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MAI UKA A I KAI: FROM THE MOUNTAINS TO THE SEA
‘ĀINA-BASED EDUCATION IN THE AHUPUA‘A OF WAIPĀ

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Ola i ke ahe lau makani.

There is life in a gentle breath of wind.
Said when a warm day is relieved by a breeze.
(Puku'i, 1983, p. 271)

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Abstract

Using the *ahupua'a* of Waipā on the island of Kaua'i as a case study, this thesis argues that *'āina*-based (place-based) Hawaiian Educational programs provide powerful learning experiences for Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian students alike. Ten fifth and sixth grade students participated in focus groups in which they analyzed selected video clips of themselves learning at Waipā. Findings support the effectiveness of *'āina*-based Hawaiian educational strategies for both Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian students. The study concludes that students focus, learn, and retain more in the natural environment than inside the classroom and develop a strong sense of *kuleana* (responsibility) and desire to *mālama* (care for) the Hawaiian culture and *'āina* through their participation in the program. This thesis also considers challenging issues of cultural authority, proposing a high standard of respect, sensitivity, and excellence among all who learn about and teach the Hawaiian culture.

“Before you enter a new place you should ask.”

“I learned that this is Waipā.
cause I didn’t know Waipā was here.”

“We went hiking and learned the names of mountains and places around us
and we learned how to be courteous to other things.”

“The summit made me feel very unforgettable.”

“Waipā has changed my life by letting me learn more Hawaiian things.”

“Native plants give us oxygen and great peace.”

“I learned that we should respect our elders.”

“I got more in touch with plants and soil and trees.”

“Teaching me how amazing Hawaiians are.”

“Being respectful with the land.”

The above quotes are collected from students’
evaluations of their learning
in the *ahupua’a* of Waipā, Halele’a Kaua’i,
January 2003.

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Chapter One

Ke Kahua: The Foundation

Tasha studies the map of her group's planting area as the morning sun breaks through clouds over Waipā Valley, Kaua'i. She squints at her paper, carefully decoding the colored circles and shapes that stand for different types of Native Hawaiian plants. "We need five *kulu'i*," she says, "five *kulu'i*." Healani and Shauna, fellow members of her group, chatter eagerly as they look through hundreds of plants assembled from the project nursery.

"*Kulu'i*, which one is that?"

"That's the silvery one, right?"

"Oh yeah, here it is. She said five, right?"

Gingerly, they carry the plants back to their quadrant, passing them from hand to hand to Tasha who, careful not to step all over the freshly-tilled soil, places them gently where she sees them on the map.

To prepare for this activity, these students have researched some of these native plants, their scientific and Hawaiian names, ideal growing conditions, and Hawaiian cultural uses and meanings. They presented speeches on this information to their parents earlier in the morning. The group has also gathered and potted seeds, transplanted seedlings into larger pots, and now, they are out-

planting, the first leg of a project to restore Native Hawaiian plants to a stretch of land where they haven't grown for over a hundred years.

Across the group of twenty students and parents assembled to plant today, names of native plants ring out, "*a'ali'i, 'ōhai, nanea, naupaka, ānapanapa, loulu, pōhinahina, 'ahu'awa, pā'ū-o-hi'iaka, 'ākia, 'ilima papa.*"

Slowly, one by one, each of the plants is passed, hand to hand. The students are learning to identify each plant they place into their planting area. Then, hands and shovels, fingernails and trowels begin to dig into the rich brown dirt. Tasha calls Healani to ask if the hole she's dug looks big enough. Together, they compare the depth of the hole to the depth of the pot the plant is in now. Too deep and the plant's stem may rot, too shallow, and its roots may dry out. Each hole gets a handful of manure. Then each plant is tenderly set into its new home, and supported with soil.

After two hours, the weedy patch along the fence is transformed into a garden of hundreds of native plants. The group spreads out around the area, stretching to hold hands, and chants their *oli* for *ho'oulu 'āina*, to make the land grow, asking the help of the Gods that these plants may flourish. The plants, tall and short, silvery and green, ripple gently in the sunlit breezes, seeming to sway with the chant, stretching their roots into the earth.

Waipā

Cultivating youth with roots that stretch deep into the earth, connected to the *‘āina* of Kaua‘i o Manokalanipō, that is the aspiration of the educational programs at Waipā. Waipā is an *ahupua‘a* in the *moku* (district) of Halele‘a or Hanalei¹ on Kaua‘i’s North Shore. An *ahupua‘a* is a traditional Hawaiian land division, generally stretching from the mountains to the sea to encompass a variety of resources necessary for its inhabitants to survive (Puku‘i and Elbert, 1971; Kelly 1982). The name *ahupua‘a*, includes the idea of *hō‘ahu*, which means to set something aside for later.² The *ahupua‘a* of Waipā stretches from the peak Māmalahoa, all the way to a point called Keahu on the shore of Hanalei Bay. Waipā is situated between the *ahupua‘a* of Wai‘oli and Waikoko. The name Waipā means, “a request, a prayer, as to the gods” (Pukui, 1971, p. 351).³ Other translations separate the components of the word, wai-pā, to suggest touched water.⁴ The name could also connote wai-pa‘a, “dammed-up-water,” referring to

¹ Today the district is known as Hanalei, however, its traditional name is Halele‘a (house of joy).

² *Ahu* also refers to the stone *ahu*, or stone platforms for offerings, that marked the boundary of each *ahupua‘a*. *Pua‘a* means pig and refers to the pig heads often placed upon or buried beneath the *ahu*. The *pua‘a* is a symbol of Lono, Hawaiian God of the harvest.

³ The Dictionary offers the following example, “*Pela ka‘u waiha me ka‘u Waipā aku ia ‘oe, e ke akua*, such is my request and prayer to you, O god.”

⁴ Wichman, 1998, p. 114. Also Puku‘i, 1976, p. 227.

the way that the sea heaps sand in the river mouths, often blocking the streams for part of the year.⁵

The Waipā Project began in 1982 when a group of Hawaiian *kūpuna* (elders) from Halele'a, along with their *'ohana* (families) and *kako'o* (supporters), organized to preserve Waipā, which was at that time slated for development of an upscale housing project. After four years of negotiations, the group convinced the land-owner to lease the land to them instead of developing it. Their mission was "to restore the 1600 acre *ahupua'a* of Waipā as a Native Hawaiian learning center and community center, a sustainable, culturally and community-based model for land use management" (The Waipā Foundation, 2002, p. 1).

These *kūpuna* envisioned a valley in which streams would always flow uninterrupted from the mountains to the ocean, allowing migrating native fish to flourish. They dreamed of *'ohana* returning to farm native crops, able to support their families from the land rather than working multiple menial jobs to survive. Their vision encompassed restoring native upland forests where people could come to gather medicinal plants. They imagined that *'ōlelo Hawai'i* (Hawaiian

⁵ Wichman, 1998, p. 114.

language) would be spoken throughout the valley, and envisioned Waipā full of children learning their culture.

Under the name “The Hawaiian Farmers of Hanalei,” the group began a variety of land restoration and community-based economic development activities including *kalo* (taro) farming, poi production, and a farmer’s market where locals could come to sell their produce.⁶ The Waipā Foundation, a non-profit branch of the organization, was formally incorporated in 1994 to fulfill the mission of restoring Waipā to a fully functioning *ahupua’a*. The Waipā Foundation’s educational programs, in which student groups come to participate in restoration activities and learn about Hawaiian culture and environmental science, have become an increasingly important part of the work at Waipā. These educational programs promote the continuation of cultural and restoration activities, not only in the present, but for generations to come.

Hawaiian Educational Context

Waipā’s educational program is just one of many Hawaiian education efforts across the state of Hawai’i. Over the past twenty years, researchers have

⁶ *Kalo*, or taro, is the staple crop of the Hawaiian people. It is grown in irrigated terraces or *lo’i*, as well as on dry land. *Kalo* is cooked and pounded into *poi*, which, eaten along with fish, provides the basis of the Hawaiian diet. In addition to being the staple crop, *kalo* has tremendous cultural and spiritual significance in Hawaiian cosmology. (See Chapter Four on *‘Āina* to more fully understand its significance).

been investigating Hawaiian education and how to make education most effective for Native Hawaiian students, “for whom educational outcomes have historically been far below those of Hawai’i’s non-indigenous population” (Kahakalau, 1999, p.3) (Benham, 1998; KALO 2000). Most of this early research focused on cultural difference theory and the mismatch between Hawaiian learning styles and Western methods of teaching (Jordan and Tharp, 1984; Gallimore, Boggs, and Jordan, 1974; Vogt, Jordan, and Tharp, 1987; Trueba, 1988; Au, 1983; Alu Like, 1986). The Kamehameha Schools Early Education Program (KEEP), the source of much of this early research, sought to create culturally congruent, laboratory classrooms for Hawaiian students. Pedagogical adjustments included allowing for work in cooperative groups, “talk-story” type verbal interaction in which many students may speak at once, and non-individualized patterns of feedback and praise because researchers found that singling out individual Hawaiian students actually had a negative effect (Jordan and Tharp, 1984; Gallimore et al., 1974; Vogt et al., 1987; Trueba, 1988; Moll and Diaz, 1987; Au 1983).

In the 1980s, a decade or more of vibrant Hawaiian cultural revival, and increasing concern at the seemingly inevitable demise of the Hawaiian language, gave birth to the Hawaiian language immersion program. Representing a

significant development in Hawaiian education, these schools currently serve pre-school to graduate level students in the Hawaiian language (Kamana and Wilson, 1996). While immersion programs have made significant innovations in curricular content, as well as in student, parent and teacher relationship to the school, they continue to operate primarily within a Western model of schooling, often as programs within existing Department of Education schools (Yamauchi, 2000).

In light of these programs, along with earlier Hawaiian education research, it has become increasingly evident that adjustments in pedagogy, content, or even the language of instruction, are not sufficient to create meaningful Hawaiian education. More recent Hawaiian educational research focuses on Hawaiian epistemology, or philosophy about knowledge, and how these ideas fundamentally conflict with Western educational systems (Meyer 1996). These approaches illuminate cultural conceptions of what makes knowledge valuable (for example its utility), elements lacking in most formal schooling today.

This realization has recently spawned a variety of new Hawaiian educational programs. These programs aim to provide meaningful, culturally and community based, integrated, and effective education for Hawaiian

students. Examples of these innovations include the Wai'anae High School Hawaiian Studies Program (Blaich, 1997) and a coalition of eleven Native Hawaiian Charter Schools founded in 2001 and 2002 (Nā Lei Na'au'ao, 2001). These charter schools, while publicly funded, operate autonomously from the rest of the Hawai'i State Department of Education, offering new models of Hawaiian education. As Kū Kahakalau, founder of the first Hawaiian Charter School, Kanu o ka 'Aina, writes, "We believe that Hawaiian knowledge structure differs significantly from the Western system of education" (1999, p. 5). Kahakalau notes her school's "strong integration of the natural environment and the community into daily learning" (1999, p. 4). Many of these Hawaiian Charter Schools and programs are consistent with national initiatives in place-based education because they seek to connect Hawai'i students to the *'āina*, to their homeland (Smith 2002). Waipā is among this *'ohana* of innovative, *'āina*-based, Hawaiian education programs. Currently, such programs are becoming the focus of an emerging body of new research on Hawaiian education.

This study focuses on the voices of students at Waipā, engaging them in telling the story of what they feel is unique about the educational programs they participate in within the *ahupua'a*. Students' own voices are the vehicle to examine the effectiveness of one particular Hawaiian program. This work is also

unique in that it includes both Hawaiian students and students of other ethnicities participating in an *‘āina*-based Hawaiian educational program.

‘Āina – Land Alienation in Hawai‘i

Traditionally, *‘āina* or land was redistributed amongst the *ali‘i* (chiefly class) each time that a new *mo‘ī* (high chief) came to power. These periodic *kālai ‘āina* (land redistributions, literally carving up of the *‘āina*) created a system in which the *ali‘i* who oversaw individual *ahupua‘a* were relatively transient on the land (Andrade, 2001; Kame‘eleihiwa, 1993). However, the *maka‘āinana*,⁷ the majority of the Hawaiian people, were permanent residents of the *ahupua‘a* regardless of which *ali‘i* had oversight of it. The responsibilities of the *ali‘i* included interceding with the Gods, as one with *mana* or power, closest to the Akua (or Gods) to ensure the productivity of the land (Kame‘eleihiwa, 1993). The phrase *na‘au ali‘i* means “having a kind and generous spirit,” (Andrade, 2001) and if an *ali‘i* lived up to this mandate, he or she was in turn supported by offerings of food (directed via the *ali‘i* to the Gods) from the *maka‘āinana* (Kelly, 1981; Andrade, 2001). If an *ali‘i* was cruel or failed to perform his or her

⁷ The word *maka‘āinana* is frequently translated as commoners or people that attend the land (Puku‘i and Elbert, 1971, p. 207). Literally, *maka‘āinana* means “on the land, sprouts on the land, or those who look at the land” (Andrade, 2001).

responsibilities in some way, the *maka'āinana* were free to move to another *ahupua'a* and seek another *ali'i* (an important way the Hawaiian land tenure system differed from feudalism) (Kelly, 1981; Andrade, 2001). Despite changes in *ali'i* leadership, the *maka'āinana* always retained their right to remain on the land. *Maka'āinana* rights included the right to farm tracts of land (often to plant *kalo*), water rights, as well as access to all of the other resources *mai uka a i kai* (from the mountains to the sea) of the *ahupua'a* (Andrade, 2001; Kelly, 1982; McGregor 1996).

