

PEHEA KOU PIKO: MOTIVATING MO‘OLELO FROM HAWAIIAN EDUCATION KUMU

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## ABSTRACT

This qualitative mo‘olelo study explores the lived experiences of three Hawaiian education kumu. The Hawai‘i Department of Education is currently experiencing a teacher shortage especially in the fields of Hawaiian Language and Hawaiian Immersion. This study offers the opportunity to learn from the stories of kumu who have been teaching for more than ten years in Hawaiian Education. Discourse on the relationships between Hawaiian culture, Hawaiian language and education were analyzed to gain insight on the motivating factors that led the kumu to teach in Hawaiian education and how those lessons can support teacher education program practice.

Mo‘olelo served as a method to collect and analyze the data which revealed that the three kumus’ decisions to become Hawaiian education kumu were highly motivated intrinsically and altruistically. The main influences that contributed to their decision making to become a teacher came from three areas 1) positive relationships with role models like family, teachers, and friends, 2) building competence in Hawaiian knowledge and 3) taking action and accepting kuleana as a kumu.

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## **Prologue: Hūi! Pehea Kou Piko?**

“Pehea kou piko<sup>1</sup>”, although considered “a facetious greeting avoided by some because of the double meaning” (“Nā Puke Wehewehe ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i,” n.d.), asking someone how their piko is doing can spark a deeper conversation about a person’s positionality in life. Through the practice of mo‘olelo<sup>2</sup>, we are able to express our life’s journey, reflect on our purpose and foster connections. This qualitative research focuses heavily on the lessons learned from the personal and professional journeys of individual Native Hawaiian kumu<sup>3</sup> and their reflection on the social and cultural contexts that make up their mo‘olelo. Before embarking on analyzing and reporting the lessons learned, it is only fitting to put into practice and ask myself, ‘pehea ko‘u piko<sup>4</sup>?’ I share three main stories that encompass the concept of kanu i ka piko<sup>5</sup>, mālama i ka piko<sup>6</sup> and ola ka piko<sup>7</sup> in hope to highlight identity, self-improvement and responsibility to share knowledge. My mo‘olelo opens at the conception of where I found my piko, metaphorically and literally.

### **Kanu I Ka Piko**

When my siblings and I were younger, we had chores to complete like most kids in the homestead neighborhood. No one could leave the house to play until all of the responsibilities were complete. No matter how loud the neighborhood kids would call out your name or how hard they would bang on the front gate with the rusted “Beware of Dog” sign, we weren’t released until the work was done. Rightfully, chores served as a wall of tension that blocked me from engaging in far more important endeavors at the ripe age of 10. In my young mind, people

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<sup>1</sup> Pehea kou piko? How are you doing? Piko: Naval or umbilical cord

<sup>2</sup> Story, history

<sup>3</sup> Teacher

<sup>4</sup> How is my piko?

<sup>5</sup> To bury the umbilical cord

<sup>6</sup> To care for the umbilical cord

<sup>7</sup> The umbilical cord survives

relied on me to chase down the “manapua man” who tried his hardest to drive by quickly through the neighborhood in his white van. Without my services, who else could negotiate the cost of a bag full of fried noodles and a couple of fluffy steamed char siu manapua? It was clear to me then that the chore of watering the lā<sup>8</sup> around the house was cutting into my leisure activities. My High Jump game and Hop Scotch tournaments suffered greatly. There were a few times that I tried to dig out early by just shooting water at the leaves so that it would glisten and appear to be drenched. Of course, this did not pass. Lā<sup>8</sup> for our family provided us with medicinal and spiritual protection, adornment, food preparation, and entertainment. Due to my negligence, the leaves eventually browned and shredded. It had no chance against the Wai‘anae heat. I felt terrible.

Later in life, I asked my dad once, “Mahea ku‘u piko? Where is my piko?” My father shared with me the practice of mālama piko from the perspective of his pure Hawaiian mother, my Tūtū<sup>9</sup>, an expert hānau keiki in her own right who bore 18 children. When my older brother was born, my Tūtū told my dad to never throw out the piko of a keiki or child. She further explained to my dad that the cord was the life line that secured the pilina or relationship between keiki and mother. Rather, plant or kanu it in the earth, under a new tree, so it can continue to nourish and be a part of the living tree. This growing tree will always remind the child of its connection to the land. Blaisdell (1997) shared about the belief of “nā piko ‘ekolu” (three body points) that re-enforces the piko’s mana and importance to the Hawaiian culture. The first piko is in reference to the fontanel or the soft spot on a newborn’s head that connects to the spirit world. This represents the time of the past. The second piko is in relation to the umbilical cord that

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<sup>8</sup> Ti leaf plant

<sup>9</sup> Term for grandparent. In this setting, Tūtū is reference to grandmother.

connects to your parents and represents the here and now. And lastly, the third piko refers to the genitalia that links to the future, the next generation.

So once again, I asked my dad, “Where is my piko buried?” He shared that it resides in our yard under the lā‘ī. I remember thinking to myself, of course it would be there. How fitting. After receiving the treasure map to my piko, I remembered the effects of my negligence so I took on a new responsibility and pride to drench the lā‘ī with water. Starting at the roots, I worked my way up. I scanned each section and acknowledged its resourcefulness and symbolism for our family. I thought of its potential, my potential. I needed to protect it from those hot days so that the leaves stayed shinny and green as it absorbed the sun’s rays. I was tapped in, fully grounded and willing to be present as a kupa<sup>10</sup> of Wai‘anae. The manapua man could wait.

### **Mālama I Ka Piko**

In the first mo‘olelo, I found the home of my piko. This next mo‘olelo acknowledges the clashing of cultures and multiple attempts to exhume and transplant my piko. Mākua valley is a lush and spiritual place out on the Wai‘anae coast. It is one of those places that calls to you. Before social media blew up and everyone’s “secret beach spots” got exposed, Mākua beach was somewhat a secluded swimming and surf spot for the local residents. In the 1980s, my family and I would camp out at Mākua beach and it was during these overnight stays that I experienced Mākua valley being used by the U.S military as target practice with live ammunition. I remember the vibration in my na‘au as each bomb would go off. I remember tears, but not for me, for Mākua.

The abuse went on for years until the residents and Mālama Mākua, a nonprofit organization stepped in to challenge the military’s use of the valley. Live ammunition ceased but

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<sup>10</sup> Resident or native

access to the valley is still limited due to the damage caused by their target practices. Years later, far from the nights of camping out in Mākua’s front yard, my family had gained an opportunity to access Mākua valley. It was a perfect addition to our planned events for our first ever family reunion. The gates that once locked Mākua away from us, were finally opened. As I stood at the base, staring up at the peaks of Kahanahāiki, Ko‘iahi and Mākua, my na‘au started to experience a twisting and pulling pain of years of trauma. As the wind circulated the voices of my ‘ohana who humbly asked Mākua for entry through ‘oli, my stress subsided and a sense of familiarity came over me. It was my piko. I was experiencing the past, present and future at the same time. My kūpuna stretched out her arms that day and embraced us all with her protection. I realized why Mākua calls to me. My kupuna wahine<sup>11</sup> lived in Mākua and the peaks, the dirt, the sand, the wind, they all hold her story, her essence, her remembrance. My tears that day were for her.

### **Ola Ka Piko**

As the dirt was starting to loosen around the place where my piko laid, the knowledge of my kūpuna was experiencing culture appropriation within school settings. The Americanized curriculum did not allow for discussions on Hawaiian cultural practices, Hawaiian language or topics like the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy. May Day on the other hand, was a must. Plastic flowers, check. Fake smiles, check. Dancing a hula that we don’t understand, check, check. My piko was so close to the top soil at that time that I could feel the warmth of assimilation. I needed the truth.

When I graduated from high school, I shed my private school uniform and returned back to my shorts and t-shirt with printed bold sayings like “Kū‘ē kākou,” “Aloha ‘Āina” and on special occasions, “Wat’s the haps, couple slaps.” I needed to be replanted. I took Hawaiian

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<sup>11</sup> General term for grandmother or female ancestor. In this case, it is used in reference to my great, great grandmother

language at Leeward Community College and then later at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. I also became a Hawaiian Studies major at Kamakakūokalani. My piko was charged.

I knew I wanted to go into teaching. I wanted to be a part of a movement towards the development of Hawaiian language, culture and knowledge in schools. I pursued my Masters of Education in Teaching (MEdT) at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa (UHM). After graduating, I was then hired to work with Curriculum Studies at UHM, College of Education. As a kicker, I was able to work back in my community, well a few mountains over. My work supported the Nānāikapono Community School Museum in Nānākuli. If you ask anyone on the West side, there is a specific distinction between whether you are from Nānākuli or Wai‘anae. This is how I describe the relationship. The two aren’t neighbors but more like siblings. They may have the same parents but they have their own identities, their own group of friends and their own hangouts. They ignore each other all day at school but if anyone was to ‘try act up’ with them, they would be there for each other in a heartbeat. ‘Bumbai’ suffer the consequences at home. For me, it was an influential time and place working in the community. My piko was happy. Ua ola.

As a faculty member working alongside a teacher preparation program, I felt that it is my kuleana or responsibility to be conscious of the situation of our Native Hawaiian teacher candidates. I wanted to be a part of building an appropriate learning environment that can best mālama the educational, emotional and social grounds where their own metaphorical piko may lie. Documenting and engaging with the lived experiences of Native Hawaiians are essential to understanding the progression of the people in the areas of education, culture and language. So, I now shift and ask others, “Pehea kou piko?”

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

*My TūTū told my dad to never throw out the piko of a keiki. She further explained that the cord was the life line that secured the pilina between keiki and mother. Rather, plant or kanu it in the earth, under a new tree, so it can continue to nourish and be a part of the living tree.*

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore and understand the influences and motivating factors that led three Native Hawaiian kumu to teach Hawaiian education. It is essential to examine these factors to learn how these influences nourish their piko like the excerpt above highlights. As a faculty member at the University of Hawai‘i and working specifically with a teacher education program, it is evident that teacher recruitment for Native Hawaiian education is on the low end. The Hawai‘i Department of Education (HIDOE) issued a memo indicating that shortage differentials for the school year 2020-2021 will continue (Covell, 2020). Hawaiian Language Immersion programs remain on the list as an area of need in recruiting qualified teachers. The high vacancy of Hawaiian Education teaching positions in the HIDOE is a critical issue. Therefore, this study was conducted in hope to find solutions to strengthen teacher education program practices.

### **Research Questions**

#### Overarching Questions

1. How can the mo‘olelo of three Native Hawaiian kumu inform us about influences and motivational factors that lead individuals to become Hawaiian education teachers and remain in the profession?
2. How can these mo‘olelo help inform teacher education program practices?

#### Sub Questions

1. What personal experiences impact an individual's decision and/or path to become a Hawaiian education kumu?
2. How does an individual's experiences in Hawaiian Language, culture and education influence their decision to become a Hawaiian education kumu?
3. What are the values that drive individuals to become Hawaiian education kumu?
4. What are the supports and barriers in an individual's pursuit to become a Hawaiian education kumu?
5. What are the reasons that individuals remain as Hawaiian education kumu through their career?

### **Significance of the Study**

There has been a substantial amount of research conducted on motivating factors that support individuals on becoming a teacher. However, in review of the literature, there is a greater need for more research on Native Hawaiians and their personal journey to the teaching profession. In addition, there is also limited research on Native Hawaiians teaching Hawaiian education. Another significant value of this research is that the participants were able to engage in sharing their ideas and experiences through a very traditional Hawaiian practice of storytelling or mo'olelo.

Although this study only focused on three kumu from three different schools, the use of purposive sampling and storytelling provided diversity in the data. The hope of this research was to look at ways to support Native Hawaiians pursuing a pathway to becoming a Hawaiian education kumu and support teacher education.

### **Definition of Terms**

- Hawaiian Education: knowledge acquired that has roots in Hawaiian culture and

language. This includes Secondary Hawaiian Language, Hawaiian Language Immersion Schools and the Hawaiian Studies Program.

- Hawaiian Studies: incorporation of Hawaiian culture and language into the Department of Education school curriculum.
- Ka Papahana Kaiapuni Hawai‘i: Hawaiian Language Immersion Program
- Ke Kula Kaiapuni: Hawaiian Immersion schools
- Ke Kula Kaiapuni/Hawaiian Immersion Schools: K-12 school settings where instruction is carried out through the medium of Hawaiian Language
- Kūpuna: elders of past and present who are respected for their knowledge and skill.
- Kuleana: a sense of deep connection or responsibility to carry out action.
- “Pidgin”: Hawaiian Creole language.
- Teacher Preparation Programs: University programs that offer licensure in teaching.

### **Overview of the Literature Review and Theoretical Frameworks**

Based on this study of three Hawaiian Education kumu, the themes addressed in the literature review for this dissertation focus on: overview of Hawaiian education and motivations for pursuing the teaching profession. The theoretical framework for this study is based on Ryan and Deci’s (2017) Self-Determination Theory as well as Balutski & Wrights’ (2017) Kanaka ‘Ōiwi Critical Race Theory.

### **Overview of Methodology**

Native Hawaiian educators were recruited using a criterion-based selection (LeCompte and Preissle 1993, p. 69) that was aligned with the intent of the research questions. When consent forms were signed, a survey was issued to the participants which was used to gather knowledge on their education background and years of teaching. One semi-structured interview

or ‘talk-story’ session was conducted with each participant separately. This structure was to ensure comfort in the setting, validity and protection of confidentiality. The kumu were also asked to bring in an artifact that represents their thoughts on Hawaiian culture, language and education.

Traditionally, Native Hawaiians<sup>12</sup> were (are) masterful oratorical communicators that use various methods to observe, analyze and internalize the environment. One method is mo‘olelo which is defined as “story, tale, myth, history, tradition, literature, succession of talk” (Puku‘i, 1986, p. 254). The use of mo‘olelo as a means to collect, analyze and present the participants’ lived experiences was the backbone of the research design.

### **Overview of Results and Discussion**

In Chapter 4, the findings are organized according to main themes which is then broken down into sub themes. Excerpts from the kumus’ stories will be used as evidence that support the main and sub themes. Chapter 5 will include the discussion on the findings, implications of the study and conclusion.

