

‘Ike ‘Āina: Native Hawaiian Culturally Based Indigenous Literacy

ku‘ualoha ho‘omanawanui

‘Ike ‘Āina (knowledge from/about land) is a culturally rooted Hawaiian approach to place-based learning that is useful in teaching writing and cultivating indigenous literacy. This article explores one instructor’s experience with implementing ‘Ike ‘Āina as culturally based literacy promoting the goals of the Native Hawaiian education movement. A discussion of differences between ethnic, cultural, and indigenous literacy is included, and specific Hawaiian examples are provided. By providing students with experiences on the ‘āina (land) and incorporating it into the reading/writing process, a deeper understanding of how our ancestors related to the ‘āina, expressed in their oral and written compositions, is gained, strengthening both in the process. Thus developing ‘Ike ‘Āina as part of a culturally relevant curriculum supports a more well-rounded idea of indigenous literacy, nurturing and solidifying cultural links between student, family, and ‘āina.

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Jumping off the pier
Sun sinking into deep seas
Relaxing day's end

Up the hill we climb:
Rising like the distant sun—
Holomoana

Holomoana,
Heiau of our kūpuna
Who are still with us

The currents ripple,
Form a directional path
To ancient homelands
(ho'omanawanui, 2003, p. 50)

This article focuses on utilizing 'Ike 'Āina, a form of place-based learning as an indigenous Hawaiian approach to teaching writing and cultivating culturally based literacy with Native Hawaiian and other *haumāna* (students).¹ The development of this approach is inspired by the work of other indigenous scholars who have addressed the issue of indigenous models of education, such as Meyer (2003), Kahakalau (2004), Kaiwi and Kahumoku (2006), and McDougall (2006). The primary research questions around which this approach was developed are: What is indigenous literacy in a Native Hawaiian context? What kinds of models and contexts can be developed to inspire and educate Hawaiian learners? And lastly, how can its implementation have positive outcomes for Hawaiian communities?

The first part of this article explores 'Ike 'Āina and the concept of indigenous literacy. I begin by discussing the varying definitions of literacy as used in educational settings, including the differences among ethnic, cultural, and indigenous literacy. The second part provides specific examples of how I have implemented and adapted Native Hawaiian culturally based indigenous literacy for different ages and learning levels.

The term 'Ike 'Āina can be translated as knowledge (*'ike*) about land (*'āina*), which suggests the Western discipline of geography or geology. From an indigenous Hawaiian perspective, however, the term includes, as Meyer (2003) wrote, "learning

from the land” (p. 8). This *mana*‘o (thought) is reflected in the *‘ōlelo no‘eau* (proverb) *He ali‘i ka ‘āina, he kauwā ke kanaka*, “The land is the chief served by the people” (Pukui, 1986, p. 62). ‘Ike ‘Āina emphasizes oral traditions, cultural memory, and experience or a relationship with the ‘āina, aspects of our traditional literature that are recognized and encouraged in the development of Native Hawaiian creative writing curriculum (McDougall, 2006). Research on indigenous literacy in Australia supports this concept. Williams-Kennedy (2004) wrote,

For many Indigenous cultures, their lore explains how the land was shaped by the creation beings as these creatures traversed the land. The stories of these feats have been orally handed down continuously to each successive generation for more than 40,000 years.

The natural features within the homelands of each indigenous cultural group are therefore the symbols that contain important information. Indigenous people have drawn on this information to explain their origins, to make sense of their world and to practice and maintain their cultures. Reading the land is therefore only possible within the context of stories, lores, and ways of relating to each other and their homelands. (p. 89)

One way this connection between Native Hawaiian and ‘āina is demonstrated is through the myriad compositions from ancient to modern times of *mo‘olelo* (history/story), *oli* (chant), and *mele* (song). It is embodied in the integral cultural concept of *aloha ‘āina* (love of the land or of one’s country), “a very old concept, to judge from the many sayings (perhaps thousands) illustrating deep love of the land” (Pukui & Elbert, 1986, p. 21).

In my experience as writer and teacher, I believe it is important to incorporate as fully as possible the concept of ‘Ike ‘Āina into the learning environment. As such, I have effectively implemented ‘Ike ‘Āina as an approach to promote literacy from an indigenous perspective in multiple environments with different age groups. While focusing on the Native Hawaiian learner, I have used it in my classrooms with non-Hawaiian students with positive results.

As we educate students in a globalized 21st century, one may ask why teaching, incorporating, or promoting literacy from a Native Hawaiian perspective is important, or how it is beneficial to student success. The inclusion of such content serves several important purposes. First, it supports a sense of well-being and encourages positive self-esteem of Native Hawaiian students. In studying the incorporation of Mexican American literature into mainstream classrooms on the continental United States, Gollnick and Chinn (1990) discovered that “positive ethnic affiliations...greatly influence individual development in many ways, including: lifestyle choices, values, opinions, attitudes, and approaches to learning” (quoted in Escamilla, 1996, p. 272). Australian research confirms that the lack of utilizing indigenous knowledge in Western school systems is detrimental to students. Fleer (2001) stated, “Too often schooling for Indigenous children has concentrated on the school [Western] culture only, with indigenous children having to learn the rules of school. Very little cultural knowledge is shared or used to build teaching and learning programs” (quoted in Williams-Kennedy, 2004, p. 81). Moreover, when indigenous culture and learning processes are ignored in the classroom, it has a detrimental effect on the indigenous learner, resulting in “learning becom[ing] secondary or even irrelevant when a child feels they are not understood or accepted as a member of their cultural group” (Williams-Kennedy, 2004, p. 86).

Next, it is not just a “feel good” movement but a reeducation of what is culturally important to know, to learn, and to pass on, a thought on the minds of our *kūpuna* (elders) as well. In 1867, J. N. Kānepu‘u, a school teacher from Pālolo, O‘ahu, published an article in the Hawaiian newspaper *Ke Au ‘Okō‘a* about this very topic. “Ka‘ahele ma Moloka‘i” (Traveling Around Moloka‘i) details a *huaka‘i* (trip) taken where different *wahi pana* (places celebrated through stories) and culturally important sites were visited. In the article, rain and wind names and other detailed information about the ‘āina were specifically included. In his “Mana‘o Hope” (Closing Thoughts), Kānepu‘u concluded,

Here is my challenge: if the school teachers of this archipelago are willing, they should write the stories of different lands and publish them...it would be a great benefit to enlighten people...we [the teachers] would...select the ones to teach the students in the manner of the foreign lands....If we all did this—teach the students about the different aspects of our lands—the points, the mountains, the plains, the craters, the seas, the winds, the Kāne stones,

the heiau, the places where the chiefs lived, the springs, the rivers, the peninsulas, the ravines, the storied places, the places recorded in legend, etc.; if we all contributed to doing this, then we would have a new geography for the Hawaiian islands....[It] will take some time if there are ka'ao stories for specific places, stories about travels there, and other storied places, and the kupua of this place, such as the deeds of La'amaikahiki at Kualoa, and the amazing works of Kamapua'a in the uplands of Kaliuwa'a, and the story of Kāneipolu in Kailua. If these things are edited appropriately, then they can be published. Aloha to you all, and mahalo to the editors and publishers.² (Kānepu'u, 1867, p. 4; my translation)

As Kānepu'u's article demonstrates, a reclamation of Hawaiian knowledge through a "new geography" or renewed understanding of the specificities of 'āina known by our ancestors has been on the mind of Hawaiian educators for over a century as a key element in Native Hawaiian education. It is a call to educators in Hawaiian education today to throw off the suffocating cloak of colonial education and reconnect ourselves and our students once again to the 'āina, inviting us to renew our relationship and implying new ways of learning about 'āina. Through the process of decolonizing and reestablishing Native Hawaiian cultural knowledge, positive educational experiences foster future leadership and land/cultural reclamation. The connection between *kānaka* (people) and 'āina is genealogical, cultural, social, and political, and discussed by many scholars and practitioners (Holmes, 2002; Kame'eiehiwa, 1992; Kanahale, 1986; Kana'iaupuni & Malone, 2006; Meyer, 2003).

