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# ***Nānā I Ke Kumu - Look to the Source***

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*This project evaluation provides an overview of Nānā I Ke Kumu - Look to the Source, an information literacy project developed in Hawai'i to encourage and enable school library users to explore various culturally relevant digital sources and foster inquiry. In recent years, numerous digital collections featuring Native Hawaiian content have been created. While these developments are exciting, as part of ongoing research and practice, we have realized there is a significant disconnect between the resources and potential users. Many students, educators, and community members are not aware of the collections and lack information seeking strategies to access them. Nānā I Ke Kumu was designed and implemented to begin to counter these disconnects and move toward reestablishing clear pathways to literacy and information seeking.*

## **Introduction**

According to Kamehameha Schools' Ka Huaka'i Native Hawaiian Educational Assessment 2014, *Kānaka Maoli* (Native Hawaiians) in the public school system have the lowest rates of timely graduation of all major ethnic groups in the state, 69.4%. Dropping out of high school is linked to unemployment and poverty, and as the ACLU (2020) describes, it increases the likelihood of incarceration. As librarians committed to social justice, we are compelled to formulate strategies and actions to address these unacceptable circumstances.

## **Historical Context**

The current reality is unlike past times when Native Hawaiians had literacy rates higher than most other cultures. These contemporary educational challenges stem from historical inequity (Laimana, 2011). Take for example, how, following the invasion and overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawai'i in 1893, the Hawaiian language was essentially banned from government and schools for eight decades. As Ka'ano'i Walk's review of the Act of 1896 discusses, schools had an option to use English; however, choosing Hawaiian would mean forfeiture of government funding (2008). As a result of the English preference law, the number of *'ōlelo Hawai'i* (Hawaiian language) schools dropped from 150 in 1880 to zero in 1902. As if that wasn't enough, the Republic's report of 1886 snidely remarked that while the gradual extinction of a Polynesian dialect may be regretted for sentimental reasons, it certainly was in the best interest of Native Hawaiians themselves.

Fortunately, due to the resistance of Native Hawaiians, neither the culture nor the language perished. According to the Hawai'i Department of Education (2019), since the 1978 Constitutional Convention enabling the promotion of the study of Hawaiian culture, history, and language in public schools, there have been ongoing efforts to move beyond the earlier toxic policy and

reestablish language as an integral element of the educational system. Today, Hawaiian resilience is evident in schools, throughout communities, and in critical movements such as the recent Hōkūleʻa Voyage (Polynesian Voyaging Society, 2019) and the establishment of Puʻuhonua o Puʻuhuluhulu on Mauna Kea (Huth, 2019). It is during this time period and within these efforts, some forty years after Hawaiian language was officially restored, where we situate this discussion.

Our project, *Nānā I Ke Kumu*, stems from ongoing observations of Native Hawaiians, particularly *ʻōpio* (youth) in high school, exhibiting a lack of familiarity with libraries and other academic services - and having difficulties navigating information resources. This is due to underdeveloped research skills in combination with challenges that emerge in navigating systems laden with inherent bias. We have observed numerous *haumāna* (students) expressing difficulty with understanding and feelings of inadequacy in their attempts to find resources for class projects in digital and print formats. Sometimes these youth also demonstrate a lack of confidence and reluctance to ask for help due to the likelihood of being patronized or feeling ashamed.

In recent years, the number of public school libraries in Hawaiʻi has decreased dramatically (Star Advertiser, 2011). As such, there are limited opportunities for school librarians to reach students and promote “equity and inclusivity of education opportunity, and culturally and linguistically responsive practices to promote each learner’s academic and/or professional success and well-being.” (Kurdyla, 2017). Contemporary secondary student struggles are undoubtedly a consequence of many students not having access to essential school library resources during their earlier schooling as part of/in addition to ongoing historical inequity.