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<sup>12</sup> Native Hawaiian is a term used to identify the people of Hawai‘i with Hawaiian blood and lineage to the ‘āina pre-Western contact.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

*I shed my private school uniform and returned back to my shorts and t-shirt with printed bold sayings like “Kū‘ē kākou” “Aloha ‘Āina” and on special occasions, “Wat’s the haps, couple slaps.” I needed to be replanted. I took Hawaiian language at Leeward Community College and then later at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. I also became a Hawaiian Studies major at Kamakakūokalani. My piko was charged. I knew I wanted to go into teaching. I wanted to be a part of a movement towards the development of Hawaiian language, culture and knowledge in schools.*

In keeping with the theme of the excerpt above, this chapter will focus on building the context of Hawaiian culture-based education, Hawaiian Language education and the history of Hawai‘i. The historical tensions of power will be made explicit so that the intentions of the creation of Hawaiian culture-based learning environments are clear. The theoretical framework is defined in this chapter which included Kanaka ‘Ōiwi critical race theory and self-determination theory.

### **Education in Hawai‘i**

**Building context.** After the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom in 1893 and followed by the illegal annexation to the United States in 1898, Hawai‘i’s schools were forced to adopt and operate under a more Americanized system. One way to ensure the assimilation into the newly appointed “dominant culture” was through a method of “linguicide” (Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson, 2017). Despite the efforts made by King Liholiho in early 1800s to raise the literacy rate in both Hawaiian and English, the new educational system was strategically designed to “white wash” the Hawaiian culture and silence the now marginalized Native Hawaiian population. With the English only movement on the rise, the tensions in the schools

and communities faced culture extinction and appropriation. These actions in Hawai‘i’s history have laid the foundations for future issues in the educational system and unknowingly sparked the fires of resistance.

**Resurgence.** With the ongoing years of cultural damage, it would take almost 80 years later for the Hawaiian culture and language to make a resurgence in the communities and schools. Freire (2006) refers to this as conscientizacao which “refers to learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality” (p. 35). The process of building critical consciousness encourages dialogue, reflection and action which helps break the “theme of silence” which “suggests a structure of mutism in face of the overwhelming force of the limit-situations” (Freire, p. 106). Linda Tuhiwai Smith talks about the importance of envisioning and how its initiative can bring indigenous peoples together. Smith (1999) states, “The power of indigenous peoples to change their own lives and set new directions despite their impoverished and oppressed conditions speaks to the politics of resistance” (p. 152).

Thus, one such event that empowered Native Hawaiians to rebuild Hawai‘i’s education system to include more Hawaiian language and culture was in 1978 with the Hawai‘i State Constitutional amendment (Article X, Section 4). This amendment expanded the possibilities of the inclusion of Native Hawaiian language and culture in HODOE. The Hawaiian Studies program was created in 1981. This also gave way for the creation of Hawaiian immersion schools as well as laying the foundation for Native Hawaiian government entities to be recognized by other State of Hawai‘i entities.

One example of a political shift that came from the 1978 Constitutional Convention, was the creation of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA). OHA was established with a mandate to

“better the conditions of both Native Hawaiians and the Hawaiian community in general” (OHA, 2020). Today, OHA works towards the empowerment of communities by focusing and providing support to Native Hawaiian issues like education, ‘āina, economic self-sufficiency, education, governance and health (OHA, 2020).

**Hawaiian education in HDOE public schools.** According to the Foundation & Administrative Framework for the Kaiapuni Education (FAFKE) Report (2015), the goals for the program are as follows, the mission of Ka Papahana Kaiapuni or Hawaiian Immersion program is to 1) provide a culturally rich and dynamic learning environment 2) ensure excellence in the Hawaiian language, culture, history, and ways of knowing and 3) empower students to self-determine success and stewardships in community and family. Since its birth in 1987, the Hawaiian Immersion program has set out to be the beacon of hope to reinstate control over what is being taught and how the culture is being relayed to Hawai‘i’s keiki. The overall objective is to “develop proficient and fully functioning Hawaiian language speakers (1) in a variety of communicative setting, (2) with high levels of fluency and authenticity similar to native speakers, and (3) as future Hawaiian language-speaking parents and community leaders” (FAFKE, 2015). In order to achieve this, the language commitments must exist across the board. The intent of the program is designed for students to be exposed to language in a variety of environments. These environments are to be strategically reinforced with Hawaiian pedagogies of learning.

In February 2014, the U.S. Department of Education granted Hawai‘i a one-year waiver granting Hawaiian immersion 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade students to take the math and language arts assessment test in Hawaiian. The Superintendent Kathryn Matayoshi stated “this waiver sets a precedent for our Hawaiian Language education efforts...It took collective vision, collaboration,

and a lot of work to reach this point.” ‘Aha Kauleo’s Kalehua Krug collaborated with UHM College of Education as well as others at the time to create the piloted Hawaiian Language Assessment. Krug stated, “This field test brings us one more step closer to ensuring that this happens. We know the USDOE will be closely watching what occurs over the year during the Kaiapuni field assessment. We’re confident that Kaiapuni students are up to the challenge of rigorous assessment in the Hawaiian Language” (HIDOE, 2015).

**Hawaiian education charter school and culture based education.** At the dawn of the twenty-first century, the No Child Left Behind Act introduced in 2001 served as a new reform for America’s education. The spawning of standardized tests and pressures on schools across America to make Annual Yearly Progress put the school curriculum, school administration, students and communities under investigation. A Research Professor of Education at New York University, Diane Ravitch (2010) covers the issues with teacher uniformity in San Diego by discussing the belief that “properly trained teachers sharing the same practices, the same ideas, and the same language, it was believed, would lift student achievement” (p.51). This was the driving force behind many cases made about the link between uniform curriculum and success. Many administrators shifted their school curriculum to teach to the test which gave very little room for student-focused instruction or the culture of the students to be able to breathe in the same air pocket of standardized instruction. Many schools were unable to make Annual Yearly Progress and due to the effects of accountability, some schools were closed and communities were disrupted and forced to reshuffle.

Ravitch (2010) believes that initiatives that are lacking collaboration, indulges in money hungriness, and suppressing both teacher and student learning due to test heavy mandates is undermining education in America. Despite these obstacles, Hawaiian Culture-based schools

held tightly to their mission and program goals. A quantitative research study entitled Hawaiian Cultural Influences in Education (HCIE) focused on the impact of culture-based education on student outcomes, particularly Native Hawaiian Students. The students that were assessed came from private, charter and public schools.

Educators and researchers agree that increasing the continuity between students' home and school cultures will likely lead to positive educational outcomes. Drawing upon Hawaiian cultural knowledge and practice can help make learning more relevant for students who, regardless of ancestry, share a common connection to Hawai'i. When examining Hawaiian language ability, internalization of Hawaiian values, and participation in cultural activities, students of High CBE Teachers consistently outperform those of Low CBE Teachers. (Ledward & Takayama, 2009, p. 2)

The study revealed that place-based education "(CBE) positively impacts student social-emotional well-being...Second, enhanced socio-emotional well-being, in turn, positively affects math and reading scores. Third, CBE is positively related to math and reading test scores for all students, and particularly for those with low socio-emotional development" (Kana'iaupuni, Ledward & Jensen, 2010).

In the case of Hawai'i charter schools, Goodyear-Ka'ōpua (2013) states that "The efforts to build indigenous Hawaiian culture-based charter schools have been about not only educational reform but also the restoration of the holistic health of Hawaiian communities and nationhood. They are projects of survivance" (p. 5). Hawaiian culture-based charter schools like Hawaiian Immersion Schools began with the intent to regain strength for the next generation. This idea of survivance holds water with Hawaiian culture-based charter schools because of its history of struggle and triumph. As of right now, the "governance of charter schools has largely remained

at the community level, and approximately half of the thirty-one charter schools in the islands are run by predominantly Native Hawaiian communities that continue to assert the importance of ‘Ōiwi cultural values and practices” (Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua, 2013). This slight autonomous advantage allows for decision making to reflect the needs of the community and school.

Although it is influential to look at research that supports the progression of culture-based education in Hawai‘i, it is also important to acknowledge that for decades prior, the inclusion of Hawaiian culture in schools has been limited to a “curriculum of aloha” that perpetuates stereotypes of Native Hawaiians (Kaomea, 2000). McTighe, Seif, and Wiggins (2004) says “Students are more likely to make meaning and gain understanding when they link new information to prior knowledge, relate facts to ‘big ideas,’ explore essential questions, and apply their learning in new contexts” (p.26).

According to Richards, Brown, and Forde (2006), if there is to be a reform that encourages schools to be more culturally responsive then three areas need to be addressed:

1. Organization of the school- this includes the administrative structure and the way it relates to diversity, and the use of physical space in planning schools and arranging classrooms.
2. School policies and procedures-this refers to those policies and practices that impact on the delivery of services to students from diverse backgrounds.
3. Community involvement-this is concerned with the institutional approach to community involvement in which families and communities are expected to find ways to become involved in the school. (2006, p. 5)

### **Motivating Factors on Becoming a Teacher**

The Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2005) collected

extensive data from 25 countries on teacher recruitment and policies on why people go into the teaching profession. OECD noted that there were three types of motivating factors according to the teacher education literature. These types of motivations were (1) extrinsic motives such as job guarantee, money, holiday, social security appointment and ease; (2) intrinsic motives such as interest, personal satisfaction, and desire and love of the profession; and (3) altruistic motives such as being of service to people, society, and country (OECD, 2005). OECDs' findings revealed that teachers taught with altruistic motives (OECD, 2005). However, it is important to point out that altruistic motivation does not resonate across the board.

Bastick's (2000) research focuses on pre-service teachers and it was revealed that in areas that were "developing or undeveloped societies, they instead chose teaching as a career with extrinsic or mercenary-based extrinsic motives." This is not to say that all "undeveloped societies" are motivated in this fashion but it is an interesting commentary on how the social and economic status of a community can impact the career decisions of its inhabitants.

Yuce, Sahin, Kocer, & Kana (2013) conducted a study that consisted of 283 Turkish pre-service teachers that discussed factors that lead to their choice to become a teacher. This mixed method study set out to not only add to the literature on career choices but also specifically highlight teachers and education in Turkey. A significance of the study was that it focused on gender identity and roles in Turkey. The results showed that altruistic motives were dominant with female teachers while mercenary-based extrinsic motives were more popular with males. Overall, the study showed that all three motives were important to the individuals when choosing teaching as a profession but it is essential to point out that extrinsic motives had the overall highest percentage with (36.75%) in comparison to intrinsic motives (30.2%).

Yuce, Sahin, Kocer, & Kana (2013) revealed that more pre-service teachers indicated that they “idealized the profession” as the reason for their career choice. In regards to extrinsic motives, the higher desired reasons were based on “High social status and prestige of teaching profession” “working conditions” and “holidays.” And lastly, the top altruistic motive was “Loving Turkish Language and wanting to teach it to others” and “Being in service of people.”

Another study was conducted in 2015 by the Associate of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) union who surveyed 858 teachers to find out the reasons why that they started teaching. The five reasons that came from the survey which had some similarities to the findings of Alexander, Chant, & Cox (1994), are:

- 1) Work with young people and to make a difference
- 2) The variety of the job
- 3) Teaching is fun
- 4) Inspiring teachers
- 5) Love of their subject

In 2000, Virginia B. Stuart published her dissertation that focused on the career decision of 10 African American teachers. Her research acknowledged that African Americans were underrepresented in the teaching profession therefore the need to examine the factors that lead her participants to their teaching career was crucial. This research adds to the literature because not only did it look at the “self-concept of ability and self-efficacy” it also looked at the impact of environmental influences. One of these influences dealt with “Home environment and preparation for teaching background information.” Stuart (2000) highlights the common themes that emerged: “(a) family practices and behaviors towards education, (b) influence of family role

models on earlier academic growth, (c) circumstance affecting choice of teaching, and (d) personal efficacy in adjusting to challenging and rewarding family experiences” (p. 79).

In the study, the participants recalled how their family practices empowered them and fed their self-efficacy. Most of the teachers acknowledged that their family showed positive behaviors toward education and often supported them with one-on-one attention. Another factor was building self-efficacy based on “family strife or discord.” Some of the teachers had influential people in their lives that were educators “who valued continuing education, possessed a commitment to the teaching profession, and offered financial and moral support in academic endeavors” (Stuart, 2000 p. 87).

Another influence that came from this research was the impact of the school environment. The study showed most of the participants had a role model in their early education. Stuart (2000) discusses how the participants recalled common traits of teacher role models that displayed knowledge in their area of expertise, possessed the ability to inspire students

to do their best, and were well organized. Likewise, high expectations as conveyed by teachers through verbal encouragement, rigorous coursework and special academic assistance appeared to be strong factors in shaping personal beliefs in academic capability. (p. 93)

Although a typical reaction and observation of good quality teachers, there was a lack of attention to how the race of their role model played a factor in their decision. The other case is that of the topic of neglect. However, Stuart’s (2000) study did highlight the impact of counselors on career choices. Some of the recollections that the teachers had of high school were “(a) counselors who were unavailable for assistance, (b) counselors who were rarely visible, and

(c) in one instance, a counselor's failure to provide the assistance needed as requested by the student" (p. 95).

**Hawai'i teacher motivation.** Asam (1999) conducted a study that examined the professional socialization experiences of sixteen Native Hawaiian pre-service teachers while they were in their teacher training program. The study also focused on identifying the influences that lead the participants to enter the teaching profession. The main themes that the data revealed is that "influence of role models, cultural issues and changing confidence, knowledge, and commitment" were all contributing factors in choosing teaching as a profession (Asam, 1999, p. 78). The study also revealed influences that the participants encountered while in the program which included their work relationship with their mentor teacher. The study examined the importance of being a Native Hawaiian teacher. "Most participants recognized connections between their identity as Native Hawaiian and their desire to improve education for Native Hawaiian students" (Asam, 1999, p. 91).

### **Theoretical Framework**

**Self-determination theory.** Given the research on motivation, it was critical to use a theory that allowed for a deeper understanding of influences that motivate choice. Self-determination theory was developed by psychologist Richard Ryan and Edward Deci. One aspect of the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is "particularly concerned with how social-contextual factors support or thwart people's thriving through the satisfaction of their basic psychological needs for competence, relatedness, and autonomy" (p. 3). These psychological basic needs are defined as "nutrients that are essential for growth, integrity, and well-being" (p.10). Competence is defined as "the need to gain mastery of tasks and learn different skills" while relatedness is defined as the "need to experience a sense of belonging and attachment to other people."

Autonomy refers to the “need to feel in control of their own behaviors and goals” (Cherry, 2019). Although the focus of this theory is in the field of psychology, it is argued that it can support human development in multiple domains of knowledge because of its concern with “the nature, structure, and functioning of a person in action, including the person’s inherent proactive capacities to selectively engage, interpret, and act on external environments” (Ryan & Deci, 2017, p. 8). SDT makes assumptions that in order to take action and make choices, people need to be intrinsically motivated to reach autonomy which leads to self-determination. For instance, Joesaar, Hein and Hagger (2012) conducted a study in the field of sports that showed there was a correlation between coaches who were seen as more autonomy-supportive and the athletic levels of their athletes.

