how I view my students, my haumāna. To reflect this thoughtful change of perspective, I refer to them interchangeably as haumāna or nā pua, where it is my kuleana to care for them and to nurture them as one would a favored blossom. They are also descendants in a never-ending lineage of kānaka ‘ōiwi. It is with humility, reverence, pride, and hope that I embrace and honor nā pua.

CHAPTER 6. IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Piko Ma'i

“E lawe i ke a'o a mālama a e `oi mau ka na `auao.”
“He who takes his teachings and applies them increases his knowledge.”
It is a reminder that when we learn and gain knowledge,
we have a kuleana to apply it, use it, and share it.
‘Ōlelo No‘eau, Number 328 (Pukui, 1983, p. 40)

When considering the educational status of minority and Indigenous students in postsecondary settings, institutional actors such as counselors, instructors, and administrators, tend to view the issue through a superficial, one-dimensional lens of diversity, treating it as a general characteristic of the institution rather than acknowledging the “particular circumstances of the racial and ethnic groups that constitute diversity” (Bensimon, 2005, p. 100). Even those that may be aware of the educational status of specific ethnic groups are “more likely to make stereotypical attributions, such as associating deficit with blacks and Hispanics and achievement with whites and Asians” (Bensimon, 2005, p. 100). Although an apathetic or cursory attempt to understand the intricacies of our students’ cultures, and in this case the Native Hawaiian culture, are not overtly discriminatory, neither do they promote an atmosphere of *real* equity and social justice. In regards to faculty of color, Johnsrud and Sadao (1998) identified the lack of Indigenous knowledge at the institutional level as the primary factor in creating a separatist environment, resulting in Native Hawaiian and minority faculty experiencing a sense of “otherness” in the workplace (p. 325). Bensimon (2005) feels that the reduction of inequities in higher education does not depend on the latest innovative training program or touted best practice, but rather “lies within individuals, specifically, in their capacity to develop equity as their cognitive frame” (p. 100).

The process of developing a conscious mindset for equity begins with educating ourselves about the cultures of the students that we serve. This study attempts, on a small scale, to do this by presenting the voices of Native Hawaiian Teacher Education haumāna with the intent to understand the cultural and educational experiences that have shaped their views of education and use that knowledge to inform student support services at Leeward Community College's Associate in Arts in Teaching program. As an action research narrative inquiry, the study's findings directly impact the way in which I, as the counselor for the AAT program, view my work and my relationships with my haumāna. In this respect, this final chapter is primarily written for my own benefit. Realizing that the implications of this study would impact the way I have been engaging in student support and advising activities, especially with my Native Hawaiian students, for the past twenty years, I had to ask myself if I was genuinely ready to hear what the data was telling me and make the necessary changes in my attitudes, actions, and interactions with my students. After some reflection, a quick prayer, and a big breath, I answered myself with a definitive "Yes."

Weaving Moena O Nā Pua

With the gathering of all the elements from Hui O Nā Mana'o Haumāna, Hui O Nā Mo'olelo Haumāna, and Hui Ho'oholomua, the weaving of the Moena O Nā Pua commences. I am influenced by the words of Benham and Heck (1998) who state:

The work of the storyteller is to recollect and re-collect events, then reflect on the events' multiple meanings, both personal and public and within their time and across time. This reflection extends the mind not only to what is known, but to what is surprising. Kaona is the goal here,

that is to tolerate ambiguity and shifting meanings in order to come to truth. As all things in Hawaiiana are practical, the process of storymaking presses the storyteller to make sense of these multiple thoughts within a current context; that is, to consider the political, the social, and the cultural. Once these thoughts are framed and articulated in a text, the storymaker must encourage – even propose – action. (p. xvi)

As I reflect on what has been revealed by nā pua through this process, I realize that although this is their story, I am the storyteller. If their voices and ideas are the key elements in the creation of Moena O Nā Pua, then I am the weaver. When I contemplate this role, I feel the weight of this awesome responsibility. Benham and Heck (1998) speak of the purposeful nature of mo‘olelo, the lesson to be learned, and the kaona⁴² to ponder in search of truth. McDougall (2016) provides a comprehensive discussion on the various explanations of kaona as articulated by revered Native Hawaiian historians, poets, and cultural authorities, but I gravitate towards her reference of the ‘Ōlelo No‘eau, “Pali ke kua, mahina ke alo” (The back is a cliff, the face a moon) to provide the context of kaona for this study. McDougall (2016) states that:

We can read ke kua (the back) and ke alo (the face or front) as a duality that mirrors how meaning is constructed in kaona. The front, which must shine like the moon, is the surface or literal meaning that most audiences can enjoy and read. The back, however, which must hold up the entire

⁴² Hidden meaning (“Nā Puke Wehewehe ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i,” n.d.). According to (McDougall, 2016), there are many explanations of kaona ranging from buried, multi-layered meanings to private jokes to sophisticated episodes of rhetoric intended for exclusivity in meaning-making.

structure of kaona with the straightness and strength of a cliff, comprises the layers of figurative meaning lying under the literal. (p. 39–40)

Ke alo, or the face of the study, resides in the findings as discussed in chapter 5.

It is important to understand and acknowledge the cultural values, practices, and language patterns of our students as well as their experiences and influences in developing their relationship with education and a teaching career. Beyond that, I asked myself, “What is the spirit of the findings? What is ke kua, the strong back, the foundation on which these findings are built? As I reflected on the mana of the words shared by nā pua, I approached my review as if reading a long, detailed, multifarious narrative. In this process, two questions drove my rumination, “What do nā pua want me to know? What do they want me to do?” As a result, the kaona, or the spirit of the findings, emerged and at last, I knew what message or pāwehe would appear on Moena O Nā Pua.

Culturally-Sustaining Identity of Achievement Model

Wheatley and Rogers (1998) explain the importance of identity development and maintenance for all living organisms.

Life organizes around identity. Every living thing acts to develop and preserve itself. Identity is the filter that every organism or system uses to make sense of the world. New information, new relationships, changing environments—all are interpreted through a sense of self. This tendency toward self-creation is so strong that it creates a seeming paradox. An organism will change to maintain its identity. (p. 14)

As I went back to the raw data, reviewed transcripts and survey results, and read my formative and summative findings, I realized that each morsel of data was inimitable

and significant in its individualism. I was careful not to trivialize the uniqueness of each mo‘olelo, comment, or suggestion by making broad-sweeping statements or forcing overarching categories just for the sake of presenting a Euro-American modeled and sanctioned research template. However, when I looked and listened closely, I was inspired by the message I was hearing. To me, my Native Hawaiian AAT students were giving me a roadmap to the successful development of their own identities grounded in four principles of building pilina or relationships with their Native Hawaiian culture, education, `ohana, and our AAT program.

As I looked deeper into the findings, my ever-present guiding principle of Nā Piko ‘Ekolu materialized, this time with each component serving as a cornerstone to the development of an identity and achievement model for Native Hawaiian Teacher Education student success. I found that my Hui O Nā Mo‘olelo Haumāna participants, who had all persisted in the AAT program and were continuing successfully in further education or employment as a teacher, had a well-developed sense of self in terms of their pilina with their culture, education, and their `ohana. Wilson et al. (2011) support this stating that “students who maintained a strong identity were able to strategically counter and critique the alienating effects of the university culture and its curriculum” (p. 703). In presenting a portion of their findings from the Hawaiian Cultural Influences in Education Study, Kana‘iaupuni and Ledward (2013) conclude that "great teachers have ample knowledge about content and instruction, and they also understand the fundamental importance of cultural relevance and relationships in their work with children and their families" (p. 153).

As counselors, we often focus on helping our students identify career goals, academic pathways, and resources needed to reach set goals. These are necessary steps when helping students navigate effectively through the chaotic maze of higher education policies and procedures. However, the message from nā pua is not just about identifying goals and reaching them, it permeates much deeper to their essence, their maui. It is about developing a sense of who they are. It is about rebirthing their spirit as kānaka ‘ōiwi, discovering and embracing their validity as haumāna, and preparing their path as future kumu.