In the mid 1800s, in response to pressure from American missionaries and Western business interests eager to start sugar plantations, the Hawaiian monarchy implemented privatization of land. The first vehicle for this, the Mahele of 1848, consisted of a great land exchange involving all of the *ali'i* including the *mo'i* (the crown, the highest chief at that time) (Andrade, class lecture, 1/28/03; Kame'eleihiwa, 1993). Shortly afterwards, the *mo'i* Kamehameho'uli, also known as Kamehameha III, gifted a percentage of the crown lands to the new government of Hawai'i. Each *ahupua'a* was assigned to the crown or an individual *ali'i*. While this amounted in some ways to a great *kālai 'āina*, it flouted the traditional authority of many *ali'i* who were not in favor with the current monarchy of Hawai'i, leaving them landless. By instituting land

taxes, it also ensured that many *ali'i*, land rich, but without access to cash, would be forced to sell their land to foreigners in order to pay the taxes (Andrade, 2001). Thus began the swift sweeping tide of foreign land ownership in Hawai'i.

A second major vehicle of dispossession of Hawaiians from the land was the Kuleana⁸ Act of 1850 that required all *maka'āinana* to register for the particular parcels of land they had traditionally farmed. This four-step process included filing a claim, providing testimony of at least two witnesses to substantiate the claim, paying for a survey of the land, and paying a fee. This process awarded only 1% of the total land available in Hawai'i to *maka'āinana* (Andrade, 2001).

Unawarded parcels became, by default, the property of the owner of the *ahupua'a*, who was then free to sell or subdivide the land as he or she wished. These land claims were called *kuleana*, because they were awarded under the Kuleana Act. For those who received land, the size of their award was limited because any fields not currently in cultivation (i.e. those left fallow for the next season) were excluded. Furthermore, *kuleana* rights have been steadily eroded by the onslaught of Western real property law so that *maka'āinana* rights now effectively only include the small *kuleana* parcels awarded, without mountain to

⁸ The word, *kuleana* means "right, title, property portion, responsibility, interest, claim, ownership; small piece of property within an *ahupua'a*" (Puku'i, 1967, p. 165). See Chapter Five, "*Kuleana*" for a fuller description of meaning.

ocean access to other *ahupua'a* resources. Consequently, farmers who went to the ocean to fish were suddenly trespassing. *Kalo* farmers who dug an *auwai* (irrigation ditch) from the river, and even *kuleana* owners who accessed their land by walking or driving through another person's property, were accused of unintentional violation of the new law that had been established.

As a result of the Mahele of 1848, the *ahupua'a* of Waipā was awarded to the *ali'i* Princes Ruth Ke'elikolani. Upon her death, Princess Ruth left all of her lands to her cousin, Princess Bernice Pauahi Bishop, the great-grand-niece of Kamehameha the Great. Later, at Bernice Pauahi's death, these lands, including Waipā, became a part of the Kamehameha Schools Bishop Estate (KSBE),⁹ the largest private land-holder in the state of Hawai'i today. Along with the adjoining valley of Lumaha'i, Waipā is one of the only intact *ahupua'a* remaining in the state today.

Land in Hawai'i, and especially in communities such as Halele'a, on the Hanalei side of the island of Kaua'i, has become an extremely valuable commodity. Annexation and later statehood, under the government of the United States of America, has resulted in unfettered in-migration to Hawai'i.

⁹ KSBE is a charitable trust established in Princess Bernice Pauahi Bishop's will. The trust required the creation of the Kamehameha Schools, dedicated to the education and advancement of Native Hawaiian students.

Our state's primary industry, tourism, draws scores of wealthy visitors each year, many of whom enjoy their stay so much they decide they would like to own a piece of paradise (e.g. time-share or vacation-rentals), or even move here. Buying up pieces of property at prices far higher than most locals can afford, these immigrants build luxury homes, often selling them within a few years for triple or quadruple what they have paid. Additionally, permissive county and state zoning laws allow property owners to subdivide their lots, quickly turning vast agricultural parcels into gentleman's subdivisions. Often, these developments come with gates to ensure protection of property owners "right" to privacy. These gates block local families from areas where, for generations, they have gone to fish, hunt, gather, camp, or just enjoy the beach together.

The county tax structure on Kaua'i bases assessments on the highest priced property sold in the area, resulting in property tax assessments tripling from year to year. Even those Hawaiian families who have been able to hang on to small parcels of land for this long, are being forced to give them up because they can no longer afford the taxes. Forced into the rental market, locals find outrageous prices are the norm due to a shrinking supply as existing units are increasingly converted into vacation-rentals for visitors. Available jobs in Halele'a tend to revolve around the tourist industry, including cleaning vacation-

rental units between customers or waiting tables at the hotel. Parents find themselves having to take on two or three such menial jobs in order to support their families. Families have less and less time to spend together, less time for camping and fishing, less time to listen to *kūpuna* (elders') stories, less time to pass on the cultural skills that remain, and a decreasing connection to the '*āina* they call home.

At the same time, the composition of Halele'a has changed, from primarily Native Hawaiian families, to primarily recent immigrants from the United States Mainland. When the *kūpuna* of Waipā stopped the development of the *ahupua'a* for luxury housing in 1982 and insisted that it be preserved, intact from the mountains to the sea, they were visionary. Despite the changes, the work of the Waipā *kūpuna* has ensured that Halele'a has at least one *pu'uhonua* or safe-haven, a place where people from this community, both indigenous and non-indigenous, can come to learn and perpetuate the Hawaiian culture, to experience and care for the '*āina*. The restoration and educational efforts at Waipā endeavor to reverse the trend of alienation from the land by creating Hawaiian educational opportunities which are, once again, '*āina* -based. This thesis is the story of these programs and of this place, Waipā, in the words of the

students of Halele'a who come to share in the work and learning of restoring this
ahupua'a, mai uka a i kai, from the peak of Māmalahoa, to the sea at Keahu.

Chapter Two

Ka Papa Hana: Method

The purpose of this research is to talk with students about their educational experiences at Waipā, to learn what they feel is unique and effective about the programs, and to understand how we can make these programs better. This study was motivated by my interests as a teacher and developer of educational programs at Waipā. A child of the Halele'a community myself, born and raised in the near-by *ahupua'a* of Kalihiwai, I have been working at Waipā off and on since 1996, primarily in summers home from college or from teaching work on O'ahu.¹⁰

Our first educational programs at Waipā have been summer programs, five since 1996. Within the last three years, we have developed field-trip offerings where teachers can choose from an array of topics, and then bring their class of students to participate in a one-day visit. Many teachers have brought their students back a number of times throughout the year. Currently, we are moving towards more sustained involvement with classes and during the 2002-2003 school year we piloted our first year-long project in conjunction with the combined fifth and sixth grade class from the neighborhood elementary school.

¹⁰ I recently completed three years of teaching with a public Hawaiian language immersion school.

Their teacher, a long-time educator and resident of the community, is a staunch proponent of environmental education, cultivating a garden with her students every year. Her dedication, support, and teaching experience were vital to this project. These fifth and sixth grade students are the primary participants in this study.

This class visited Waipā once a month throughout the 2002-2003 school year for a total of ten full-day field trips. They also participated in three family camping trips, where they and many of their families camped at Waipā for the weekend. Their activities at Waipā were a very integrated part of their classroom curriculum for the year, providing a focus for much of their learning.

All fieldtrips and activities at Waipā were planned and implemented by a teaching team composed of the classroom teacher, three Waipā staff members, one biologist, one *kumu hula* (respected teacher of hula, chant, and other cultural practices), and myself, a trained middle and secondary school teacher with a background in Hawaiian studies and environmental education. Our group conducted curriculum development and planning meetings and team-taught all of the students' activities at Waipā. The classroom teacher chose water and agriculture as the theme of her students' classroom studies for the year. While we were able to offer materials and suggestions for the classroom, she developed

her own in-class curriculum, largely in relation to Waipā. Three of the ten students interviewed for this research also participated in the 2002 Waipā Summer Program.

This research utilized a polyvocal, ethnographic approach to stimulate dialogue about these programs (Tobin and Davidson 1990). My intent in choosing this method was to shift the power to define meaning away from myself as teacher / researcher, and instead to highlight the many voices and perspectives of the numerous other participants, teachers, older youth who are actively involved at Waipā, and especially the fifth and sixth grade students involved in this program. Educational research rarely focuses on the *mana'o* (ideas, thoughts, feelings) of those who are most affected by programmatic educational decisions, the student participants themselves, who effectively became partners in this particular research process.

He Huaka'i (A Typical Field Trip to Waipā)

The fifth and sixth grade class field trips focused on four different topics, each of which was covered in one field trip per semester: *kalo* (taro), *wai* (water), geology, and cultivation of native plants. Curriculum for each of the trips contained the following elements: 1) regular *oli* (chant) and protocol to begin

and end the day, 2) a new *oli* or *mo'olelo* (story, legend) related to the day's topic, 3) a hands-on activity designed to teach a particular concept, 4) verbal instructions and explanation of concepts to the entire group followed by questions and discussion, 5) environmental restoration work such as planting, and 6) introduction of new place names in Waipā. For example, the first field trip on water began with the students' usual *oli* requesting permission to enter Waipā. We briefly discussed the day, sharing memories and learning from the first trip. Then, a short lecture and demonstration taught some basic scientific principles about water such as its molecular structure and the stages of the water cycle.

After that, we went to the beach where the students heard the *oli* "*Aia i hea ka wai a Kāne?*" or "Where are the waters of Kāne?" Kāne is the Hawaiian deity for fresh water. This *oli* also recounts the water cycle from a Hawaiian perspective, through all of the various and complementary forms in which fresh water can be found from the rising to the setting of the sun, from the mountains to the ocean, from the heavens, to below the earth. This *oli* became a focus for the day as students then proceeded on a hike throughout the *ahupua'a* of Waipā, finding and observing many of the forms of fresh water described in the chant, seeking to answer the question "*Aia ihea ka wai o Waipā,*" or "Where is the water

of Waipā?” While hiking, students experienced the work of hauling the water you need to live by taking turns carrying large water jugs throughout the day’s activities.

After exploring the *muliwai* (river mouth), a *loko i’a* (fish-pond), and *auwai* (irrigation ditches), students were led to a *punawai* (spring) burbling out of the valley wall. Students considered the need to conserve water, learning that the water in the spring took twenty years, from the time it fell as rain, to percolate into the earth and down through the mountains, emerging clean enough to drink. Next, students investigated aquatic stream-life. Working in groups, the students were given an implement designed to simulate the eating mechanisms of a particular organism that lives in Waipā’s streams (for example, meat tongs for *‘ōpae* (native shrimp)). Working in the stream, each group had to “catch” as much food as they could in a given time, then compare their results and propose hypothesis about the most likely sources of food for those organisms.

To end the day, the class planted *‘ahu’awa*, a Native Hawaiian sedge, along the bank of the stream to serve as a filter, preventing litter, silt, and animal wastes from washing into the water. *‘Ahu’awa* is also a *kinolau* (one of many forms) of the *Akua* (god) Kāne, god of fresh water, thereby bringing the day full circle and connecting all of its elements.

Data Collection Methods

I videotaped three of the class' early fieldtrips to Waipā. Using this footage, I created eight video clips of approximately two minutes in length. The clips were selected because they represented a range of educational experiences that students engaged in at Waipā. The clips depicted students participating in:

- 1) The stream animal simulation game described above
- 2) An oli or chant to help their *kalo* grow
- 3) A lecture on the water cycle and photosynthesis
- 4) An art activity to create their own variety of *kalo* plant along with an accompanying evaluation exercise
- 5) A series of choral and individual recall questions on how to differentiate varieties of *kalo*
- 6) Restoration work planting *ahuawa* with a partner
- 7) A demonstration requiring students to build "islands" of sand then gradually "rain" water on them to show erosion
- 8) Two different observation experiences in which students touched nutrient rich soil, and watched a particular type of cloud on the horizon, one described in a chant

The purpose of these video clips was to stimulate discussion within the focus groups, providing a concrete way for participants to share their thoughts about their learning experiences at Waipā and what makes these programs unique. Building upon the polyvocal video methodology utilized by Joseph Tobin, David Wu, and Dana Davidson in their research on preschools in Japan,

China and Hawai'i (1987)¹¹, this study used video to enable subjects of ethnographic research to respond to and analyze film of themselves. Consequently, my data consisted of participants' reactions to the video clips rather than the clips themselves.