**Kanaka ‘ōiwi critical race theory.** The foundational theory of Kanaka ‘Ōiwi Critical Race Theory is a combination of critical race theory (CRT) and tribal critical race theory. Seen as a means to actively process and address inequality, CRT naturally calls for social justice. According to Barnes (1990), “Critical race theorists..integrate their experimental knowledge, drawn from a shared history as ‘other’ with their ongoing struggles to transform a world deteriorating under the albatross of racial hegemony” (pp. 1864-1865). With the origins of CRT serving as a means to expose systemic racism against African Americans in America, the argument was that it was not inclusive to all. Brayboy (2005) points out that critical race theory “did not address the specific needs of tribal peoples because it does not address American Indians’ liminality as both legal/political, and racialized beings or the experience of colonization” (pp. 428-429). Due to these limitations, Tribal Critical Race Theory emerged and extended the theory to be more inclusive and relative to indigenous histories.

Although indigenous peoples may share similar histories of oppression, Wright and

Balutski (2016) saw the need to adapt critical race theory even more to meet the Kanaka ‘Ōiwi story. They considered various frameworks which included CRT, including Tribal Critical Race Theory and Kanaka ‘Ōiwi critical consciousness to look at the crossing themes. Wright and Balutski’s (2016) emerging themes from Kanaka ‘Ōiwi Critical Race Theory are:

- The **consequences of colonialism and occupation** are pervasive and unique to Hawai‘i in their exploitation of ‘āina and appropriation of identity, particularly in the areas of local identity and settler colonialism, tourism, and de/militarization.
- **Aloha ‘āina** (love for the land and nation) is fundamental to the expression and analysis of educational journeys for Kanaka ‘Ōiwi.
- It is important to recognize and honor **hūnā** (sacred, hidden) of mo‘olelo. Unlike western notions of research, not everything is free and open, and sometimes what is shared may only be understood by a few.
- **Mo‘okū‘auhau** (connections to people, places, and spaces) can be used to describe and understand the diverse pathways and relationships that individuals have with respect to different contexts.
- **Kuleana** (right, responsibility, privilege, concern, authority) is the culmination of Kanaka ‘Ōiwi mo‘olelo about their educational journeys and the ways in which they enact agency. (p. 94)

Wright and Balutski (2016) explains that “External Forces” are the contextual factors that influence Kanaka ‘Ōiwi educational journeys. “Identity Conscious Articulation” are the intentional, culture-based ways in which these educational experiences are understood and expressed, and “Kuleana” is the theme that relates to the self-reflexive and praxis-orientated aspects of the educational journey (p.94).

These collective theoretical frameworks, Kanaka ‘Ōiwi Critical Race Theory and Self-Motivation theory, will be the lenses when analyzing the stories and serve as an explanatory framework when discussing the mo‘olelo of the three kumu. They will serve as a map to understanding the context of the social and political environments of the participants. Through Kanaka ‘Ōiwi Critical Race Theory, the external forces, identity conscious articulation and kuleana will be explored while sorting through the motivators that support competence, relatedness and autonomy to the self-determination of becoming a kumu.

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

*I asked my dad, “Where is my piko buried?” He shared that it resides in our yard under the lā‘ī. I remember thinking to myself, of course it would be there. How fitting. After receiving the treasure map to my piko, I remembered the effects of my negligence so I took on a new responsibility and pride to drench the lā‘ī with water. Starting at the roots, I worked my way up. I scanned each section and acknowledged its resourcefulness and symbolism for our family. I thought of its potential, my potential.*

As suggested in the excerpt, this chapter reviews the methodology and methods used for reviewing and acknowledging this mo‘olelo study on the influence of Hawaiian culture, language and education on Native Hawaiian kumu. The purpose of this qualitative research is to explore the motivational life experiences expressed through mo‘olelo by three Hawaiian education kumu and understand its relationship to Hawaiian culture, education and teaching practices.

#### **Importance of Mo‘olelo**

In search of an appropriate methodology, it was essential for me to revisit my question and reflect on my participants. There are important factors to consider when approaching research done by and for indigenous people. Linda Tuhiwai (1999) states:

Indigenous methodologies tend to approach cultural protocols, values and behaviours as an integral part of methodology. They are ‘factors‘ to be built in to research explicitly, to be thought about reflexively, to be declared openly as part of the research design, to be discussed as part of the final results of a study and to be disseminated back to the people in the culturally appropriate way and in a language that can be understood. (p.15)

Traditionally, Native Hawaiians were (are) masterful oratorical communicators that used various methods to observe, analyze and internalize their environment. The Hawaiian language itself is drenched with rich visuals of the world through a Hawaiian lens. It also holds power and importance. A popular ‘ōlelo no‘eau or wise saying, that reinforces this point is as follows, “I ka ‘ōlelo no ke ola, i ka ‘ōlelo no ka make” which means “Life is in speech; death is in speech.” (Puku‘i, 1983, p. 129). This wise saying bears much weight because of its layered meanings. One aspect of it relates to the belief in the power of words and how it can literally cause pain and uncomfortableness through insults and forms of curses. Vice versa, words can also encourage greatness, honor people and motivate warriors in battle. Another layer to this wise saying, which resonates well with the Hawaiian language revitalization movement, is the practical understanding that with language or voice, a people can prosper and without it, the people will lose their cultural map and its content will disintegrate. Mo‘olelo serves as a means to revitalize the Hawaiian language, cultural beliefs, practices, collect data and ensure opportunities of validity.

Like the prophetic ‘ōlelo no‘eau, “I ka ‘ōlelo no ke ola, i ka ‘ōlelo no ka make” implies, generations of Hawaiians have been silenced by a foreign government who banked on assimilation to hold the voices of Native Hawaiian people captive. Since the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian government in 1893, the Hawaiian language, stories, and people slowly started moving away from the cultural and linguistic norm. Hawaiians became displaced in their own land and their mo‘olelo started to disappear from the educational world. Throughout history, there were revolts against the change and one effective method that Native Hawaiians historically used to fight against these tensions was through the use and resurgence of mo‘olelo. Mo‘olelo is defined as “story, tale, myth, history, tradition, literature...succession of talk”

(Puku‘i, 1986, p.254). Kaomea (2005) speaks to the importance of mo‘olelo and how it was “used to teach cultural values, transmit historical information, perpetuate family genealogies, and impart knowledge about cultural customs and traditions.”

**Pilina me ka ‘āina.** Native Hawaiians have been using mo‘olelo for thousands of years to understand their connection to ‘āina or land. One mo‘olelo that has been used to teach many life lessons and has laid the foundation of the connection to ‘āina is the one of Hāloa. Kame‘eleihiwa (1992) talks about the complex relationship triangle of Ho‘ohōkūkalani’s celestial parents Papa (the mother), Wākea (the father) and herself. The story focuses on the first born son of Ho‘ohōkūkalani and Wākea which was still-born. His name was Hāloanakalaukapalili and from the place of his burial site grew the first kalo plant. When Ho‘ohōkūkalani has her second child, she honors the eldest child by naming him Hāloa. He becomes the first Ali‘i Nui or chief and from him, the nation was birthed. The retelling of this mo‘olelo not only preserves the genealogical aspect but reinforces the weight of kuleana or responsibility of the people to mālama ‘āina. The balance is simple. We take care of the land and the land will take care of us. The lessons of Hāloa exist till this day. Many Hawaiian mahi‘ai or farmers carry the weight of this kuleana and have used it as a foundation and practice to mālama ‘āina. Hāloa’s mo‘olelo has even been used to support the fight against creating a genetically modified kalo. This is a worthy example of how significant mo‘olelo is to Native Hawaiians and the perpetuation of culture. Through the use of mo‘olelo in this context, it is a means to not only collect cultural knowledge but also a way to preserve family names and important lessons and connections with land.

**Life lessons.** Mo‘olelo were also used to teach life lessons through revisiting influential stories like Hawai‘i’s Umi-a-Liloa, who was underestimated because he was a lower-ranking

ali‘i. He successfully overthrew his brother, Hakau who was deemed an unfit ali‘i. This mo‘olelo preserved concepts on genealogical rankings and how it relates to inheritance of the government alongside cultural practices like being pono<sup>13</sup> and having a stronger skillset. Another traditional mo‘olelo that is often reflected on is Kalapana, ke keiki ho‘opāpā (banter) who takes down a Kaua‘i chief and his skilled kanaka ho‘opāpā. This story is swimming with colorful language and witty play on words that help the readers engage with kaona or hidden meaning. In order to win against the ali‘i, Kalapana is trained by his mother, aunt, and his collective experiences throughout his journey. This young child is totally overlooked by his challengers and most others because of his age. What he lacks in years of life he makes up with skilled training in mo‘olelo, knowledge of the mountain, sea, land, rituals, etc. Krug (2014) analyzed this particular story to highlight genealogy and to investigate how the methods could be used to develop curriculum for Hawaiian language immersion schools. Krug (2014) goes on to comment that “Nā kēia mo‘olelo e a‘o ana iā kākou i ke ‘ano kūpono o ke a‘o ‘ana i kekahi ha‘awina ma mua o ka ‘oni ‘ana a i kekahi hou aku” (p. 47). He makes a valid point in discussing how the mo‘olelo teaches us the right way to gain knowledge before moving on to something else. Not only does it have lessons on ways to train and equip with weapons of knowledge but it teaches us to honor our mo‘okū‘auhau<sup>14</sup> of teachers. It is just another reminder on how important it is to “nānā i ke kumu” or look to the source. These life lessons are passed down and impact the way of life for the next generation through mo‘olelo. In relation to this study, using mo‘olelo as a method to collect data provides an opportunity to sift through rich life experiences and analyze the important lessons that can inform change.

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<sup>13</sup> Balance or fair

<sup>14</sup> Mo‘okū‘auhau means genealogy.

**Written word.** With the introduction of the written word in the early 1820s, Native Hawaiians adapted and adopted the medium and used it to their advantage to increase literacy and gain control of publishing their work in the local newspapers. Great historians and writers like Samuel Manaiākalani Kamakau were one that would use the Hawaiian newspapers as an avenue to express themselves and also submit Hawaiian mo‘olelo with the intention of preserving the knowledge. In the introduction of Kamakau’s “Ruling Chiefs”, Kame‘eleihiwa (1991) comments on Kamakau’s body of work and how he helped form the first Hawaiian Historical Association in 1841 with the intent:

to obtain and preserve all historical data possible which bore on the origin of the race, and to obliterate the common belief among some foreigners who claim this is a wandering race which was lost in a storm and driven by winds to these shores.

(Kamakau, 1961, p. v)

Works that were generated from mo‘olelo collectors like, Kamakau, Puku‘i, Malo, Poepoe, Fornander and others recognized the importance of documenting the past in order to support the future. Silva (2017) talks about the concept of “mo‘okū‘auhau (genealogical) consciousness” which she describes as a specific “Hawaiian orientation to the world.” Silva credits Kānepu‘u and Poepoe as examples of individuals who possessed this consciousness because

They positioned themselves within the mo‘okū‘auhau of our lāhui; that is, they greatly valued the narrative and poetic traditions of their kūpuna and used their talents to record them for their descendants. In the twenty-first century, we are who they foresaw: descendants whose primary language is now that of the colonizer, but who need and are benefiting from their efforts to write in Hawaiian. (p. 7)

Due to their efforts, Hawaiian education is able to flourish and our keiki in the Hawaiian Language Immersion programs, Hawaiian focused charter schools and at the college level are able to reconnect with the knowledge of our kūpuna preserved nicely in the documented mo‘olelo.

### **Mo‘olelo As A Method**

Contemporary Native Hawaiian Scholars look to mo‘olelo and other forms alike (‘ōlelo no‘eau, ‘ōlelo nane, mele, etc.) to help reflect and drive their research. Mo‘olelo of our kūpuna are analyzed to help make sense and revive what was lost but also to use the cultural underlining plan as a methodology of ways to properly engage with Hawaiian research. In an chapter by Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua (2016) within *Kanaka ‘Ōiwi Methodologies: Mo‘olelo and Metaphors*, she comments on the weight of Hawaiian research in comparison to research on Hawaiian topics as “a commitment to revitalizing the collective ability of Kanaka Hawai‘i to exercise our ea in healthy, respectful and productive ways” (p. 9).

Through collections of mo‘olelo and utilizing mo‘olelo as a method, Hawaiian scholars are able to acknowledge their commitment and write for the next generation. For instance, research conducted by Kimo Cashman (2012) is an example of navigating and reflecting through life’s experiences to seek purpose, responsibility and accountability. Cashman highlights the value and importance of mo‘olelo as an “intergenerational transfer of knowledge” and a means to “be accountable to my kuleana to my relationships” as he eloquently puts it (p. 7). In following Cashman’s journey down the road of mo‘olelo, we learn that this medium can relay humor, emotion, inspiration, reflection, love, identity, transformation and perseverance. Mo‘olelo is truly personal which some may stray from because it can reveal vulnerability and truth but it also may be the very reason why Native Hawaiians are willing to use this method for research.

In revealing truth through mo‘olelo, one is able to reflect on themes that have contributed to these truths and use that dialogue to inform change. For instance, Kaiwipunikauikawēkiu Lipe (2016) used mo‘olelo as her methodology when collecting insight from Native Hawaiian female educators. Her research tackled the topic of transforming the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa into a Hawaiian place of learning. Her framework was inspired by an ‘oli or chant which was woven in her methodology of collecting mo‘olelo. Lipe (2016) reminds us that as we read stories,

we each glean both similar and unique lessons based on who each of us are and our own life experiences. However, we can only connect to the mo‘olelo if we take the time to learn from them, which requires us to first value mo‘olelo and then spend time with them.

(p. 59)

If embraced and accepted, a person’s mo‘olelo becomes a part of the listener who then reflects on it to inform their own truths and what they are accountable for. That is one of the impacts of mo‘olelo and how purposeful it is. Given the background and definition of mo‘olelo and narrative, it was clear that mo‘olelo methods were the correct methodology to use if I intend to understand the reasons my participants went into the field of Hawaiian education.