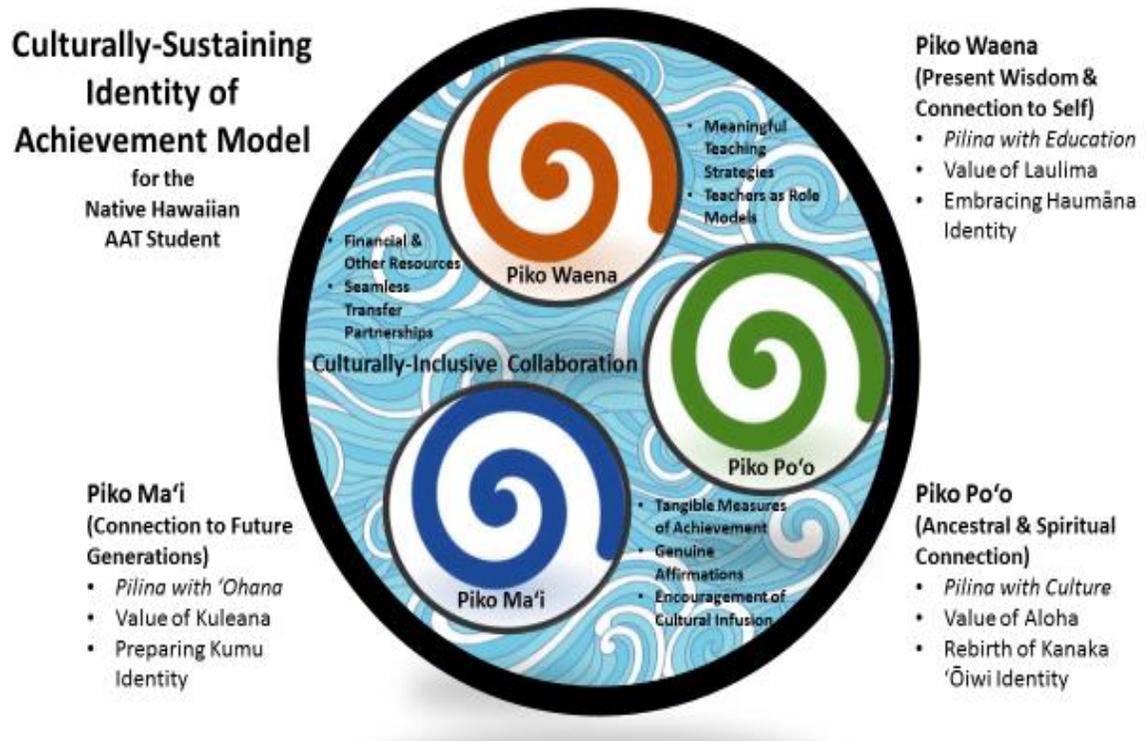


Figure 6.1 Culturally-Sustaining Identity of Achievement Model

Incorporating the spirit of the message gleaned from nā pua and inspired by the artistic design of the ‘Ekolu Piko bone carving created by local artisan and carver, Benjamin Muti, I developed an image (pictured above) to illustrate an achievement model whose cornerstones are grounded in reciprocity, culturally-sustaining pedagogy,

and the encouragement of a perpetual state of mindfulness for both students and their advisors. There are four components to the Culturally-Sustaining Identity of Achievement Model: **Piko Po‘o** (Ancestral/Spiritual Connection), **Piko Waena** (Present Wisdom/Connection to Self) and **Piko Ma‘i** (Connection to Future Generations), and the interaction between counseling and advising professionals and haumāna, which I describe as **culturally-inclusive collaboration**. The metaphor of the piko is critical to the model because it represents the centering and mindful connectivity to three areas of the Native Hawaiian AAT student’s development of an identity of achievement. The purpose of this model is to provide a guide that counseling and advising professionals (i.e., myself) can refer to and share with students in order to work together and build a sense of self that embodies the institutions of culture, education, and family.

In a study of 16 Aboriginal community college student experiences and perspectives on persistence, Muzzin (2015) states that the “major finding was that First Nations students experience a disconnect between the epistemology of Aboriginal peoples and ways of being in community colleges” (p. 53). By addressing the student’s context in the areas of education, culture, and family, the goal is to minimize feelings of alienation or non-belonging and show that pilina exists between all three in the support of the student’s individual achievement. This is important because as counselors, we help our students to recognize, and change if they so desire, their own realities. As stated earlier, Wilson (2008) posits that realities are multifarious and defined by relationships that we foster with all that exist in our cosmos. These pilina help to define our place and purpose in the world. The Culturally-Sustaining Identity of Achievement model can be used as a tool to help students determine and acknowledge their own connections to the

cosmos. It is through this self-discovery that they can then gain clarity in understanding who they truly are.

Piko Po‘o (Ancestral/Spiritual Connection)

This Piko Po‘o component of the model focuses on the student’s ancestral and spiritual connection to their ethnic culture, which in this case is Native Hawaiian. Represented by the color green, this piko represents growth and planting roots firmly in one’s cultural identity. There was an undeniable feeling of pride from all of the haumāna about their bloodline and being a part of the Hawaiian genealogy. Nā pua shared a common understanding of the importance of being connected with both the physical and non-physical aspects of their surroundings and living by Hawaiian values. The deficiency appeared when asked about their level of knowledge of their native language and the frequency and quality in which they participated in native practices. Developing opportunities by which pilina with their culture can be nurtured and doing so by incorporating the value of Aloha and fostering genuine affection for Indigenous tradition has the potential to awaken and strengthen their kānaka ‘ōiwi identities.

Piko Waena (Present Wisdom/Connection to Self)

In this model, the Piko Waena represents the student’s mindful connection to self. The goal in this area is to be able to understand and add to the wisdom and creativity that already exists in their na‘au and then use that knowledge to embrace who they are as they develop confidence and pride as haumāna. The red hue of the piko represents the passion that develops as nā pua learn about the craft of teaching and begin to see their place within the context of higher education. Through exposure to various teaching principles, strategies, styles and methods of delivery, nā pua begin to envision who they want to be

as kumu one day, using those ideals that align best with their personal and cultural orientations. Reflecting on their own educational experiences and influences will bring awareness to why they are the kind of student they are and can be used to further inform their goals and action plans.

Laulima is the guiding value as this piko requires a willingness to cooperate and work with others who have the expertise and resources to guide them on their path. In this piko, it is not the end-goal that is most important, rather, it is being present to where they are in their educational journey and taking the time to reflect on learning gained in the moment and its implications to their overall development. It is also identifying why they are in education and re-visiting that motivation often to ensure timely adjustments in goals, actions, and the attainment of supports and resources.

Piko Ma‘i (Connection to Future Generations)

The third piko is heavily influenced by the Hawaiian value of Kuleana that repeatedly appeared throughout all three methods of data collection. This sense of responsibility to perpetuate culture, knowledge, and hope to the next generation is the greatest motivating factor of the haumāna who participated in this study. Shaded in blue to represent the fluidity and life-giving aspects of water, this piko embodies the spirit of reciprocity and allows a free-flow of acquired knowledge and innate wisdom to pass from one generation to the next, ensuring that the life, language, values, practices, and essence of the culture and its people will be protected and preserved.

Piko Ma‘i represents a stage in which nā pua prepare for the next step in their journey, usually entering the workforce or transferring to a university teacher education program, that leads them closer to their goal of becoming kumu. It is also in this stage

that they clarify who they are and who they want to be as kumu. The relationship or pilina represented in Piko Ma'i is one with 'ohana. For this model, 'ohana is not only limited to one's genealogical kinship, but rather extended to those who influence and enhance their journey as a teaching professional. It emphasizes and requires reflection on how they intend to build pilina with their own haumāna. All of these steps work together to prepare the journey for nā pua to transition to their role of kumu.