In order to solicit participant commentary on the video clips, I conducted four focus groups, two with students from the *fifth and sixth* grade class, one with a group of Hawaiian high school students who had been involved in educational programs at Waipā since 1999, and one with the teaching team described above. I also recorded each focus group session using both audio and video tape which I then transcribed.

I chose to utilize a focus group method rather than individual interviews because I felt that this method was more culturally appropriate, more in keeping with the Hawaiian talk-story style of communication, characterized by overlapping speech patterns, as well as a better match with the collaborative character of the program. While I had also hoped to conduct a parent and *'ohana* focus group, I was unable to for the purpose of this thesis. Originally, I planned to interview only the Hawaiian students in the fifth and sixth grade class about the program. However, after working with the entire class all year, I felt

¹¹ They credit Linda Conner, along with Tim and Patsy Asch for pioneering this method in a series of ethnographic films on Bali (1986).

awkward about including only some of the students. Therefore, I decided to conduct two fifth and sixth grade focus groups, one with the five Hawaiian students, and one composed of five students of other ethnicities who were interested in participating in the study. This particular decision redefined the direction of my thesis. Researchers rarely explore the question of how non-indigenous students are affected by participating in indigenous educational programs. I found the non-Hawaiian students reflections to be extremely powerful along with introducing a rich, comparative dimension to this study.¹²

I began each focus group with an explanation of the method and the overall purpose of the study. Then, I showed the video clips, one at a time, pausing to allow for participants' reactions to each. Sometimes the groups began to respond spontaneously at the end of a clip, other times I asked questions to invite reactions. Frequently, I responded to these reactions with follow up questions to clarify what the participant meant. While I initially expected the discussion to focus on the effectiveness of the various instructional techniques employed in the clips, the participants chose not to confine their conversation to the video. Instead, the students and teachers chose to broaden the discussion to

¹² Changing to include non-Hawaiian students as participants in this study convinced me of the value of trusting your instincts as a researcher, even if it means significantly revising your project.

encompass many aspects of the Waipā program, and of education in general.¹³

As a result of participants' level of engagement in the discussion, and the thoughtfulness of their reactions, my methods evolved throughout the project.

Focus groups became more of a conversation between all of the participants, myself, and even the individuals helping to record the sessions who inevitably became interested in the discussion and added clarifying questions of their own. Also, I decided to share responses of the earlier fifth and sixth grade groups with the older students and the teachers in order to record their reactions and, essentially, involve them in the process of analysis.

While the older student and teacher groups were invaluable in helping me to contextualize and interpret my findings, for the purposes of this paper, I have chosen to focus only on analysis of the fifth and sixth grade focus groups.¹⁴ All of the students in both groups were very eager to participate and, as they saw it, to help Waipā by providing insight into the effectiveness of our programs.¹⁵

¹³ For instance, the older students were eager to compare the video to their own experiences of elementary education. This led them to stories of their current experiences at the high school and their career goals. Younger students wanted to talk about what their families thought of the program, and how they felt it had changed their own ideas about their community.

¹⁴ It is important to note that my research focuses on a particular educational program in a particular setting. My primary informants are ten individual students from one class. These findings may or may not be generalizable to other Hawaiian education contexts. However, my hope is that this research, and the interpretations offered by these students, will serve to raise questions and awareness which may then be applied and adapted to other programs.

¹⁵ They were also eager to help me with my research so that I could graduate.

Both groups elicited a wealth of responses though the two proceeded very differently.

“Talking Story”

As previously mentioned, I chose to conduct focus groups in order to incorporate the Hawaiian propensity for talk-story, and to allow the reactions of one respondent to spark the *mana’o* (thoughts) of others. A finely honed skill for “talk-story” was immediately evident with the Hawaiian group of students. Their conversation was extremely seamless with students frequently speaking over one another and often finishing each other’s thoughts. Somehow, even when all five students were talking at once, everyone got their turn and was heard. Significantly, each comment built on the ones before it, and led to other ideas, with the students really thinking things through together.

My second group, consisting of five students of a variety of ethnicities other than Hawaiian, interacted extremely differently. Though I said at the beginning of the focus group session that no one needed to raise their hands, and reminded them of this once in the process, the students continued to do so. If they got excited and a few began to babble their thoughts, they would immediately stop, raise their hands and look to me to assign speaking order. I

resisted at first, but it seemed the only way for them all to share their ideas and feel satisfied with the process. In addition, when each person spoke, it was their own distinct thought which did not necessarily connect to or build on (might not even relate too) the one before it, giving the impression that students weren't listening while their classmates spoke.

I found it fascinating to note that the Hawaiian students heard far more of what their classmates had said, even if two or three of them were talking at the same time their classmate was sharing. James, one of the Hawaiian students, explained to me that you do not have to look like you're listening to be listening. "In second grade, there was this one kid, a boy, and he would always be talking. But he would be listening and he would get everything (the teacher) said." The result of this ability to talk and listen at the same time, was a lively conversation. In contrast, the second group, with the exception of a few interchanges, felt more like a series of responses.

These observations of the focus group process support years of educational research arguing that Hawaiians, along with other ethnic groups of students, have a tendency to learn and communicate in certain ways that differ from the mainstream. This research implies that educational programs that cater to Hawaiian styles of learning will increase the educational success of Hawaiian

students. Let us turn now to what these two groups of fifth and sixth grade students, both Hawaiians and students of other ethnicities, had to say about their learning at Waipā and what factors facilitated this learning.

Chapter Three

*'Ike A'o: Insight Gained in Teaching and Learning*¹⁶

What do students say is effective about their program at Waipā? This chapter focuses on some of the elements of the program students feel help them in their learning. Many of the elements students raised are predictable, common features of nearly every Hawaiian education program today: *laulima* (working together), observation and repetition, and *ma ka hana ka 'ike* (learning by doing). All of these elements are well documented learning preferences and strengths of many Native Hawaiian students. However, in this research, these same three elements were supported by students of other ethnicities as well. The effectiveness of these methods of instruction across many ethnic groups and learning styles, while not lessening their importance or usefulness for Hawaiian students, increases the need for educational programs to incorporate these elements.

Laulima

Cuz if you're working with someone . . .
Everything is the greatest, everything. (Gloria, Sasha)

¹⁶ I am grateful to Dr. Manulani Meyer of U.H. Hilo for introducing me to the concept of 'Ike A'o in 1997.

The word *laulima* literally means “many hands.” It is commonly defined as cooperation or working together (Puku’i and Elbert, 1971, p. 181). In traditional Hawai’i, much of the learning occurred within peer groups, networks of siblings and cousins working together, largely apart from adults (Puku’i, Haertig, Lee, 1972; Meyer, 1996). The propensity of most Native Hawaiian students to learn better in settings where cooperation is emphasized is well documented in educational research (Puku’i et al., 1972; Vogt et al., 1987; Tharp, 1989; Alu Like, 1996; Au, 1991; Au, personal interview, 7/26/97; Blaich, 1997; D’Amato, 1987; Meyer, 1998, p. 117). Accordingly, this body of research recommends a number of classroom modifications to improve the performance of Native Hawaiian students in educational settings. These include heterogenous grouping (Vogt et al., 1987), time for problem-solving and discussion in groups (D’Amato, 1987), time for students to teach one another independent of the teacher (Alu Like, 1989), group versus individual praise (Vogt et al., 1987; Tharp, 1989), and, rather than insisting only one student talk at a time, allowing for talk-story style communication as we saw exhibited in the focus groups for this study (Au, 1991; Tharp, 1989).

All the students I interviewed, both Hawaiians and non-Hawaiians described working together, *laulima*, as an important strength of the Waipā

program. In addition to preferring the security of a group for activities like *oli* or chant, they were adamant that working together with their classmates facilitated their learning. As one student, Frank, explains, "We have more fun, because we learn more than just doing our work, and just having to do it ourselves. We could work as a group."

Students' comments on a mid-year evaluation activity illustrate very different reactions to the same basic activity conducted in two different ways, one individual and one cooperative. The first was an individual homework assignment in which students were provided with various categories and had to list all of the things they remembered learning related to each of them. Gina said of this assignment, "When we have to think really hard about it, it's just not fun. When we get a grade on it. . . just sit at home, like doing an essay, it's kind of boring."

Compare that reaction to Gina's thoughts on the cooperative method. In this activity, students wrote things they had learned at Waipā on post-it notes, and then, as a class, posted them on big, hanging, pieces of chart paper according to the topics they related to. Gina stated, "It was different because we got to race around. . . . We get to do it with our class and we get to have fun and like racing around trying to put [our post it notes] back. " As Gloria enthusiastically added,

“It was bringing back really good memories so it was just like keep writing, keep writing, oh yeah, this is great, I could do this all day.” Two of the students explained specifically why working as a whole class on this activity was valuable for them:

If we remembered little tiny stuff and put it on a piece of paper, then we’d read that again and we might get another idea. And then, we could probably look at someone and we could get another ideas [sic]. Maybe, if someone needed help, they could ask a person that has plenty of ideas, and they could probably get some ideas from that person. (Theresa)

You would look on other people’s note pads and you would remember, “Oh yeah, we did that too!” (Sasha)

In many educational settings, the idea of looking to classmates for ideas, of looking at their note pads to help you remember, would be considered cheating. However, these practices are very in keeping with the Hawaiian ideal of *laulima*.

The following *‘ōlelo no’eau* (Hawaiian proverb) exhibits the utility of *laulima*. It is simply easier to get things done with many hands:

‘A’ohe hana nui ke alu ‘ia
No task is too big when done together by all.
(Puku’i, 1983, p. 18)

Students expressed similar awareness of the usefulness of *laulima* when working together with their classmates to complete tasks such as planting 'ahu'awa, a native sedge, along a stream bank to reduce erosion:

It was kind of hard digging the holes because there was rocks [sic].
... (Tasha)

And we had to help each other because we had to dig in the dirt
and it was kind of hard because of the shovels. ... (Kalei)

But I thought it was fun because we got to work with each other. . .
(Tasha)

We could work together. (Healani)

The students also indicated pleasant surprise at how well their class worked together on certain of the activities, such as building an island out of sand to simulate erosion.

It was fun. (James)

It was fun because it kind of felt like you could just build
a sandcastle. (Kalei)

It was like that but we had to build a certain kind, like a mountain.

We were working together. (Healani)

And usually sometimes when our class works together they
kind of get in a big fuss about things . . . They [the boys] weren't
really throwing sand or anything, so it was kind of surprising. (Sarah)

At least we were calm over there. (Healani)

Sarah observes that at Waipā, in these kinds of activities, the boys who were usually just "messing everything up," were really helpful, a change she and other girls found refreshing. In fact, she described their whole class working together "surprisingly" well. As the year progressed, the Hawaiian students felt

that activities at Waipā which got them working together, as a class, in groups, or as partners with people they didn't usually work with, have brought their entire class closer together:

We get along better a little bit. (Kalei)

Yeah, because in the beginning of the year, some people. . . .

(Tasha)

We were fighting, we used to fight a lot. And grumbling with each other, grumble, argue, all that. I don't know why, but it just happened. Since we've been going to Waipā, we've been building better relationships. (Sarah)

Hawaiian students highlighted the value of the Waipā camp-outs because they created an opportunity for parents and family members to take part in *laulima*, to work alongside the students. Expanding the concept of *laulima* beyond the classroom to include 'ohana (family) builds on the Hawaiian student's need to connect school learning to family life (Alu Like, 1996; Blaich, 1997; Puku'i et al., 1972; Meyer, 1998). Sarah's description of working together with her father on a Waipā campout is especially poignant because she had been separated for her father for a long time before this experience:

We got to gather around the camp-fire. And we got to introduce our parents. And last time we didn't really get to do that so in a way, it felt good because my Dad got to come this time and last time my mom got to come. . . . My dad is coming next time again. He wants to come. He felt good because he learned, even for an adult, he learned, like some of the native plants that we planted. And he enjoyed, he said that he enjoyed, helping out and seeing the kids having fun and being happy.

Sarah went on to describe all of the families gathering together to bless the food for dinner on that same camp out, “It felt like we were an *‘ohana* (family), just saying a prayer.” In this instance, quarterly camp outs at Waipā, involving students and their families in working together, allowed Sarah to experience convergence of her own family with the family created among her classmates into one big *‘ohana*.