## Guiding Frameworks

*Nānā I Ke Kumu* draws from several information literacy frameworks. The American Association of School Libraries (AASL) defines information literacy as, “a set of abilities requiring individuals to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information” (2016). Information literacy should be developed throughout studies. Culturally-relevant guided practice facilitates this development. As Kovalik, Yutsey, & Piazza (2013) note:

Because librarians serve as a critical link to high-quality and relevant resources, the importance of having school librarians for grades K-12 is paramount. If students have multiple opportunities to interact with librarians throughout their elementary and middle school years, they have a higher comfort level about approaching the school librarian with research questions by the time they move into high school (p. 18).

Regular access to libraries is essential to ensure consistent and equitable student progress at all levels and to empower learners “to become critical thinkers, enthusiastic readers, skilled researchers, and ethical users of information” (Cohen, Poltras, Mickens, & Shirali, 2017).

The AASL *National School Library Standards’* Common Beliefs (2019) are also relevant to our project; in particular, “information technologies must be appropriately integrated and equitably available.” While information technology is abundant, not all students and teachers have equitable knowledge of or means to access potentially useful resources. School librarians provide effective means to bridge divides and promote literacy for all.

*Nānā I Ke Kumu* development was guided by an inquiry process grounded in Hawaiian understanding. We draw upon the *Hoʻonui i ka ʻike* (expand knowledge) model, which encourages each participant to: prepare, listen, observe, practice, comprehend, showcase, and perpetuate. In the 2014 article, “Approaching the Inquiry Process from a Cultural Perspective,” former Kamehameha

Schools librarian Nālani Naluai provided details of the process from the student perspective, which paraphrased succinctly are:

1. *Ho'omakaukau* (prepare) My mind, body, spirit, and materials are ready - and my attitude is positive.
2. *Ho'olohe* (listen) I value the ideas of the *kumu* (teacher) and my peers. I approach my tasks carefully.
3. *Ho'onana* (observe) I seek to understand through observation and careful consideration based on reliable sources.
4. *Ho'oma'ama'a* (practice) I read and take notes. I rely on questions to guide my research. I apply what I learn.
5. *Ho'opa'a* (comprehend) I organize ideas. I rewrite concepts in my own words. I ask questions.
6. *Ho'opuka* (showcase) I synthesize, create, revise my work, and give credit. I share my knowledge and talents.
7. *Ho'omau* (perpetuate) I persevere. I embody and pass on the *'ike* (knowledge).

Another model that informed our work was *Nā Hopena A'o*, or *HĀ*, with learning outcomes statements presented by the Hawai'i State Department of Education (HIDOE, 2016) based on consultation with educators around Hawai'i. The *Nā Hopena A'o* learning outcomes statements reflect cultural values emphasizing belonging, responsibility, excellence, aloha, wellbeing, and place, paraphrased and summarized as:

1. *He pili wehena 'ole* - a relationship cannot be undone  
Belonging is experienced through as a connection to past, present, and future. Students interact respectfully; know about the place they live and go to school; build relationships with diverse people; care about relationships; are open to new ideas and ways of doing things; communicate with confidence; consider how actions affect others; and actively engage in school and community life.
2. *Ma ka hana ka 'ike, ma ka 'imi ka loa'a* - in working one learns, through initiative one acquires  
Responsibility is demonstrated by a commitment to others. Students are mindful of the values, needs, and welfare of others. Students go to school regularly, see self and others as active participants in learning; question ideas and listen generously; seek feedback; make decisions with moral courage and integrity; set goals and complete tasks; reflect on learning and actions; honor family, school, and community.
3. *'A'ohe 'ulu e loa'a i ka pōkole o ka lou* - there is no success without preparation  
Students believe in themselves and are inspired to care about their efforts and quality of work. Students demonstrate by a love of learning and pursue growth. They take intellectual risks; know and apply skills and abilities; prioritize and manage efforts and ideas; take initiative; explore areas of interests and ideas; utilize creativity to solve problems and innovate; see failure as an opportunity to grow; and make ongoing improvements.
4. *E 'ōpū ali'i* - have the heart of a chief

Students demonstrate care and respect for themselves, their families, and their communities. They demonstrate empathy and appreciation for the symbiotic relationship between all. They build trust and lead for the good of the community; give generously; appreciate the roles of others; make others feel welcome; communicate effectively with diverse audiences; respond mindfully; give joyfully without expectation of acknowledgement; share the responsibility for collective work; and spread happiness.