Culturally-Inclusive Collaboration

The last component is not represented by piko because it ebbs and flows throughout all three areas of the model. Symbolized by the gently rolling, swirling swells of kai, culturally-inclusive collaboration depicts the support or buoyancy given to the process of exploring each piko and provides the context in which the development of the nā piko can occur. I base the concept of culturally-inclusive collaboration on the foundation of collaborative counseling and psychotherapy as presented by Pare (2012), where "counseling is unveiled as a cultural practice, and clients are viewed as cultural beings," (p. xxi) and where "counseling comes to be seen less as an exercise in correcting dysfunction or promoting personal growth and more as a cross-cultural collaboration capitalizing on people's unique knowledge and competencies" (p. xxii). In Pare's (2012) presentation of collaborative counseling, the goal is still intervention and therapeutic benefit for the client. However, in this educational setting, the outcome is less therapeutic and more exploratory and celebratory in nature. Culturally-inclusive collaboration is a method of interaction between student and academic counselor where the advising function is viewed as a collaborative partnership between both parties with

the intent to ground exploration and decision-making activities in the cultural, educational, and familial orientations and priorities of the student.

By definition, counselors and advisors are those who give advice to others and the rapport established usually supports a one-directional flow of information where the student shares the issue or asks the question and the advisor provides the answer. This automatically places advisors in a position of authority and assumed power, sometimes even before the two parties have met. Pare (2012) views interactions between counselors and clients (e.g., students) not only as “vehicles for delivering some form of helpful intervention distinct from the conversation itself” but rather, “the conversation *is* the intervention” where “counselors talk with clients, and the talk itself is what is helpful” (p. 5). Similarly, in culturally-inclusive collaboration the conversation is key. This interchange between advisor and student works best when advisors are open to diverse perspectives (especially those that are contradictory to their own), are willing to show their *humanity* in front of the student which may include humility and vulnerability, and are committed to promoting pride in culture and being open to its infusion throughout the advising process.

Regardless of job title and the supposed roles attached to it, those who enter into a culturally-inclusive collaboration define the relationship as it best suits their dispositions, backgrounds, and objectives of the session. It allows the flexibility for roles to be reversed, where the student is the expert in a particular area such as a specific life history experience or cultural practice or both parties could decide to work as equals and learn together in order to meet agreed-upon objectives. In this model, advisor and student do not just work together to determine the “what” (e.g., goals), “when” (e.g., timelines), and

“how” (e.g., action steps) of their intentions. The most important aspects are determining the “why” behind their actions and “who” are they doing this for beyond themselves. In this study, these were the motivational factors that kept our Native Hawaiian AAT students on track for their own achievements.

I created the concept of culturally-inclusive collaboration as a result of the benefits I gained from the authentic exchanges experienced with my haumāna in the Hui O Nā Mo‘olelo Haumāna and Hui Ho‘oholomua. If the three piko in the model are the templates for self-discovery and authentic reflection, culturally-inclusive collaboration is the method that promotes an environment where non-threatening, honest, and intimate discourse can take place. With a healthy interchange of ideas, values, cultural experiences, and belief systems as prompted by reflecting on the three piko, both advisor and student can gain greater awareness of their own evolving identities as culturally-sustaining educators.

Model Application to my Doctoral Journey

As a reflective practitioner scholar, creating a theoretical model that stimulates provocative discourse is secondary to developing a model of practice that can be rendered useful in my daily interactions with Native Hawaiian AAT students. In an effort to illustrate the utility of the Culturally-Sustaining Identity of Achievement Model, I reflected on its components in application to my own life, specifically my educational journey as a Native Hawaiian doctoral student.

In Summer 2014, I was admitted to the EdD of Professional Educational Practice cohort at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa with 25 other educational leaders and practitioners from P–20 levels of education in Hawai‘i. I applied to the competitive

program with the intent to hone my postsecondary leadership skills and academic prowess. Identity development was not my goal when I first entered the program, however, it has been one of my greatest takeaways. Reflecting on this rigorous three year educational epoch, I can now appreciate how the EdD program's diverse faculty and students, multifarious course readings, community projects, and reflective exercises have shaped my own culturally-sustaining identity of achievement.

The **Piko Po'o** of this model speaks to the connection we build with our ethnic and cultural roots. An unexpected benefit of my EdD doctoral journey was experiencing a rebirth of who I am as kanaka 'ōiwi. Various program influences, such as assigned course readings highlighting minority and Indigenous worldviews, my 'ōlelo Hawai'i speaking cohort peers and professors, the opportunity to conduct a consultancy group research project for a Hawaiian immersion school, and being sponsored by the EdD program to present at and experience the cultural pride and advocacy of the He Manawa Whenua International Indigenous Research conference, all contributed to the development of pilina with my Native Hawaiian culture.

One particularly poignant class activity, in my Social and Cultural Contexts of Education course, served as the catalyst to my cultural awakening. Led by instructors, Dr. Walter Kahumoku III and Dr. Lori Ideta, our class was divided into small groups of five or six students. Each small group had their own 'āina and was asked to develop the values of that island and its people. This first part of the activity fostered a sense of laulima and belongingness. We created 'āina that we believed in and were proud of. All but one person on the 'āina was then instructed to move on as a group to visit a neighboring island (i.e., rotate to another group's project). As the one left behind to

represent my original island, I experienced a sense of loss seeing my group move on as well as a kuleana to preserve what we created and adequately explain and share it with the new group coming to visit. When I found out that the visitors were allowed to take a portion of what my group had instilled in our island home, I started to downplay what I felt was most important because I did not want them to take away anything from our ‘āina. I strategically engaged the visitors in discussion so that they did not make their selection in time and my island remained victoriously untouched. When the next group of visitors arrived, I became suspicious and very protective. I was in disbelief when they took a piece of my island without asking. I felt violated. After the initial shock, I went into a practical, problem-solving mode trying to determine how I could make my ‘āina whole again, which I eventually did. However, it was not the same island I started with, and never would be again. In my course journal, I reflected on the activity and the feelings it provoked. I wrote:

In my heart, I knew that we could re-build [our ‘āina], but I also knew that it wouldn't be the same EVER again. Even if we had our island pieces returned to us, they would be altered and the scar of having these components literally ripped away from us would still be there. I was AMAZED at how much emotion went into every single stage of the activity and for the first time, I was beginning to understand what it felt like to be a Hawaiian (or a part of any Indigenous group) and have something taken away. (Thompson, EDEF 762 personal journal, p. 3)

In reflecting on the **Piko Waena** construct of the model, my EdD educational journey played a critical role in the development of my doctoral student identity.

Although the majority of my professional career had been within the realm of higher education, it had been over a decade since I had assumed the role of a student. In this context, strengthening my relationship with education not only as a provider (i.e., counselor or instructor), but from a consumer (i.e., student) perspective was the priority. This entailed reacquainting myself with the nuances of college such as locating library and research resources, applying for financial aid opportunities, and writing as a scholar as well as finding balance between work, school, and family responsibilities. In essence, I was reminded what my own students are faced with every day and as a result, rejuvenated my empathy for them. The Hawaiian value of *laulima* was also evident as I embraced my positionality as a doctoral student. Initially unsure of my place, role, and ability to contribute to the EdD cohort of professional educators, I soon understood that many peers felt as I did and together we grew as individual leaders and as a cohesive unit. We cooperated and helped one another so that no one would fall behind in their academic obligations, and in doing so, developed a greater sense of our own places within the program and the larger context of academia.

The **Piko Ma‘i** component of the model speaks about developing a kumu identity grounded in the value of *kuleana* to the next generations and building *pilina* with ‘ohana, however broadly it is defined. Although the term *kumu* is commonly referred to as teacher, it is also defined as the source, beginning, origin, reason, or goal (“Nā Puke Wehewehe ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i,” n.d.). To me, the **Piko Ma‘i** of the model represents the place and time when *haumāna* prepare for their next steps and contributions upon completion of the educational program. It is the beginning of the formation of their identity beyond the educational experience they are in. As an EdD student, I was given

ample opportunity to reflect on my leadership abilities and growth opportunities through self-directed and guided exercises, program projects, and responsive journaling to class readings and activities. I became self-aware of how I develop and sustain relationships with administrators, professors, cohort peers, haumāna, community members, friends, family members, and new associates. I discovered that *how* I relate to and treat others is just as important, if not more important, than *who* I develop pilina with. Reciprocity and a deep sense of kuleana to my ‘ohana (i.e., which I define as whatever group I am serving at the time) was the impetus for obtaining my doctorate and continues to serve as the foundation for my academic and career aspirations.