These points are connected to the more recent success of Native Hawaiian learners within revamped, culturally based educational settings. They are particularly important in Native Hawaiian education movements, from indigenous language immersion classrooms (e.g., Pūnana Leo, Kula Kaiāpuni), expanded Hawaiian studies and Hawaiian language programs and degree options (e.g., Ka Haka 'Ula o Ke'elikōlani College of Hawaiian Language at University of Hawai'i [UH]–Hilo, Hawai'inuiākea School of Hawaiian Knowledge at UH–Mānoa), culturally rooted public charter schools (as exemplified by Nā Lei Na'auao³), and a stronger cultural focus at educational institutions such as Kamehameha Schools work to erode the colonial educational system that has devastated Native Hawaiian positive self-identity for generations.⁴

In the charter schools, for example, “place-based learning is a pillar of educational reform” (Kana‘iaupuni & Malone, 2006, p. 297). One result is increased positive experiences—and success—of Native Hawaiian learners in the classroom. Kana‘iaupuni and Malone (2006) wrote,

[T]hese innovative schools...boast academically rigorous project-based and place-based curricula for children, integrating community, culture, language, and the natural environment. Students engage in authentic experiences at particular wahi pana...that serve as outdoor learning laboratories....In this way, connections to the land create the space for Native Hawaiians to maintain traditional practices that nourish spiritual, physical, and educational well-being. (p. 298)

Kawakami and Aton (2001) reported that “studies show that best practices among successful teachers of Native Hawaiian students include experience-based, authentic activities” (quoted in Kana‘iaupuni & Malone, 2006, p. 298). Data from other studies demonstrate that “Hawaiian charter schools evidence higher attendance and achievement scores than exhibited by Native Hawaiian students in conventional public schools” (Kana‘iaupuni & Ishibashi, 2005, quoted in Kana‘iaupuni & Malone, 2006, p. 298). Furthermore, Yamauchi (2003) reported that “evaluation research finds higher levels of engagement (attendance, timely completion, postsecondary aspirations) among Native Hawaiian students enrolled in public school-within-school models that offer hands-on experiences at significant places within students’ communities such as streams, freshwater ecosystems, and ancient burial grounds” (quoted in Kana‘iaupuni & Malone, 2006, p. 298). Because of similarities in land relationships within other indigenous cultures, not surprising, these findings “are consistent with research on other indigenous groups” (Kana‘iaupuni & Malone, 2006, p. 298).

It is also beneficial to educate non-Hawaiian learners about the rich depth of Native Hawaiian culture to help them appreciate and respect the indigenous people of Hawai‘i. In their work on Mexican American students by Gollnick and Chinn (1990) quoted above, they concluded that “it is not enough for...students...to learn

only about their own cultural heritage and history. They must learn to appreciate and respect other cultural groups” (Escamilla, 1996, p. 272). They encouraged the implementation of “ethnic literacy” for all students.

Ethnic literacy is defined by Banks and Banks (1989) as

a knowledge of the role and function that ethnicity plays in our daily lives, in our society, and in our transactions locally, regionally, and transnationally. Ethnic literacy allows all students to understand their uniqueness, to understand the complexities of ethnicity and culture, and to take pride in who they are as a people. (quoted in Escamilla, 1996, p. 272)

Ethnic literacy is the basis of multiethnic literature school-based reading programs across the United States, which highlights literature that teaches about different cultural practices. Thus, research in different multiethnic settings supports and encourages literacy that better reflects and represents students of different and diverse cultural backgrounds. There is tremendous potential to create positive learning experiences that extend beyond the learner, culture, and region. Yet, is indigenous literacy the same thing as ethnic or cultural literacy, and does it mean the same thing for indigenous learners and the cultures/communities they come from? Simply put, no.

Within Western culture, the basic definition of literacy is “the ability to read and write” (www.dictionary.com⁵). Within the context of education, what constitutes literacy is more complex. For example, the Summer Institute of Linguistics International (SIL International) recognizes that around the world, “literacy [is often] intertwined with larger issues such as social and political history, educational development, educational priorities, and even such questions as social equity and the responsibility of the state to redress past patterns of discrimination” (www.sil.org). This definition acknowledges the historical context in which indigenous literacies exist, including damage to literacy in the indigenous language as a result of colonialism, as well as reclamation and decolonizing movements on the part of the indigenous people affected.

Street (1984) identified two primary models of literacy: autonomous and ideological. Bielenberg (1999) described an autonomous model as

one which considers literacy to be a neutral technology...that can easily be detached from social context...[where] literacy can be isolated as an independent variable, thereby allowing the predicted cognitive effects of literacy to be examined.... The “autonomous” model attempts to distinguish literacy from schooling, and sets up a dichotomy between written and oral modes of communication. (p. 104)

SIL International states that the notion of autonomous literacy as simply a cognitive skill is “the oldest and now most outdated understanding of literacy” (www.sil.org).

In contrast, the ideological model “concentrates on the social practices of reading and writing, [recognizing] that these practices are culturally embedded, that literacy is a socially constructed practice and thus has different meanings for different groups. This mode envisions an overlap of oral and literate modes” (Bielenberg, 1999, p. 104). Furthermore, ideological literacy “requires that we view literacy as much more than the ability to decipher or encode messages on paper” (www.sil.org). Thus the ideological model of literacy is much more relevant to indigenous contexts of literacy, which are socially and culturally constructed. It is also clearly demonstrated in the examples later in this article.

A NOTE ON CULTURAL LITERACY—WHOSE CULTURE?

I identify ‘Ike ‘Āina as cultural literacy based on and within Native Hawaiian cultural practice. However, *cultural literacy* and the *cultural literacy movement* are nationally recognized terms that are commonly defined by educator E. D. Hirsch Jr. and utilized in a completely different context. Therefore, it is important for me to distinguish between my use of the term cultural literacy and Hirsch’s. Hirsch’s *cultural literacy* has been described as

the ability to converse fluently in the idioms, allusions and informal content which creates and constitutes a dominant culture. From being familiar with street signs to knowing historical reference to understanding the most recent slang, literacy demands interaction with the culture and reflection of it....[C]ultural literacy requires the broad range of trivia and the use of that trivia in the creation of a communal language and a collective knowledge. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_literacy)

Hirsch speaks to mainstream America, as “the concept of cultural literacy implies a national culture” (Hirsch, 2002, p. vii). Native Hawaiian and other indigenous perspectives support Hirsch’s idea that literacy entails communal (or shared) language as well as collective knowledge. However, Hirsch’s cultural reference is not ethnic or indigenous; it is based in the explicitly stated dominant colonizing culture, upholding hegemonic Western concepts of knowledge.⁶ As such, it is the antithesis of ethnic, multicultural, and indigenous literacies.

INDIGENOUS LITERACY

In contrast, indigenous literacy not only incorporates literature about indigenous peoples but also focuses on the process of literacy, that is, what makes one literate, how and what is “read,” and the context(s) in which literacy/reading occurs. It is based in the indigenous culture (meaning it is also rooted in place or ‘āina), and it advocates and assumes a level of multiple literacy. Fleer and Williams-Kennedy (2001) wrote that multiple literacy is something that “many Indigenous children experience within the context of their home cultures” (quoted in Williams-Kennedy, 2004, p. 83). This occurs prior to entering a formal school environment, as well as during the process. Williams-Kennedy identified these multiple literacies as involving

speaking, listening, reading natural and man-made symbols, recording language in lore, stories, song, dance, rituals and traditions, and observing body and sign language, combined

with intuitive and critical thinking. Religious and spiritual beliefs, values, customs and traditions are embedded within all of these elements. (pp. 89–90)

Differences in home and school perspectives can be confusing and damaging for indigenous children in school environments that refuse to validate the indigenous-based multiple literacies learned in the home environment. One example of this contrast is found in Haunani-Kay Trask's essay, *From a Native Daughter*. She begins,

When I was young the story of my people was told twice: once by my parents, then again by my school teachers. From my *'ohana* (family) I learned about the life of the old ones: how they fished and planted by the moon; shared all the fruits of their labors, especially their children; danced in great numbers for long hours; and honored the unity of their world in intricate genealogical chants. My mother said Hawaiians had sailed over thousands of miles to make their home in these sacred islands. And they had flourished, until the coming of the *haole* (whites). At school, I learned that the "pagan Hawaiians" did not read or write, were lustful cannibals, traded in slaves, and could not sing. Captain Cook had "discovered" Hawai'i, and the ungrateful Hawaiians had killed him. In revenge, the Christian god had cursed the Hawaiians with disease and death. (Trask, 1999, pp. 113–114)

Definitions of indigenous literacy are wide ranging. On one end of the spectrum, indigenous literacy is defined as "the 'technologies' of reading and writing the indigenous language" (Bielenberg, 1999, p. 111, fn. 2).⁷ This narrow view of indigenous literacy can be problematic. Van Broekhuizen (2000) argued that "expanding [the] notion of literacy to include first-language literacy in indigenous communities significantly increases the number of issues to be addressed and the complexity of the topic" and, as such, "Literacy in first languages in indigenous communities is a topic that generates lively discussion" (p. 1).