### **Participants**

Purposeful sampling (Merriam, 2001) was used when selecting participants for this study. Participants had to meet three criteria: (a) be of Native Hawaiian descent, (b) currently teaching Hawaiian Education, (c) taught Hawaiian education longer than 5 years. It is important to mention that being a part of the Native Hawaiian community of kumu, I do have connections with these participants. These Hawaiian education kumu are like ‘ohana to me which brings on specific responsibilities. The participants were not randomly selected but rather strategically

recruited because of their contributions to the profession and the Native Hawaiian community. Sharing life stories can be very vulnerable and personal. In order to protect the identities and stories of the participants, they chose pseudonyms and the gender of some participants were changed. The only descriptors used in this study were their pseudonyms, whether they taught in secondary or elementary settings and the amount of years in the profession. The kumu chose their pseudonyms, Kumu 'Ekahi, Kumu 'Elua and Kumu 'Ekolu. Any other identifiable information was renamed or removed.

### **Procedure: Data Collection and Analysis**

**Survey.** A survey was issued out to the participants to gather demographic information on their years of teaching and their educational background. It was filled out before the interview session and later used to indicate the participant's profile.

**Semi-structured interview.** As I mentioned earlier, Native Hawaiians come from an oral culture so naturally we engage people through "talk story" sessions. Interviewing with the flexibility to "talk story" and allow the conversation to breathe was the best choice for this research. Bishop (1996) suggests "storytelling is a useful and culturally appropriate way of representing the 'diversities of truth' within which the story teller rather than the researcher retains control" (p.169). 10 semi-structured interview questions were used to generate discussion on: cultural identity, Hawaiian education, teacher career choice and motivators (See Appendix D). Data was collected in a way that perpetuated the proper use of mo'olelo. During the interview sessions, instead of presenting closed-ended questions, the participants were asked to share a story or a memory that was associated with a particular question. For instance, one request was to share their earliest memory that they had with Hawaiian culture. This allowed for

free expression, authentic account of events, enriching lessons and discussions on important actors in their mo‘olelo.

**Artifact sharing.** In addition to the “talk story” session, participants were asked to bring in artifacts that relate to Hawaiian culture, education and teaching. The participants were asked three questions, “What is your artifact?”, “How did you acquire it?” and “What is the significance of the artifact to your experience with Hawaiian education?” Artifacts are carriers of culture, emotion and history which compliments the data collection process (Yin, 2009). The intent of an artifact sharing is to generate more in depth conversations as well as provide comfort for the participant. The participants had the freedom to present their artifact when they were ready during the “talk story” session.

**Data recordings procedures.** Each interview session was recorded and downloaded onto my computer. My computer was safeguarded with a password sign-in which ensured protection of data. The recordings ensured close accuracy of participants’ stories which were then transcribed for member checking and data analysis.

**Data analysis procedures.** The mo‘olelo sessions were transcribed by the researcher and reviewed multiple times to ensure accuracy and analyzed for “the story they have to tell, a chronology of unfolding events, and turning points or epiphanies” (Creswell, 2007, p. 155). The data was thoroughly analyzed and coded in order to highlight important themes, such as the repetition of words or concepts, and interactions with culture, language and education. From that, topics or themes started to emerge and I coded topics that were expected and surprising (Creswell, 2009).

Two cycles of analyzing the data were conducted. I revisited the research questions and highlighted stories and language that represented significant events or examples that showcased

interaction with Hawaiian culture and language. I then looked at the social context that the kumu experienced--their motivations and its relation to culture and language. The data from the survey, interview sessions and artifacts were then triangulated to reveal the main themes.

### **Consideration of Human Subjects Conforms**

All appropriate actions were taken to protect human subject research. An application to conduct this study was submitted and approved by the University of Hawaii Institutional Review Board (IRB). Approval was granted on September 21, 2018 (see Appendix B).

### **Researcher's Role**

**Kuleana.** It was my kuleana to ensure that the kumu were treated respectfully during the process of this research. When meeting with the participants, I made sure to meet at a place of their choice so that it would be comfortable for them. Whether we were meeting in a coffee house or at the participant's home, it was essential for me to conduct Hawaiian cultural practices of bringing some kind of food or refreshment for the participants.

My role as a Native Hawaiian researcher often encouraged reflection on the insider-outsider role when conducting research. As a Native Hawaiian, there are advantages in existing in a common culture and having background knowledge that helps with understanding the participants' mo'olelo and the kaona or the hidden message locked in the chosen words and thoughts. From an outsider researcher role, mo'olelo was used as a means to stray from "testing" the participants or speaking for them. The natural fluidity of storytelling lent to engagement in conversation with the participants which led to building stronger connections. As the researcher, I made sure not to sway or disrupt the thought process while the kumu shared their mo'olelo.

### **Validity**

To ensure validity, the participants were given different opportunities to share

information on the topic. Data from surveys, interviews and artifact sharing were triangulated to gain a better understanding of the kumus' relationship with Hawaiian culture, language and education. Transcriptions of the interviews along with my findings, were sent to the participants to review. Through member checking, participants were actively involved in ensuring accuracy and validity. The participants were also given the opportunity at that time to expand their thoughts and share any additional mo'olelo.

### **Limitations**

One limitation of this study is the sample size of the participants. The three kumu come from the Hawaiian education community which is deemed an already small population. There may be commonalities of experiences among Native Hawaiians but this study should not be used to make generalization about a particular community. The limitation of sample size may be grounds of questioning reliability but it is important to mention that the data can still be rich when utilizing mo'olelo as a data collection and analysis method.

### **Conclusion**

Overall, mo'olelo was used to collect substantial data while validating the voices of the participants. The data collection plan allowed for multiple opportunities for the participants to share their mo'olelo which provided a picture of their lived experiences. In the next chapter, the findings will be presented through excerpts from the participants' mo'olelo based on the analysis and emerging themes.

## Chapter 4: Results

*As the wind circulated the voices of my ‘ohana who humbly asked Mākuā for entry through ‘oli, my stress subsided and a sense of familiarity came over me. It was my piko. I was experiencing the past, present and future at the same time.*

This chapter reports the results of this study on the past and present lived experiences of kumu and their reflection on their personal and professional futures. The data is organized and presented in five main themes: 1) relatedness, 2) building competence, 3) seeking autonomy, 4) overcoming obstacles and 5) remaining in the teaching profession. Each theme is followed by sub themes that provide more insight on the larger themes. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the kumu were given pseudonyms: Kumu ‘Ekahi, Kumu ‘Elua, and Kumu ‘Ekolu. The table below are results from the survey that served as a means to gather background knowledge on the participants.

Table 1. Participant profile

Pseudonym Name	Grade Level	Years of Teaching	Completed a Teacher Education Program
Kumu ‘Ekahi	K-12	15+ years	Yes
Kumu ‘Elua	10-12	12+ years	Yes
Kumu ‘Ekolu	10-12	13+ years	No

### Relatedness (Pilina)

A common theme that showed up throughout the mo‘olelo of the three kumu is the importance of relationships and how they impacted their sense of belonging. These pilina help map the kumus’ genealogy of experiences with culture, language, and education while building

autonomy of choice. These experiences also served as intrinsic and altruistic motivations for the kumu, as a means to pursue their teaching career.

**‘Ohana involvement.** All three kumu gave credit for their early encounters with Hawaiian cultural practices and knowledge to an ‘ohana, or family member. The definition of ‘ohana and the types of knowledge granted were unique to all three. Kumu ‘Elua shared a moment that he identified as “the first recollection of ever being part of something Hawai‘i.” It was when he was only six years old that he saw his mom performing hula one day. After she explained what it was, he confidently and respectfully responded “well, I want to learn, teach me.” In doing so, his mom became his first kumu and hula served as his motivating pilina.

Kumu ‘Elua and Kumu ‘Ekolu both spoke to being intrigued by their experiences with Hawaiian culture in their younger years because it was deemed “different.” Kumu ‘Ekahi recalled a story about witnessing a gift exchange between a father and son that “ua pa‘a ka na‘au,” or stuck with her, after all these years. She openly shared that she grew up in a household where practicing Hawaiian culture was “not normal for her family.” When her boyfriend’s (at the time) dad cut a piece of his lauoho, or hair, and braided it, attached it to a hook and gave it as a gift during a pivotal social event, Kumu ‘Ekahi was intrigued by the appropriateness and the unfamiliarity of the practice.

For Kumu ‘Ekolu, his earliest memory of cultural exchange was through storytelling and ‘ohana involvement. He credits the ambience of his uncle’s house, where as a child he would lay on the grass in the front yard while his uncle would conduct an impromptu “class,” and point out the stars and names of the places for the children. He also shared that at the same house he learned about ‘aumākua. He recalls, “we just saw this pueo fly right over me and my dad, and my uncle was talking about ‘aumakua.” At that moment, his interest was piqued, and reflecting

upon it, Kumu 'Ekolu commented, "now that I look back on it we did a lot of things that were Hawaiian but we just never called it that. You know it was just the way my family was."

**Good qualities of a kumu.** Teachers serve as models and influencers in the lives of students. The impact can be so great that teachers can often play a key role in the career choice of their students. All three kumu highlighted the impact of an influential teacher, effective teaching style, or positive qualities of a teacher, that supported their decision to become a kumu.

Teachers can also guide students on the pathway to understanding their self-worth. Kumu 'Ekahi shared a great mo'olelo about a particular teacher during her high school years that supported her self-efficacy. Kumu 'Ekahi got into some trouble when she was in high school which led her parent to enroll her in another school. Away from her friends and normal school environment, Kumu 'Ekahi expressed that she wasn't particularly happy at her new school. However, in reflecting on her experiences with the teachers at the school, she shared about a specific teacher that had a long lasting positive effect on her. This teacher knew about her past but didn't hold that against her capabilities as a student. Kumu 'Ekahi respected him because, as she puts it, "his ability to see through the hihia<sup>15</sup> that was happening" was something that stuck with her. The teacher's motivating quality was that he would focus on Kumu 'Ekahi's positives and often share them with her parent. The teacher later asked Kumu 'Ekahi to represent the school in helping with recruitment. Kumu 'Ekahi mentioned that she has "always had a really good relationship with him throughout the years." As a testament to this, Kumu 'Ekahi recalls visiting this teacher with her husband many years later.

"I took my husband [to the school] because I wanted my teacher to meet him because he

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<sup>15</sup> Issues or trouble

could see through whatever it was [at the time]. You know, broken family and what not. So, I take my husband there, he [teacher] goes into his cabinet and he has this photo album and he has pictures of ‘success stories.’ He had a picture of me.”

Kumu ‘Ekahi’s emotional response to retelling the story was just another added layer of the long lasting impact that this teacher had on her. She also attributes some of her current teaching style and interactions with her students to this particular teacher.

Kumu ‘Elua and Kumu ‘Ekolu highlight the mo‘okū‘auhau of their kumu and the qualities that they possessed which inspired them to continue in the development of their cultural knowledge, Hawaiian language, and teaching skills. For Kumu ‘Elua, his motivation was his first kumu, his mom. He recalls that she was the only one that would always say, “ make sure that you continue what you are doing.” She pushed him to not settle for the “base mana‘o,” by reminding him “if that’s what’s interesting to you, you need to go and do your own research.” This experience illustrates how this kumu was motivated, and how his self-worth was built.

**Sense of belonging through mālama ‘āina.** In alliance with the beliefs, practices and respect of ‘āina by Native Hawaiians, the three kumu contributed to this pilina by honoring its importance to healing, spirituality and awareness. All three kumu highlighted a physical place that motivated and centered them. Kumu ‘Ekahi identified Ke‘anae as her place of motivation and importance. She highlighted that Ke‘anae serves as a means of mending relationships and healing because it is a gathering place where families, friends, and students can come out to work together in the lo‘i. For her, it allowed ties that were weakened over time with a particular ‘ohana to rejuvenate. The more times that she would go to Ke‘anae, Kumu ‘Ekahi would “feel more and more ho‘oku‘u<sup>16</sup>, ho‘oku‘u.” The relationships were reformed because of Ke‘anae and Kumu

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<sup>16</sup> Release

‘Ekahi also shared that it allowed for positive networking. She was able to take her students on a field trip to Ke‘anae and was hosted by that aforementioned ‘ohana. The kumu was able to regain a sense of belonging through place and pass that sense of security to her students.

Nature can serve as a means to motivate through its beauty and potential to inspire reflection on the realities of life. In building a sense of belonging, there is a need to physically and mentally recenter oneself to reflect on life and work towards problem solving. Kumu ‘Elua shared his relationship with a specific place,

“You know, going up Ka‘ala, it’s hard. It’s strenuous and it’s just like life. Life is hard, life is strenuous. When you go up there, you feel different elements as we travel up. I remember going to where we pick palapalai and all I could feel was peace and your whole body tends to just [exhales]. I feel like everything is being lifted from my feet up. For me, it just rejuvenates me. It brings a sense of calmness and peace. And it makes me not think about the outside things that are going on. It helps me to recollect, to think and it just settles my mind. I’m not even from Wai‘anae but that’s my place.”

For Kumu ‘Elua, ‘āina contributed to building a sense of belonging because it is associated with gathering resources like palapalai for hula which is a huge part of his identity as both a dancer and a kumu. Ka‘ala also symbolized connections, restarting, centering and resourcefulness which are practices that the kumu value.

Kumu ‘Ekolu shared about his connection with Kaho‘olawe. This sacred island was used in the past by the United States military for training and bombing. Kumu ‘Ekolu describes the lasting effects of abuse on Kaho‘olawe and its importance to the people.

“Kaho‘olawe is like that, you go to Kaho‘olawe and you don’t come back the same person. It’s a reminder of what happens when we forget. Not that we, Hawaiians have

ever forgotten but it's what happens when foreign power comes in and take control and everything goes crazy. And then you're left with this island that is struggling to survive. And there's a spirituality there, there's a mana there, that's evident to anybody who goes there."

In this case, 'āina served as a sense of belonging through building a sense of purpose. This kumu's reflection was on his visit to Kaho'olawe for cultural practices as well as for land restoration purposes. For all three kumu, 'āina worked advantageously to support their beliefs about culture, language and education.

**Building identity through culture, language and education.** Another aspect that surfaced in the stories is the comfort level and relationship that the kumu have with Hawaiian culture. Playing to the core of sense of belonging, Kumu 'Elua talked about how dancing hula was a "safe zone." The experience that was shared by this kumu highlights the coming together of po'e<sup>17</sup> hula at Halema'uma'u.

"My mom and her hula brothers and sisters were dancing and I was ho'opā the ipu. And all of a sudden I felt myself lift off of the area to another realm, to another space. I wasn't scared. It was just peace and knowing that it is where I was supposed to be."

Cultural experiences like the one Kumu 'Elua shared helped reinforce the reasoning behind social belonging, spirituality and practices. It is also important to point out the use of the enduring terms "hula brothers and sisters" in reference to other hālau members. The familial terms speak to the created environment that shapes the identity of belonging to a group, culture, worldview and in this case a spiritual connection as well. Kumu 'Elua highlights the comfort level and the importance "to be connected to your kūpuna."