By creating opportunities for students to work alongside other students, their own families, the families of their classmates, as well as teachers and other adults from the area, the Waipā program is gradually increasing students’ sense of belonging to a community. The Hawaiian students pointed out that some of the other students’ parents were new to the island and that their own parents would not have gotten to know them as well, if at all, without the opportunity to work together at Waipā. They felt that getting to work with these parents and to teach them about Hawai’i was important:

It felt good because lots of parents learned stuff. (James)
And lots of parents aren’t really from here, they’re from the mainland and they don’t really know, so when they come together, they learn more about the *ahupua’a* and all kinds of native plants.
(Sarah)
Like Frank’s mom, she learned lots of things. She asked good questions. (Tasha)

And some parents were helpful. (Healani)

Some parents were really helpful, they lended us, they letted [sic] us put some plants in their car to load when we were planting.
(Tasha)

According to Gina, the sense of connectedness, of community, built through *laulima* carries beyond the boundaries of the Waipā *ahupua'a* itself and into the wider community, “[At Waipā] we get to meet new people. . . . When you just walk around town, they always say “hi” and stuff and it’s kind of fun.”

Observation and Repetition

I ka nānā no a ‘ike.
By observing, one learns.
I ka ho’olohe no a ho’omaopopo.
By listening one commits to memory.
I ka hana no a ‘ike.
By practice one masters the skill.
(Puku’i et al., 1972, p. 48)

The well known ‘*ōlelo no’eau* (proverb) above describes the Hawaiian emphasis on learning through watching and listening closely, then practicing repeatedly, trying to mimic (*ho’opili*) what they had observed. Observation and repetition are both well documented in educational literature as culturally congruent instructional strategies for teaching Hawaiian students (Puku’i et al., 1972; Blaich, 1997; Meyer, 1998; Alu Like, 1996). Like *laulima*, or working together, observation and repetition

were identified by students in both focus groups as integral elements in their learning at Waipā.

When the non-Hawaiian students were asked what was most helpful to them in learning the *oli* or chants, Gloria chose observation, being able to hear and see the chant being taught. She raised this same point two separate times during the course of our discussion:

I also like hearing [a teacher] saying it, because [that teacher] knows it really well. And then hearing [her], I know that, well, that's how she says it, then I should say it that way, not this way.

It was cool to have her teach us about the clouds and everything like that, but it was really awesome for her to show us. When she was saying it, it was cool to see, because she's Hawaiian and all, so it was cool to see her saying it like that. Awesome. And then we got to learn it easier that way because we could see how she was saying it. And, if we were in school and a person just handed us a piece of paper, we'd be like, umm, ok, so how am I supposed to pronounce this one, "googalaga" or something like that. But when she says it and she shows us first, we understand, oh yeah, that's how you say it now. Otherwise I would've been lost. (Gloria)

The element of repetition and practice, of listening carefully to a line then mimicking what your ears hear over and over, also figured prominently in learning *oli*. While explaining how one teacher introduced a new chant, Kalei emphasized the value of repetition. "Word by word, and then she said it each line, and then she said it all together. . . . We repeated it." Frank described how each segment is repeated until mastered before adding on. "We go over them a

lot. Step by step. Like we do one word then we do another then another. Then we do a whole sentence and then we go to the next sentence and do the same.”

This concept of mastering each line before moving on to the next is very prevalent in Hawaiian education. Unlike Western schooling where time, the end of a unit, semester, or grade level, usually determines when learning one thing ends, Hawaiian education emphasizes repetition of a task until mastery is achieved (Meyer, 1998; Puku’i et al., 1972; Blauch, 1997). As one Hawaiian proverb exhorts:

“Pipī ka wahie, ho’onui ka pulupulu.”
If the firewood burns slowly, add more tinder.
Keep trying until you succeed. (Alu Like, 1996)

In other Hawaiian educational programs, such as Kukulu Kumuhana on the Big Island, I have observed the Hawaiian practice, recorded by Mary Kawena Puku’i (Puku’i et al., 1972), of requiring a young person learning a new skill to repeat the work until their first product is perfect. For example, the first *lauhala* basket may have to be remade a hundred times, however, the *kumu* (teacher) will continue to direct the *haumana* (student) to undo it and begin again, until it is perfect. This practice encourages truly deep mastery of the skill. For as another *‘ōlelo no’eau* teaches:

‘Ike ‘ia no ka loea i ke kuahu.
An expert is recognized by the altar he builds.

It is what one does and how well he does it that shows whether he is an expert.
(Puku'i, 1983, p. 131)

The technique of practice, doing something over and over until your work exhibits mastery, also connects to the Hawaiian educational philosophy of learning by doing.

Ma ka Hana ka 'Ike (Learning by Doing)

“When we’re hands on, we get to really do it, and we do remember, but we get to have fun with it, it kind of is easier to remember.”
(Gina)

Along with working together, observation and repetition, one phrase came up over and over when students discussed what they like about learning at Waipā, “hands-on.” Hands-on learning, or learning by doing is, again, a well-documented strength of many Native Hawaiian students (Alu Like, 1996; Blaich, 1997; Puku'i et al., 1972; Meyer, 1998, p. 85). In the Hawaiian sense, you have not learned something unless you can do it. The students in this study, Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian alike, express that the stage of doing truly facilitated their learning and was their favorite part:

It’s funner [*sic*] when we get to have hands on, get to really know it. When they [teachers] talk it gets kind of boring. When we do it, it’s really fun. (Gina)

We get to sit down and do stuff with our hands.
Not just sitting down and listening.
We get to listen and do creative things. (Kalei, Healani, Tasha)

Planting, digging, working. . . . Instead of just writing. And you're
having fun because you're doing stuff with your hands, getting
dirty. (James)

In fact, experiences that weren't hands-on were the only ones students did
not enjoy at Waipā. After watching a video clip of one lecture, the students
described passively listening, sitting still for a long time, as hard work, even
painful:

We had to sit down for the whole time, and we can't sit still sometimes,
well most of the time. (Kalei)
I have to move my leg. (James)
Yeah, my legs get numb if I don't move them. (Healani)
I was uncomfortable. (Tasha)

On the other hand, activities that engaged them physically, even
challenging ones like a long hike or carrying heavy buckets of water, are never
described as uncomfortable or even tiring, only fun. Even when I attempted to
challenge their assertion that all hands-on activities were fun by proposing that
we dig a hole just to see how deep we could go, the students responded, "That
would be fun."

‘A’ole Pau ka ‘Ike i ka Hālau Ho’okahi

The above *‘ōlelo no’eau* is frequently translated as “All knowledge is not found only in one school” teaching that knowledge is found in many places. Perhaps it could also mean, “All things are not learned in one way” or knowledge is learned in many ways. Indeed, Hawaiian approaches to education are capable of encompassing many different learning styles and even educational paradigms often viewed as mutually exclusive. So far, we have considered three elements that students proposed as crucial to their learning at Waipā: cooperative learning, observation and repetition, and learning by doing.

Interestingly enough, these three instructional strategies are often associated with distinct and mutually exclusive instructional models. Marion Kelly summarizes Hawaiian education as follows:

Regarding the process of learning there seems to have been a strong emphasis on learning by doing – one might say on the job learning – together with memorization and rote. (1982)

Indeed, in Western or American educational paradigms, observation and repetition is often associated with rote, “drill and kill” type methodologies while cooperative and hands-on learning are considered the provision of constructivist educators. Yet, the students in these focus groups find that using all of these methods facilitates their learning at Waipā. We see that, in fact, Hawaiian

epistemology encompasses all three approaches, each with its own proper time and place.

The inclusive and expansive nature of Hawaiian education is evident in the *'olelo no'eau* most frequently cited to encapsulate Hawaiian philosophy of learning:

Pa'a ka waha. Ho'olohe ka pepeiao.

Nānā ka maka. Hana me ka lima.

Keep your mouth shut. Listen with your ears.

Observe with your eyes. Work with your hands.¹⁷

This proverb incorporates silent observation¹⁸ and hands-on learning, each with a distinct time and place, yet all integral parts in the process of education. In the following quote, Gloria explains the pros and cons of lecture and hands-on learning, arguing that, even though hands-on learning is far more fun, she finds both are helpful to her in different ways:

Sometimes when [the teacher is] talking you can sit down and get comfortable and then you hear him and it's just going through your brain and getting all stored. In some ways it's easier like that, but when you're doing it hands on, you sort of get into a play mode. You're slipping on the rocks and everything. I mean that's good and all.

¹⁷ This *'olelo no'eau* is recorded as taught to me by *kupuna* (elder) Anakala Eddie Ka'anana of Miloli'i.

¹⁸ I do not say "passive observation" because Hawaiian thinking does not conceive of silently watching and listening as passive at all. Rather, observation, in the Hawaiian sense requires the mind to be highly active, aware, and hard at work.

So when he's talking you get straight learning and you're sitting there. When you are doing [hands on activities], you're playing plus learning, and sometimes you don't get it, well, I do, but sometimes. . . .You're more focused on playing, yeah. (Gloria)

Gloria reminds us that each student learns differently, even as certain communities and ethnicities may have greater numbers of students who learn in particular ways. We cannot assume that these methods will work for every student of a given ethnicity. Neither should we assume that these methods will only work for students of a particular ethnic group. Either way, the pedagogy being practiced at Waipā certainly accommodates a large range of learning styles effectively, for both Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian students.

As a result, the students feel that many of their classmates were able to do better at Waipā than in the classroom. When asked if coming to Waipā had changed their opinions of any of their classmates, made any individuals seem smarter than in class, the two groups identified the exact same students. Many of their comments focused on their classmate Shelly. As Sarah explains, "In the classroom [Shelly] doesn't pay attention, but when we're doing stuff at Waipā, and in the outdoors, she does a lot better. She doesn't like being cooped up in a classroom.

James suggested that he himself is an example of a student who would appear smarter at Waipā than in school:

I'm an example . . . 'cuz I don't really learn at school, 'cuz they're gonna get me tested, 'cuz some kids they don't do good in school. This is just what they [my parents] were saying. They [students like me] learn better at hands on stuff. Not writing.

Sarah and Tanya agreed, saying together, "I think [James is] too active and inside the classroom he can't be that way so he likes to be that way at Waipā."

Interested to find out if students felt that by building on strengths, Waipā helps them to improve skills in academic areas that are more difficult for them, I asked James whether the hands-on activities at Waipā helped to make writing easier for him. He responded, "When you're doing hands on stuff, maybe a teacher will say write this down. The next day, she'll say, write a page or two, what you learned at Waipā. And I do better at that than math and stuff." Sarah chimed in, "I think you do better at that because you enjoyed yourself rather than being in school." Later James added, "It's just like writing what you remember, and that's easier." Sasha pointed out that Waipā, "Helps us a lot with writing because we write more when we talk about things."

Sarah offered another example of how learning at Waipā has improved her skills in a traditional academic subject area:

It made science easier for me because I never really used to like science because I didn't understand it. Ever since I've been going

to Waipā, I've been learning how all kinds of bug sprays and stuff affect plants and how they are living. And how water is really important to your plants because they really need it to grow strong and sturdy. (Sarah)

So far, we have seen that these fifth and sixth grade students, both Hawaiians and students of other ethnicities, independently cite the same instructional strategies to be effective for their learning. While the effectiveness of these methods is well documented for Hawaiian students, it is rare to see non-Hawaiian students comment on these same methods. This chapter suggests that instructional strategies we already knew to be effective may have wider application and reach than previously known. Furthermore, these methodologies are not mutually exclusive, but can effectively reinforce one another, leading not only to educational success at Waipā, but to enhanced skills and understanding of traditional academic subjects in school as well.

Now, let us turn to other features of the Waipā program, equally important to the students, but perhaps less known to teachers and researchers up to this point. Let us turn to the very source of all learning at Waipā, the place itself.

Chapter Four

‘Āina: That Which Feeds

It was great. I thought it was awesome because we got to have an outdoor field trip and have experience in doing, good experience. . . in planting native plants and in hiking and doing all kinds of fun stuff that none of us probably thought we could have done. (Sarah)

(We) got to swim in Wai‘oli River. That was cold. Theresa fell in. It was refreshing, still refreshing. (Kalei, Sarah, & Tasha)

‘Āina is the Hawaiian word for land or earth (Puku‘i, 1971, p. 10).