Lastly, the faculty and students associated with the EdD program worked together to develop an academically rigorous and stimulating environment that allowed **culturally-inclusive collaboration** to develop organically. A shared governance approach in terms of allowing student input into curriculum considerations and program processes created an atmosphere charged with open-mindedness and creativity. In addition, faculty took the time to learn about cohort students’ lives outside of the program. Social events, such as family potlucks at a classmate’s taro farm or baby showers for cohort members, allowed faculty and students to engage with one another outside of the classroom and embrace one another’s family members, thereby extending the EdD ‘ohana beyond the original cohort members.

During my doctoral journey, I experienced growth in each area within the Culturally-Sustaining Identity of Achievement Model. When I first applied to the program, I expected an evolution in my kumu identity, however, I did not anticipate the additional benefits of embracing my haumāna identity or connecting with my Native

Hawaiian culture. I had hoped for encouraging professors and supportive cohort members, but what I experienced was an authentic culture of caring and gained an extended 'ohana of educators, forever linked together by a passion to improve Hawai'i's educational systems. The Culturally-Sustaining Identity of Achievement Model will serve as my guide in providing my students with opportunities and experiences that clarify who they are in terms of where they come from, who they are in our program, and who they dream to be beyond Leeward Community College.

Recommendations

Although magnificent and intricate in design, the purpose of Kalaiokamalino's moena makaloa was not to astound viewers with her artistic craftsmanship, but rather to send a purposeful message to the highest level of Hawaiian monarchy at that time, King Kalākaua, urging him to consider the declining position of Native Hawaiians and to remove certain animal taxes (Rose, 1990). The Moena O Nā Pua renders a similar purpose. It provides a commentary on the phenomenon of the Native Hawaiian AAT student experience and what higher education professionals can do to support them. There is beauty in the message of the haumāna, but there is also a genuine plea for transformative changes to AAT student support systems.

Sagor (2002) believes that "the primary purpose of action research is to inform the decision-making of practitioners who wish to improve their performance" (p. 20). As such, the following recommendations serve as a professional list of things to do, or at the minimum, things to thoughtfully consider in order to improve my practice as a program counselor who works with Native Hawaiian students in a community college teacher education program. The following recommendations are presented as a result of the

findings from chapter 5 and are divided into two parts. The first section is a reiteration of what nā pua from Hui Ho‘oholomua identified as what they believed Leeward CC’s Associate in Arts in Teaching program could do in order to support the achievement of Native Hawaiian Teacher Education students while the second section presents additional recommendations from me and my perspective as kanaka noi‘i.

Recommendations from Nā Pua

There were four recommendations that were direct requests from the focus group participants of Hui Ho‘oholomua.

- 1) ***Develop a one-stop online resource site.*** The first recommendation by nā pua was the creation of a one-stop online resource that would provide timely information on the program, degree, course, and university transfer information. Although a site like this has been created and in use since 2013, it was evident that it is missing critical pieces of helpful financial aid and scholarship resource information. The students compared their experience to a site at a local university where they would fill out one scholarship application as a Native Hawaiian student and based on the one application, would be granted eligibility for a variety of Hawaiian-based scholarships. Currently, the AAT program does not have anything like this in place. Nā pua also urged that more detailed and step-by-step information be provided in terms of the varied university program offerings and articulation agreements, university admissions process, and resources to fund university programs. Lastly, better marketing of the website is needed so that students know it is

available and can refer to it on a regular basis for information throughout their tenure in the AAT program.

2) ***Reinforce the bridge between AAT and university teacher education***

programs. In addition to improving online resources that can guide students in the transition from the AAT to an articulated university teacher education program, more opportunities for assistance from the universities in navigating the transfer process is suggested. Currently, students do take advantage of the satellite university advising services where the AAT program invites university representatives to have one-on-one appointments at Leeward Community College with students interested in transferring to their programs. However, it was also suggested that workshops be held on the actual admissions process whereby students can complete their university and College of Education applications in a group setting and in the presence of the university advisors.

3) ***Create opportunities for cultural connections.*** One of the most interesting findings is that of the 50 haumāna that participated in this study, an overwhelming majority of 96% felt that it was important or very important to be connected to their Native Hawaiian culture, while only 70% felt connected or very connected. This sentiment was also reflected in the focus group discussions where all of the students indicated a desire to have a deeper connection to their Indigenous culture and that they would benefit, not only as students but as future teachers, from the AAT program supporting more cultural opportunities. Incorporating Hawaiian language and practices could

be done within the classrooms, as separate workshops or community events for personal development, or in one or two large-scale events. Another suggestion was the development of a Native Hawaiian AAT cohort program where courses, assignments, cohort activities, and field placement requirements would be heavily influenced by Hawaiian language, practices, and values. Currently, one AAT faculty member organizes outreach events and off-campus field trips that provide the blending of Hawaiian cultural practices and community service opportunities. Many AAT faculty members also innately exhibit and incorporate “Hawaiian-like” thought and values into their classrooms and student interactions. However, the AAT program as an entity is not a Hawaiian culturally-driven program. In truth, a change in this philosophical and cultural orientation would minimally require the input and discourse of the AAT faculty with some of the discussion questions asking, “How important is it to infuse Hawaiian culture, thinking, and practices into our AAT program? If so, in what ways do we intend to provide more cultural connectivity opportunities for our students?” Native Hawaiians and minorities have systematically been encouraged to be “bicultural” and assimilate to the dominant White culture in higher education (Johnsrud & Sadao, 1998). The universal lessons that the Hawaiian culture offers not only has the potential to strengthen the resolve of our Native Hawaiian students, but also has the ability to introduce our non-Native Hawaiian students to being *bicultural* by enhancing their current mindset with an Indigenous orientation rooted in Hawaiian values such as kuleana, hō‘ihi, laulima, mālama, ‘ohana,

and aloha. Simply stated, even though it may not be our current practice to officially identify and act as a Native Hawaiian-based program, I believe it is worth further exploration and discussion.

- 4) ***Fight the negative stereotypes.*** One of the most impactful statements shared in the focus group was by ‘Ekolu who said, “if you treat Native Hawaiian culture like it's important, then they [Native Hawaiian students] in turn will feel important.” Two centuries of the cultural displacement of Native Hawaiians has had an impact on the collective self-image of the Indigenous people as evidenced in the replies of today’s students who quickly and easily identified the negative stereotypes (e.g., angry, lazy, unintelligent, low achievers, entitled, etc.) associated with being Native Hawaiian. As an educator and proponent of equity and social justice, I had to ask myself, “What am I doing to fight these prejudicial assumptions? Are negative stereotypes perpetuated unintentionally, by both Native Hawaiians and non-Native Hawaiians, through apathy, inaction, and dispassionately objecting to incorrect and ignorant assumptions made about the Indigenous people of Hawai‘i? What am I prepared to do in order to be a warrior of activism and stand up for the rights of my people?” With the revitalization of the Hawaiian language and increasing interest in cultural traditions that have drawn global attention such as the Polynesian navigational system and the three-year worldwide Mālama Honua voyage of the Hōkūle‘a, there is opportunity to refute the negative stereotypes associated with Native Hawaiians and educate

the people of Hawai‘i (and the world) on the positive attributes and strengths of Hawai‘i’s original people.