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<sup>17</sup> People or group of.

Kumu 'Ekolu shared certain events in his life that contributed to the development of his identity and his relationship with Hawaiian culture. He shared how getting into a school that had a high population of Native Hawaiians, and supported Hawaiian language and culture, contributed positive feelings towards Hawaiian education. A major event that had a huge impact on his connection to culture, or feeling “fully Hawaiian” was at the 100th year anniversary of the overthrow in 1993. He shared his thoughts about the experience, “Being around thousands of Hawaiians and you know crying and all that stuff. It was a pivotal moment and it was when things started to shift in my life towards Hawaiian things.”

**Defending identity.** Both Kumu 'Elua and Kumu 'Ekolu shared stories that exposed the tone of the social and political environment at the time. They felt that they needed to defend their identity against the effects of systemic racism and ignorance. For Kumu 'Elua, the setting of his story took place in the educational system. He remembered the impact of one teacher that told him and his friends who were “Polymix” that “you guys not going make 'um. You know where you guys come from, there's no way that you are going to get past sixth grade.” Kumu 'Elua commented, “That was my worst teacher I had but I always was taught to never give up, and when somebody makes you mad, prove them wrong.” What could have been a demotivating incident, was seen as a moment that helped shape Kumu 'Elua to be aware of what not to do as a teacher. Ultimately, this experience would shape this kumu's future work with his students.

Kumu 'Ekolu's experience having to defend his identity served as a reminder about stereotypes and belief systems of what a Hawaiian was supposed to look like. He shared reactions that people have had about his skin color, and its relation to being Hawaiian.

“I don't think I ever felt a moment of discomfort in learning something Hawaiian or in being Hawaiian but I think for me the discomfort came from when people automatically

assume that I was not Hawaiian. I've had that happen several times. You know because people look at me and you know cuz I'm not a "brownie" you know they don't automatically think Hawaiian. Then of course when they look at my name because I have a [ethnicity] last name then they are like "What, you Hawaiian?" I come from that generation of "How much Hawaiian are you?" And so there's been a few times like that where I've felt discomfort about it. I think it served as a reason...to learn more."

Kumu 'Ekolu shared that when he was faced with these types of experiences, he often counteracted them by going through his mo'okū'auhau and using his skills as a language speaker.

**Kūpuna connection.** Two of the kumu made a few references acknowledging experiences where the path of becoming a kumu was already pre-set for them by their kūpuna or by some unexplained force. Kumu 'Elua tells a story where his mother's kumu's kumu had seen him as a young boy, and told his mother "That boy, he going teach." That story served as a reassurance of Kumu 'Elua's path, and how important the words of the kūpuna meant to him. Kumu 'Elua confirmed the connection by simply saying "It's just so Hawai'i."

Kumu 'Ekolu had a similar experience where his career path started with the shared mo'olelo of where his name came from. Kumu 'Ekolu's dad told him what his name meant and its relation to his family member who was trained in dancing hula. His knowledge was also extended when the relationship between his name and the deity Laka was explained to him. These kūpuna were all associated with hula, which formed Kumu 'Ekolu's identity. He shared the following thoughts, "Ever since I learned that story, I kind of felt that hula was my calling." In resemblance of pathways with their kūpuna, these two kumu were reared to pursue their passions.

### **Building Competence (Nānā i Ke Kumu)**

All three kumu shared their journey to nānā i ke kumu, or look to the source for knowledge, to build their competence in Hawaiian culture and Hawaiian language. The sub themes provide more insight on the intrinsic motivating factors that ultimately led the kumu to pursue teaching Hawaiian education.

**‘Imi na‘auao.** Obtaining proper knowledge of their pathway was something that all three kumu mentioned throughout their mo‘olelo. Obtaining that knowledge was a part of their journey in becoming a teacher. Kumu ‘Ekahi shared an encounter that put her on the pathway to knowledge and the profession. When she was off island for college, she had moments where people were interested in knowing about Hawai‘i. She felt it tested her to question herself, “What do you know about Hawai‘i?” She also recalled receiving a letter from a friend, which was written all in Hawaiian, and it inspired her to learn her language. Kumu ‘Ekahi completed her ‘ike Hawai‘i program, and because she wanted to teach, she went on to pursue her teacher certification in Hawaiian Immersion. Kumu ‘Elua had a similar pathway and sought his Bachelor and Master’s degrees. Kumu ‘Ekolu did not seek out teacher certification, but pursued his degree in the ‘ike Hawai‘i program.

**Early styles of teaching.** It was evident that for most of the kumu, early exposure to the culture and language made an impact on their self-identity and self-worth. Another aspect that was important was their early accessibility to teaching. Kumu ‘Elua shared how learning music and hula was something that he wanted to do for the rest of his life. He knew that he wanted to teach, so he took opportunities to strengthen his craft and confidence. He volunteered at a summer fun program and also taught Hawaiian culture and hula as a high school student. He shared, “I loved kids. I loved working with them. I guess when I made up my mind, I knew that

was what I wanted to do. I don't know how to explain it, I just knew." These experiences served as altruistic motivations to continue on his pathway to teaching.

**Teacher program qualities.** For Kumu 'Ekahi and Kumu 'Elua, their experiences in their master's programs were transformative and motivating. For Kumu 'Ekahi, her journey built her competence level, but also highlighted discomforts. She explained her experience in her teacher certification program,

"I went to sleep every night with the Hawaiian dictionary up my nose, pages of hua'ōlelo<sup>18</sup>. Even before I went there [teacher education program], there were so many cultural experiences that I never had. I never even had made a lei lā'ī and I was like in my 20s."

Her teacher preparation program challenged her to build her content knowledge and expand her cultural experiences. The kumu's completion of the program was seen as an accomplishment and a testament to her capabilities to push through hardships.

Kumu 'Elua's experience with his teacher preparation program was that it fit his learning style and relationship with Hawaiian culture. He recalled the experience,

"I remember the first time going to the program and it was not in a class. It was in a classroom but my type of classroom. What I mean by that is, I remember meeting everybody at [school name] and I remember us going out and actually doing stuff on the 'āina and that helped intrigue me as a teacher because that is what I like. I no like the confinement. I call it the confinement of the classroom with the desk and chair. You know that's how we learn, that's how Hawaiian people learn. Hana ka lima. Ho'olohe ka pepeiao. Pa'a ka waha. I knew that was the place for me."

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<sup>18</sup> Words or terms

For Kumu 'Ekolu, he was exposed to knowledge through coursework that specifically focused on 'ike Hawai'i. For all three kumu, the programs that they were a part of pushed them to stay on the path to becoming a teacher.

### **Seeking Autonomy (Kuleana)**

All three kumu shared stories about how developing autonomy, whether supported by the surrounding support systems or through self-motivation, played a key role in accepting their kuleana as a teacher.

**Recognizing kuleana.** People find their kuleana at different times in their lives and for different reasons. Kuleana is a personal experience that can have an expansive impact. This was the case for all three kumu. Kumu 'Ekahi always knew she would be a kumu, but at one point in her journey, it was not clear what path she would take. One critical point that contributed to her pursuit of teaching was accepting her kuleana as a kua'ana. The kaikaina and kua'ana relationship comes with the responsibility of recognizing the impact that one can have on a younger sibling, or a person from a generation below. Kumu 'Ekahi served as a kua'ana, or older sibling, to the sister of her boyfriend during the time that she was starting her studies at the university. Taking on the kuleana of serving as a role model gave her the motivation to complete her studies so that she could achieve her passion.

One interesting way to show the acceptance of kuleana for Kumu 'Elua was through his definition of a kumu. He states,

“I think it makes me a better educator for my students because there's a difference between being a regular teacher and a kumu. That word kumu is so heavy. It's so important. Yeah, teacher, I'm not a teacher. Kumu, that word itself is source and that responsibility and when I teach my students I carry that with me. I am responsible for

making sure that they know about our people, our language, and everything there is to be Hawaiian.”

**Visiting haumāna.** Being of service or impacting students was a great motivator for all three kumu in both their pathway to teaching, as well as remaining in the teaching profession. All three kumu reflected on their past experiences of building their competency and identity to relate to their students. They also shared a few instances that demonstrated how they impacted their students, or haumāna. For instance, in the case of Kumu ‘Elua, he recounted a rough day that he had in his third year of teaching. He remembered going through the motions of self-doubt, and questioning if this was where he was supposed to be. The day that the kumu was feeling like this, he was visited by a past student. The student expressed this appreciation to Kumu ‘Elua, and specifically referenced a project that they had to complete about their names. Kumu ‘Elua shared the words that the student had said to him,

“You know, that project changed my life. You know kumu. You may have not known but in high school I was addicted to drugs and alcohol. And my family is not the best but you letting me have that opportunity to do that project really changed my life not then but now. Because there was a day where I was ready to give up on everything. And I was laying in bed and right next to the bed was that project, that paper, and I decided to read what I wrote and that saved my life.”

**Making connections to curriculum.** A strong theme that kept coming up throughout all of the mo‘olelo was the importance of connecting their students to the content. Kumu ‘Ekolu shared about how he teaches language development through exploring traditional knowledge concepts like the Kumulipo, or creation chant. Although initially receiving some push back from a student because his style of teaching did not align with how other teachers were engaging their

students, the student eventually came around. Like Kumu 'Ekolu, Kumu 'Elua uses mo'olelo, mele, and mo'okū'auhau to engage his students. He shared, "To me that's the number one thing...you have to know who you are as a kanaka. When students come to school, they are supposed to feel safe and it's the responsibility as a kumu to make sure that they feel safe. Safe in what they learn."

### **Overcoming Obstacles**

**Pushing through the discomfort.** All three kumu have experienced some kind of discomfort during their journey in becoming a kumu that put their identity, culture and career choices in question. For Kumu 'Ekahi, some of the hihia was internal, and some based on outside expectations of what a kumu should be. It was during her teacher preparation program that some of those discomforts were exposed. She talked about cultural practices that were unknown to her like making a lei lā'i, which could call into question her internal battle with competence. She shared about how she had to work hard to build her competence level and comfort in the Hawaiian language. It was difficult for her to hear her kumu confess at the end of the program saying "I didn't think you were going to make it [through the program]." Kumu 'Ekahi shared some of her thoughts on the continuing internal hihia.

"I think even now, even being in the 'ōlelo Hawai'i realm or culture-based realm, there are still huge pockets of discomfort. Now, I gotta try 'oli komo 700 kids. I'm like 'nope, I'm not gonna do that' that's not what I feel comfortable doing. Yeah, there's still that whole, I'm not gonna dance hula in front of a crowd, you know. But I have a desire to grow. It's definitely uncomfortable because sometimes people think for the lack of better words that it is a package deal. He kumu kaiapuni 'oe, he kumu 'ōlelo Hawai'i so pa'a nā mea Hawai'i a pau. Akā, 'a'ole."

**Rigor of teaching.** Kumu 'Ekolu talked about “teacher realness” and how that serves as a challenge.

“I never learned until later that teaching is a 24 hour job. Even though you work from 7:30 to 3:30 there's no such thing as leaving your work at work. And even if you do leave your work at work, you're constantly thinking about it because you're constantly in the reflective mode. What went good today and what went wrong. So, you are constantly in lesson planning mode. Because things are going to change every second, you have to be flexible with them and you can't be upset if your lesson plan fails. Cause it will.”

While Kumu 'Ekolu talked about “teacher realness,” Kumu 'Elua shared his challenges with issues in the educational system.

“I think what we lack in our educational system for better word is yeah we have Hawaiian studies classes, yeah we get 'ōlelo class but what happens when they go to math? What happens when they go to science? What happens when they go to all these different subject areas? They need to incorporate something Hawai'i into their curriculum. Something that has them connect. I mean hello, you live here. You live here, you teach our keiki who are from here so you need to know how to grab um. You need to know how to educate um. Because what are we doing to them? I don't blame them at all. I blame the circumstances that are around them and the confinement that we put them through. If you're going to be in the classroom you have to make sure you know it and understand it. That's the waiwai<sup>19</sup> and at least try to do something or ask.”

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<sup>19</sup> Richness

For all three kumu, the most impactful motivators were those that positively increased their competence level, strengthened their sense of belonging through relationships with culture and land as well as supported their autonomy.

### **Remaining in the Teacher Profession**

**Love for the content.** Kumu ‘Ekolu shared proudly his artifact which showcased all his kumu that has inspired him on his cultural journey. He shared the characteristics that each kumu possessed and how it impacted him as a kumu, chanter, dancer, researcher, and kanaka. When sharing about one kumu that he trained under, it was clear that this kumu made an impact on him and the way that he looked at culture. He described this kumu:

“She’s the one that blew my brains away because of the way that she looks at chants. Like I had no idea that there were different weather systems, like Kane weather systems and Lono weather systems. She brought things out of the mystical realm. She’s a deep woman you know and you just look at things very differently.”

Kumu ‘Ekolu’s motivation lay in his continuation of learning new things so that he could apply it in his classroom or at a halau.

Kumu ‘Elua shared about his passion for mele, hula, ‘ōlelo, and all ‘ike Hawai‘i. Like Kumu ‘Ekahi, he looked for ways to engage his students in the content through a Hawaiian worldview and love for the knowledge.

**Love for the students.** Another key motivation that the kumu shared that kept them teaching was the students themselves, and wanting to protect them. Kumu ‘Elua expressed his responsibility to the students by sharing,

“I say that my students keep me teaching because I love my students. I don’t know how else to say it. I always tell my administration, ‘oh they rotten, tell them take Hawaiian, I

take um.' You know because they not rotten, they just need to know that somebody care. Making those connections with the students, that's what keeps me going. That's my responsibility. I want to make sure that each and every one of my students feel a sense of home. A sense of Hawai'i and how Hawai'i suppose to be."

Kumu 'Ekahi saw the importance of her role in the classroom to make an impact on the next generation. She shared, "I always want to give the next hanauna or generation what teachers have given to me." Kumu 'Elua also was influenced by the love for his students. He added,

"To this day, I still love going to work. I love my job. I love going to that place where I see my students every day. That was instilled by my mom loving me unconditionally, making sure that I always push myself and strive and that's the same thing I want for my students. None of my students are stupid, not a single one of um. You know, they just learn differently and it's my job as a kumu to bring out what they're good at. To bring out what they strive in."

### **Artifact Sharing**

Clearly it was the students that motivated the kumu to remain in teaching, but another theme that came from the artifacts was the acceptance of their line in the mo'okū'auhau of kumu. For Kumu 'Ekahi, her artifact was a project that incorporated a Hawaiian worldview on science, which connected well with her students. She reflected on an earlier mo'olelo about how she finally felt that her hard work paid off, and she reached a level where she could make a difference, whether in language, culture, or connection to students. This artifact showed her dedication and acceptance of that kuleana to provide a different lens for the students to engage with.