5. *Ua ola loko i ke aloha* - love is imperative to one's mental and physical welfare

Students practice a healthy lifestyle. They make choices that improve the mind, body, heart, and spirit. They meet the demands of family and school while contributing to the wellbeing of 'āina (land), community, and world; feel safe and secure; develop self-discipline; manage stress and frustration levels; have goals that support healthy habits; utilize resources available for wellness; have enough energy to perform daily tasks; engage in positive social interactions; and promote wellness in others.

6. *'O Hawai'i ku'u 'āina kilohana* - Hawai'i is my prized place

Students are enriched by the uniqueness of the land. Students appreciate Hawai'i's rich history, diversity, and indigenous language and culture. Students navigate effectively across cultures and communities and serve as stewards of the homeland; pronounce, understand, and use Hawaiian words; learn the names, stories, special characteristics and the importance of places in; learn and apply Hawaiian traditional world view and knowledge in contemporary settings; share the histories, stories, and languages of Hawai'i; appreciate different points of views, cultures, and their contributions; are respectful of Hawai'i. *'O Hawai'i ke kahua o ka ho'ona'auao*. Essentially, Hawai'i is the foundation of learning.

## Project Summary

*Nānā I Ke Kumu* - Look to the Source drew on concepts from the beliefs and frameworks described above; and builds on understanding developed through practice and through a previous project, *E Noelo I Ka 'Ike* - To Search for Knowledge, that offered workshops for Hawaiian community leaders and educators to explore culturally-relevant resources. During *E Noelo I Ka 'Ike*, project leaders were surprised to learn that less than 25% of session participants had any prior knowledge of digitized materials available in numerous online databases featuring Native Hawaiian content. This is a significant disconnect. It gave us pause and compelled us to consider the reasons for this void. Why were educators not aware that the databases existed - and had no experience accessing content or sharing the rich resources with their students to support their learning goals? At the end of the *E Noelo I Ka 'Ike* sessions, over 90% of participants planned to incorporate the digital resources into their work with students and other community responsibilities.

*Nānā I Ke Kumu* was launched in 2017. The project was developed by the authors to counter difficulties and disconnects that had been recognized by increasing awareness, understanding, research skills, and use of (principally digital) Hawaiian resource materials. This project was generously funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and sponsored by Hawai'i Maoli, a non-profit organization established in 1997 and dedicated to the Hawaiian culture and traditions. We are especially grateful for the leadership of Maile Alau and her steadfast commitment to Hawaiian culture and the *Nānā I Ke Kumu* project.

As we realized the critical need for increased information literacy, based on the disconnects between digital resources and potential users discussed above, *Nānā I Ke Kumu* was launched to introduce new models of engagement and training for Native Hawaiian high school students, librarians, and other educators. *Nānā I Ke Kumu* objectives were:

1. To equip Native Hawaiian students with library skills to access and retrieve culturally-relevant information in support of their educational and personal goals; and increase their understanding of Hawaiian knowledge systems and material available in culturally relevant digital collections.
2. To offer professional development sessions to train librarians and other educational leaders to use repositories and resources that support curricular goals of Hawaiian students. We would develop content and deliver modules emphasizing culturally-relevant digital content and special collections aligned with current curricula and learning standards such as Eighth Grade Social Studies Modern Hawaiian History, “Understand important historical events in Modern Hawaiian History” (HIDOE, 2019).