Recommendations from Kanaka Noi‘i

According to Johnsrud and Sadao (1998), “in Hawai‘i, decolonization has implications for higher education as Hawai‘ians demand that greater numbers of Hawai‘ians be represented among students, faculty, and staff, and that their language, culture, and history be prominent in the curriculum” (p. 319). Therefore, the successful Native Hawaiian Teacher Education student deserves special acknowledgment because not only are they potentially adding to the college persistence and academic achievement rates of Native Hawaiians, they are also addressing the shortage of teachers and especially teachers of color, and serving as role models to the next generation of Native Hawaiian students. Understanding how to best support these students at their first introduction to higher education is critical to the perpetuation and *ripple effect* of Native Hawaiian achievement.

In addition to the recommendations from nā pua, this study’s findings have prompted me to make suggestions of my own, echoing the sentiments of Weber-Pillwax (2002), “If my work as an Indigenous scholar cannot or does not lead to action, it is useless to me or anyone else” (p. 169). The following recommendations are meant to enhance student support services for those enrolled in the Associate in Arts in Teaching program. These action items exist within the purview of my own authority to initiate and then seek out resources to support the action.

- 1) ***Coordinate university application and admissions workshops for transferring students.*** In these sessions, having an advisor from the

university who is willing to walk a group of students through the online application process would take the confusion or guesswork out of the process and aid in the transitioning of AAT students to university teacher education programs.

- 2) ***Create an alliance with Leeward CC's Hālau 'Ike O Pu'uloa Native Hawaiian Student Support Center (Hālau) in order to promote their services within the AAT program.*** The Hālau offers a variety of quality academic programs and cultural enrichment opportunities to Native Hawaiian students and those interested in learning more about Hawaiian culture. However, their office is located on the opposite end of the campus from where the majority of AAT students take their classes and study. This could be a deterrent to some of our students engaging in their programs. As Ho'oulu shared, "It's good that we have the Native Hawaiian Center definitely, but to be honest, even though I got invites, I never stepped in there ever. It's not that big of a campus, and it doesn't take that far to walk there but I think it's just the fact that I felt that it was its own thing. It wasn't really part of the AAT program." Initiating talks with the Hālau staff in order to brainstorm ways in which we can jointly support Native Hawaiian Teacher Education students would be the first step. Minimally, I would like to explore a more systematic referral system to their Ke Ala 'Ike⁴³ Native Hawaiian Achievement program

⁴³ Leeward CC's Ke Ala 'Ike program is the Native Hawaiian Student Achievement program where haumāna must meet academic (e.g., create an academic plan with counselor), cultural (e.g., interview a kupuna elder), and elective requirements (e.g., compose a mele or qualify for a national honor society). Ke Ala 'Ike scholars are provided with cultural and academic support and participate in a special ceremony of recognition.

or the plausibility of creating a track for Native Hawaiian Future Teachers in order to garner more student interest.

3) ***Identify, develop, and strengthen partnerships with off-campus Native***

Hawaiian support services. This study has provided me with the opportunity to gain an awareness of the needs of my Native Hawaiian AAT students that I did not previously have. It has shown me that I have to not only treat and nurture them as my haumāna, assisting them through the parameters of postsecondary education, but more importantly, I need to be there to enrich and develop their cultural heritage and identity. Given this, another action item for myself is to explore the various cultural enrichment resources and opportunities available outside of the campus to see if and how they may be incorporated into the AAT's support mechanisms. As an example, one of the most valuable resources to our Native Hawaiian Teacher Education students is the services of the Institute for Native Pacific Education and Culture (INPEACE). This non-profit organization strives to “nurture community members and empower them with specific knowledge and skills so they can realize a more productive, fulfilling life” (“INPEACE culture,” n.d.). Over the past ten years, a relationship of respect and cordiality has evolved between the members of the AAT program and INPEACE, however the synergistic potential of this alliance has not yet been fully realized. Exploring a stronger partnership through shared responsibilities in the support of Native Hawaiian Teacher Education students could involve a systematic dual-direction referral system to ensure that every Native Hawaiian AAT student who lives on the

Leeward coast is receiving services from both the AAT counselor and INPEACE. Other ways to partner might include joint recruitment efforts, grant endeavors, college workshop presentations, and cultural events.

- 4) ***Organize and/or participate in Native Hawaiian cultural training for myself and those who are interested (including faculty, staff, students, and their families in the AAT program).*** In order to help nā pua establish and maintain pride in their culture, we have to be knowledgeable or at least open to learning more about the culture too. The Hālau and other members of the Leeward CC campus regularly offer cultural enrichment workshops. Encouraging nā pua to take advantage of these opportunities by offering class credit or using what is learned as talking points in classes would be a way to tie in their cultural learning with their teacher education. Another option would be to organize guest speakers and cultural trainings that specifically tie in Hawaiian language, values, and practices to the teaching profession. Lastly, inviting family members of nā pua to all events should become regular practice.
- 5) ***Organize and/or participate in equity-mindfulness professional development training.*** Fighting institutional racism begins with the individual and changing their cognitive bias, whether intentional or not, towards the non-achievement of minority and Indigenous students (Bensimon, 2005). As much as we, as educators, do not want to believe that these biases exist in our practice, taking the time to really explore our assumptions or misconceptions about different student groups could be a healthy personal and professional growth opportunity. Self-exploration of known and unknown biases and how

we can recognize and counteract them to promote and sustain equity in higher education would be extremely beneficial in my role as a program counselor. It would be an appropriate “temperature check” and one that I would encourage my colleagues and even students to engage in.

- 6) ***Explore the feasibility of creating an Academic Subject Certificate⁴⁴ with a minimum of 12 credits (i.e., generally 4 classes) that awards students who take a combination of Education, Hawaiian language, and Hawaiian cultural courses.*** For several of our haumāna, having a diploma or something tangible that represents what they worked for was an important indicator of achievement that helped them to persist in college and gain self-efficacy. Creating a credential that would blend coursework from the AAT degree as well as Hawaiian language or cultural classes could help students build a greater sense of who they are and touch upon the three piko in the achievement model. In addition, if the classes were applicable to the AAT degree, then it would be a certificate gained while still pursuing the larger goal.
- 7) ***Work with Leeward CC’s Financial Aid Office to determine the feasibility of creating a scholarship portal specifically for Native Hawaiian students.*** In the focus group, ‘Ekahi had mentioned a university one-stop scholarship database that allowed her to complete one online application that was then used to determine eligibility for multiple funding sources. Determining the feasibility of developing something similar at Leeward Community College

⁴⁴ The Academic Subject Certificate is a supplemental college credential that requires a minimum 12 credit hours (“Leeward CC Catalog and Courses,” n.d.).

would minimally entail conversations with the campus Financial Aid office and then possibly lead to more conversations at the system level or with private scholarship providers. If a one-stop application portal is not possible, then providing easy access to the variety of scholarship and source fundings available for postsecondary education would be the next consideration.

- 8) *Use the principles established in the Culturally-Sustaining Identity of Achievement Model to guide and restructure my orientation, counseling, and class sessions.* Under this model, I take the time to purposefully help students build their sense of self as a Native Hawaiian, college student, and future teacher. The intended result of this collaboration in self-discovery will be a student who is clear in their purpose and context, both within and outside the realms of education. Developing sense of self through the guidelines of the model will be a primary objective and component of my retention strategy rather than just an accidental by-product of counseling and advising sessions that have traditionally focused on career goals, academic plans, and transfer information.

Implications for Future Research

The findings of this study revealed the Hawaiian values and beliefs that have impacted student relationships with education, the lessons learned by listening closely to the educational life history mo‘olelo of students, and the suggestions nā pua believed would be most beneficial to future Native Hawaiian Teacher Education student success. However, these findings have also prompted consideration of future research topics. The

following are additional suggestions for further scholarly research that could be both thought-provoking and rewarding.