Most indigenous languages are non-dominant languages. There is usually an official language that prevails in one way or another by virtue of its prestige status, use in wider communication, or status as the accepted standard dialect and a factor in upward mobility. Nevertheless, indigenous languages throughout the world continue to struggle for survival. And many consider literacy to be essential to their continued existence. (Van Broekhuizen, 2000, p. 1)

Because of the complexities of the issues surrounding indigenous language literacy, I will not be addressing it directly in this article, as it is an important topic worthy of a separate study. Yet I do not argue that indigenous literacy in English can be completely separated from *‘ōlelo Hawai‘i* (Hawaiian language) because of its historical and cultural connection.⁸ I propose here that culturally based Hawaiian literacy can transcend the indigenous language, although it is certainly based in it and is (or should be) highly inclusive of it.⁹ Because language and culture reflect each other, there is an inseparability in the relationship between *‘ōlelo Hawai‘i* and contemporary Hawaiian literacy in English.

It is important to make this point, as it acknowledges the reality that Native Hawaiians (like many other indigenous groups worldwide) have been colonized and thus speak, to different degrees, English, a dominant colonially imposed language. Because of the imposed banning of Hawaiian language instruction in Hawai‘i for over a century, English is, for the vast majority of Native Hawaiians, the default language of contemporary culture. As such, the discussion of Native Hawaiian literacy in this article is how culturally based literacy functions in either language, with a focus on English.

So what is indigenous literacy? There are several components of it that are important to recognize. First, Williams-Kennedy (2004) identified indigenous literacy as being culturally constructed.¹⁰ She wrote, “in order to understand what Indigenous Australian literacy might entail, we first need to consider the accumulated experience we call indigenous culture and the belief that literacy development is essentially a collaborative social process rather than an individual activity” (p. 89).

Aside from reading and writing text, the ability to “read” or decode visual and verbal signs is a form of literacy within a specific environment, which is culturally based. One example is the decoding or “reading” of visual signs such as the interpretation of cloud formations as specific *hō‘ailona* (signs, symbols) in a Hawaiian cultural context, or the interpretation of ocean currents and tides.¹¹ When these experiences are synthesized and rendered into oli, mele, or mo‘olelo (which can then be interpreted through a performance mode, like hula), it can be added to the body of orature or “oral literature” of a culture that supports collective Native Hawaiian experience with the ‘āina. It also embraces the social-political relationship of kanaka and ‘āina through the practice of cultural memory, as “The importance of place to Hawaiian identity is powered not only by ancestral genealogy, but also by the collective memory of a shared history” (Kana‘iaupuni & Malone, 2006, p. 291). Thus while the emphasis in modern Western society is on defining “literacy” as the ability to read and write text, the oral component of hearing, storing, remembering, and retelling or passing on information through oral means—typically referred to as “oral traditions” or “oral history,” is an important mode of indigenous literacy.

For the numerous generations of Native Hawaiians prior to Western contact, communication was primarily oral.¹² As with other indigenous cultures, oral tradition forms the foundation of literacy and writing (Momaday, cited in Meyer, 2003, p. 75). Hawaiian language professor Rubellite Kawena Johnson describes Hawaiian orature as being taught and learned in formal and informal settings, both of which continue today. Formal traditions included the composition, memorization, and recitation of chiefly *mo‘okū‘auhau* (genealogies), such as those composed for Kamehameha, *ko‘ihonua* (creation chants) like Kumulipo, and various oli, mele, hula, speeches, and storytelling, on a wide range of topics from chiefly or godly exploits to the naming of specific places (*wahi pana*), to the development of cultural practices (Johnson, n.d., p. 1).

For example, the place name Lē‘ahi (“forehead of the tuna fish”) recalls our cultural past—a fishing heritage, a location of a *heiau* (temple) utilized by Kamehameha, for example; its modern replacement, “Diamond Head,” prompts the telling of a completely different (and fallacious) one. Our beloved queen Lili‘uokalani also carried the name Kamaka‘eha, “smarting eyes,” to commemorate an affliction suffered by a close family member at the time of her birth. These are relatively simple examples of a process applicable to most, if not all, Hawaiian personal and

place names; any loss or absence of mo'olelo is more likely due to a disruption in the transmission process (whether via memory, verbal, or written transmission) than a lack of mo'olelo connected to the personal or place name.¹³

Because it is so encompassing, Williams-Kennedy (2004) acknowledged that indigenous literacy

involves speaking, listening, reading natural [land] and man-made symbols [text], recording language in lore, stories, song, dance, rituals and traditions, and observing body and sign language, combined with intuitive and critical thinking. [Furthermore,] religious and spiritual beliefs, values, customs and traditions are embedded within all of these elements. (pp. 89–90)

Fleer and Williams-Kennedy (2001, quoted in Williams-Kennedy, 2004, p. 90) recognized that

- Both spoken and symbolic language[s] are used by Indigenous people in many different forms.
- Speaking, reading, writing (using Indigenous symbols and languages as well as English), painting, making music, singing, dancing, and storytelling are all included within these forms, with versions of representation vary[ing] according to context, purpose, and audience.
- Language is also contained within intangibles such as feelings [*na'au* (gut feeling)] (made obvious through body language and actions), through pictures (images and visions) and word pictures and metaphors.
- Thought pictures, pictures and word pictures are multidimensional and at times intuitive representations that can be interpreted from many different perspectives. Words however, are usually more prescriptive symbols with a specific range of meanings which change only if placed and used in different contexts.
- Within Indigenous literacy, meaning is expressed through the people themselves.

- Even though Indigenous peoples differ in their contemporary use of literacy, for many their skills and knowledge are still linked to a traditional view of the world.

This last point is particularly important, as Williams-Kennedy wrote that most indigenous children come to their first experiences with Western education (school, preschool)

already know[ing] how to listen and how to speak their mother tongue, in English, or in both languages...therefore, when [they] enter schools...they are second literacy learners. It is not surprising, then, that they may experience confusion and difficulty when learning a partially or completely new system of literacy—Western school literacy. (Fleer & Williams-Kennedy, quoted in Williams-Kennedy, 2004, p. 97)

They also come to schools multiliterate, as mentioned earlier, as indigenous literacy is multidimensional, involving more diversity of literacy skills.

With the larger conversation on indigenous literacy in a Native Hawaiian cultural context in mind, there is a critical need for it to be fostered more in classrooms and learning environments, particularly for Native Hawaiian learners. In this next section, I share a few examples of how I have done that in different classroom settings.

‘IKE ‘ĀINA: THREE CLASSROOM EXAMPLES OF NATIVE HAWAIIAN PEDAGOGY AND CULTURALLY BASED LITERACY

The following are three examples of three different classroom experiences in which I incorporated Hawaiian oral tradition, ‘Ike ‘Āina, and indigenous Hawaiian literacy into writing assignments to help students make better connec-

tions between themselves and the greater world around them. This is not a comprehensive description of all course requirements; rather, I focus specifically on formal or required writing assignments. The first example is my English 100 courses at the University of Hawai'i–Mānoa (UHM). The second is a UHM College of Education course (TECS 314), “Indigenous Perspectives on Literacy,” which I taught as a part of the Kaho'iwai Native Hawaiian Education cohort directed by Native Hawaiian Education Professor Kerri Ann Hewett. The third is my 2004 Ho'olauna Kaua'i classes.¹⁴

EXAMPLE 1: ENGLISH 100/101: HE 'ILI'ILI AU (I AM A PEBBLE)

Composition I or English (ENG) 100 is a required course for all freshman-level students at UHM. The course is meant to introduce students to the “rhetorical, conceptual, and stylistic demands of writing at the university level” (<http://www.catalog.hawaii.edu/courses/departments/eng.htm>). On the course syllabus, I explain to students that

The purpose of ENG 100 is to acquaint freshman to the rigors of academic writing at the collegiate level. But the physical act of writing—picking up a pen and putting it to paper, or sitting with one's fingers industriously tapping away at a keyboard—is only part of it. The physical act of writing must be accompanied by critical thinking, reading, and discussion about the topic at hand. It is only by reading, talking, and thinking about a subject that one is able to productively write about it. Thus it doesn't matter what your major is (or will be, if you haven't yet decided), as these are all important whether you are majoring in math or music, accounting or art history. (ho'omanawanui syllabus, Spring 2008)