Our overall goal of the *Nānā I Ke Kumu* was to increase information literacy among Native Hawaiians by addressing critical gaps in awareness, access, and engagement. Based on insights gained from the previous experience, our approach included offering both direct instruction to students and professional development for librarians and other educators. Instructional materials were developed and tailored according to the needs of the target audiences—from a learner-centered perspective.

### **Connecting Users with Digital Resources**

Guided by inquiry and grounded in the *Hoʻonui i ka ike* Framework and *Nā Hopena Aʻo* Statements, our project sought to connect participants with digitally-accessible, culturally-relevant information. These representations created and stored in various formats reflect diverse aspects of Hawaiian knowledge and align with understanding bestowed by Hawaiian *kupuna* (elders), *kumu* (teachers), *loea* (experts), *moʻolelo* (stories), *wahi pana* (sacred places), and *moʻomeheu* (culture).

On the one hand, it has been exciting to see the growing number of digital collections and databases that incorporate Hawaiian content developed in recent years. That said, if, as we have observed and verified in our earlier work, Native Hawaiians continue to be unaware or unable to access the resources, the essential purpose of developing them is void. *Nānā I Ke Kumu* was an effort to begin to address this unacceptable gap.

*Nānā I Ke Kumu* sessions identified and introduced content and search features for thirteen key digital resources: Hawaiʻi Alive, Hawaiian Legends Index, Hawaiʻi State Archives, Huapala, Hula Preservation Society, Kīpuka, Kulāiwi, Kumukahi, Manomano, ʻŌiwi TV, Papakilo, Ulukau, ʻUluʻulu. Details of these resources explored in *Nānā I Ke Kumu* sessions are presented in the Appendix. During *Nānā I Ke Kumu* sessions, we also presented and explored additional digital collections featuring Native Hawaiian content when they were helpful in meeting participants' interests and needs. These include *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*, which was launched in 2005 by the National Digital Newspaper Program (NDNP) and supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Library of Congress; the Hathi Trust, which began in 2008 as a collaboration between the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (now the Big Ten Academic Alliance) and the University of California system; and the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) launched in 2013 by Harvard's Berkman Klein Center and the Alfred P. Sloan

In addition to exploring digital materials and using them to search for works to complete assignments, students participated in site-visits to libraries and archives. This provided opportunities to connect with physical resources along with the people who oversee them. Sites of interest to *Nānā I Ke Kumu* student participants include: Bishop Museum Library and Archives; Hawai'i State Archive; Kamehameha Schools Museum Archive; University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Hawaiian and Pacific Collections; as well as collections available at Public Library System Libraries; Community College Libraries; private school and college libraries; and those housed at nonprofits like Alu Like, Inc., a service organization dedicated to assisting Native Hawaiians in their efforts to achieve social and economic self-sufficiency. Alu Like established a Native Hawaiian library in 1985. These visits enabled students to begin forming positive relationships with librarians in their communities.

### **Training Sessions**

As part of *Nānā I Ke Kumu*, librarians developed and offered information literacy sessions of varying durations to accommodate needs and availability including: two-hour introductory modules and six-hour library research skills training sessions with field trips for high school students; and four-hour training session on Hawaiian resource databases for librarians and teachers.

As training sessions were arranged in advance, we were able to determine if participants had special interests or topics they wanted to explore. When applicable, these insights were used to inform discussions and focus activities using particular collections. In general, all sessions started with introductions of the participants and the project. As part of the introduction, an overview of all the digital collections, shown in the Appendix, was briefly presented. Subsequently, session content was tailored to address particular individual and collective interests. As part of exploring content and features, we referenced tools like K-W-L (Know, Want to Know, Learn) charts and other graphic organizers to help students thoughtfully consider approaches to exploring concepts (Facing History, 2019).

Overall, thirteen sessions were offered over the course of the grant with partners from Kamaile Academy, Hālau 'Inana, Kamehameha Schools, Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA), and Nā Hawai'i 'Imi Loa; and in conjunction with professional meetings for the American Library Association (ALA), Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums (ATALM), Schools of the Future (SOTF), Hawaiian Library Association (HLA), and Ho'okele Na'auao.