- 1) Conduct a similar study with Native Hawaiian students enrolled in university teacher education programs exploring their mo‘olelo and what it reveals about student relationships with education and culture.
- 2) Conduct a similar study but with a different yet homogenous ethnic or student group, such as Filipino-Americans or military and military dependents.
- 3) As an Indigenous action researcher, implement some of the proposed recommendations and evaluate them for progress and effectiveness.
- 4) Conduct a narrative inquiry study on faculty equity-mindfulness where faculty share their perceptions before, during, and after diversity and equity professional development training and its impact on their practice.
- 5) Conduct a study on those who did not persist in the AAT program and through their mo‘olelo determine reasons why and what, if any, supports could have made a difference in their retention.
- 6) Conduct studies on Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian students enrolled in a Multicultural Education or Hawaiian studies course to determine what, if any impact, has the course content had on their assumptions and biases towards Native Hawaiians and other ethnic groups.
- 7) Interview the families of Native Hawaiian teacher education students to determine what their relationship with education is and how that supports or hinders student achievement.

My Mana‘o

In an interview with action researcher champion, Patricia McGuire, Horwitz and Howton (2016) share her words of wisdom regarding the importance of action research and her belief “in the power of asking the questions and creating space for others to lift their voices in revealing the complicated ways that power and privilege work” (p. 109). This study’s objectives focused on providing opportunity for student voice, sharing mo‘olelo and artifacts, honoring context, making meaning, and improving practice. Each data piece, represented by the makaloa sedge stems, was then selected and woven into a collective mo‘olelo and artifact called Moena O Nā Pua, whose purpose was to inform and transform student supports in the AAT program.

As kanaka noi‘i embedded within the research, I also shared my background, my reflections on my haumāna, and the application of the Culturally-Sustaining Identity of Achievement Model through my own lived doctoral educational experiences. What I did not yet share was my own artifact. Would it be a picture of my inspirational ‘ohana, a childhood book, or maybe my academic regalia? I pondered the same question I asked of my students, “What artifact best represents an experience or story in my life that has impacted my views on education?”

For me, the answer was simple. I offer you this paper as my artifact. It is the culmination of my past educational influences, my present doctoral journey, and my hope for improvement as a professional counselor and educator. This paper is more than an academic writing piece, it is a documentary of my relationship with education. It represents countless meetings and discussions I have had with mentors, colleagues, and students about Hawaiians and education; shared meals with my haumāna and advisors

that strengthened pilina; quiet, reflective, and solitary moments of doubt and determination; an overwhelming sense of kuleana to honor those in this study; and above all, a deep sentiment of gratitude for their selfless sharing. The Oli Mahalo chant by Kēhau Camara is a candid representation of what this research experience, and the emotions accompanying this journey, have been for me.

Oli Mahalo

(by Kēhau Camara)

Ūhola ‘ia ka makaloa lā
The makaloa mat has been unfurled

Pū‘ai i ke aloha lā
In love, food was shared

Kūka‘i ‘ia ka hā loa lā
The great breath has been exchanged

Pāwehi mai nā lehua
The lehua honors and adorns

Mai ka ho‘oku‘i a ka hālāwai lā
From zenith to horizon

Mahalo e nā akua
Gratitude and thanks to the Gods

Mahalo e nā kūpuna lā ‘eā
Gratitude and thanks to our beloved ancestors

Mahalo me ke aloha lā
Mahalo me ke aloha lā
Gratitude, admiration, thanks, and love
To all who are present, both seen and unseen

As I reflect on my dissertation journey, I knew from the beginning that I wanted to do an action research narrative inquiry, even before I knew what those terms meant. I wanted to hear the stories (i.e., mo‘olelo) of my students and see what ideas, thoughts, and meanings (i.e., mana‘o) could be derived from their experiences to inform

improvements in my practice. I wanted to focus on my Native Hawaiian haumāna to not only identify with them, but in the process, to reconnect with myself and who I am as kanaka ʻōiwi. This study, and all the thoughts, emotions, and energies that supported it, is a living, spiritual extension of who I am and what I have experienced on this journey.

In my practice (and the practice of any education professional), we need to ask ourselves if the goal of the college experience is to merely have students jump through institutional academic hoops in order to earn a paper diploma that says to the world that they can finish *something* and are employable, and most importantly, that we are the institution that got them there. Or, could the goal be to nurture the holistic development of the student whereby they understand, appreciate, and sustain who they are and their place in the world? If it is former, then the focus and efforts of the educational professional can stop at familiarizing oneself with the procedures, policies, technology tools, and degree requirements that will help the student navigate through the postsecondary experience. For many faculty and even students, this is enough. A competent, knowledgeable advisor is always a benefit to a struggling, yet determined student.

However, for those counseling and advising professionals who seek more, who philosophically believe that their role does not just end with providing relevant and timely information but also encompasses being open to the receiving and free-flow exchange of information, experiences, and ideals, I appeal to you. Make the time, though you may not have it, to understand the beautiful phenomenon of each student and the context in which they exist. What is the moʻolelo of their moena? What is the message they want you to hear but don't know how to ask? Reach out and encourage them to

reach back. Explore their Nā Piko 'Ekolu to develop awareness and authentic connection with their past selves and cultural foundations, present selves and student orientations, and future selves and teacher aspirations. The efforts will lead to a gestalt of intricate interactions resulting in an improved, more meaningful pilina with them and with yourself. In my context as a teacher education counselor, there is no greater achievement.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: IRB Approval



UNIVERSITY
of HAWAII
MĀNOA

Office of Research Compliance
Human Studies Program

March 7, 2016

TO: Erin Thompson
Sarah Twomey, Ph.D.
Principal Investigators
College of Education

FROM: Denise A. Lin-DeShetler, MPH, MA
Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Denise A. Lin-DeShetler".

SUBJECT: CHS #23791 - "From Mo'olelo to Mana'o: Transforming Post-Secondary Support Systems for Native Hawaiian Teacher Education Students (An Action Research Narrative Inquiry)"

This letter is your record of the Human Studies Program approval of this study as exempt.

On March 7, 2016, the University of Hawai'i (UH) Human Studies Program approved this study as exempt from federal regulations pertaining to the protection of human research participants. The authority for the exemption applicable to your study is documented in the Code of Federal Regulations at 45 CFR 46.101(b) (Category 2).

Exempt studies are subject to the ethical principles articulated in The Belmont Report, found at <http://www.hawaii.edu/irb/html/manual/appendices/A/belmont.html>

Exempt studies do not require regular continuing review by the Human Studies Program. However, if you propose to modify your study, you must receive approval from the Human Studies Program prior to implementing any changes. You can submit your proposed changes via email at uhirb@hawaii.edu. (The subject line should read: Exempt Study Modification.) The Human Studies Program may review the exempt status at that time and request an application for approval as non-exempt research.

In order to protect the confidentiality of research participants, we encourage you to destroy private information which can be linked to the identities of individuals as soon as it is reasonable to do so. Signed consent forms, as applicable to your study, should be maintained for at least the duration of your project.

This approval does not expire. However, please notify the Human Studies Program when your study is complete. Upon notification, we will close our files pertaining to your study.

If you have any questions relating to the protection of human research participants, please contact the Human Studies Program at 956-5007 or uhirb@hawaii.edu. We wish you success in carrying out your research project.

1960 East-West Road
Biomedical Sciences Building 8104
Honolulu, Hawaii 96822
Telephone: (808) 956-5007
Fax: (808) 956-8683

An Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Institution

Appendix B: Leeward Community College Approval



UNIVERSITY of HAWAII
LEEWARD
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Counseling & Guidance

March 22, 2016

TO: Manuel Cabral
Chancellor, Leeward Community College

FROM: Erin N.K. Thompson 
Associate Professor, CC (Education Counselor), Teacher Education

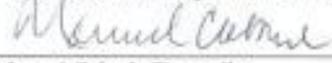
This memorandum is to notify you that I am currently engaged in research as part of the EdD in Professional Educational Practice doctoral program at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. My research will seek to document, examine, and utilize the educational experiences and stories of my Native Hawaiian Teacher Education students to inform postsecondary support system improvements in Leeward CC's Teacher Education program. As part of the research process, I will be collecting data from our Office of Policy, Planning, and Assessment, review historical and current Leeward Community College documents and reports, collect and review student demographic information from Star and Banner systems, as well as review survey, interview, and focus group data collected from current and former Leeward Community College Teacher Education students.