There is no forced standardization of what or how instructors teach or design their ENG 100 courses, as long as the basic concepts listed above are addressed in the classroom. As a graduate assistant, lecturer, and now assistant professor assigned to teach ENG 100 at UHM, the flagship campus bearing the Hawai‘i name, I felt it important to utilize a Hawaiian cultural foundation in my English courses whenever possible, in part because acknowledgment of Native Hawaiian culture and practice has recently been affirmed by the UHM educational strategic plan.¹⁵ It was also an opportunity to demonstrate to my students, peers, and colleagues that Hawaiian cultural knowledge and perspectives were not limited to the Hawaiian Studies or Hawaiian language classroom and did not need to be sectioned off in a particular course unit; it could be incorporated across the entire classroom experience. Thus the theme for my ENG 100 courses is “Hawai‘i, ka piko o ka Pakipika” (Hawai‘i, the center of the Pacific), a concept based on the UHM introductory course in Hawaiian Studies (HWNST 107) of the same name. Thus, in my ENG 100 course, the theme expresses an *‘ili‘ili pōhaku* (stone pebble) philosophy of how haumāna will navigate through this course:

Everyone experiences the world from our own unique and individual perspectives; for Kānaka Maoli (Native Hawaiians) and others living in Hawai‘i, that perspective is tempered by being rooted, if only temporarily, to this ‘āina (land). Thus your writing assignments will begin from the piko, the center, and move outward from yourself to your ‘ohana (family); from the kaiāulu (community) to the lāhui (nation) and beyond, to embrace ka honua ola (the living earth). (ho‘omanawanui syllabus, Spring 2008)

The culturally based teaching strategy I developed to teach ENG 100 is called “He ‘Ili‘ili Au—I am a pebble.” The underlying premise is that wherever the student is in the world, not just geographically or physically, but in ability, mental, and/or spiritual knowledge and preparation, among other factors is how that student will understand his or her place in the world, view, relate to, and interact with it. Metaphorically, the student is a pebble. To extend that metaphor, when a pebble is dropped into water, it sends ripples out into the world, touching things beyond its immediate grasp. Similarly, the student reaches outward from self, to family, to community, to the world. Sometimes, the ripples will hit the edge of the pond (or

in the case of the Pacific, the edge of the ocean) and bounce back. 'Ili'ili pōhaku is an appropriate cultural metaphor, as “stones form the foundation of our culture” (ho'omanawanui, 2008, p. 153). *Pōhaku* (stones) connect us to Papahānaumoku (Mother Earth) and are born from her as we are; *kalo* (taro), the offspring of Hāloa, our collective ancestor, is grown in *lepo* (soil), a relative of pōhaku; they are the relations of Pele, our Hawaiian volcano goddess and ancestor.

Therefore, instead of starting with 'ike outside the self, the semester begins with the haumana. At first glance, this approach may appear to be culturally inappropriate, as it focuses on the individual and not the greater community. However, as Hawaiian students are typically uncomfortable and intimidated in the English classroom, it gives them an opportunity to begin the semester with something familiar and thus more comfortable—their *'ohana* (family) and their place within it. Once they are able to establish their foundation of who they are in the classroom, it grants them a level of confidence and allows them to make physical and intellectual connections with the world around them.

The first assignment is a *ho'olauna* (introduction of self). I use relatively simple readings, short essays and poems that discuss aspects of self and identity, such as Puanani Burgess's poem “Choosing My Name,” Ho'oiipo DeCambra's “I Come From a Place,” and even Latina writer Sandra Cisneros's chapter “My Name” from *The House on Mango Street* (1984) to inspire haumāna in writing their own mo'okū'auhau. Beginning the course with a written mo'okū'auhau is culturally appropriate, as mo'okū'auhau is the foundation of Hawaiian origin and identity. As such, it is part of basic cultural knowledge and protocol from traditional times until today. In addition, by starting with themselves, students have no excuses not to begin writing—there is no book, no Internet source to blame for the inability to research the topic. It is an empowering position to begin the semester, as students are the primary source of 'ike. It tangentially promotes collaborative and interfamilial and intergenerational learning, as haumāna often call home to ask parents, siblings, and other family members for some genealogical information; even when they know the information they need, it is often because of previous family mo'olelo and interaction. This first assignment is a form of oral history, as well as a literary recounting of mo'okū'auhau.¹⁶

The readings and writing assignments move out from the self to immediate community and beyond. Each is designed to incorporate different skills all students should have to do basic research at the college level. Table 1 is a summary of the formal writing assignments.

TABLE 1 Writing assignments for English 100, “He ‘Ili‘ili Au”

Writing Assignment	Theme/Title	Purpose
Paper 1	Self-Reflection / Letter of Introduction Ku‘u Ola I Hawai‘i Nei (My Life in Hawai‘i) Mo‘okū‘auhau, ho‘olauna (self-introduction)	Using the handouts/readings from the first day of class, write a 4- to 5-page essay about yourself. This could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where you are from, • who your family is, • why you decided to come to UH–Mānoa, • what kinds of things you like to do, • what you are considering majoring in, and • what your professional goals are at this point in your life.
Paper 2	Personal Biography Pilina (solidifies relationships)	Write a 4- to 5-page essay on someone you know. You will interview them and incorporate the information you discover into your paper. We will work together in class to formulate questions to share with interviewees.
Paper 3	Professional Biography ‘Imi na‘auao (seek knowledge)	Using the technique of interviewing and research, choose a professor in a field you are considering as a major. Write a 4- to 6-page essay on their professional life.
Paper 4	Community Issues: Hawai‘i Mālama ‘āina (caring for the land)	Write a 5- to 6-page essay on an issue affecting the Hawaiian community.
Paper 5	Literary Analysis	Choosing a poem or short story from ‘ <i>Ōiwi</i> , write a 5- to 6-page essay using techniques common to literary analysis.

The second paper is a Personal Biography, an interview with someone the student is familiar with, typically a family member or friend. We do similar readings and develop interview questions together from which the class can draw upon. Aside from getting to know this person in a new way, the interview is an important research skill. Again, this is oral (and family) history that often relates to larger historical events. Such an assignment often leads to heightened student interest in how their families were affected by or participated in such events as Hawai‘i’s annexation to the United States, or Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor, for example.

Third, students write a Professional Biography on a professor in the field they are considering. Aside from the readings and questions we develop as a class, students must also do library and Internet research to find articles and/or books by and about that professor and/or his or her work. This not only gives them

a well-rounded perspective on the person and the field but also furthers their confidence level in public speaking (the interview), gives them practice in basic library and Internet research and evaluation of sources, and helps them determine whether or not they want to pursue that discipline. This is a different kind of oral history, in which the professor can be a prominent participant in significant events, research, or practice. This experience is often intimidating at first but is ultimately empowering to students. It allows for an understanding of what *ma ka hana ka 'ike* (knowledge is gained in first-hand experience) means, when they do the research and work themselves with professionals who are similarly committed within their respective fields.

The fourth paper is a community issue, where haumāna explore and argue a perspective on an issue important to a Hawai'i community. Students choose how narrow they want to define "community": by geography (where they live, the UHM campus), social group (their freshman class or soccer team), cultural practice (hula hālau [school], Hawaiian language class), or 'ohana. For this assignment, they can use interviews with community leaders or key players, including legislators or media representatives, articles, books, and Internet sources. More often than not, they submit their pieces, or modified portions, as letters to the editor or as legislative testimonies for or against bills. As part of the process, they are participating in living history and becoming involved citizens, a worthwhile literacy goal. In preparing for the assignment and participating in an investigation of a community issue, haumāna engage in a form of *ho'opāpā* (informed debate), a cultural practice that values the display of intellect.

Because UHM requires students to take 200-level literature ILP (Intermediate Literature Program) courses, the fifth paper is a literary analysis. This paper is a helpful refresher for students who may not have written a literary analysis since high school, and an important skill for those who have never written such a paper prior to this class. We read literature in English and Hawai'i Creole English ("pidgin") written by Native Hawaiian and local writers. By using Hawai'i-based literature, haumāna are often enthusiastic about their own insights and knowledge on the topics. Local students are also empowered to educate their peers in the class who are not from Hawai'i but who are often very interested in learning more. Often, I will ask, "Where is 'town' referring to in this poem?" or "What's an *uhu* (parrotfish)?" and they say, "Aw *kumu* (teacher), you know!" And I say, "I know, and you know, but does Sarah from Chicago sitting next to you know?" And Sarah will say, "No." So I tell them, "Explain it to her." This sharing leads to a peer-mentored, rather than teacher-dominated, classroom.