During our sessions, Native Hawaiian students were introduced to and learned library skills to seek and retrieve credible information efficiently and effectively. Of paramount importance was increasing participants' familiarity and comfort with Hawaiian digital resources and special collections, including, when possible, offering instruction in the Hawaiian language and introducing students to local library staff as an initial step to establishing a positive relationship and, therefore, a welcoming sense of connection. Additionally, we developed content and delivered modules for librarians and other educators emphasizing culturally-relevant digital content and special collections. *Nānā I Ke Kumu* instructional materials were developed and tailored according to the needs of the target audiences.

A total of 286 individuals participated in the *Nānā I Ke Kumu* sessions, 70% of whom completed evaluations. One hundred and forty-four educators completed session evaluations, which included performance measure statements. All respondents' self-assessments were positive and indicated growth in terms of understanding, interest, and future engagement:

1. My understanding has increased as a result of this program/training.  
136 (94%) strongly agreed, 8 (6%) agreed
2. My interest in this subject has increased as a result of this program/training.  
112 (78%) strongly agreed, 32 (22%) agreed
3. I am confident I can apply what I learned in this program/training.  
112 (78%) strongly agreed, 32 (22%) agreed

Open-ended participant feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Additionally, statements reinforced the ongoing need for additional training and resources. We received feedback such as:

- *"Mahalo for this opportunity to learn more about the resources that are out there that will allow me to know how we as educators can be more effective in the classroom."*
- *"I LOVED your ALOHA, relevant sources and presentation was customized to my interests, needs."*
- *"Thank you for the opportunity to learn how we can use various resources to provide our students with primary and secondary sources from different mediums. These resources will help engage students in the curriculum."*
- *"Thank you for this useful workshop; I will encourage other librarians to attend another workshop."*
- *"Loved aloha, sharing, great relevant sources for students to benefit!"*
- *"This workshop was amazing!!! Clear, succinct, well organized, engaging and so applicable personally and professionally! Please do another workshop like this!"*

## Conclusions and Implications

Throughout *Nānā I Ke Kumu*, our interactions with librarians, teachers, and students were lively and enjoyable - and afforded new opportunities to reflect on our endeavors. Overall, we were pleased to have launched our project and accomplish our original goals to connect with, train, and empower Native Hawaiian students and educators, but we also realize there is much more that needs to be done. In introducing digital resources, many questions about how to navigate the wide array of possibilities emerged. We valued the questions, but were also concerned that they were just the tip of the iceberg from a relatively small number of participants. What about others? That is, without a solid infrastructure (e.g., librarians in every school to support accessing and exploring culturally-relevant information resources), much remains disconnected. A truly effective practice could only be the result of a much greater number of school librarians in place to empower students to engage wholeheartedly in inquiry processes and promote community inquiry (Bruce, 2010).

In collaboration with other librarians, we are planning to continue to address some of these significant needs as part of subsequent projects. As a next step, we will aim to develop new pathways to link seemingly isolated concepts and augment useful access. In sharing details of our project, we also expect others will be motivated to take positive steps to connect youth with libraries particularly in order to gain access to culturally-relevant information and search strategies.

Another reflection comes from *Nānā I Ke Kumu's* primary project instructor, who noted the particular needs of novice educators who teach Hawaiian history. Several of these teachers inquired about options to procure sets of lesson plans based on content available in the databases - with standards, objectives, learning activities, and supplemental resources. While we did develop and

share some sample plans during workshops, more comprehensive curriculum development was beyond the scope of our initiative.

In terms of lessons learned during *Nānā I Ke Kumu*, throughout the project, we were reminded of the vast scope, complexity, and beauty of Hawaiian knowledge and the critical importance of cultural practitioners in navigating this world. We were blessed with opportunities to consider issues of context, to cultivate relationships, and to create meaningful learning experiences. *Mahalo nui loa* to all of the collaborators who engaged in this initiative; and to those continuing to lead efforts grounded in inquiry and culturally-relevant engagement.