Student participation in this research will be voluntary. If students decide not to fill out the survey or engage in an interview or focus group, it will not impact their academic standing in any way. At no time will any data be used in a way that personally identifies the student research participants, nor will any specific information be used without the students' written consent.

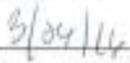
If you have any questions about this project, please contact me via phone at (808) 455-0392 or email at enkt@hawaii.edu. You can also contact my faculty advisor, Dr. Sarah Twomey, at (808) 956-5898 or email at twomey@hawaii.edu. If you have any questions about rights of research participants in this project, you can contact the University of Hawai'i, Human Studies Program, by phone at (808) 956-5007 or by email at uhirb@hawaii.edu.

If you agree to give your permission, as the administrator, for such research to be conducted at Leeward Community College, please sign below. Mahalo for your consideration.

I give Erin N.K. Thompson permission to conduct research on Native Hawaiian Teacher Education student experiences at Leeward Community College.



Manuel Cabral, Chancellor



Date

Appendix C: Leeward CC Teacher Education Program Approval



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII
LEEWARD
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Counseling & Guidance

March 22, 2016

TO: Roberta Martel
Teacher Education Coordinator, Leeward Community College

FROM: Erin N.K. Thompson 
Associate Professor, CC (Education Counselor), Teacher Education

This memorandum is to notify you that I am currently engaged in research as part of the EdD in Professional Educational Practice doctoral program at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. My research will seek to document, examine, and utilize the educational experiences and stories of my Native Hawaiian Teacher Education students to inform postsecondary support system improvements in Leeward CC's Teacher Education program. As part of the research process, I will be collecting data from our Office of Policy, Planning, and Assessment, review historical and current Leeward Community College documents and reports, collect and review student demographic information from Star and Banner systems, as well as review survey, interview, and focus group data collected from current and former Leeward Community College Teacher Education students.

Student participation in this research will be voluntary. If students decide not to fill out the survey or engage in an interview or focus group, it will not impact their academic standing in any way. At no time will any data be used in a way that personally identifies the student research participants, nor will any specific information be used without the students' written consent.

If you have any questions about this project, please contact me via phone at (808) 455-0392 or email at enkt@hawaii.edu. You can also contact my faculty advisor, Dr. Sarah Twomey, at (808) 956-5898 or email at twomey@hawaii.edu. If you have any questions about rights of research participants in this project, you can contact the University of Hawai'i, Human Studies Program, by phone at (808) 956-5007 or by email at uhirb@hawaii.edu.

If you agree to give your permission, as the administrator, for such research to be conducted at Leeward Community College, please sign below. Mahalo for your consideration.

I give Erin N.K. Thompson permission to conduct research on Native Hawaiian Teacher Education student experiences at Leeward Community College.



Roberta "Bobbie" Martel, Program Coordinator – Teacher Education Program

3/28/16
Date

Appendix D: Recruitment Flyer



E ala! E alu! E Kuilima!

Up! Together! Join Hands!- 'ōlelo no'ēesu

Are you Native Hawaiian or Part-Hawaiian?

Are you a current or former AAT (Teaching) major from Leeward CC?

Are you at least 18 years old?

If the answer is **YES...**

Erin Thompson (formerly Erin Loo) would like to invite you to participate in a Native Hawaiian Student Case Study.

The purpose of this study is to document, examine, & utilize the educational experiences and stories of Native Hawaiian Teacher Education students to inform student support systems in Leeward CC's AAT program.

Participation in this research study consists of three (3) steps:

- ⇒ Completion of a survey consisting of both multiple choice and short answer questions. (Approximately 15 minutes)
- ⇒ A "talk story" interview session (Approximately 60-90 minutes)
- ⇒ A small group/hui session where initial research findings are shared and ways to improve supports for Native Hawaiian students explored (Approximately 60-90 minutes)

Be a part of a movement to serve future Native Hawaiian Teachers!

To learn more about the study, contact:

Erin Thompson

Email: enkt@hawaii.edu Phone: 808.455-0392.

MAHALO NUI LOA!

Appendix E: Consent Form

UH Mānoa Ed.D. in Professional Educational Practice Erin Thompson

Agreement to Participate in a Native Hawaiian Teacher Education Student Study

My name is Erin Thompson and I have been the Education Counselor at Leeward Community College since January 2007. I am currently participating in a doctoral program with the College of Education, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and am conducting a dissertation study that will explore the educational experiences of Native Hawaiian Teacher Education students. The purpose of this study is to document, examine, and utilize these educational experiences and stories of Native Hawaiian Teacher Education students to inform student support systems in the Associate in Arts in Teaching (AAT) program. I am asking for your kōkua and participation in this study because:

1. You are at least 18 years old.
2. You are a Native Hawaiian or Part-Hawaiian.
3. You are a current student or graduate of the Associate in Arts in Teaching program.

Activities and Time Commitment: Participation in this project will consist of completing an electronic survey consisting of both multiple choice and short answer questions. Completion of the survey will take approximately 15 minutes. Participation will also consist of a “talk story” or interview session, lasting approximately 60-90 minutes, at a time and location convenient for you. You will be asked to share stories about your experiences in education and select artifacts that best describe your experiences in school. These interview sessions will be audio-recorded and transcripts of the interviews will be made available to you for review. No personal identifying information will be included with the research recordings or results. A final component will be participation in a focus group session where initial findings are summarized and ways to improve support services for Native Hawaiian Teacher Education students will be explored.

Benefits and Risks: There will be no direct benefit to you for participating in the interview or focus group. However, it is my hope that this research project will allow participants an opportunity to reflect, connect, and be inspired by their own stories. Also, the results of this project will help me and others who provide college support to Native Hawaiian students improve their services.

I believe there is little risk to you in participating in this research project. If you become uncomfortable, we can take a break, skip the question, or stop the session. You can also withdraw from the project anytime.

Confidentiality and Privacy: During this research project, I will keep all information in a safe and secure location. Only myself and my research advisors will have access to this data. The University of Hawai‘i Human Studies Program also has the right to review research records for this study.

After transcribing the interviews, I will erase or destroy the audio recordings. When I report the results of my research project, I will not use your name or any other personally identifiable information. Instead, I will use a pseudonym (fake name) for your name and report my findings in a way that protects your privacy and confidentiality to the extent allowed by law.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in this project is completely voluntary. You may stop participating at any time. If you stop being in the study, there will be no penalty or loss of benefits to you.

You will receive a gift certificate for your time and effort in participating in this research project.

Questions: If you have any questions about this study, please contact me via email at enkt@hawaii.edu or phone at 808.455.0392. You can also contact my faculty advisor, Dr. Sarah Twomey, at 808.956.5898 or via email at twomey@hawaii.edu. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you may contact the UH Committee on Human Studies at 808.957.5007 or uhirb@hawaii.edu.

Please keep the document for your records.

If you agree to participate in this project, please sign and date page 3 of this document and submit to Erin Thompson either via email (enkt@hawaii.edu) or mail to:
Leeward Community College, Attn: Erin Thompson
Education Building, Room ED-210C
96-045 Ala Ike, Pearl City, HI, 96782

Appendix F: Survey Questionnaire

Native Hawaiian Teacher Education Survey

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study. The purpose of this survey is to gather preliminary information about your experiences as a Native Hawaiian. No names will be revealed in the report findings. There are no right or wrong answers...only your answers! Mahalo nui loa for taking the time to do this survey. E ala! E alu! E kuilima!