Again, it is the oral sharing of perspectives on the written word. This is not new. What is new is focusing on culturally relevant texts. I tell students from other places, “You can go anywhere and read Shakespeare, Keats, Faulkner, or even Dave Barry. Stretch your mind and learn something new about this place you are living in. Then you can teach someone else. And then you can challenge yourself in applying these lessons to your own culture.” Therefore, we read selections from *‘Ōiwi: A Native Hawaiian Journal*, *Ho‘omānoa: An Anthology of Hawaiian Literature*, or *Ka Wai Ola o OHA*. We read arguments on culturally based issues, such as Haunani-Kay Trask’s *From a Native Daughter* (1999) or John Dominis Holt’s *On Being Hawaiian* (1974). We compare different viewpoints on the same issue, such as Frances Frazier’s English translation of Pi‘ilani Ko‘olau’s *Kaluaiko‘olau* with Jack London’s *Ko‘olau the Leper*. I pull articles from Lee Cataluna’s *Honolulu Advertiser* column or *Honolulu* magazine so they can analyze how other Hawai‘i-based writers write about issues and topics affecting all of us who live in Hawai‘i. When haumāna are not Hawaiian or not from Hawai‘i, I encourage them to look at the issues at hand from their perspectives, and I encourage discussion among all haumāna to examine the different sides of the argument to see if they can come to an alternative solution or conclusion.

EXAMPLE 2: KAHO‘IWAI—PERSPECTIVES ON INDIGENOUS LITERACY

In the summer of 2003, I taught TECS 314, “Perspectives on Indigenous Literacy,” as part of Kaho‘iwai, the first UHM cohort of student teachers focusing on Native Hawaiian education and incorporating an indigenous Hawaiian cultural approach to education as described by Meyer (2003). The 6-week summer semester concluded with a week-long fieldtrip to the island of Hawai‘i. The intent of teaching literacy on the land was to put into practice what students were learning in the classroom, thus the theme for this huaka‘i was ‘Ike ‘Āina. For our class, ‘Ike ‘Āina meant that the ‘āina was the “textbook,” the source of knowledge and learning.

As the students were prospective school teachers about to graduate, I challenged them to not be passive observers who learned about the land or about the culture, but from the land and from the culture—ma ka hana ka ‘ike. Haumāna performed oli and hula on the *hula pā* (platform) at Kīlauea in the misty rain called forth

from their oli; gave *ho'okupu* (offerings) at Halema'uma'u to Tūtū Pele; worked in Waipi'o valley *lo'i* (taro garden); sailed the double-hulled canoe *Makali'i* with Uncle Chad and Auntie Pomai Paishon and the *Makali'i* 'ohana at Kawaihae; cleaned the shoreline ponds with Uncle Mike Ikeda of Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center at Papawai in North Kona, where they also dyed *kihei* (rectangular-shaped outer garments); visited the battlegrounds of Kuamo'o in South Kona; learned about celestial navigation and sea turtles at Punalu'u in Ka'u with Auntie Keola Hanoa and her 'ohana; and spent the afternoon with their peers from UH–Hilo, Kahuawaiola, the Hawaiian language student teachers cohort, at Ke Kula o Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u in Kea'au.

Through it all, these future teachers were encouraged to be active readers and writers, and to document their experiences through various modes of writing such as poetry, essay, and journals. At first they were reluctant; some lacked confidence, uncomfortable with English and the formal writing process required in college. Others thought writing was a magical process that occurred in a special environment. The day we sailed on the *wa'a* (canoe) *Makali'i*, cohort members Hinaleimoana Wong and Ke'ala Ching were aboard the escort boat *Alaka'i* and composed an extemporaneous chant that recorded our experiences on our voyage. That night, they taught the mele as a hula to the class, who presented it as a *makana* (gift) to the *Makali'i* crew (Ching & Wong, 2003). The next night, with the assistance of *kumu hula* (hula instructor) Vicky Holt Takamine, the hula was adapted into an oli for the *Makali'i* crew as they sailed to Hilo:

'O Makali'i, he wa'a kaulua
Makali'i, *double-hulled voyaging canoe*

'O Makali'i, i ka moana
Makali'i, *set sail upon the ocean*

'O Makali'i, 'au i ke kai
Makali'i, *forge onward upon the swells of the sea*

'O Makali'i, o Kawaihae
Makali'i, *at Kawaihae*

'O Makali'i, holo i mua
Makali'i, *forge onward*

‘O Makali‘i, me ke Akua
Makali‘i, *with peace and blessing*

‘O Makali‘i, e ho‘i mai
Makali‘i, *return to us safely*

‘O Makali‘i, me ke aloha
Makali‘i, *with unending love and respect for your great work*

‘O Makali‘i, ‘o Makali‘i, ‘o Makali‘i ē
(Ching, Wong, & Holt Takamine, 2003, pp. 104–105)

The Kaho‘iwai group drove from Papawai, Kona, back up the coast to surprise the *Makali‘i* ‘ohana with this oli, chanted to them, accompanied by rhythmic hand claps, as they sailed out of Kawaihae harbor to Hilo. Both oli were gifted to the *Makali‘i* ‘ohana to utilize as part of their own educational endeavors for their own students. These are prime examples of oral tradition still in practice.

That afternoon, I started scribbling in my notebook on the van ride to Kona. “What are you doing Kumu?” one of the students asked. “I’m writing a poem about our experiences today.” That evening, I shared the poem with my students, “Haiku Composed at Kawaihae, June 24–25, 2003.” The haiku can be read as a single haiku; read together, they form a longer poem in which each haiku documents a particular experience we had, in chronological order.¹⁷

Oli kahea
Rings out on the morning breeze
Greeting with honi

Floating like honu
Ka nehe o ke kai, and
Sun-sparkled water

Kawaihae sunshine
Makali‘i calmly waits
I ke kai nani

Sailing past Waika
Dolphin alaka‘i play
Dancing off the bow

Look—Keawewai
Stands regally in the distance
Watching over us

Across the channel
'Ewe 'ōpua reach out
to Kanaloa

Haleakalā
wears a white pā'ū trimmed blue
I ka 'ehu kai

The navigator
Holds the knowledge of the sea
He ipu piha

Where the island turns
'Alenuihāhā sweeps
Off Mahukona

Steer the ancient path
Pāni'au and Mahina
Praise Makali'i

“Huki one, two, three”
While 'ohana steers wa'a
Gliding safely home

For Makali'i
The chant was composed
As Alaka'i sailed past

.

The sun peeks over
Flooding the plains with new light
At Mahukona

There Mauna Kea
and Hualalai stand proud
with Mauna Loa

Crystal seas sparkle
diamond-like, reflect bold colors:
turquoise and aqua

Travis speared a Mu
In the pristine blue waters
Of Mahukona

Warm hugs and honi
As we prepare to depart
From new 'ohana

Driving to Kona
Fond memories of these past days
Linger in our minds
(ho'omanawanui, 2003, p. 50)

While haiku is a Japanese form of poetry, its succinct nature and strict syllabic structure give students uncomfortable with writing specific guidelines to work with. I do not differentiate between 'ōlelo Hawai'i and English in my writing and do not make it an issue with my students—if they are capable and comfortable to write in 'ōlelo Hawai'i or English, it is their prerogative to choose.

The following day, students started handing in their writing. They were amazed that the process was not as difficult as they initially thought—it entailed riding a boat to compose a chant, and riding in a van to write a poem. That day, they stopped being passive recipients of literature. Instead, they became active participants documenting their experiences. Oral tradition. Indigenous literacy. 'Ike 'Āina.

The following example is excerpted from the poem, "Kilauea," composed by Kaho'iwai cohort member Keomailani Case of Waimea, Hawai'i. It was composed as part of our literacy course and was inspired by our experience at the volcano.

Clouds open up and shine your light on us—
Let us feel the updraft of your might;
Shower us with the voices of the past,
Encircle us with your never-fading knowledge.

Here I stand in the bone-chilling mist of the highlands
Embraced by your touch, and drenched by your warmth;
Sound of the slow-drifting drizzle echoes
as it gently reaches out to touch faces of leaves—
Astonished by your haze and grounded by your wonder,
Here I stand at your command.

.