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### Author Notes

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Kuuleilani Reyes is a librarian at Kamehameha Schools Kapālama Campus. Her dissertation involved talking story with Native Hawaiian educators. She is a seasoned educator herself as well as a hula master and performer. She enjoys presenting with a group or performing as a soloist, especially in the areas of education, Hawai'i, and hula.

Keikilani Meyer is a librarian at Kamehameha Schools Hawai'i Campus. She has many years experience as a literacy specialist, library administrator, and academic librarian. Her research interests center on increasing access to libraries, indigenous knowledge and traditional organization systems, and community engagement.

**Appendix. Digital Resources Explored in *Nānā I Ke Kumu***

Resource (Date)	Major Creator/Sponsor/Host	Content Area(s)	Website
Hawai'i Alive (2011)	Bishop Museum	History Curriculum	<a href="http://www.hawaiialive.org">http://www.hawaiialive.org</a>
Hawaiian Legends Index	Lillian Ching Hawai'i State Library University of Hawai'i Mānoa	Hawaiian legends Polynesian legends	<a href="http://manoa.hawaii.edu/hawaiiancollection/legends">http://manoa.hawaii.edu/hawaiiancollection/legends</a>
Hawai'i State Archives	State of Hawai'i	Government records Maps Photographs	<a href="http://ags.hawaii.gov/archives/about-us">http://ags.hawaii.gov/archives/about-us</a>
Huapala: Hawaiian Music and Hula Archives	Kaiulani Kanoa-Martin	<i>Hula</i> - music, instruments, steps, chants, holidays, regions	<a href="http://www.huapala.org/">http://www.huapala.org/</a>
Hula Preservation Society (2000)	Kumu Hula Nona K.D. Beamer	<i>Kūpuna</i> --Chants, Instruments, ancient hula	<a href="http://hulapreservation.org">http://hulapreservation.org</a>
Kīpuka (2012)	Office of Hawaiian Affairs	GIS Land ( <i>'aina</i> ) Place name ( <i>wahi inoa</i> )	<a href="http://www.kipukadatabase.com">http://www.kipukadatabase.com</a>
Kulāiwi (2014)	Kamehameha Schools	Videos Language	<a href="http://ksdl.ksbe.edu/hawaiian_resources/kulaiwi">http://ksdl.ksbe.edu/hawaiian_resources/kulaiwi</a>
Kumukahi	Kamehameha Publishing	Culture Videos Games Lessons	<a href="http://www.kumukahi.org">http://www.kumukahi.org</a>
Manomano	KAI LOA, Inc. Ke Kula 'o Samuel M. Kamakau Laboratory Public Charter School US Department of Education	Dictionary	<a href="https://manomano.io">https://manomano.io</a>
'Ōiwi TV	Nā'ālehu Anthony Keoni Lee Amy Kalili	Videos Culture Stories Music Entertainment	<a href="https://oiwi.tv">https://oiwi.tv</a>
Papakilo (2011)	Office of Hawaiian Affairs	Places; Events; Documents	<a href="http://www.papakilodatabase.com">http://www.papakilodatabase.com</a>

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Ulukau, the Hawaiian Electronic Library (2005)	University of Hawai'i at Hilo Alu Like University of Waikato UNESCO	Books, Curricula, Dictionaries; Genealogy, Land claims, Music, Newspapers; Photos; Place names; Polynesian Voyaging Society; Radio archives; Religion	<a href="http://www.ulukau.org">http://www.ulukau.org</a>
'Ulu'ulu: The Henry Ku'ualoha Giugni Moving Image Archive of Hawai'i (2010)	University of Hawai'i West Oahu; Bishop Museum CLEAR -Center for Labor Education and Research Hula Preservation Society PBS	Moving images, Hawaiian culture	<a href="http://uluulu.hawaii.edu">http://uluulu.hawaii.edu</a>

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