General

1. Where were you born?
2. How many years have you lived in Hawai‘i?

Native Hawaiian Identity

3. In your opinion, what does it mean to have a “Native Hawaiian Identity?”
4. How connected do you feel to your Hawaiian culture?
(Not Connected) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Connected)
5. How important is it for you to feel connected to your Hawaiian culture?
(Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)
6. List any Hawaiian practices you participate in.
7. How often do you participate in Hawaiian practices.
(Rarely to Never: <6 times/yr) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very often: 1+ times/wk)
8. List any Hawaiian values you practice or live by.
9. How often do you practice Hawaiian values.
(Rarely to Never) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very often)
10. How familiar are you with the Hawaiian language?
(Not familiar: Few to No words) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very familiar: Speak/Understand)
11. Who, if anyone, has been the most influential person in sharing the Hawaiian culture with you? How did this person influence or shape your view of being a Native Hawaiian?

Student Identity

12. How do you define “education?” What does it mean to you?
13. How important is it to obtain a high school degree?
(Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)
14. How important is it to obtain a college degree?
(Not Important) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very Important)
15. Who, if anyone, has been the most influential person in shaping your views of education? How did this person impact your thoughts on education?

Future Teacher Identity

16. Why do you want to become a teacher?
17. Who, if anyone, has been the most influential person in helping you choose teaching as a career? How has this person impacted your views of the teaching profession?
18. Were there any Native Hawaiian teacher role models for you in school?
Yes No
19. Please describe your Native Hawaiian Teacher role model(s).

Next Steps...

20. Please select only one of the following.
- a. I am willing and able to participate in an INTERVIEW to further share my experiences in education.
 - b. I am willing and able to participate in a FOCUS GROUP to brainstorm ways in which Native Teacher Education students can be best supported.
 - c. I am willing and able to participate in BOTH an INTERVIEW and FOCUS GROUP.
 - d. I am unable to further participate in this study.

Appendix G: Interview Protocol and Questions

Protocol and Questions for Interviews

Interview Protocol Notes:

- Before beginning each interview, introduce myself as the researcher, give a background of the research study, and ask the interviewee if he/she has any questions.
- Remind the interviewee that their participation is voluntary and that he/she is able to refrain from answering a question or stop the interview at any time.
- If the interviewee is comfortable, begin the interview session with an appropriate oli or blessing.
- With permission, take a picture of the artifacts provided.
- After the interview, thank the participant for his/her time, ask if he/she has any questions, and inform them of next anticipated steps in the research process.
- Present the interviewee with a makana or gift to show appreciation for their time.

Semi-Structured Interview Questions:

Background Information

1. Where are you from and where did you grow up?
2. Tell me about your 'ohana. Who do you consider to be in your 'ohana? What is the role you play in your 'ohana?
3. What is your career goal?
4. Where did you go to school (i.e. elementary, secondary, and college)?

Educational Experiences and Stories

5. I have asked that you bring in three (3) items or artifacts, each representing a specific incident or story in your life that has impacted your views on education. One artifact should represent a story about a time in the past (e.g., K-12 school experiences), another should represent why you came to college and/or your college experiences, and the third item should represent how you see your future self within education. Can you share these with me now?
 - a. How did these incidents impact your views on education?
 - b. How did these experiences influence how you feel about your role and relationship with education?
 - c. How did each these scenarios impact your views about who you are as a student? A Native Hawaiian? A future teacher?
 - d. Please give me one word that describes your relationship, your connection, your feeling towards education.

Education through a Native Hawaiian Lens

6. In what way, if any, has your Hawaiian culture influenced your values or views on education (e.g. what it should be, what it looks like, how important it is)?
7. Oftentimes Native Hawaiians are depicted as not being very successful in school environments. As a Native Hawaiian, what barriers or challenges have you experienced throughout your school career?
8. When faced with challenges in school, what inspired you to persist and/or complete your degree?

Experiences in AAT Program

9. Why did you choose Leeward Community College's Associate in Arts in Teaching (AAT) program?
10. What, if any, experiences in the AAT program supported your progress towards obtaining your degree?
11. What, if any, experiences in the AAT program inhibited your progress towards obtaining your degree?
12. What could the AAT program do (or have done) to better support your experiences in college?
13. In what ways has the AAT program supported or hindered your progress towards your career goal?

Closing

14. How would you describe your K-12 school experiences? What kind of student were you?
15. How would you describe your college experiences? What kind of student are you now?
16. How have you evolved as a student from your elementary to your current college student status? In what ways are you the same student? In what ways are you different?
17. Do you have anything more that you would like to share?
18. Do you have any questions for me?

Appendix H: Focus Group Protocol and Questions

Protocol and Questions for Focus Groups

Focus Group Protocol Notes:

- Welcome participants, introduce myself as the researcher, review the purpose of the action research study, and if all are comfortable, begin the session with an appropriate oli or blessing.
- Allow focus group members to introduce themselves and share a brief statement about why they have decided to participate in the focus group.
- Briefly present initial findings from the interviews conducted and any emerging themes.
- Explain the format of the focus group. I will present three questions for the group to consider. After each question is presented, I will allow a 2 min reflection time and encourage participants to jot down notes or ideas. I will then pose the question again and ask for the group to brainstorm ideas and encourage discussion. I will provide poster paper and pens and record their ideas.
- As the facilitator, I will be sure to set a positive tone, ensure all have a voice, probe for complete answers, and monitor time.
- At the close of the focus group, I will thank participants, give them contact information for further follow up if needed and explain the next steps in the research process.
- I will end the session with the presentation of makana or gifts to each participant. Food will also be available at this session.

Script:

- Re-search is a process of re-looking at issues by taking a fresh look together. And so we search again. Focus group sessions are one way for people together to take a re-look. We are all re-looking at what it takes to help NH students succeed in college and I need your help.
- You will hopefully learn by hearing each other and we will learn from hearing you and you may learn from hearing some of our questions and from our input that we make from time to time—so it will be like a learning experience for us all. So we can consider that we are all re-searching together today.
- I want to encourage you to talk to each other, share with each other, and not just talk with me.

Focus Group Questions:

1. Introduce yourself and why did you choose Leeward Community College's Associate in Arts in Teaching (AAT) program?
2. How would you describe your educational experiences in the AAT program?

3. What are some of the barriers that Native Hawaiian students face in obtaining a college degree?
4. What do Native Hawaiian college students need in order to be successful in school, especially in college?
5. What kinds of supports are most effective in addressing Native Hawaiian Teacher Education student needs?
6. What are some ways to motivate Native Hawaiians to succeed in college?
7. What would you like the world to know about Native Hawaiian Teacher Education students? What message would you like to share?

GLOSSARY OF HAWAIIAN TERMS
(In Hawaiian Alphabetical Order)

A

aho cordage
 ahupua‘a land division
 ‘āina land
 alaka‘i leader
 aloha love
 ‘aumakua deified ancestors

E

‘ekahi one
 ‘elua two
 ‘ekolu three
 ‘ehā four

I

‘ili bark

O

‘ohana family
 ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i Hawaiian language
 ‘Ōlelo No‘eau Hawaiian proverbs

U

‘uhane soul, spirit

H

hānai foster child, adopted
 haole White person
 haumāna student
 hō‘ihi respect
 ho‘olauna to introduce oneself
 ho‘oulu to grow
 hui group
 hula kahiko ancient form of hula
 hula ‘auwana modern form of hula

K

kai ocean, sea
 kamaha‘o wondrous, amazing
 kamali‘i children

K (continued)

kanaka noi‘i researcher
 kānaka ‘ōiwi Native Hawaiians
 kānaka maoli Native Hawaiians
 kapa tapa made from wauke
 kapu forbidden, prohibition
 Ke Akua God
 kolohe rascal, mischievous
 kuleana responsibility
 kumu source; teacher
 kupuna respected elder

L

lā‘au lapa‘au medicine
 lāhui nation, race, tribe
 laulima cooperation
 lo‘i irrigated terrace for taro

M

mahalo Thank you
 maika‘i good
 makaloa sedge plant
 makau fish hook
 makua parent
 mālama to take care of
 mana‘o thought, idea
 maui life force, essence
 mele song
 moena mat
 moku district, island, section
 mo‘olelo story
 mo‘opuna grandchild

N

na‘au gut, seat of wisdom

P

pāwehe geometric patterns
 piko navel, center
 pilina relationship
 pua flower, blossom, child

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