Carry my whisper to your great depths—
Drink of the Waimea water I offer you;
Let it replenish your energy,
May it nourish all sides

Let it run through the uplands and lowlands, inward and out
May you continue to grow and live forever.

.

Grounded by your presence my mind drifts towards another light—
The pathway is shown through your eyes;
Weave the way and I shall learn all I can,
Create, generate and continue to dominate with your craft:
Give life with your breath and live on.

Clouds open up and shine your light on us—
Let us feel the updraft of your might;
Shower us with the voices of the past,
Encircle us with your never-fading knowledge.

(Case, 2005, p. 135)

Through direct experience on the ‘āina and incorporating that in their writing process, haumāna gained a clearer understanding how our kūpuna related to the ‘āina while they recorded their mana‘o in oral and written compositions, strengthening both in the process. It also allowed them to better understand how to create their own forms of ‘Ike ‘Āina for their students, and to inspire their haumāna to be culturally literate.

EXAMPLE 3: KA HO‘OLAUNA KAUA‘I

In 2004, Kamehameha Schools began a new Extension Education summer program in selected communities across the state called “Ho‘olauna;” I was a kumu for the inaugural “Ho‘olauna Kaua‘i” program. The Ho‘olauna program was designed as week-long cultural experiences for sixth graders similar to the popular Explorations summer program for fifth graders. Instead of being based on the Kapālama campus, however, the Ho‘olauna programs are placed in the communities they are designed around, with activities for each program across the state unique to each location. For Kaua‘i, students visit Hanapēpē Salt Pond and learn the process of salt-making; string Ni‘ihau shell pendants with Ni‘ihau families; visit Queen Emma’s gardens at Lāwa‘i, where they carve *‘ohe kāpala* (ink stamps), dye kihei, study indigenous plants, and sample traditionally prepared Hawaiian foods; study Hawaiian medicinal plants in Kōke‘e; work in lo‘i and make poi at Waipā; and visit the sacred heiau and *ali‘i* (chiefly)-related sites at Wailua.

The first day of the program, the 40 students attending—all Hawaiian, and all in the Department of Education—struggled with the preactivity test that was designed to assess their basic knowledge of Hawaiian culture. After participating in the week-long program, however, most students quickly and successfully completed the posttest with no difficulty.

As we began the week, I was disturbed to see so many Hawaiian *keiki* (children) born and raised on Kaua‘i lacking cultural knowledge of our beloved island. They didn’t know basic place names or meanings, or what Kaua‘i was famous for in traditional times. I was saddened because I saw myself at that age several decades prior; in all that time, nothing had changed in the public school curriculum to give them a positive cultural sense of self or place. As a kumu and writer, I thought about how to address the situation. Early one morning, inspired by my daily walks on the beach, I began composing the opening words and *‘ea* (tune) for “E ō Kaua‘i” (Greetings to Kaua‘i):

E ō Kaua'i 'āina kamaha'o
Greetings to Kaua'i, a wondrous land

Kū kilakila i ka la'i
Standing proud in the calm
 Hemolele i ka mālie
Perfect in the calm is

'O Kamawailualani ē
Kamawailualani indeed.

The concluding line of the mele states, “He keiki nō au o Kaua'i lā ē!” (I am a child of Kaua'i!). I quickly sketched out a framework for the poem, in which each place on the island could be represented. The first line for each *paukū* (stanza) was “E ō (place name) (Greetings to place name) / 'āina (what it is famous for) (land of what it is known for).” The second line of the couplet would be some kind of statement relevant to that place. The first *paukū* I composed was for Wailua, the 'āina where I was raised:

E ō Wailua 'āina wai kini
Greetings to Wailua, a land of many waters

I ka hālau Wai'ōpua ē
In the heavy hālau-like Wai'ōpua rain

The oli begins at Wailua for several reasons. First, it is the eastern-most part of the island where the sun rises. Related to this is its significance in traditional times as an important spiritual place; there is a network of seven heiau here that extend from the point at Ala Kukui on the sea to Ka'awakō at the summit of Wai'ale'ale; the heiau Hikinaakalā (“the rising sun”) is located here as well, and was an integral part of Hau'ola, a *pu'uhonua* (place of refuge) (ho'omanawanui, n.d., p. 13; Joesting, 1984, p. 10). Because of its spiritual significance, *malihini* (visitors) to the island, such as Hi'iakaikapoliopole, stopped here first to pay their respects to the 'āina (ho'omanawanui, 2007, pp. xvi–xvii). Wailua is also the host site for the Ho'olauna Kaua'i program, thus the appropriate location on multiple levels as a location to begin the oli.

Traditional *kaona* (poetic expression, veiled reference, or hidden meaning) is also utilized in the composition. For example, Kawaikini, the highest point on Wai‘ale‘ale, the main mountain of the area, is referred to poetically in the phrase, “‘āina wai kini,” the land of abundant water. Here are other paukū I composed that incorporate traditional reference points, such as acknowledging wind names, rain names, environmental qualities, or traditional activities of these places:

E ō Kapa‘a ‘āina pili kai
Greetings to Kapa‘a, a land close to the sea

Kaulana i nā lawai‘a ē
Famous to fishermen

E ō Kealia kai leo nui
Greetings to Kealia, in the loud echo of the sea

Ke kai he‘enalu ē
A surfing place

E ō Anahola ‘āina nani loa
Greetings to Anahola, a very beautiful place

‘Āina ho‘opulapula ē
Hawaiian Homestead land

E ō Kīlauea, ‘āina pali kai
Greetings to Kīlauea, a land of sea cliffs

Lele i nā manu kai ē
Where the sea birds fly

E ō Hanalei, ‘āina ua loku
Greetings to Hanalei, a land of heavy rain

Kaulana i nā lo‘i kalo ē
Famous for the taro patches

E ō Nāpali, ‘āina pali loa
Greetings to Nāpali, a land of great cliffs

Ka malu o nā Ko‘olau ē
The protectors of Ko‘olau and his family

E ō Kekaha, kaha pili kai
Greetings to Kekaha, the sandy plains near the sea

Kahi alohi kai la ē
The place where the sea sparkles

E ō Waimea, 'āina 'ula'ula
Greetings to Waimea, a reddish-colored land

I ohi 'ia nā kukui ē
Where kukui nuts were gathered

E ō Hanapēpē, 'āina makani
Greetings to Hanapēpē, a windy land

Kaulana i ka pa'akai ē
Famous for sea salt

E ō 'Ele'ele, 'āina i ka lā
Greetings to 'Ele'ele, a land of bright sunshine

Kaulana i ke kaua ē
Famous for a great battle there

E ō Lāwa'i, 'āina uluwehi
Greetings to Lāwa'i, a verdant land

'Āina ho'okipa ē
A very hospitable land

E ō Lihu'e 'āina maluhia
Greetings to Lihu'e, a peaceful land

Kia'i 'ia e Hā'upu lā ē
Guarded by Hā'upu (the mountain) there

E ō Hanamaulu, 'āina momona
Greetings to Hanamaulu, a fertile land

Kahi ho'okipa lā ē
A very hospitable place

The oli also references activities the Ho‘olauna students participated in during the week. For example, at Waimea, haumāna gathered kukui nuts at the river mouth to make lei; at Hanapēpē, they toured the traditional salt pans and saw the process of salt-making from beginning to end; and at Lāwa‘i, they made ‘ohe kāpala, *kapa* (tapa) dyes, and dyed kapa with *kupuna* (elder) Sabra Kauka, learned about Hawaiian plants at Queen Emma’s gardens with kupuna Levon Ohai, and were treated to a variety of traditional Hawaiian foods prepared by kupuna Elroy Medeiros.

This mele was meant to inspire the students and instill pride for their ‘āina *hānau* (birthplace). One of the most important aspects of this *oli kama‘āina* (chant for the natives of the land) is its adaptability—it can be expanded or contracted to include additional places or target selected communities; it is a structure that can be adapted to other islands such as Ni‘ihau, for example, where some of our haumāna have close family ties:

E ō Ni‘ihau, ‘au i ke kai
Greetings to Ni‘ihau, swimming in the sea

Kaulana no nā pūpū nani ē
Famous for its pretty shells

While I wrote paukū for different locations around the island, keeping the concept of *ma ka hana ka ‘ike* in mind, I wanted to give the students an opportunity to compose their own paukū for the places they live.