Literally, the word *‘āina* means “that which feeds.” *‘Āina* is that which feeds us, not only physically, by providing the sustenance we need to survive, but spiritually, emotionally, and intellectually¹⁹ (Andrade, class lecture, January 2003). Hawaiian knowledge, while it may have universal applications, is very much place-based, derived in relation to particular *‘āina* (Meyer 1998). Dialects of speech, customs, and methods of farming and fishing varied substantially from *ahupua‘a* to *ahupua‘a*, carefully adapted to each setting. Hawaiian education focused on preparation to live, survive in, and care for a specific place. Hawaiian knowledge of their natural environment was so intimate and in depth, that one *ahupua‘a* could encompass a whole life-time of learning, where to find which fish

¹⁹ In Hawaiian thought, there is less of a distinction between emotion and intellect. The word for gut, for the seat of emotions, is “*na‘au*,” while the word for wisdom or knowledge, “*na‘au‘ao*,” means enlightened guts, suggesting that emotion and wisdom reside in the same place.

at what time of day on what night of the month, and then how to catch them (Meyer, 1998). Some *ahupua'a* had as many as forty different types of wind, all of which had to be recognized, felt, anticipated, known by name, and understood by the conditions that generate them, for their effects on weather, voyaging, fishing, plants, and the like (Andrade, 2002). A person was considered wise if she or he knew well all these features of their *ahupua'a*, and even of others. (Andrade, class lecture, April 2003)²⁰

Our *kūpuna* or elders considered *'āina* a fertile source of learning and their belief is further supported by this study in which the students seem to say that *'āina* continues to feed them in every sense. When asked what made their learning experiences at Waipā unique, what about our program helps them to learn, all the students mentioned *'āina*, the chance to be out-of-doors, closer to their natural environment. Their descriptions of school, on the other hand, lack any sense of nourishment, tending more towards claustrophobic and even physically painful:

²⁰ One example of such deep *'ike* or knowledge of a place is the chant that Pele performs for Lohiau upon the arrival of her spirit form in Hā'ena, Kaua'i. Lohiau asks where beautiful Pele is from and, though her home is at Kilauea on the island of Hawai'i, she tries to convince him she is a Kaua'i girl. He insists that, as beautiful as she is, he would have known of her earlier if she is indeed from his island. To prove she is of Kaua'i, Pele recites a chant which gives all of the wind names for each *ahupua'a* on the entire island, exhibiting such impressive knowledge of Kaua'i that her audience is convinced she must be local.

Cause school you're stuck in a classroom. Yeah, and everytime you have to be in there, . . . it's better outdoors. (Gina)
Waipā's more outdoor stuff and that's funner [*sic*] because we don't have to sit in a classroom all bunched up. (Sasha)
Maybe we can learn more [at Waipā] because at school we're just sitting in our hard seats and freezing. (Gloria)

"Construction-Site Learning"

"Construction-Site Learning" is the phrase one student, Frank, coined to describe how school and Waipā are different, "(At Waipā,) we're not just in construction-site learning. . . . In Waipā, . . . it's all green outside, and no construction. It's mostly plants, wildlife, more natural." Trying to understand what he meant by the phrase, and thinking perhaps that his school must be undergoing construction projects, I asked Frank to elaborate on "construction-site learning." He patiently explained, not construction in progress, but simply all the things that had already been built. "Like buildings and playgrounds. And in Waipā, the only building I've ever seen is a house and that garage and that other house. And that's it, it's just mainly all green then."

Frank seemed to be proposing that school, which is structured to be the most ideal learning environment is, by virtue of its many structures, actually less conducive to learning. His classmate, James, agreed that he had a hard time staying focused at school because of the very tools and technologies designed to

facilitate learning. Like Frank, James felt that being outdoors in the natural environment “makes me learn better. It’s away from noise. New stuff, like um, the board, all [the] computers and stuff, cords, cameras. Yeah, electrical stuff.” Tasha chimed in that those things are distracting “because he’s interested in it” to which Sarah suggested, “He could try to ignore it.” But James protested, “I can’t.”

The students seem to be saying that it is easier for them to learn in the natural environment of Waipā than in the built environment of school. According to Gina, “In class we don’t remember that well. . . . but then, when we go to Waipā you can tell us like two times and then we’ve already got it in our head.” Sasha declared, “In school, we don’t really get to go outside. So [outdoors] we get to have fun, it just makes it easier to learn.”

Wanting to be certain I was understanding their *mana’o* (thoughts) correctly, I asked, “As teachers, we are often reluctant to take our students outside because we worry there will be more distractions to their learning. Are you telling me that even though at Waipā there are many more distractions -- clouds, (Frank chimes in ‘mountains’) grass, bugs -- somehow it is easier to learn there?” In unison, all five students answered emphatically, “Yeah.” To be really sure, I tried again, “So you’re telling me it is easier to pay attention when. . . .”

Frank broke in to complete my sentence, “When there’s distractions.” Trying to help me understand how things teachers usually consider distracting can actually aid learning, Frank added, “Whenever we look at that stuff, I always think of all the stuff we learned about it.”

Multisensory Learning

I believe these students are arguing for more stimulation, for learning that is connected to something other than paper, pencil and text. They are presenting a model of learning far more sophisticated than most educational systems suppose, suggesting that learning in a natural setting engages all of the senses in receiving cues (the feel of the wind, the green of a mountain, the sound of a bird, the splash of a stream, the smell of soil). These cues then become an integral, woven part of learning, allowing students to make connections that ensure deeper understanding and recall. Frank provides an example of this type of connection in a discussion of the difference between learning an *oli* in class, and learning it on the beach at Waipā:

In school, [our teacher] gives us something . . . she gives us the Waipā chant. She tells us the red billowing clouds, all this stuff. But if someone’s teaching you, if someone’s teaching you, and showing you at the same time, showing you examples like, pretend the sun sets over there, and the clouds are coming over here, you

learn and you see instead of just learning it. So you get better vision.

Students highlight another example from a lesson on identifying different parts of the *kalo* (taro), a theme that we returned to a number of times in the Waipā curriculum. Initially, the class used a diagram to learn the basic parts of the *kalo*. This activity took place in the classroom in preparation for the first visit to Waipā. Four months later, we returned to the parts of the *kalo* in teaching students how to distinguish between different *kalo* varieties. This lesson took place in the garden where we have plants of each of these different varieties.

Sasha differentiated between these two settings for learning the same information:

It was more fun in a way [learning in the garden] because we got to have the actual *kalo* plant there and look at it and actually have it right there. And we could feel and see. The pattern sometimes would be like bumps you know, the colors on there. It might have been just the way it was growing.

Contrast this level of engagement, multisensory engagement, with the following interchange describing being in the classroom:

When we're inside a class we're sitting and we have this desk here and, I don't know, it's just something that's stored in our brain. I don't know what it is. Every time we're sitting by a desk, you just sort of drain out and you're just sitting there like errrrrr. (Gloria)
We space out. (Sasha)
I know, you're just gone, I don't know what it is but (Gloria)
You're thinking about something. (Sasha)

I know and then, when you're at Waipā, you're actually moving around, and you can actually hands on and everything, (Gina)

Writing maps, playing (Frank)

So it's easier, it's easier to push the save button in your head, than to be there like, "Snore, noise, O.K., I get it!" (Gloria)

According to these students, the very elements of schools widely believed to foster learning (for example desks, classrooms, and school buildings) can actually serve as obstructions to the learning process. Learning, to them, relies upon all of the senses, and a setting which can engage and feed each of them, creating a rich fabric of connections and meaning. Even computers and technology, while full of exciting possibilities to aide learning, can be distracting for some students when they are not in use. At the same time natural elements that educators commonly hold to be distracting, such as bugs, sun, dirt and wind, actually facilitate learning. We often underestimate students, assuming that they need us to block out all forms of distraction or noise in order for them to learn. These students are telling us that the environments we have built to be optimal for learning are, in fact, deadening. They argue that built environments such as schools can actually function to impede their learning.

Complimentary Learning Environments

The students were not, however, saying that there was no place for classroom learning, for computers, and desks. Instead, they reversed the usual relationship between fieldtrips and classroom learning. Most teachers see field trips as opportunities to reinforce classroom learning. Instead, these students proposed the opposite, asserting that the classroom functioned to reinforce what they learned from the natural environment of Waipā. Here, Sasha comments on classroom activities designed to prepare the class for a trip to Waipā:

It was also good that way because when we go back to Waipā, we sort of know what we're gonna talk about. [The classroom teacher will] review some of the things before we go so that when we're there, we're not just like, whoah this is a totally new thing. We know it a little so that we can go there [and] actually know what we're getting into.

The following group discussion further illustrates this point about the positive relationship between class work and learning at Waipā:

Anytime we go to a fieldtrip anywhere, you better be listening.

(Sarah)

Because, without us knowing, [our teacher] might quiz us. (Tasha)

It's important for us to learn because. . . . (Sarah)

Whenever we go to Waipā and we come back from our fieldtrips, she always discusses it some times, most times with us. (Tasha)

Or she gives us homework that we write two pages or one page on the day, relationships, types of *kalo* . (James)

When asked how it would be if school was at Waipā the entire time, the students were enthusiastic, yelling “Yeah.” Healani eagerly exclaimed, “Oh, I would be so happy.” James suggested, “I would have As, probably As and Bs.” Sarah explained, “If we ever did have a school at Waipā. . . I think I would come to school with a better attitude.” The students went on to envision ways that other subjects could be integrated at Waipā:

If we had school down at Waipā, instead of doing math like 20×80 , you could use a number of native plants, a number of native plants minus a number of alien plants. . . . And we can get a lot of problems for math and we could times that and divide it and minus it and we would see what we could come up to and then we would check it. And spelling, for spelling tests, we’d have native words and stuff. (James)

Students did raise concerns, however, about the effects that more constant use by more people could have on the natural setting, the *‘āina* of Waipā:

It’s kind of like a battle, between Waipā and the buildings. Because you don’t want to build buildings in Waipā. Then it’ll all be gone. (Theresa)

It would be bad. Unless it didn’t have any classrooms. You could just have a picnic table in the middle of the field. (Frank)

We at Waipā see their concern as a valuable reminder of the challenges in sustainable use of the *ahupua’a* as an educational setting. The students do not seem to be worried about whether they would be able to learn enough at Waipā. When asked whether they felt they could learn all the skills they needed to know

as adults within the setting of Waipā, the Hawaiian students were adamant that they could. However, the students are concerned about the effect intensifying use could have on the place. Our challenge is how to grow with balance, with sensitivity to the needs and unique qualities of Waipā. We need to be careful that, in expanding our educational programs to include more time with more students, we do not destroy the very qualities that make this *‘āina* so special, for all who come.

Ho’omaha (To Rest), No’ono’o (To Reflect)

[At Waipā] you give us breaks, it’s easier. We can’t do it when we don’t get breaks in class, they just keep talking and talking and we just can’t do it. But there [at Waipā] we get to learn a little. . . .

(Gina)

We get breaks a lot. (Frank)

And then we get to play, learn, play, and we get to have tons of fun. It’s just so much easier. (Gina)

The discussion above fascinates our Waipā teaching team because our program is structured to mirror the school’s regular “break-times.” On their days at Waipā, students have a fifteen-minute snack break mid-morning and a half-hour lunch break, just like at school. Usually, we have more activities planned for a field trip day than we can fit in and, if work or the length of a hike requires it, we shorten even these breaks. It appears to us teachers that the

students are constantly busy, so how is it that students feel they have more “break” time at Waipā?

In further discussion, it emerged that learning in the natural environment of Waipā was full of organic opportunities for breaks. Taking a moment to look up at the mountains, pausing to watch rain sweep across the valley, these quiet moments, which students can initiate on their own, all seem to figure in students accounting of breaks:

In Waipā, there’s plenty of time to space out,²¹ there’s lots of breaks whenever. It’s not like in school, where you just, you can’t just say break, and then we have a break. In Waipā, it’s more. . . it’s more fun, and more. . . (Gina)
It’s like relaxation. (Sasha)

These sentiments recall the meaning of *‘āina*, as students feel their spirits nourished, and replenished by the environment around them.

In addition, students expressed that, at Waipā, the learning activities themselves felt like a “break.” Finding berries in the course of a hike, digging their hands into especially nutrient rich soil, simulating aquatic organisms gathering food in the stream, building a model of an eroding island out of sand,

²¹ The students often use the term “spacing out.” When Tasha accused James of “spacing out” at after school homework help, James explained that “spacing out” has a function:

He daydreams. He looks around first, then he does his homework, looks around again, and then he goes again. (Tasha)

I do it on purpose. To take a break. (James)

all felt like playing, like break time. When asked why they remembered so much of what they had learned at Waipā, the Hawaiian students had the following conversation:

Because it's fun. (Kalei)
We're enjoying ourselves. (Tasha)
And interesting. (Healani)
And we're being free, and we get to do all kinds of activities.
(Kalei)
And not listening every single minute. (Tasha)
To the teacher. (Sarah)
According to another student, Gina, in the natural setting of Waipā,

even transitioning between activities, feels like a break, "When we're just walking to the field, people are dancing in circles when they're walking. It's so much fun doing it." And for these students, fun is not what happens in the absence of instructional time, not tangential or detrimental to learning. Instead, fun is the key to learning. As Frank explains:

[If] we have fun doing it, [then] we're trying to remember it, and, "Oh yeah, we splashed each other." We learn when we're having fun, it's so much fun we just remember a lot of things. But when we're there sitting at home getting made to [required to do school-work], we have to hear it over and over. But when we're at Waipā, it's really fun, we get to remember really easily. (Frank)

Remembering Fun

The word "fun" was the most frequently used adjective in our focus group discussions on Waipā. The students said "fun" 137 times, at

least once for each minute of discussion. When I probed deeper to understand what they meant by fun, the Hawaiian students suggested that learning is fun when you are learning about topics that feel important and interesting, when it is hands-on, and when you feel like you are helping. Whatever the precise meaning of “fun” for these students, it is clear that having fun while learning is important to them, and that this relationship goes a long way to explaining while they feel Waipā has more break time than school and why they are learning so much. As Gina tells us:

It’s easy to remember because you’re having fun and it just goes into your brain easy. And it’s just stored there forever and ever.