Kumu 'Elua's artifact was his ipu heke that he had been using for a long time. His artifact embodied the very essence of his teaching style. He described the sound of the ipu heke being played as a metaphor of the voices of his students. The artifact validated his students, and collaboration with his past kumu. One clear theme was his connection to the spirituality, or predestined experience, that pulled him into the lineage of a kumu. Whether he accepted it, or it was chosen for him, he felt being a kumu was where he was supposed to be. As for Kumu 'Ekolu, his artifact was the lineage of his kumu. He showcased the photographs of his past and current kumu and recounted what each kumu passed on to him. For all three kumu, by internalizing all their past experiences, motivators, kumu, and knowledge, their kuleana to teach put them in the mo'okū'auhau of kumu for their own students.

## **Conclusion**

All three kumu highlighted intrinsic and altruistic motivations that influenced their decision to pursue teaching. The data pointed to the relational ties that they had with positive role models that inspired them to learn more about their culture. The pursuit of building competence encouraged confidence, self-worth, and sense of belonging. All the stories had a sense of urgency and importance, especially in the area of understanding the weight of a teacher's kuleana. In some form, all kumu spoke to the political, social, economic and emotional tension that they faced as Native Hawaiians. The main factors will be discussed further in the next chapter.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

*I wanted to be a part of building an appropriate learning environment that can best mālama the educational, emotional and social grounds where their own metaphorical piko may lie. So, I now shift and ask others, “Pehea kou piko?”*

This chapter starts with an excerpt from the prologue of this dissertation to shift the direction to the lessons learned from the participants’ mo‘olelo. The excerpt speaks to the larger goal of this research which was to reflect on the essential components that are needed in teacher education programs to support individuals who are seeking to enter the teaching profession, and in this case, Hawaiian education. This discussion includes a deeper look at the main factors that supported the participants’ pathway to becoming a Hawaiian education kumu as well as the motivation that kept them in the profession. This chapter concludes with implications for teacher education programs and recommendations for future research.

### **Research Question**

#### **Overarching Questions**

1. How can the mo‘olelo of three Native Hawaiian kumu inform us about influences and motivational factors that lead individuals to become Hawaiian education teachers and remain in the profession?
2. How can these mo‘olelo help inform teacher education program practices?

#### **Sub Questions**

1. What personal experiences impact an individual’s decision and/or path to become a Hawaiian education kumu?
2. How does an individual’s experiences in Hawaiian Language, culture and education influence their decision to become a Hawaiian education kumu?

3. What are the values that drive individuals to become Hawaiian education kumu?
4. What are the supports and barriers in an individual's pursuit to become a Hawaiian education kumu?
5. What are the reasons that individuals remain as Hawaiian education kumu through their career?

### **Piko Framework: Kanu, Mālama, Ola**

At the start of this dissertation, the concept of piko was shared through personal mo'olelo to reflect the impact of influential people, events, and knowledge, on my worldview and identity. As a result, I created the piko framework and model (see Figure 1), inspired by the collective stories of my own mo'olelo, and the mo'olelo shared by the participants in this study. The three main concepts, *kanu i ka piko*, *mālama i ka piko*, and *ola ka piko* are used to frame the discussion in this study. *Kanu i ka piko*, the burying of the piko, is used to highlight the foundational beginnings that put the participants on the path to becoming a Hawaiian education kumu. *Mo'okū'auhau*, or the genealogical line of influences, is at the center of this concept. *Mālama i ka piko*, caring for the piko, refers to the nurturers that help build competence and self-worth in culture, language, and education. *Ola ka piko*, survival of the piko, is used to discuss the acceptance of kuleana and the essential reasons that the kumu remain in teaching. In Figure 1, the Piko Framework also includes the *pilina*, or relationship, and the *hihia*, or tensions. It is essential to note that these social constructs were not made to remain parallel, but rather, they are interwoven lines of complex relationships. The following discussion focuses on the commonalities across the mo'olelo of all three kumu and how these commonalities may inform teacher education.

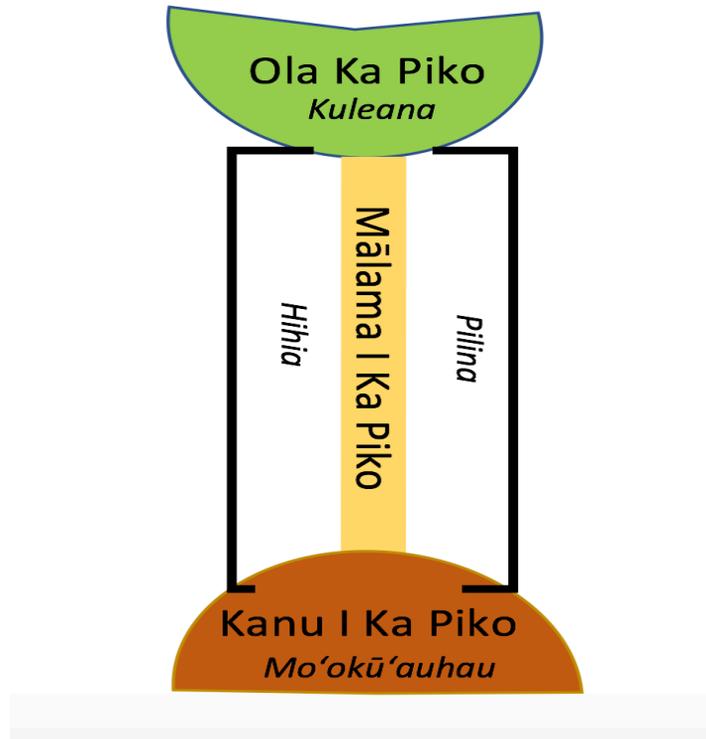


Figure 1: Piko Framework

### **Kanu I Ka Piko**

*What personal experiences impact an individual’s decision and/or path to become a Hawaiian education kumu? How does an individual’s experiences in Hawaiian Language, culture and education influence their decision to become a Hawaiian education kumu? What are the supports and barriers in an individual’s pursuit to become a Hawaiian education kumu?*

**Mo’okū’auhau is a critical motivator.** More commonly defined as genealogy, mo’okū’auhau refers to the sequencing of lineage. Most Native Hawaiians recount their kūpuna as far back as possible. We celebrate them through oli, mele, mo’olelo, and we honor them through our keiki. Within the Piko Framework, mo’okū’auhau accompanies kanu i ka piko to reinforce those ties to the past but also reflect on the foundational motivations that are set in place in life’s decision making process. In reflecting on their past experiences, the three kumu shared stories that highlighted the existence of mo’okū’auhau in many spaces. For instance, there

was a distinctive mo‘oku‘auhau of Hawaiian cultural knowledge exchange. Who were their original kumu? Who inspired their cultural connections? The original motivators that metaphorically planted their piko were those within their ‘ohana or part of an extended ‘ohana.

**Positive role models.** What was evident from the findings of the study was that the interest in Hawaiian language, culture, and education, was highly influenced by the key relationships that the participants had with their role models, or mentors. These types of relationships include family members, teachers, colleagues, and friends. As mentioned in the literature review, Stuart (2000) conducted a study that highlighted the motivators that influenced teachers’ decisions to pursue teaching. She found that having family role models, as well as positive teachers, were of great impact. Kumu who possess qualities that support the participants’ self-worth, sense of belonging, and cultural values were vital to developing their interest level.

**‘Ohana involvement is crucial in building interest.** In this particular study, all three participants recalled a story that associated their first experience with Hawaiian knowledge with a family member. Kumu ‘Elua shared a lovely story about how seeing his mother dance hula when he was six years old set him on the course of interest and deep connection to Hawaiian language, Hawaiian culture and the love of teaching hula. He recalled, “I couldn’t stop watching and so I asked her ‘mom what are you doing?’ and she said ‘I’m doing hula’ and I said ‘well I want to learn, teach me,’ and she became my first kumu.” Kumu ‘Elua also reflected that it was his first memory of “ever being part of something Hawai‘i.” Being a part of something. This was an indication that there was a sense of identity building and association. Like Kumu ‘Elua, Kumu ‘Ekolu had a similar experience through hula but his mo‘okū‘auhau of knowledge exchange began by looking up at the sky. Kumu ‘Ekolu’s mo‘olelo highlighted the potential power that

stories hold and how the conduit, his uncle, contributed to that expansion of the world through a Hawaiian lens. When asked, Kumu 'Ekolu shared why those relationships in his mo'okū'auhau stood out to him,

“because I could tell that they were different. You know, my friends here in the neighborhood, they had none of that. I mean, we had Hawaiians in the class too but most was [ethnicity], and we never talked about that [Hawaiian culture] at [school]. I thought it was cool and it was very different from everything else. I always looked forward to those moments.”

Very similar to Kumu 'Ekolu, Kumu 'Ekahi had noticed something different in her exchange with culture through gift giving. Her mo'olelo had a different twist being that her experience with Hawaiian culture was with a family that was not blood related. It is a great example of how mo'okū'auhau can be used to link outside families to your lineage of knowledge and experience. Kumu 'Ekahi was intrigued by the fact that her ipo's dad shared a piece of his hair to be used as a rope for a necklace. Kumu 'Ekahi highlighted how the exchange was something that stuck with her by sharing,

“It wasn't normal for my 'ohana. My mom is not Hawai'i and my dad is and he lives in [place name]. I think it was more so like, it was sentimental and this family was really close knit and I come from you know a 'broken family' I guess is the term. So, it was kind of pa'a ka na'au. It was just like wow that's amazing that this is a significant event right, and then you going give your son his lauoho and I just thought it was very appropriate.”

Kumu 'Ekahi's words, "pa'a ka na'au" reflected a belief that when an idea resonates with you, it is there, in your gut, for life. This was a really strong statement—that this life experience played a large role later in life.

Kumu 'Ekolu shared another mo'olelo that emphasized how passing down family names influenced a person's character and passions.

"My dad, somewhere between eight or ten, tells me the story of my name. And who [name] was to him and his interpretation of the name. His interpretation of the name was that [name] dedicated to Laka. So, in my mind that has a lot to do with perhaps why my aunty was chosen to train as a dancer. Ever since I learned that story, I kind of felt that hula was my calling."

The gift giving of a name to a child in Hawaiian culture is a very sacred practice. In some families, it is believed that a name shapes the character and moral being of a person. This mo'olelo is unique in the sense that there were multiple nurturers. The name itself served as a motivator in becoming involved with hula, another was his dad, who perpetuated the tradition, and lastly, the knowledge of his aunty was passed down to the family.

**Pilina.** Investigating and reflecting on the intricate relationships between impactful events, people, and the knowledge that was instilled, can reveal who people were, who they are, and who they might become. All three kumu shared mo'olelo that identified the impact that the bond between Hawaiian culture and family involvement made on the foundation of their identity and their sense of belonging. Familial connections solidified the authenticity and truth of these cultural exchanges. Their 'ohana relationships were based in trust, and the need to follow what is familiar. Family involvement was crucial to building not only interest in the content, but these relationships placed the kumu on the path to their profession.

**Positive teachers are critical to transitions.** A study done by the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (2015) points out that one of the five reasons that the participants in the study were interested in teaching was due to an inspiring teacher. Teachers have the influential power to connect students with content, as well as demonstrate positive character and interest in teaching. This can highly impact the way students view the profession as well as the productive relationship between student and teacher. Kumu 'Ekahi's teacher, who "saw through the hihia," positively impacted her path and transition to teaching. She mentioned that her experience with that positive teacher guided the way that she built rapport with her current students.

**Aloha 'āina is an essential value and practice.** The three kumu all shared and defined place as a physical space, but later through their mo'olelo, expanded on the uniqueness of the place and its pilina to them. 'Āina to Native Hawaiians are essential to physical and spiritual survival. The kumu all engaged in respectful reminiscing of their experiences at specific places that resonated with them. Kumu 'Ekahi spoke of Keanae as a "healing place." For this kumu, that place reconnected lost ties with family, and nurtured new relationships. 'Āina also served as a means of escape. Kumu 'Elua recalled Ka'ala as a place that "brings a sense of calmness and peace."

**Hihia.** 'Āina also represented destruction and abuse on the people. Kumu 'Ekolu reflected on this abuse when talking about Kaho'olawe, "and it's very evident, the destruction is very evident. There are places you can't go on Kaho'olawe."

'Āina is an ancestor to the Native Hawaiian people. For the kumu, 'āina was very personal. Exposure to the social, political, cultural and spiritual tension between Hawai'i's complicated past with American power, had the potential to build consciousness of the injustices

and realities of Native Hawaiian positionality. Protection of ‘āina brought those injustices to the frontline through discourse and action.

**Safety in culture.** Another aspect that surfaced in the stories was the comfort level that the kumu had with Hawaiian culture. At the core of Kumu ‘Elua’s Halema‘uma‘u mo‘olelo, dancing hula was a “safe zone,” for him. He was among others a like who appreciated and practiced the art form of hula. Not only did this experience provide safety, culture also served as a means of feeling a sense of belonging to a community of hula practitioners. He had a purpose as a ho‘opā which supported the collaborative group. Sense of belonging was also justified through a sense of spirituality. The sense of connection through reasons that were intangible added a layer to the mo‘okū‘auhau of knowledge. It was not just the hula lessons that were taught, or the exchange of culture through makana, it was the exploration and openness to a force that drove these experiences, all experiences.

**Hihia: Finding comfort in the discomfort.** The sense of belonging did not always start on a positive note. In their mo‘olelo, the kumu addressed “pockets of discomfort” as named by Kumu ‘Ekahi. These pockets were filled with challenges that shaped their identity. All three kumu dealt with moments that made them question what a Native Hawaiian was supposed to look like. Kumu ‘Ekolu commented on the frustration of stereotypes and the need to defend his identity. “I think for me the discomfort came from when people automatically assume that I was not Hawaiian...people look at me and you know cuz I’m not a ‘brownie’...they don’t automatically think Hawaiian.”

These types of instances brought awareness to the treatment of skin color and the lack of attention to the historical discrimination against Native Hawaiians. The residual effects of colonization and marginalization of Native Hawaiians helped build walls of stereotypes, where

the bricklayers were the policy makers, government officials, universities, and educators, to name a few. As in the case of Kumu ‘Elua, stereotypes also brought bias and judgment to a person’s worth. The kumu shared about a teacher who used a metaphorical rubric of economical disadvantage and stereotypes of a community to determine the failure of that particular kumu’s future. Kumu ‘Elua recalled the teacher’s message, “where you guys come from, there’s no way you going get past 6<sup>th</sup> grade...you not going make um.” These experiences brought awareness to the dangers of racist views promoted by critical influencers like teachers. Kumu ‘Elua acknowledged the discomfort, but found the solace in what he was taught, “when somebody makes you mad, prove them wrong.”