To prepare the students for this writing exercise, I shared a poem from Kaua‘i native Kaimalino Andrade called “Where I’m From”:

I’m from waking up in the morning to the sound of the ocean,
I’m from living in a house that my dad built with his own hands,
I’m from having my closest neighbor living five miles away,
I’m from looking out my window and seeing a group of pigs just stroll
on by,

I'm from walking around in the pasture, playing with the horses,
 I'm from growing my own veggies and fruit,
 I'm from eating papayas and avocados as a meal,
 I'm from running around naked on the beach,
 I'm from running away from cows,
 I'm from running away from my sister's killer pet geese,
 I'm from running away from home, goin' two blocks, and comin' back,
 I'm from playing monopoly alone (and I still cheat),
 I'm from being teased because I look haole,
 I'm from being teased because I'm Hawaiian,
 I'm from burning rubbish in the evenings,
 I'm from stomping out the flames with my rubber slippers when my
 mom set the pasture on fire,
 I'm from making fire every night with my brother for a hot bath,
 I'm from listening to my dad play slack key,
 I'm from falling asleep to the sound of the ocean.
 (Andrade, 2002, p. 190)

I told the haumāna that Kaimalino wrote the poem when he was about their age. They were very impressed. I told them that he was from Kaua'i and asked them if they could identify where Kaimalino was from, based on the clues in the poem. While no one could guess that he was from Pīla'a in the *moku* (district) of Ko'olau on the northeast side of the island, we discussed how this poem was a contemporary *mele pana* (poem celebrating place) that is important, as it is not a very populated area today. We discussed important cultural themes, such as the *pilina* (relationship) between members of the 'ohana, *laulima* (the 'ohana working together), and *mālama 'āina* (caring for the land), and how it demonstrated 'Ike 'Āina based on his experience with the 'āina and growing up there.

After discussing different elements of the poem, I grouped the haumāna according to where they lived (town, *ahupua'a* [land division], or area) and had them map out important things about their communities. Some wrote words, others drew pictures. We used other relevant resource material, such as *Place Names of Hawai'i* (Pukui, Elbert, & Mookini, 1986) and *Kaua'i, Ancient Place Names and Their Stories* (Wichman, 1998) to help with cultural and traditional references. When we were *pau* (finished), each group contributed a thought for individual paukū for the mele. A *hui* (group) of three boys from Lihu'e proudly displayed their drawing of Vidinha stadium. "How is that important?" I asked. "It's where we play football!" was their enthusiastic reply (it was impossible not to smile at their proud and enthusiastic faces). A discussion ensued about how important places to young Hawaiians today (like Vidinha stadium) are surrounded by important places to our kūpuna—Hā'upu mountain, for example, 'Ahukini, or Nāwiliwili bay, all wahi pana of the Lihu'e area.

I created a simple handout for students to help them make sensory connections to the wahi pana we visited, and to understand the importance of 'Ike 'Āina. The introduction states,

The term 'Ike 'Āina can be translated in several ways. 'Ike means to "see" with your eyes. It also means to "know" or understand, with your na'au (gut, heart). 'Āina is land. Mary Kawena Pukui says that the word 'āina is comprised of two parts, 'ai (food), and the suffix na, meaning, "that which feeds." Thus, 'āina is the land that feeds and sustains us. 'Ike 'Āina means both to see the land, but also to know the land. Hawaiian cultural practice teaches "ma ka hana ka 'ike," or "knowledge is gained through experience." Our kūpuna were keen observers of nature and their environment. As we travel through different ahupua'a, we will have opportunities to learn about and from the 'āina, and the stories associated with it.

The assignment emphasizes the students' multiple sensory interaction with the 'āina as they write about their experiences, answering the following questions: What place are you at? What do you see? What do you hear? What do you feel?

What other observations do you have about this place? How does being on the land provide insight into why our kūpuna lived here or created mo'olelo about this place? What is one thing about this place you feel is most special or important to you? What is one thing about this place that you would like to know more about?¹⁸

Haumāna had opportunities to write initial thoughts at the sites visited, as well as to reflect in their journal writing time later in the evening. The assignment helped them focus on their personal connection to the 'āina, as well as enhance their observational skills. The questions were presented with an indigenous framework in mind, in that they embrace multiple senses (which form the basis of multiple literacies) rather than just privileging one type.

The following day, we visited Waipā in Hanalei, where we worked in the lo'i and gardens and made poi. The rain poured the entire time. We joked, "Good thing we didn't sing 'Ka Ua Loku o Hanalei' (The Heavy Rain of Hanalei) or we would have caused it to flood." We wanted to compose a verse for our experience in Waipā, but the Waipā community was enthusiastic about composing the verse for their 'āina, which seemed more *pono* (appropriate). When a new group of Ho'olauna haumāna returned to Waipā during our summer sessions, kumu Mehana Blaich and her Waipā haumāna greeted the Ho'olauna haumāna with their paukū for Waipā:

E ō Waipā, 'āina uluwehi
Greetings to Waipā, a verdant land

I ka malu o Māmalahoa
In the protection of mount Māmalahoa

He hoa kūpuna 'o Hāloanaka
Hāloanaka is the elder companion

I ka poli o Halele'a ē
In the heart of the Halele'a district

This "lei mele" is adaptable to different situations and groups, and continues to grow. It is a primary example of the continuation of oral tradition, which today is woven with our written ones, as well as a cultural penchant for the community-based, shared nature of cultural knowledge. Together, our oral and written traditions form the basis of a Hawaiian concept of cultural literacy formulated around

the concept of 'Ike 'Āina. The focus on 'āina is culturally important. In an article on the "Connotative Values of Place Names," Samuel H. Elbert (1976) stated that "traditional sayings, narratives, and songs indicate the values of a culture" (p. 130).

HA'INA (CONCLUSION)

The issue of indigenous literacy raises the question of purpose: Why do we want Hawaiian children to be culturally literate? Why is it important to recognize indigenous literacy as cultural practice? As discussed earlier, indigenous literacy helps perpetuate culture, important when cultural practice is under constant assault and commodification. It promotes culturally rooted identity and more positive self-esteem among students, their families, and the communities to which they belong, resulting in increased well-being. It can also nurture or solidify links between student, family, and 'āina, often leading to renewed interest in cultural practice or more political involvement with issues such as land preservation. Meyer (2003) wrote about the important role of place, history, and genealogy, as "culture strengthens culture...cultural practices...restore...a Hawaiian sense of health [and] identity" (p. 144). By working toward these connections, Native Hawaiians

will heal [as] we will be educated by 'āina. This is key. We will, once again, be "fed" by the tides, rains and stories of a place and people made buoyant because this is how culture survives. This is how children learn best. This is how we all will survive. We will survive because excellence of being is found in the practice of aloha that...is an epistemological point. So, let us shape our school lessons by this ideal and let us shape our lives accordingly. (Meyer, 2003, p. 59)

Indigenous literacy is important because it is another representation of indigenous knowledge, perspective, and practice. It provides an alternative perspective to dominant colonial views and practices, which tend to be anti-indigenous, such as capitalism and globalization (see Anning, Cullen, & Fleer, 2004; Dei, Hall, & Rosenberg, 2002; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). Relationship to 'āina has always been important to Native Hawaiians. However, as Kana'iaupuni and Malone (2006)

pointed out, with the constant assaults to Native Hawaiian identity (high rates of intermarriage with other ethnicities, high level of mobility, endangered native language, highly commodified culture), it is perhaps even more important today to teach 'Ike 'Āina, as "place is critical to the cultural survival and identity of...Native Hawaiians" (p. 282).

In addition, 'Ike 'Āina is one piece of an indigenous model of education developed by Kahakalau and others that follows and allows for pono cultural practices and is designed "for the benefit of this Hawaiian community, and with the help of this Hawaiian community" (Kahakalau, 2004, p. 31). It is an example of what Kahakalau argued for in her work, where "indigenous peoples can conduct quality scholarly research utilizing native ways of inquiry, and that such research can solve native problems and advance native knowledge" (p. 21). The importance of indigenous peoples finding our own solutions and positive outcomes for the benefit of our communities cannot be understated, particularly when indigenous knowledge and cultural practices are under continued attack from others who dismiss, abuse, co-opt, or claim their own indigenous knowledge and practices.