And indeed, students’ descriptions of what they were learning in the video clips repeatedly impressed me with their level of retention, even two to six months later. The one exception was the video clip of the strictly lecture style of teaching. Students’ recollections of the content taught in this manner were extremely muddled. However, every other instructional experience (games, simulations, demonstrations, *oli* taught through repetition, work experiences) resulted in impressive recall. In classroom learning, students frequently memorize factual information only to forget it immediately after the test, without the ideas ever really sinking into their minds and hearts. While the fifth and

sixth grade students in this study may not have remembered every factual detail, every scientific term they learned at Waipā, their grasp of basic concepts, of the big ideas was lasting. Four of the Hawaiian students (James, Healani, Sarah, and Kalei) exhibit basic understanding of island hydrology in their response to the video clip of building heaping “islands” in the sand to demonstrate erosion, two and a half months before:²²

That’s about volcanoes.

Erosion.

Biology, now wait, geology, no wait. Yeah.

We were talking about how, if it rains really hard. . . .

And what the mountain will bring down that the river will be so muddy.

And it will be dirt and rock and stuff.

And then we all stood in a line. . .

and we each went down to the ocean and got a bucket of water so we could make like it was rain

and we poured it on the sand but it was the mountain.

It was FUN.

It was fun because it kind of felt like you could just build a sandcastle.

It was like that, but we had to build a certain kind, like a mountain.

It was part of the water cycle because the rain comes down and goes to the river and makes it all dirty. Then it goes to the ocean and the ocean brings the water to. . . .

²² This conversation was a magnificent example of “talk-story,” so much so that it was difficult, in transcribing, to discern who was saying what. Therefore, I have chosen to present their conversation without names of individual speakers, just as it tumbled out.

And I was glad that we did something about erosion because before that whole trip, I didn't really know what erosion was or how could it affect our island and stuff.

Red hill is erosion.

I didn't know Kaua'i used to have mountains and looked just like a shield volcano.

It did? Oh yeah.

And then the erosion made passages.

Time

It seems like when we're at Waipā, time goes by so fast. And when we're at school, it goes so slow. (Sarah)

Yeah. (Tasha)

Cuz you have more time to learn more stuff and you can press the save button. (James)

You don't have to rush. (Tasha)

This discussion of time offers an interesting paradox. According to these students, time seems to go by so much faster at Waipā than at school. Yet, at the same time, at Waipā they have more time to learn and do not feel like they have to rush. Further probing reveals that, in students' minds, the key to maintaining this optimal balance of time is focusing on fewer things. Effective instruction should include fewer activities, less information, with more time to reflect upon, digest, and deepen their knowledge.

Students repeatedly raised this point that depth in learning was more desirable than breadth, as Theresa reflects here:

At school we can do one thing and then, for twenty minutes, we can do another thing, and then another thing. And you just want to explode. At Waipā, you can do one thing, and then take a break, one thing, then take a break. So it's much easier at Waipā because they take it slow and they don't take it fast. (Theresa)

Sarah further supports Theresa's concept of taking it slower with less activities and more time to reflect between each:

Maybe have a little less things, and do it [sic] for longer. Then we have a discussion after. What do we remember? Then we go on to the next things, and then have another discussion, see what we remember, help us remember more. (Sarah)
They [discussions] refresh your brain. (James)

In contrast, here is how students feel when a lot of information is thrown at them at once, without time to reflect and digest:

Sometimes when people talk they talk a lot and the kid's brain can't hold it all. That's why it's good to stop and let us think about what we just learned, let it sink in. (Gina)
Press the save button. (Sasha)

And like school they give us way too much information. . . . (Gina)
Because we don't have that big of a head. (Theresa)

'Ike Hohonu (Depth of Knowledge)

In arguing for deepening their knowledge of fewer things, for more time to ruminate on ideas, students challenge another common perception in education. As teachers today, we are often told that we need to keep classroom activities moving quickly from one thing to the next. We are not to allow too

much time on any one thing or students are likely to get off-task, due to their ever shortening attention spans. Today's youth grew up on television and video-games and therefore, we learn that activities need to be constantly shifting in order to hold their interest. We believe learning experiences must always be new and different for we fear students will shut off if asked to do the same thing twice, a notion these students contest.

In the following quote, Frank asserts that repetition, returning again and again to Waipā for all of their field trips, is essential to their learning:

We also remember because practically all of our trips have been to Waipā, like six, five times. So it's kind of hard to forget. (Frank)
It doesn't get boring even though we're going to the same place.
(Sasha)

Yeah, because if you just went to one place and then another then another, you would learn stuff about that place, but not as much as if you went there seven times. [A teacher at Waipā] could refer to things in the past, like remember the time. . . . We could learn more because he could give examples more. (Frank)

Frank suggests that returning to Waipā allows students and teachers to extend learning, to deepen knowledge, by building upon each prior experience in the *ahupua'a*, connecting new ideas to previous lessons. He says:

We remember because we've learned stuff in the past too that might help us remember, and refer to.

Like our *kūpuna*, who understood specific places to encompass lifetimes of learning, these students feel that learning in relation to one place, forging a

layered connection to Waipā, is extremely valuable and full of possibilities for *'ike hohonu*. These students are learning by making connections, not only to what they've learned in prior visits to Waipā, but to what they know as residents of the community of Halele'a, as children who are growing up in this place, who drive through it, play in it, explore it every day. In this way, by connecting to what they know, Waipā allows them to learn, not only about the place they come from, but about who they are. For these students, *'āina* truly is that which feeds them in all ways, nourishing their thought processes and feelings about who they are, where they come from, and about their responsibilities to care for and contribute to this place, their home.

Chapter Five

Kuleana: Rights and Responsibilities

The word *kuleana* means, “right, responsibility, authority, interest, claim, or ownership” (Puku’i, 1967, p. 165). Unlike Western society, where rights and responsibilities are considered very distinct, in Hawaiian philosophy, rights and responsibilities are one and the same. Rights are earned only by first fulfilling responsibilities and every right or privilege comes with increased levels of responsibility.

In this chapter, we explore the students’ *mana’o* (thoughts, ideas) towards the *kuleana* of sharing in the important work of caring for Waipā and of learning and perpetuating the Hawaiian culture. Surprisingly, this sense of *kuleana* seems equally present in students of all ethnicities, a powerful finding for the wide reaching effectiveness of Hawaiian education. At the same time, however, further exploration reveals that issues of *kuleana* at Waipā, a Hawaiian program inclusive of students of all ethnicities, can be problematic and complex. Let us begin our exploration with one *kuleana* that is particularly integral to Hawaiian life and value systems, that of *mālama ‘āina*.

In Chapter One, *Ke Kahua*, we considered sections of *‘āina* cared for by a particular *‘ohana* within an *ahupua’a*. These parcels were known as *kuleana*. In a

discussion with one *kupuna*, Anakala Eddie Ka'anana of Miloli'i (personal communication, April 2003), I asked what the word *kuleana* means to him. He immediately referred to the *kuleana* or lands of an *'ohana*. To him, the land under one's stewardship and care is the primary meaning of *kuleana* and the root of all other responsibilities and accomplishments in one's life. Feeding one's family, caring for one's children, and all other *kuleana* depended on one's ability to *mālama* that primary *kuleana*, to care for that piece of land and to make it productive. A family's work and level of respect in the community was judged largely by the productivity of their *kuleana*. In this description, Anakala Eddie reveals a profound connection, teaching us that *kuleana*, all rights and responsibilities, are inextricably rooted in the land itself and in how well we care for it.²³

***Mālama 'Āina* (Caring for the Land)**

Mālama 'āina, commonly translated as to care for the land, also connotes to honor, preserve, to be loyal, or to be a custodian of the land (Puku'i and Elbert, 1971, p. 214). The students at Waipā repeatedly say that they have a *kuleana*, a

²³ To me, connecting the concept of *kuleana* to *'āina* is especially significant when we consider how few Hawaiians have any access to the *'āina* today, much less a *kuleana* or section of *'āina* that they can care for and make productive.

responsibility to help with the work of *mālama ‘āina*, of caring for Waipā. A look at Hawaiian cosmology helps to illuminate the roots of *mālama ‘āina*.

Papa, the Earth mother, and Wākea, the sky father, gave birth to many children, the first of whom were the various islands of Hawai‘i, *‘āina*. Then, they had a beautiful daughter Ho‘ohokukalani. Ho‘ohokukalani and Wākea had a child named Hāloa-naka-lau-kapalili and it was still born. The grieving parents buried this child in the earth near their home and the *kalo* (taro) plant grew from its body. Their second child, Hāloa, was the first man, the first *ali‘i nui* (high chief), and the ancestor of all Hawaiian people. Some of the non-Hawaiian students mention these two Hāloa in their explanation of learning a chant to make the *kalo* they planted grow:

[We were] singing [the] chant because of Hāloa, [the] first man,
[who grew] into [a] taro plant. (Sasha)

It was really cool when we got to . . . plant and then say that song
and then look at it. And actually next time we come there, we can
see [the *kalo* getting] bigger and know that that song actually
works. (Gloria)

It made our plants grow good, get stronger, and give[s them]
energy. And made it grow faster. (Frank)

From our ancestral story of Hāloa, we learn that the land in Hawaiian cosmology is not viewed as something external to oneself, something inanimate, but as *‘ohana* (as family). More specifically, Hawaiians consider the *‘āina* and the *kalo* to be our older siblings. Therefore, our relationship to *‘āina* and to *kalo* is

that of a younger sibling to an older one. It is our duty to respect, honor and care for them and in return, they provide for and protect us. Hence, the Hawaiian value of *mālama'āina*, caring for the land, is actually indistinguishable from caring for and honoring your very own *'ohana* (family) (Kame'eleihiwa, 1993).

The students exhibit a sense of *kuleana* to care for the land most clearly in their discussions about the importance of restoring native plants to Waipā:

And we were planting native plants where man plants [non-native plants introduced by man] was [*sic*] too many, and we were trying to get more native plants there. (Gina)

It was awesome to plant those because we were helping Waipā and we were also helping those [plants], because they were native. And they were sort of endangered I think, and we were planting them so we were really helping out and it was really cool. (Gloria)

It was fun because we got to plant it and because those native [plants] are really endangered, there's hardly any of them left, and they give us, they can be used for asthma or something. Somebody said in the *'ilima* group that the *'ilima* was used for asthma. So it can be used for medicines and stuff. (Sarah)

The students' sense of *kuleana*, of helping Waipā, was an important part of their learning there. When asked if they also felt that they were helping out at school, the Hawaiian students answered:

No, we don't feel like we're. . . . (James)

No. (Tasha, Sierra, and Healani chime in)

Cuz at Waipā, we're helping to preserve native plants. (James)

And help make the *ahupua'a* more pretty. (Tasha)

Like how it was before. (Healani)

The garden was a total mess before we started planting plants, and now it's nicer than it was. (Tasha)

Sometimes, like the next camping trip, we should have during that day, we go around and get more rakes and stuff, and make it cleaner by the beach, and other places. (James)

Whether their *kuleana* is raking or planting, any type of work that the students feel is helping Waipā seems to imbue them with a strong sense of purpose in their learning. In discussing a program evaluation, Frank said:

We were writing down what we learned and putting them on categories. And we were helping Waipā to see if they should do it again, to see what we've been learning in the past months and months.

Weeks later, in a follow up discussion, Gina summed up the students' increased sense of *kuleana*, of responsibility for their learning at Waipā by saying, "At school it's like our teacher does all the work. At Waipā we can relate more and help teach."

I Kua Na'u (Perpetuating Culture)

I kua na'u

A burden for me

Let me bear the responsibility or let me help.