### **Mālama I Ka Piko**

*What are the values that drive individuals to become Hawaiian education kumu? What are the supports and barriers in an individual’s pursuit to become a Hawaiian education kumu?*

**Building competence is critical to the pathway of becoming a kumu.** In the study done by Yuce, Sahin, Kocer & Kana (2013), one of the motivating altruistic factors that led female participants to teaching was wanting to learn and teach the Turkish language. The desire to build competence in their language was key to inspiring them to teach.

In this study, all kumu had different experiences with learning the Hawaiian language. Depending on their upbringing and the schools that they attended, some of the kumu did not learn the language until later in their educational journey. Kumu ‘Ekahi’s experience was unique in that she was motivated by the fact that there was little language use in her upbringing. She recalled that while in college, being away from home, she received a letter written in the Hawaiian language from a friend. She used the saying again, “ua pa‘a ka na‘au,” in reference to the experience and continued to reflect by sharing “and it was there where I realized that, I don’t

even know anything about really who I am as a Hawai'i." The realization of the genocide of the language and its white washing power created a sense of renewal and reconnection. Her language motivation and journey was highly influenced by experiences of ma ka hana ka 'ike, which means "in doing, you learn."

**Hihia.** In some instances, it took fighting for the right to build competence to reinforce the reason to become a teacher. Kumu 'Ekolu shared about his experience in a cab ride to his dormitory which he rightfully deemed, "the drive from hell." His conversation with the cab driver demonstrated ignorance and racism by commenting on how Native Hawaiians were a "lazy bunch of people" and questioned why Kumu 'Ekolu was pursuing his degree in Hawaiian Studies and Hawaiian Culture. That individual believed "Hawaiians today, they just don't care." Interactions like these tested the kumu's identity and purpose. Safe-zones allowed the opportunity to expand, reconnect and inspire, while experiences like the "drive from hell" reminded Native Hawaiians that society has not yet come to terms with the injustices in our histories. In this case, it served as a motivator. Kumu 'Ekolu reflected on why he fought his point so hard.

"I think for me, I went to school and we grew up in an era where it was really evident about how much people were questioning Hawaiians. And we ourselves were questioning okay what do we do now? Now that we know this. Now that we know the overthrow occurred and we're in this place because society or whatever. You know, what do we do about it? So, I think experiences like that really pushed me to do it. During my undergraduate years there was a lot of that and we had a lot of different issues whether it was raising tuition or some kind of issue when they were going to take away Native Hawaiian gathering rights. And we had all of those issues in that time and I think that

really pushed me to want to study Hawaiian studies. We have a lot of issues that need to be solved.”

Kumu ‘Ekolu’s story was an example that building competence did not only relate to learning Hawaiian language patterns or stories and traditions of the past, but it reflected and included real life current issues that impacted the progression of a people to reconnect and become empowered.

### **Ola ka piko**

*What are the values that drive individuals to become Hawaiian education kumu? How does an individual’s experiences in Hawaiian Language, culture and education influence their decision to become a Hawaiian education kumu? What are the reasons that individuals remain as Hawaiian education kumu through their career?*

These stories revived or gave life to the role of a kumu. The connection between the stories was based on their past histories with Hawaiian language, family, social encounters, education, and teachers who have motivated them to become a kumu.

**Accepting kuleana as a kumu.** There was a lot of discussion about family relationships and its importance to rearing a child and their decisions in life throughout all mo‘olelo. The interesting transition was seen when the kumu became the motivator. A good place to start was looking at the way these kumu saw their students. Kumu ‘Elua described the relationship between a student and their kumu.

“When you one kumu, your student is not just your student. Your student becomes your younger brother, your son, your daughter, your youngah sistah, your cousin. They become part of your ‘ohana and as the kumu, that’s a huge responsibility to take these

kids and take on their baggage and try to let them see the positive. That's so important.

That's the difference between a teacher and a kumu.”

Acknowledging that there was familial kuleana as a kumu to pass on knowledge created a sense of presence and purpose for the kumu. Native Hawaiian culture is driven by ‘ohana values of honoring, being humble, and pa‘a ka waha, ho‘olohe ka pepeiao. Taking on this responsibility as a kumu was not a payment, but rather a calling or a part of the individual’s self-worth. Kumu ‘Elua emphasized this practice through the retelling of his mo‘olelo about his mom’s kumu who saw him as a little child and said “That boy, going teach.” That embedded the notion that it was predestined for him to be a kumu.

For these kumu, teaching was beyond a paycheck and other professional benefits. Like the ‘āina, working with students was personal. This was clear in a mo‘olelo about the student who was impacted by a lesson connecting the students to the mo‘olelo of their name. The student thanked him for his work and acknowledged that it had saved him at a low point in his life. For this kumu, teaching was enjoyable, “To this day, I still love going to work. I love my job. I love going to that place where I see my students everyday.” For Kumu ‘Ekahi, being a teacher meant making an impact and a “lanakila of all those paio<sup>20</sup>.” Kumu ‘Ekolu shared the complexities of working with a variety of haumāna.

**Kuleana supports reciprocal relationships.** Accepting the kuleana of being a kumu was transformative and a circular experience. The lived experiences directly influenced how the kumu taught, what they taught, and who could teach. When asked about his motivation to teach, Kumu ‘Elua responded,

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<sup>20</sup> Challenges

“I think it’s my kuleana and I can’t run away from it. That’s my kuleana as a Hawaiian to make sure that I teach keiki. I always tell my administration, “oh, they rotten, tell them take Hawaiian, I take um. You know, they not rotten, they just need to know that somebody care.”

Rather than a closed approach, this kumu took the responsibility, whether subconsciously or consciously, to work with those that struggled instead of making judgements about them. This kumu also went on to say, “for me, my calling is to make sure that I have some kind of influence or teach my students something about Hawai‘i. That’s important to me because I live here. I grew up here. This is who I am.”

Another reciprocal practice of learning and taking on kuleana was the kua‘ana and kaikaina relationship. This relationship relates to the responsibility of the older sibling to the younger sibling. It is the older sibling that nurtures and cares for the younger sibling until they are ready to move up and take the lead. This value and practice can be translated to the relationship between kumu and haumana or student teacher and mentor teacher. Some of the kumu have already served as a mentor teacher to pre-service teachers, which takes on a whole new kuleana of shifting to become the motivators for individuals who are pursuing the teacher profession.

### **Piko Framework: Conclusion**

Through the piko framework, the interconnected relationship of mo‘okū‘auhau, cultural influencers, educational experiences, values, cultural practices and kuleana as a kumu are shown as a support structure that guides decision making. The piko framework highlights *kanu i ka piko* in relation to mo‘okū‘auhau as a main contributor because in order to understand where one is heading to, there is a need to know where one came from. Reflecting on the lineage of

influencers and motivators, it was clear that the foundational experiences led to the pursuit to further build competence in language and culture through seeking out educational opportunities. *Mālama i ka piko* focuses on these experiences of building competence and its connection to self worth. Through seeking a route to becoming a teacher, the kumu reflected on the acceptance of their kuleana which allowed for *Ola ka piko*. This survival is dependent on those strong foundations that help support their sense of belonging and ultimately their love for teaching and taking action to persevere through teaching Hawaiian language and culture.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Kanaka ʻŌiwi Critical Race theory was used as the lens to understand the surrounding environment that the kumu lived in, as well as the important things that needed to be addressed in order to work on reaching critical consciousness, and how it interacted with self-determination. The three themes of Kanaka ʻŌiwi Critical Race theory looked at the external forces, identity conscious articulation, and kuleana, to support understanding the stories of the kumu. Self-determination motivation focused on competence, relatedness, and autonomy, and its role in determining the teacher profession.

### **External forces**

**Demotivating factors.** The kumu shared a variety of stories on the effects of colonialism on education, society, and even within family. When these kumu were younger, Hawaiian Immersion schools were either non-existent, or just starting out. Accessibility to Hawaiian language and culture in schools were limited. Two kumu shared stories about incidents where they needed to defend their right to be Hawaiian, or prove that they were not just a statistic. These experiences, driven by the ignorance of others, and the larger issue of systemic racism, laid at the surface for many issues. ʻĀina was another case that continued to suffer at the hands

of colonialism and the disconnect to culture. These negative experiences served as motivators and encouraged the need to build competence or self-worth. The three kumu sought educational opportunities in higher education to put themselves on a path to being kumu because of the need to take action and build autonomy for themselves.

### **Identity Conscious Articulation**

**Pilina.** Relatedness was the key motivator that was present throughout the mo‘olelo in discovering the identities of the kumu. The key reasons for becoming a kumu were in the stories of their relationships, whether to ‘āina, to ‘ohana, to their haumāna, and/or to themselves. Examples of motivating relatedness were the kumus’ interactions with place. Most spoke about the ‘āina as a family member, or feeling at home. The pilina with the ‘āina served as a validation for knowledge and acceptance of taking on the new role of being the one to pass that knowledge down. ‘Āina served as a confirmation of their reason for teaching. Another pilina was their family members. Family members were described as those who motivated the kumu to be autonomous and aided their self-determination of finding out who they are and their sense of belonging.

**Kuleana.** Through the kumus’ reflections in their mo‘olelo, they all shared stories where their identity, capabilities, and dedication were challenged. The self-determination and call to action was reflected in their decision in becoming a kumu. Taking on the kuleana of being a kumu, to impact the minds that would come after them, spoke to the heart of advocating for change in education, politics, culture and language.

### **Implications of Study for Teacher Education Programs**

*How can the mo‘olelo of three Native Hawaiian kumu inform us about influences and motivational factors that lead individuals to become Hawaiian education teachers and remain in*

*the profession? How can these mo'olelo help inform teacher education program practices?*

**Combined program pathways.** All three kumu pursued university level programs to obtain Hawaiian language and cultural knowledge. Two of the kumu pursued teacher certification in a Master's of Education program after receiving their Bachelors in Hawaiian Studies and Hawaiian Language. With the teacher shortage being prominent in Hawaiian Immersion schools, as well as low enrollment of Hawaiian education teachers in State Approved Teacher Education programs, it is essential to look at opportunities to shift the attention to building partnerships across departments at the University. Innovative programs, such as those combining Bachelor programs with Masters programs not only decrease costs for students because the amount of years of school would be shortened, but it can also secure healthy partnerships to serve the competence and engagement level of the students with the content. Currently, there is a teacher certification program in the works which will include a partnership between the College of Education and the Hawaiian Language department at the University of Hawai'i. A program like this offers a pathway to licensure in Hawaiian education fields as well as a Master's in Education. More innovative pathways like this can help entice students to pursue their Master's degrees, obtain teacher licensure, strengthen language skills, and receive proper training in teacher education.

**Community and school partnerships.** A key theme in the study was the importance of relationships between influencers and the participants. All three kumu clearly shared about the valued pilina they have with family members, their hula hālau brothers and sisters, their partners, other teachers, school and the Hawaiian community. The implication is that there is a need to work closer with the community and school partnerships. Teacher preparation programs can look to include more opportunities for the community to be involved and engaged. Hosting

professional development classes where community leaders, parents, and colleagues can share their own mo'olelo about Hawaiian education, or community needs, can help with developing an understanding of the positives and challenges. This involvement can help inform teacher practice in creating plans of action or service learning opportunities.

**Appropriate mentoring and research.** This study revealed the importance of influential people, or mentors, that encouraged the kumu to stay on the path to become a teacher. It is critical to strategically recruit mentor teachers that have sufficient experience in teaching the content, have accepted the kuleana as a teacher, and are willing to be open and pass their knowledge to pre-service teachers. The teacher education program should work with a community of kumu that are properly informed on the responsibilities of being a mentor teacher. There can be opportunities for the community of kumu to engage in research development and present at conferences, or community school events.

**Building competency in Hawaiian language and culture.** The study revealed that the kumu sought out opportunities to build their competence level in Hawaiian language and culture. It is vital that teacher preparation programs reflect the practice to help build competence in Hawaiian language and culture as well as building a positive learning environment for students to feel a part of. There is a need for more opportunities for teacher candidates to be immersed in Hawaiian language and culture while pursuing their licensure to teach Hawaiian education. In order to be successful, it is important for teacher preparation programs to hire faculty that are proficient in the language and culture. In order to build a positive learning environment at the college, having a designated place and informed group within the college that works with Native Hawaiian students through counseling, providing information on scholarship opportunities, Native Hawaiian professional development engagement, and research dissemination can be quite

effective. Another practice to encourage a positive learning environment is to expose college faculty to culture and language. Some essential offerings would be to host workshops that encourage Hawaiian language development and build an understanding of Hawaiian worldview.

**‘Āina inclusion is essential.** The study revealed that there is a deep respect and needed space for ‘āina in the development of identity, sense of belonging, kuleana and sense of purpose. The connection with ‘āina is a special motivator because the land can teach so many lessons. It would be essential for teacher preparation practices to include exploration of land issues and engagement in land revitalization initiatives, while building opportunities to reflect on personal connections to land and bridging the university through community engagement. One partnership that stood out from the stories included Kaho‘olawe. Partnering up with programs to work closely with revitalizing the land like Kaho‘olawe, can lead to potential curriculum development to expand the students’ and university’s understanding of kuleana to place.

Although not mentioned in this study, the issues surrounding Mauna Kea and the controversial use of the land has made a huge impact on the Native Hawaiian community and other supporters locally and around the world. It would be vital to include more open opportunities to discuss political, cultural and spiritual issues and events. As seen in Kumu ‘Ekolu’s case, things shifted for him when he attended the 100<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian government. It is important for teacher preparation programs to validate the importance of ‘āina through research, curriculum development, collaborative actions to preserve the land and developing an open mindedness towards Native Hawaiian values.

### **Limitations of the Study**

There were two limitations of this study. The participants resided only on one island. In

future studies, it would be desirable to include kumu from a variety of locations. Another limitation was that the number of participants was very small. As there were only three kumu, the results were limited to only their experiences and communities. Future studies should include more participants to get a broader perspective.