In diverse areas of academia, from Geography to English departments (English including areas of literary studies, cultural studies, creative writing, and composition and rhetoric), focus on "cultural geography" is a growing topic of interest among mainstream, nonindigenous scholars. It is important, as indigenous scholars in these and many other fields—Indigenous Studies programs, Education, Urban and Regional Planning, and beyond—continue to reclaim indigenous knowledge and practices and create places for them within the confines of the academy, with the ultimate purpose of advancing and supporting our indigenous communities. In the area of composition studies, Reynolds (2004) called for the need of "cultural writing theories and material literacy practices that engage with the metaphorical—ways to imagine space—without ignoring places and spaces—the actual locations where writers write, learners learn, and workers work" (p. 3). In the field of education, Tuhiwai Smith (1999) acknowledged "Twenty-Five Indigenous Projects" that promote "the survival of peoples, cultures and languages"; included among them are storytelling, remembering, connecting, representing, reading, and writing (p. 142).

Today, Native Hawaiians continue to research and recite our genealogies, chant traditional oli for our beloved ali'i, 'āina, and things we cherish. We sing songs and dance hula. We talk story. Some of us compose new mo'olelo, oli, and mele, choreograph new hula. And we still do all these things with thought and meaning.

We need to encourage more reading and writing. More important, we need to encourage those who teach to make reading and writing more culturally relevant, more interesting, and more palatable. We need to incorporate ‘āina, and learning from the ‘āina, not just about ‘āina (and not just in science classes), and develop and utilize curriculum and strategies in the arts and humanities classroom environment in which students learn from Hawaiian compositions and create their own. This approach will support a more well-rounded idea of indigenous Hawaiian literacy, one in which students are not just consumers of ideas or materials from beyond our shores. If we truly want no Hawaiian child “left behind” (a highly inappropriate concept from an indigenous perspective, by the way), an indigenous view of literacy that is ‘āina-based and fosters a sense of connection between ‘āina and haumana as reader, writer, and ‘ohana is important. Through experience in difference class settings and age levels, I have had success with this approach. By starting with the culturally appropriate and nature-based metaphor of the haumana as a pebble, and allowing thoughts, discussions, readings, and assignments to ripple out in a sea of creativity, what ripples back can be pleasantly surprising. Utilizing such an approach to teach writing and promote learning is an effective way to foster and develop literacy from an indigenous perspective.

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NOTES

1 This article was originally presented at a meeting of the State of Hawai'i Department of Education (DOE) Literacy Coordinators, April 16, 2004, Kamehameha Schools Kapālama, under the title “Oral Traditions, History, and Literacy From a Hawaiian Perspective.” Mahalo to Mikahala Roy for extending the invitation to speak to this collective of DOE educators.

2 Eia nae ka‘u wahi kauoha, ina he oluolu ko na hoa kumukula o keia paeaina, ke palapala mai i ka moolelo o kela aina keia aina, a paiia...alaila, he waiwai nui no ia i ka poe naauao, ke kuhikuhi nei kakou, a ke ao nei hoi i na haumana i ke ano o na aina haole...A pehea la ka hoi kakou e hoomauea ai, i ke ao ana i na haumana, i ke ano o ko kakou mau aina, na lae, na kuahiwi, na papu (papa), na luapele, na kai kuono, na makani, na pohaku o kane, na heiau, na wahi noho mau a na‘lii, na wai puna, na muliwai, na anemoku, na puali, na wahi pana, na wahi e Kaa o ia nei, na mahina ko nui i keia manawa, na wai lele. Ina pela e kokua like ai kakou, alaila, e loa no he Hoikehonua hou no ka pae aina Hawaii...ke manao nei au e kakau i ka moolelo no ka hele kaapuni ana ia Oahu nei, e like ke kakau ana me ko Molokai. Eia nae kahi e loihi ai keia, ina he moolelo Kaa ko kekahi aina, e hele loa ae anei ma ke Kaa, a me na wahi pana e ae, a me na kupua oia wahi, e nana i ka pohu malie a malino hoi a Laamaikahiki ma Kualoa, a me na hana kupanaha a Kamapuaa iuka o Kaliuwaa, a me ka moolelo o Kaneipolu ma Kailua. Ina nae he wa kaawale kupono, e hiki no ke hoolaha ia. Ke aloha aku nei au ia oukou me ka mahalo i ka Lunahooponopono a me ka poe kapalapala.

3 Nā Lei Na‘auao is a hui (alliance) of Hawaiian culturally based public charter schools across the state. For more information, see their Website, www.naleinauao.org.

4 This is well documented. See Kahumoku (2002), Meyer (2003).

5 Multiple references from this site include *Random House Unabridged Dictionary* (Random House, 2006), *Encyclopedia Britannica* (2008), *American Heritage Dictionary, 4th edition* (Houghton Mifflin, 2006), and *Wordnet 3.0* (Princeton, 2006).

6 Hirsch is most noted for his “Core Knowledge” series of books and curricula that prescribe step-by-step standards of what children educated in the United States need to know in each subject level and at each grade level (i.e., “What Every First Grader Should Know,” “What Every Second Grader Should Know,” etc.). According to critics like education professor Roger Schank (n.d.), the critical literacy movement as advocated by Hirsch promotes standardized “literacy lists” for each grade, focusing on the dominant culture of American society (<http://www.Engines4ed.org/hyperbook/nodes/NODE-91-pg.html>).

7 This appears the focus of indigenous literacy movements across the Americas, particularly in meso-American cultures.

8 The historical and cultural connection between Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian) literacy in Hawaiian and English is an interesting one. By many accounts, when the Hawaiian alphabet was first created by missionaries in the 1820s, Kānaka Maoli took to reading and writing immediately and with great enthusiasm in the Hawaiian language; by the 1880s, reports by the Department of Public Instruction, missionary journals, and newspapers reported that Kanaka Maoli enjoyed one of the highest literacy rates in the world. Yet in contemporary times, DOE statistics rank Kanaka Maoli students as having markedly lower literacy rates, particularly when compared with students of other ethnicities. One of the main factors appears to be the switch from Hawaiian-language medium education to English-language medium education around the turn of the 19th to 20th centuries. Kimura (1983) and others discuss how this cultural trauma, combined with the influx of new immigrant populations at the time and the rise of Hawai'i Creole English ("pidgin"), eroded Hawaiians' interest in excelling at English, viewed as the colonizer's language.

9 This point is supported by Kimura's (1983) detailed discussion of 'ōlelo Hawai'i history and cultural connections and nuances of language.

10 Van Broekhuizen's (2000) research on indigenous literacy in the Pacific concurs with these findings.

11 See discussions by Handy and Pukui (1972), Meyer (2003).

12 Although it would be short-sighted to not think of *pōhaku ki'i* (petroglyphs), *kākau* (tattoo patterns), or *kāpala* (stamped kihei and kapa designs) as forms of written communication, albeit "nonlinguistic" ones.

13 Kimura (1983) has written in detail on this concept of naming.

14 Ho'olauna Kaua'i is an Explorations-type week-long experience sponsored by Kamehameha Schools Extended Education Division. The sixth-grade participants spend the week traveling to different areas of the island learning about cultural sites and participate in cultural activities. On the final day, they perform a hō'ike about what they learned for parents, family members, friends, and other guests.

15 For more detailed information on the UHM strategic plan, see http://www.manoa.hawaii.edu/vision/defining_our_destiny/pdf/scs_final.pdf (final report 2); http://www.manoa.hawaii.edu/vision/defining_our_destiny/planning_process/resource_guide.htm#P; *Defining Our Destiny, Strategic Plan 2002–2010*.

16 I am certainly not the only Hawaiian educator who finds value in the practice. Monica Ka'imipono Kaiwi discusses her classroom practice of students introducing themselves on the second day of class with their mo'okū'auhau because "he or she does not come alone [into the classroom]—he or she comes with his or her 'ohana—those living and those who have passed" (Kaiwi, 2006, p. 35). Therefore, the inclusion of an oral mo'okū'auhau at the beginning of the semester functions "not necessarily for their classmates' benefit but to remind them of who stands with them and to help me [as the teacher] understand who has been entrusted to my care" (Ka'iwi, 2006, p. 35).

17 An excerpt from this poem was used as an opening epigraph in this article; those stanzas are omitted here and are marked by a line of dots.

18 This worksheet is adaptable to different ages and situations; I have used variations of it as part of Hālau Wānana's summer session on Kaua'i, June 2006, and a Kamehameha Schools Keaukahi huaka'i to Wailua, Kaua'i, and as part of the Community Building Division retreat in December 2006. In all cases, there is an accompanying packet of information containing mo'olelo, mele, oli, and so on for the 'āina being studied. The final question is designed to incorporate student mana'o in the improvement and updating of the accompanying information packets.