(Puku'i, 1983, p. 132)

Students' sense of purpose and *kuleana* in their learning at Waipā extends beyond *mālama 'āina* to encompass all aspects of Hawaiian culture. When asked how it feels for them to be learning about their Hawaiian culture at Waipā, Hawaiian students answered:

Exciting. (James)
I feel proud of myself. (Kalei)
I feel proud. (Tasha)
Proud to be Hawaiian. (Healani)

For these Hawaiian students, learning about their culture is a wonderful opportunity, as well as a serious responsibility. They are well aware that generations before them were precluded from learning about things Hawaiian as Healani pointed out in the following discussion:

They [kupuna, elders] know more than us, way more. (Tasha, Kalei)
Though we might know more than them, because they hardly [even] knew about Hawaiians. (Healani)
Like Auntie Carol, [one of the teacher's moms], they wouldn't let them learn about their Hawaiian history, and now her mom's learning it. (James)

Given a precious opportunity to learn, these students feel they have a tremendous *kuleana* to know about their culture and to be able to teach others. In a discussion about learning the Hawaiian names of mountains in their community, names they had not known before, one student elaborated:

If someone asks you that question [the mountains' names] and you don't know, and you're Hawaiian maybe and they're not, and you don't know, then you might feel embarrassed not to know them [the names] because you're Hawaiian. (Shauna)

Surprisingly, non-Hawaiian students shared the same sentiments, that learning about Hawaiian culture is meaningful to them, and that they, in fact, feel a tremendous responsibility, even a duty as residents of Hawai'i, not only to learn but to help to pass knowledge on:

It's awesome because by then we know, like if we're part Hawaiian, we know that our ancestors used to do that a long time ago and it's really cool to be able to sing it and know that great great grandpa, or you know, sang it once. (Gloria)

This quote, from one of the non-Hawaiian students demonstrates that students who are not of Hawaiian ancestry do not seem to feel distanced from content and skills related to Hawaiian culture. Sasha, a student who recently moved from the mainland explained, "When I came here, I didn't know anything about Hawaiian culture at all, but now I know so much." Gina said her perception of Hawaiians had changed through her Waipā learning experience. "It's amazing how they digged [*sic*] that deep hole, with just a stick. Yeah, it's so deep, it's hard to believe, and we get to have more respect to them."

Gina also worried that, without taking the time to learn, it would be possible for her and others to be inconsiderate to the host culture, without even knowing it:

And you're living there and you go to a Hawaiian's house and, if they live within their Hawaiian culture and you just come in, and they say come in, and they want you to do a chant or something and you don't even know about it, it's kind of like, "Oh, she's so rude. Why did we even say she should be allowed here?" But if you know it, you can say it, and then you'll show respect to the Hawaiians, but when you're just not knowing anything about Hawaiians it's kind of rude to Hawaiians. (Gina)
It's like you don't care about their culture. (Frank)

Gina goes further to suggest that learning about Hawaiian culture could improve relations between individuals of different ethnicities in the Halele'a community, easing tensions described by both groups of students, Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian:

Somebody I know, Hawaiians don't really respect him because he's haole. . . . And he's an adult, and it's kind of rude to him, because they're kind of mean to him. . . . just because he doesn't know the Hawaiian ways. But if he could learn all the things that we are learning, then it would make it easier for him, for everyone.

Other non-Hawaiian students asserted that, not only do they have a responsibility to understand the Hawaiian culture because they live here, but they also should take an active role in cultural perpetuation:

If you're living on this island, if they teach you that, you want to know it because you're living there and you want to respect the

land. And you want to be able to know that you are helping out in a way and also that you're gonna pass it on to people. . . . Then they could pass it on so that everyone would respect the land, in all of the Hawaiian islands. (Gloria)

I would say that haoles [whites] can learn it too, maybe they're interested in it. . . they like the culture and stuff and they want to help us in saving the Hawaiian culture, and they just want to help. (Sasha)

It is interesting to note Sasha's use of the word "us," and the use of the word "they" to describe non-Hawaiians such as herself. Earlier in this chapter, Gloria spoke about the joy of learning an *oli* and knowing that "our ancestors" may have chanted the same words. These quotes exhibit *kuleana*, a sense of responsibility and even ownership, towards Hawaiian culture among non-Hawaiian students in the program. According to these students, Waipā's program instills a desire to perpetuate the Hawaiian culture in both Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian students. This finding has powerful positive implications for the preservation of traditional values and the rural life style of the Halele'a community, as well as for harmonious ethnic relations, even in the face of swiftly changing demographics and in-migration.

Complicating *Kuleana*

However, the students' strong sense of *kuleana* raises some concerns as well. When asked about their non-Hawaiian classmates' views, the Hawaiian students agreed that others should learn about their culture because they live here in Hawai'i, and that there is a role for those who learn to help teach other people who don't know (James). However, they also suggested some problems with such involvement, describing instances where they had felt certain classmates were rude, not showing respect for teachers, or for the culture being shared. These concerns were especially prevalent while viewing a clip of the class learning an *oli* (chant):

Some people weren't singing. (Kalei)
Some people were mumbling. (Tasha)
[They] had to take off their hats. (Kalei)
Everyone was holding the paper, straight, swinging it around,
playing with it. (Sarah)

Earlier, we saw how seriously these Hawaiian students take the *kuleana* of learning about their culture. As a result, they became frustrated and even angry in the few instances when they felt certain of their classmates were being disrespectful. One instance, from the first camping trip, was mentioned more than once:

I remember a girl in our class, she didn't like the food and she was being really rude. We weren't supposed to bring candy, and she brought candy, and she went into her tent and ate all of it. (Kalei)
Instead, she went into her tent with this other girl, I'm not gonna name names, and she ate the chicken from Foodland [grocery store]. (Tasha)

One common Hawaiian expression is, "*Ai i ka mea loa'a*," meaning eat what you have. Appreciating that which you are given, especially food, is an expectation in Hawaiian culture and the students were offended by actions that went against this.

In another example, Tasha complained that one classmate's younger brother disrupted the camping trip because, "He kept on asking too much questions." There is a time and place for questions in Hawaiian learning. As Mary Kawena Puku'i writes, "Wait until the lesson is over and the elder gives you permission. Then – and not until then – *nīnau*; ask questions." (Puku'i et al., 1972, p. 48). According to Puku'i, questions were encouraged,²⁴ but only after first engaging in the other steps of learning explained earlier in this thesis: watch, listen, do not talk, mimic, and work with your hands (Andrade, personal

²⁴ Anakala Eddie Ka'anana explains that his *tūtū* (grandparent or elder), while teaching the children in his *'ohana* would notice if one child seemed to be holding back a question. The *kupuna* could tell from the child's eyes and expression, but the child would not ask lest he or she be *maha'oi*. Either his *tūtū* would invite the child to ask the question at the right point in the instruction or say nothing. In the latter case, Anakala Eddie explained that weeks or months later, the child's question would be answered. *Tūtū* would say, "remember when we were learning this earlier step and you had a question, this step you are learning now is the answer."

communication, March 2003). This philosophy of learning ensures higher quality, more thoroughly developed questions. It differs significantly from Western models of instruction that encourage questioning as the primary vehicle for learning.²⁵

In Hawaiian culture, inappropriate questioning is considered *maha'oi*, or "bold, impertinent, presumptuous, and self-assertive" (Puku'i and Elbert, 1971, p. 202).²⁶ Hawaiian children are taught from a very young age, "*mai maha'oi*," do not be *maha'oi*. "To take over a conversation; to volunteer to do something in an attention seeking way, rather than waiting politely to be given a specific assignment . . . these were examples of *maha'oi*" (Puku'i et al., 1972, p. 54).

A program workshop in coconut frond weaving encapsulated the conflict between Hawaiian and Western styles of learning and teaching. The Hawaiian *kumu* (teacher) was teaching the class to make a rose out of a coconut frond. He gave each child a frond and then proceeded to demonstrate the process.

Immediately, many of the students in the class began to ask questions, before he had finished demonstrating. The result was chaos as these same students, not

²⁵ Does this mean that inquiry based learning and Hawaiian education are incompatible? My own perception is two-fold. On the one hand yes, because inquiry focuses on questioning above all else, downplaying observation and other skills highly valued in Hawaiian education. On the other hand, these skills could be used to support and deepen inquiry based education, helping students to develop better questions through observing and trying things out themselves as the means of inspiring inquiry and questions.

²⁶ *Maha'oi* literally means "sharp temple."

having watched or listened to his instructions, found they couldn't complete the process and grew frustrated with waiting as he tried to answer all of their questions at once. Many students just gave up. Others, getting out of their seats and forcefully questioning him until they got a personal demonstration, completed the task, then grew bored and played around rather than helping others. Some of the Hawaiian students present that day took a different approach. James sat quietly, winding and unwinding his frond, attempting it over and over, until he had it almost figured out, then seeking help to finish. Healani moved close to the teacher, quietly watching him demonstrate over and over to other students. After watching for a while, she completed her rose and proceeded to teach five other students and one of her teachers.

Hawaiian students further problematized learning their heritage alongside non-Hawaiians by suggesting that, since many of their classmates were recent immigrants to Hawai'i with no prior knowledge of the culture or language, their presence could actually slow and impede everyone else's learning:

Sometimes they [non-Hawaiian, recently arrived classmates] might be talking [about things we learned at Waipā]. (Tasha)
They don't know and they say it's other stuff [using the wrong Hawaiian names for things]. Like Frank, he goes to read Hawaiian words. (James)
And he kind of mumbles. (Tasha)

And he's like "E IIII me LIHOOIE," [really mispronouncing the word]. It sort of throws you off. (James)

Yeah. (Sarah)

I know, it throws me off. (Healani)

Furthermore, they were concerned that certain of these same non-Hawaiian students with very shallow knowledge of the culture would act like they knew more than they actually did. In discussing the *oli* (chants) and the process of practicing in class, Kalei, Sarah, and Tasha explained:

Shelly, she thinks she knows everything. She said, "I'll come up, I know how to sing that." But she doesn't know it, she just mumbles it.

In class, when we practice our *oli* and stuff sometimes she wants to come up with us [to lead it], but she doesn't know it, she knows it, but not that well.

Kylie too. If we have this whole group up front, she goes in back of everybody, because she doesn't really sing. They want to go up, but they don't really sing.

These Hawaiian students seem to be saying that sharing their culture with other students is risky because some of the other students may profess to be experts, to know, without truly having the knowledge and skill, which are born not of short exposure, but of extensive practice. They seemed concerned that giving other students the opportunity to learn the culture carried a danger of false claims of authority and ownership, of *kuleana*.

This same concern has been expressed by others in the Hawaiian community in different contexts and is not ungrounded. Hawaiian history is full of instances in which outsiders have “apprenticed” themselves to cultural practitioners in *lomilomi* (massage), healing, *lei* making, *hula*, canoe building and the like, all of whom taught and shared graciously. In our Hawaiian culture there are formal processes for apprenticeship and for graduating when your teacher says you are ready, having studied well enough to achieve mastery and work on your own. Often, these outsiders have studied for only a short while, perhaps within a workshop offered to a large group as part of a conference, and then set up a business, advertising themselves as “experts in the Hawaiian art of *lomilomi* (or whatever field) trained by the venerable *kupuna* (elder)” whom they may have worked with only briefly.

Mere Roberts documents similar concerns, also born of experience, among the Maori in Aotearoa (New Zealand):

Maori share with other indigenous peoples a legitimate concern and apprehension when uninitiates enter their cultural world. Not only is there a need for respect, but also for caution about the dangers inherent in “getting on the bandwagon but starting at the top” (Rangihau in King, 1975, p. 13) without having first served an appropriate apprenticeship in learning about the culture. . . . Too often, the lack of these attributes has led to subsequent misuse and even abuse of superficially acquired knowledge, thus reinforcing the reluctance of many Maori to share their knowledge with the uninitiated. (Roberts et al., 1995, p. 8)

While it is heartening to see students of other ethnicities from the Halele'a community deepening their understanding of the Hawaiian culture and eager to work to perpetuate it, we must be careful not to oversimplify issues of *kuleana*. The five Hawaiian students in this study remind us of the complexity of these issues by pointing out situations of cultural misunderstanding and occasional lack of respect, and by raising fears that some of their classmates will claim authority and ownership based on very superficial knowledge.

However, the same Hawaiian students, in discussing plans for Waipā's summer program, offered only to Hawaiians in the past, were uncomfortable with the exclusion of non-Hawaiian classmates. They worried that segregating the program would divide existing friendships and preclude new ones:

Maybe you want to be with a friend that's non-Hawaiian. (Sarah)

Yeah. (Tasha)

And you can bring them with you and they can learn and then they can teach your friends. (Healani)

Maybe if you don't know anybody, and you introduce yourself and get along together, . . . we would be having fun with other people that we know, that they don't know, and if you don't know who they know, then it would be good because we get more friends and stuffs like that. (James)

When asked if it would be better for the Hawaiian students to be separate,

Healani answered, "Umm no, because there's some other non-Hawaiian people that sort of knows Hawaiian things." Healani seems to be saying that her

classmates of other ethnicities are all at different levels in their knowledge and sensitivity towards the Hawaiian culture. And indeed, while some students in the class had moved to Kaua'i that very semester from the mainland United States, others were from families born and raised in Halele'a for generations. It is possible that James was referring to the latter group of students when he said the summer program should include some non-Hawaiian students, "the ones who really know it, that are up to our pace."