### **Recommendation for Future Research Topics**

There are four recommendations for future research. The first is to conduct the same study but with a larger sample size that represents other Hawaiian education school settings. Increasing the sample size can expand the collection of stories and gather more insight on the different pathways and influences that individuals have taken to become a kumu. The second recommendation is to gather more data on the factors that influence and motivate kumu. Being that mo'okū'auhau and family involvement was such a dominant theme in this study, it would be interesting to collect additional stories from the kumu as well as from those that have impacted their journey. The study could expand on the lineage of knowledge, and reflect the intricate relationships between individuals. The third recommendation would be to conduct a qualitative case study on individuals who received their Hawaiian teaching permit and are able to teach in a Hawaiian education setting, when no licensed teacher is available. It would be beneficial to gather data on their experiences, given that some of them are able to get their permits directly out of high school. What are their struggles? What are their successes? What influenced their decision to go into teaching? The last recommendation for further research is to encourage pre-service and in-service teachers to document their own stories through conducting an auto-ethnographic study on their journey to pursue a teaching degree.

### **Overall Significance**

The purpose of this study was to explore why kumu choose Hawaiian education as a

career. In understanding what the participants' experiences were, the research study was able to uncover positive motivators and what influenced the participants. This study did not find the answer in how to recruit Hawaiian language and culture teachers, but did address what to look for when vetting applicants for teacher education programs. What was revealed was that recruitment should be focused on those who are altruistically and intrinsically motivated to work in the schools and with the content. The kumu's competence level needs to be developed and nurtured throughout the program as well. In order to look to the future, we must look to our past. The hope is that this will inspire other kumu to reflect on their educational pathways.

### **Conclusion**

The kumu shared stories that highlighted their reasons to go into the teaching profession. They were intrinsically and altruistically motivated. The kumu experienced competence, relatedness, and autonomy, as motivators to self-determination—which led to their decision of choosing teaching. The three kumu experienced competence-seeking as a positive intrinsic motivator which was displayed in their educational experiences as well as amongst their peers. Being faced with adversity challenged them to build their competence level by equipping themselves with the proper tools to counteract the negative discourse about Native Hawaiians. Feedback was important to them, to know that they were doing a good job, or at least making an impact on their students. Those reassurances helped support them to stay in the profession. Competence in language, whether positive or negative, was an indicator of accomplishment and validity.

Relationships were key motivating factors that inspired change, and the development of their passion for teaching. Throughout their stories, there were twists and turns that demonstrated how impactful social relationships were on their decision making. The social make-up of the

environment had the power to consume or strengthen a person. In these cases, family practices, words of wisdom, honoring mo‘okū‘auhau of knowledge and connection to ‘āina were key motivators to teacher choice. Those motivators and others alike, helped the teacher work toward autonomy.

In summary, as seen in the literature, the main motivational factors that influence a teacher’s decision to pursue the profession were intrinsic and altruistic motives. As described in the beginning of this section, the influencers that led individuals to become kumu involved the following main motivators:

#### Relatedness

- The involvement level of ‘ohana and their foundational values instilled in the kumu were critical
- Impactful kumu who possessed qualities that supported the participants’ self-worth, sense of belonging and cultural values were vital to developing their interest level.
- Relationships with ‘āina were key in connecting with family, healing relationships, reconnecting with themselves, and knowing their role in revitalizing the trauma done to Hawai‘i’s wahi pana.
- Building identity through culture, language and education were dependent on the strong relationships with the people involved as well as the passion for the content.
- Being connected to the kūpuna kept the kumu grounded as well as understanding their place and kuleana.

#### Building Competence

- Seeking the means to build competency was critical to the pathway to becoming a kumu.

- Competence was built through cultural practices, seeking higher education, and ‘ike kūpuna

### Seeking Autonomy

- Recognizing their kuleana granted them the means to feel self-determined and capable of impacting their students.
- Developing a curriculum that was engaging with Hawaiian knowledge embedded within it.

All three kumu expressed that they wanted to teach to help others and for the pure love of it. There are two things that were unique and can add to the literature when looking at motivations and the teacher profession. The first revolves around the belief that their path was predestined by something out of their hands. What led them to their profession was referenced as kūpuna, a calling, or something unknown. There was a strong sense of kuleana due to this motivation. Another motivator that can add to the literature is the need for the kumu to take action and fight the injustices and inequalities forced upon Native Hawaiians by counteracting these injustices through education. There is a great push for curriculum to include accurate Native Hawaiian history and reflect the voices of the people. For this reason, the stakes are higher, and consequently instill a stronger level of kuleana.

### **Ho‘āla I Ka Piko**

At the beginning of this dissertation, I shared my past stories that went through the cycle of where I am planted (kanu i ka piko), who or what nurtured me (mālama i ka piko) and what keeps me alive through kuleana (ola ka piko). I now end with a mo‘olelo on how my piko is awake or “ho‘āla<sup>21</sup> i ka piko.”

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<sup>21</sup> To waken the piko

I didn't know that my piko was asleep. I thought with all that charge and energy from my past experiences, knowing who I am as a Native Hawaiian would naturally stay up way past 'aumoe but in reality, my piko would often drift into slumber during some of my life experiences. I was too comfortable with my surroundings protecting me, that I forgot I eventually needed to make decisions for myself and be clear on who I am.

Being branded, not by choice, as "the token Hawaiian" in some of my family and social circles, I am made to exist in spaces that others believe I should be in because of my language, education and cultural background. This makes for interesting conversations with individuals when I talk about my current job as well as my teacher certification in Hawaiian Immersion. The conversation usually is interrupted with a response of "Oh, oh, so you work at Kamehameha Schools (KS)?" After explaining for the umpteenth time about the licensure program and that I work at UH, the conversation will always end with something along the lines of "okay, well you Hawaiian so you can always teach at KS if UH don't work out." It usually is presented in this fashion as if KS is a country club with a secret handshake and matching jackets for **all** Hawaiians. The truth is, I am still waiting for my 7<sup>th</sup> grade acceptance letter from the school. Sometimes, I find it easier to just give in and say "yeah, sure, I work at KS." The receiver of the news would seem so relieved because that makes sense to them and that's where I supposedly belong. My piko was napping.

That wasn't the only time that my piko shut its eyes because my questionable acceptance of allowing others to dictate who I am. It even happens at parties. I was at a friend's party and the DJ announced on the mic that it was time to bless the food. The host snatched the microphone and proceeded to announce to the guests, "My Hawaiian friend will lead us in a Hawaiian prayer." Keep in mind, no one spoke Hawaiian at the party so it was unclear other than

for entertainment value on why it needed to be done in Hawaiian. In fact, I believe the actual words were “Go, go, you do um [the prayer], you Hawaiian. Do um in Hawaiian.” What my piko heard was “Go, go, you do um. Dance monkey, dance.” Although some may agree that it is okay because prayer is not meant for the audience, it still had a suspicious feel of boxing my identity. I agreed to do the pule<sup>22</sup> in Hawaiian. My disappointed piko started taking melatonin at that moment.

I needed to **ho‘āla i ko‘u piko**. I then remembered my kūpuna. I thought of my piko that blended into the lā‘ī that still grows strong till this day in my parents’ backyard in Wai‘anae. My Makua Valley, where my great grandmother shines beautifully on the devastated grounds. The words of strength, “Kū‘ē kākou” stamped across a t-shirt that shielded my identity and empowered my stance. And now, the mo‘olelo of the kumu in this study. My piko awakens again.

---

<sup>22</sup> Prayer

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## Appendix A: Consent Form

### Consent to Participate in a Research Project

Project title: *Pehea kou piko: A Collection of Mo'olelo on the Motivational Experiences of Kumu that Led to Teaching in Hawaiian Education Settings (Slight variation)*

Aloha! My name is Mischa Kauaananuhea Lenchanko and you are invited to take part in a research study. I am currently a PhD student in the Curriculum and Instruction program at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. As part of the requirements for earning my PhD degree, I am doing a research project.

#### **What am I being asked to do?**

If you participate in this project, I will meet with you for an interview or “talk story” session at a location and time convenient for you.

#### **Taking part in this study is your choice.**

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 to you.

#### **Why is this study being done?**

The purpose of my dissertation research is to document and understand the stories and lessons learned through the life experiences of teachers who choose to teach in Hawaiian Education settings. The research sets out to explore the motivating factors that have led teachers to pursue Hawaiian Education as well as to investigate how those factors may have been personally and

professionally transforming. The intent is also to explore ways that these documented stories can inform teacher preparation programs.

I am kindly asking you to participate in this project because you are a teacher with more than 5 years of experience and currently working with or with in Hawaiian language and Hawaiian culture educational settings.

### **What will happen if I decide to take part in this study?**

The interview or “talk story” session will consist of 10-15 open ended questions. It will take at least 60-90 minutes. The “talk story” session will include questions like, “Recall a story that details your experience with Hawaiian culture or language as a student in the classroom/at school.” “What were some driving factors that led to your decision to become a teacher? Most importantly, what guided you to become a Hawaiian Education teacher?” During the interview, I will also be asking for you to bring an artifact that you feel represents your teaching experience in Hawaiian education. I will ask you to talk about the artifact and how it is connected to your life experiences that led you to teaching Hawaiian education. I will photograph your artifact for documentation purposes. If you would like to preview a copy of all of the questions that I will ask you, please let me know in advance.

Only you and I will be present during the interview. With your permission, I will audio-record the interview so that I can later transcribe the interview and analyze the responses. You will be one of about 5 people that I will interview for this study.

### **What are the risks and benefits of taking part in this study?**

I believe there is little risk to you for participating in this research project. If at any point during the interview you become uncomfortable answering any of the interview questions or discussing topics with me during the interview you can skip the question or take a break. You can also stop the interview or you can withdraw from the project altogether.

You may benefit using this research as a platform to tell your story and voice your experiences with Hawaiian education and the crucial factors that encouraged you to become a teacher. The results of this project may help me and other researchers to increase our understanding of why teachers choose the teaching profession and explore how it impacts individuals personally and professionally. This research may also provide insight to help inform teacher education programs and strengthen the areas of recruitment, course work and community building.

***Privacy and Confidentiality:*** I will keep all study data secure in a locked filing cabinet in a locked office/encrypted on a password protected computer. Only I will have access to the data although other agencies that have legal permission have the right to review research records. The University of Hawai'i Human Studies Program has the right to review research records for this study.

After I transcribe the session recordings, I will erase or destroy the audio-recordings and the photo of your artifact. When I report the results of my research project, I will not use your name. I will not use any other personal identifying information that can identify you. I will use pseudonyms (fake names) and report my findings in a way that protects your privacy and confidentiality to the extent allowed by law.

A report of my findings will be shared with the public through presentations, including my dissertation committee at my dissertation defense, and may also be shared at conferences or in journals or other publications. If you would like a summary of the findings from my final report, please contact me at the number listed near the end of this consent form.

***Compensation:*** There will be no monetary compensation for your time and effort in participating in this research project.

***Future Research Studies:*** Even after removing identifiers, the data from this study collected will not be used or distributed for future research studies.

***Questions:*** If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact me through email or by phone. You may contact the UH Human Studies Program at 808.956.5007 or [uhirb@hawaii.edu](mailto:uhirb@hawaii.edu). to discuss problems, concerns and questions; obtain information; or offer input with an informed individual who is unaffiliated with the specific research protocol. Please visit <http://go.hawaii.edu/jRd> for more information on your rights as a research participant.

If you agree to participate in this project, please sign and date this signature page and return it in the self-addressed envelope.

Keep a copy of the informed consent form for your records and reference.

**Signature(s) for Consent:**

I give permission to join the research project entitled, “Pehea kou piko: A Collection of Mo'olelo on the Motivational Experiences of Kumu that Led to Teaching in Hawaiian Education Settings.”

Please initial next to either “Yes” or “No” to the following:

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes    \_\_\_\_\_ No    I consent to be audio-recorded for the interview portion of this research.

**Name of Participant (Print):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Participant's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of the Person Obtaining Consent:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Mahalo!

## Appendix B: University of Hawai'i at Mānoa IRB Approved



UNIVERSITY  
of HAWAII®  
SYSTEM

Office of Research Compliance  
Human Studies Program

**TO:** Serna, Alethea, Institute for Teacher Education, Elementary Program, University of Hawaii at Manoa  
Lenchanko, Mischa, University of Hawaii at Manoa, Curriculum Studies

**FROM:** Rivera, Victoria, Interim Dir, Ofc of Rsch Compliance, Social&Behav Exempt

**PROTOCOL TITLE:** Pehea kou piko: A Collection of Mo'olelo on the Motivational Experiences of Kumu that Led them to Teaching in Hawaiian Education Settings \* The protocol title is slightly different from the proposal title.

**FUNDING SOURCE:**

**PROTOCOL NUMBER:** 2018-00604  
Approval Date: September 21, 2018      Expiration Date: December 31, 2999

### NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

This letter is your record of the Human Studies Program approval of this study as exempt.

On September 21, 2018, the request for IRB approval of changes to your exempt project noted above has been reviewed and approved. The proposed amendments will be added into your current project file. The proposed changes do not alter the exempt status of your project. The authority for the exemption applicable to your study is documented in the Code of Federal Regulations at 45 CFR 46.101(b) 2.

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 by phone at 956-5007 or email [uhirb@hawaii.edu](mailto:uhirb@hawaii.edu). We wish you success in carrying out your research project.

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Appendix C Teacher Survey

Hawaiian Culture Based Education Survey

The purpose of this survey is to gather demographic data, as well as preliminarily investigate the life experiences of kumu, like you, who choose to teach in Hawaiian Culture-Based Education settings. Thank you for taking the time to fill this out and share your experiences.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Pseudonym: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Area of certification/licensure: \_\_\_\_\_

Education Degree received from (University/College):

\_\_\_\_\_

Bachelor's Degree in \_\_\_\_\_

From: \_\_\_\_\_ (Institution)

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Residential Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

**Employment History, from most current position:**

(please use the back of this sheet if you need more room)

School/Office	Year/s	Position(s)	Summary of Responsibilities

## Appendix D: Semi-Structure Interview Questions

### Background:

1. Recall an early experience with Hawaiian Culture.
  - a. Who was involved? Feelings involved?
  - b. How was this transformative to your learning?
2. Recall a time you felt a sense of connection to being Hawaiian
3. Recall a place of significance to you.
  - a. Why was it significant?
4. What were some factors that influence your connection to culture or education?

### Teaching aspirations:

5. Recall a specific event that supported your decision to become a Hawaiian education teacher.
6. What keeps you teaching?
7. How has Hawaiian education transformed you professional and personally?

### Future implication:

8. What are some experiences that impacted your practice and views on Hawaiian education?
9. Any suggestions for teacher preparation programs?

### Other:

10. Share any other life experiences that have guided you to become a teacher.
11. Who do you want to be for the next generation?

Artifact sharing: Share the mo'olelo that is attached to the artifact. Describe your artifact. Where did it come from? What's its significance?