Perhaps Hawaiian students are making the same point their classmate Gina raised earlier. It does not matter whether people are Hawaiian so much as it matters whether or not they have some basic understanding of Hawaiian culture and whether they are sensitive and respectful in the process of learning. They conceded that, while frustrating, it was also important to educate the newer students who know nothing about the culture. Sarah suggested that including them in the summer program, "may be good because they can learn and remember more." She went on to cite the two camping trips as benchmarks showing their classmates were gaining a better understanding already:

And the last time, our first time [camping], most of them, they didn't really know, they didn't know a lot about Waipā and how the camping is. [But it changed] by this camping trip. (Sarah)

In the end, Hawaiian students suggested that perhaps the summer program should give preference to Hawaiian students, but also save a few spots for other students, some who already know a lot about the culture, and some who have no prior knowledge of Hawaiian culture at all.

Nā Hoa'āina (Friends of the Land)

The lesson at Waipā appears to be that Hawaiian culturally based education programs can benefit all students in Hawai'i, regardless of race, ethnicity, or even length of residence in the islands. Furthermore, educational programs like Waipā's have the potential to powerfully engage students of other ethnicities as allies to work alongside Hawaiians in the *kuleana* of *mālama 'āina* (caring for the land) and perpetuating Hawaiian practices. However, the right for any student to participate in this type of Hawaiian educational program bears responsibilities as well, the dual nature of *kuleana*. Participants of any ethnicity should meet certain standards including being respectful, fitting in to the process of learning rather than changing it by their presence, and not using this participation to claim sudden, unearned authority based only upon shallow knowledge. Other Hawaiian educational programs may harbor the same standard of expectations for all participants, regardless of their ethnic

background, as evidenced in program information for Kanu o Ka 'Āina, the Hawaiian Charter School cited earlier. A publication on the school reads:

We welcome all other ethnicities into our 'ohana or learning family, as long as they pledge to perpetuate Hawai'i's native culture and traditions and "*kulia i ka nu'u*," strive to reach their highest level. (KALO, 2000, p. 6)

Hoa'āina is a term that could be applied to non-Hawaiian participants and supporters of Hawaiian programs and to the quality of participation the students in this study are calling for. While it is loosely translated as "caretaker or tenant," the word *Hoa* means companion, friend, associate, or fellow, implying that *hoa'āina* refers to a "friend of the land." The word *hoa* also means to tie, bind, or secure, implying that *hoa'āina* is one bound, tied securely to the land (Puku'i and Elbert, 1971, p. 68).

The Waipā program is full of adult models of *hoa'āina*, non-Hawaiians from the community drawn to the vision of restoring Waipā, role models who contribute tremendously to the work of caring for this 'āina with respect and humility, as true friends of the land. We begin to see a heightened function for Waipā as a model, not only of *ahupua'a* restoration and Hawaiian education, but of quality partnerships between the indigenous people of Hawai'i and many *hoa'āina*. Waipā is a place where all members of the community can share in the

kuleana of teaching those new to the community, possibly even new to Hawai'i, how to live as friends of the land. This area of teaching is in keeping with the vision of Waipā because restoring *ahupua'a* requires more than physical work with the land, it requires *'āina* -based educational work with all those who are a part of the surrounding community, so that they may learn to appreciate, honor, and tread gently upon this *'āina*.

Chapter Six

Kilohana: A View from the Heights

He ola na ka 'ōiwi, lawe a'e no a 'ai ha'aheo.
When one has earned his own livelihood,
he can take his food and eat it with pride.
(Puku'i, 1983, p. 93)

In this thesis, the voices of fifth and sixth grade students who learn and work in the *ahupua'a* of Waipā have guided our analysis of its educational programs. Chapter One, *Ke Kahua*, introduced the *ahupua'a* of Waipā and situated its educational efforts within the broader context of Hawaiian education and the history of land tenure in Hawai'i. The educational efforts at Waipā endeavor to reverse the trend of land alienation in Hawai'i by reconnecting students of all ethnicities to the land they call home. Chapter Two, *Ka Papa Hana*, detailed the method utilized in this thesis, focus group analysis of selected video clips. This approach was chosen to facilitate discussion among the participants in the program, especially the students, making them partners in this process of research, analysis, and meaning making surrounding Hawaiian Education.

In Chapter Three, *'Ike A'o*, both Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian students independently cited three instructional strategies vital to their learning at Waipā. These strategies were *laulima* (working cooperatively with other students, family members, and the wider community), use of observation and repetition, and *ma*

ka hana ka 'ike (learning by doing), all integral elements of traditional Hawaiian education. While the effectiveness of these particular methods is well documented for Hawaiian students, this chapter demonstrated that Hawaiian instructional strategies may have wider application and reach than previously known. Furthermore, these methodologies are not mutually exclusive, but can effectively reinforce one another, leading not only to educational success at Waipā, but to enhanced skills and understanding of traditional academic subjects in school for a variety of students.

Chapter Four moved beyond well-documented aspects of Hawaiian education to highlight the importance of *‘Āina*, meaning land or that which feeds. Students showed us that being outdoors at Waipā, learning on the land, really does nourish them, not only physically, but mentally and spiritually. They argued that the built environment of school, referred to by one student as “construction site learning,” while designed to optimize learning, can actually serve as a deterrent. Meanwhile, elements of the natural environment often assumed to be distracting, such as bugs and wind, allow students to engage all of their senses in the learning process and serve as triggers for remembering content. Accordingly, these students reversed the usual relationship between fieldtrips and the classroom, arguing that classroom learning can reinforce

learning from fieldtrips, instead of the other way around. In addition, students explained that learning and working in the natural setting of Waipā is fun, and that having fun facilitates both learning and retention.

Finally, students asserted that they learn better when they focus on one thing in depth, spending more time on fewer activities. In the process, they challenged current assumptions about the need to constantly vary learning activities and field trips by arguing that returning repeatedly to the same place, to Waipā, is essential in their learning, allowing for connections and building upon what they've learned before, fostering deeper knowledge. In their discussion of *'āina*, of educational nourishment, the students deepened our understanding of Hawaiian education and its rooted connection to place.

Chapter Five, *Kuleana*, focused on the duality of rights and responsibilities in Hawaiian cosmology. One of the most essential forms of *kuleana* is the responsibility of *mālama'āina* or caring for the land. Fifth and sixth grade students in the program felt strongly that they are helping, sharing in the stewardship responsibilities at Waipā, especially by planting native plants. Furthermore, Hawaiian students and non-Hawaiian students alike expressed how important it is for them not only to learn about Hawaiian culture, but to perpetuate it by teaching others what they have learned at Waipā.

Non-Hawaiian students' sense of *kuleana*, of responsibility and even ownership towards Hawaiian practices and knowledge provides powerful testimony to the effectiveness of the Waipā program. At the same time however, these discussions raised concerns regarding issues of *kuleana*. Hawaiian students cited occasional instances of cultural misunderstanding and lack of respect, a pace of learning potentially slowed by including students with no prior knowledge of the culture, and false claims of authority and expertise based on only shallow exposure at Waipā.

In spite of these concerns, the Hawaiian students still felt strongly that it was important for non-Hawaiian students to participate in other educational programs at Waipā, highlighting tremendously different levels of knowledge and cultural sensitivity among their classmates, and the need for students of all levels to have a place to learn. At the same time, however, the Hawaiian students emphasized the responsibilities or *kuleana* that come along with the opportunity to learn. There is a need for sensitivity and a deep level of respect among all who learn about and teach the Hawaiian culture, regardless of their race. This standard of respect and quality is modeled by the many *hoa'āina*, friends of the land of Waipā.

Kilohana (Excellence)

Kilohana is the name of a famous peak in the Halele'a district not far from Waipā where deep Wainiha valley rises to the heights of Koke'e and Alaka'i.²⁷ On a clear day, a person who has made the arduous trek across Alaka'i Swamp to reach Kilohana can stand there and overlook the district of Halele'a, spreading all the way to Kalihiwai and beyond. It is possible to see the surf rolling in to Hanalei Bay. One can watch the way the wind moves the clouds across the district and along every hillock on each ridge, recognizing these points, one at a time, as our *kūpuna* once knew them by name. *Kilohana* also means excellence, a certain standard of *'ike* (knowledge, sight, awareness) achieved at that height of skill and mastery.

In different ways, students suggest *kilohana*, the need for excellence in Hawaiian education, again and again throughout this thesis and their reflections on Waipā. In Chapter Three, *'Ike A'o*, students celebrated the techniques of observation and repetition. These techniques are rooted in the cultural expectation to watch carefully and practice over and over, not for a set time only, but until mastery, even perfection, is achieved. In Chapter Four, *'Āina*, students argued for learning experiences enriched by engaging all senses, not simply one

²⁷ Alaka'i is the name of the swamp in the uplands of Kaua'i. The word *alaka'i*, also means leader or guide (Puku'i and Elbert, 1971, p. 16).

part of themselves. In a clear mandate for excellence, for deepening knowledge, students articulated the value of spending time to learn one thing well, time to return to one special place, to Waipā. And students championed excellence again, in Chapter Five, *Kuleana*, warning against the temptation to claim to be knowledgeable, to claim *kuleana* or ownership of cultural knowledge shared at Waipā, before one is *mākaukau* (truly ready).²⁸

*E hana mua a pa'a ke kahua
mamua o ke a'o ana aku iā ha'i.
Build yourself a firm foundation before teaching others.
(Puku'i 1983 p. 34, #276)*

As shown in the *'ōlelo no'ēau* above, the students' mandate for *kilohana*, for excellence in one's own level of learning, especially before teaching others, is in keeping with deep-seated values in Hawaiian education and culture.

Traditionally, all knowledge in our culture was not open to everyone. Students were selected for apprenticeship to certain craftsmen based on having exhibited qualities necessary to excel at that particular skill (Anakala Eddie Ka'anana, personal communication, April 2002; Puku'i et al., 1972). Once students were admitted into training, their *kumu* waited to impart successive levels of

²⁸ Additionally, in Chapter Five, *Kuleana*, we considered the quality of questioning, seeking questions derived from watching and listening first, then trying, questions rooted in thought and experience. Students criticized questions they felt did not meet this standard, but were merely plucked from the top of the head.

knowledge until they observed readiness and mastery of prior teachings. Even today, such standards are evident in many *hālau hula* (schools of hula or dance) where for instance, *hula pahu* (dances accompanied by drums of the type formerly used in temple ritual) are never taught until students reach an advanced level of mastery.

It could be argued that these high standards will cause Hawaiians to lose many aspects of our culture, creating obstacles to those who want to learn and perpetuate. Indeed, certain *kupuna*, unable to find students they felt were *mākaukau*, (fully prepared to learn) have chosen to pass on without teaching their *‘ike* or knowledge to anyone. While this choice represents great loss, these elders felt it was better than preserving *kapulu* (careless), incomplete versions of deep wisdom. There is a need to honor the sacredness of ancestral *‘ike* even if that means declining to teach it. Maori scholars describe this phenomenon well in this quote excerpted from Mere Roberts work:

These things are certainly not to be taken lightly. . . . This is another reason why most of the old people face giving information with a certain amount of trepidation. All this is bound up with the spirituality of the Maori world and the force this exerts on Maori things. It seems to me that people who want to enter this world need to enter it with a lot of respect. (Roberts et al., 1995, p. 8, quoting John Rangihau in King, 1976, p. 12-13)

Mandating this high level of respect may appear to be an obstacle in cultural perpetuation. However, requiring a certain level of excellence, respect, and quality in the teaching and learning of Hawaiian 'ike is actually the key to survival of our culture, not on a surface level, but all the way to its depths.

Lawe i ka ma'alea a kū'ono'ono.
Take wisdom and make it deep.

"I learned that you should ask before you act or pick something."

"I learned that the Hawaiians had to work to get anything."

"Waipā is to bring families together."

"Waipā taught me how to cherish my culture."

"I learned how to plant taro and native plants and
I know I want to plant some in my yard."

"Waipā has changed my life by more Hawaiian in me."

"They taught me what hard work is."

"Waipā has changed my life by . . . knowing that I helped to preserve Waipā."

"I will never take Hawaii for granted."

"I learned that being respectful to the land, it will help you back."

"Waipā is preserved."

The above quotes are collected from students'
evaluations of their learning
in the *ahupua'a* of Waipā, Halele'a Kaua'i,
January 2003.

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