

MAKAWALU: STANDARDS, CURRICULUM, AND ASSESSMENT FOR LITERATURE THROUGH AN INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVE

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While the inclusion of multicultural literature, including Hawaiian literature, is common in the modern American literature classroom, traditionally the starting point for discussion and analysis of any piece is from a Western theoretical perspective. The premise of this article challenges this Western/universal frame of reference by introducing the *Kanaka Maoli* (Native Hawaiian) concept of *makawalu* (having eight eyes), which establishes an indigenous foundation for studying literature. Makawalu emphasizes that indigenous students can use “native eyes” and a native paradigm to access and analyze literature; it empowers students by acknowledging and validating the indigenous voice.

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Hālili: Multidisciplinary Research on Hawaiian Well-Being Vol.3 No.1 (2006)
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In a brainstorming session on Native Hawaiian education, a prominent *Kanaka Maoli* (Native Hawaiian), Auntie Pualani Kanaka'ole Kanahale, introduced the Hawaiian concept of *makawalu*, or “having eight eyes,” to a group of educators. According to Auntie Pua, *makawalu* represented a broader conceptualization of what it means to educate Native Hawaiian youths than the standard, Western fare prescribed by most schools in Hawai'i. When applied to the teaching of English, for example, this culturally relevant model encourages teachers and students to venture beyond factual, historical, chronological, and often disconnected, disjointed approaches to the analysis of literature. Instead, the study of literature through a *makawalu* lens is no longer concretized in canonical standards of Western theory but acknowledges—and more importantly validates—Kanaka Maoli epistemology, axiology, and ontology.

Western educational practice has done little to embrace native children. As Tyack and Cuban (1995) recognized, the U.S. national school system has been dominated by a few influential policymakers who have advocated for and promulgated a White, Anglo-Saxon systemization of educating America's children. Restricted by this Western philosophical template for teaching and learning, indigenous groups such as *Kānaka Maoli* have long suffered under the combined weight of Americanization and colonization (Benham & Heck, 1998; Kahumoku, 2005). Today's educators, scholars, community leaders, and parents have challenged and resisted the continuation of traditional American curriculum and pedagogy; they argue that indigenous perspectives and practice have a place in the modern educational landscape (Benham & Cooper, 2000; Meyer, 2005).

This article addresses the development of standards that reflect both Western and indigenous approaches to literature curriculum development and advocates for the infusion of Native Hawaiian and American-Eurocentric approaches to the study of American literature. Included in this article is an (American Literature) English project, administered to high school juniors, which illustrates how a *makawalu* paradigm reflects both Kanaka Maoli and Western thought in the teaching of a high school composition and literature course to Native Hawaiian students. Before proceeding to the actual lesson and standards discussion, we outline some justifications for the adoption of a *makawalu* perspective when educating Native Hawaiian children.

WESTERN EDUCATION ON NATIVE HAWAIIAN CHILDREN

The works of David Adams (1988, 1995), John Ogbu (1978, 1987, 1990, 1991, 1992), Vine Deloria (1970, 1979, 1985; Deloria & Wildcat, 2001), and Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) expound on the tragic results of educational systems that sought to assimilate, at times forcibly, minority and native populations so that they would adopt a more Eurocentric culture and language. These authors and other works (Benham & Heck, 1998; Kahumoku, 2005; Kana'iaupuni, Malone, & Ishibashi, 2005; NeSmith, 2005; Silva, 2004) have chronicled the decline and decimation of native communities, the lack of clarity in the research of native peoples, and the horrific aftermath of educational policy that sought to supplant indigenous language and culture with that of Western culture and the English vernacular. As a result, many have laid strong legal, sociocultural, linguistic, political, and economic grounds for reparations in the form of increased fiscal and infrastructural assistance to indigenous peoples. Support for indigenous education would arguably be one aspect of such reparations.

Yet, according to Deloria and Wildcat (2001), the mainstream has continued to deny native self-determination in terms of education and, consequently, has allocated minimal tangible resources to native schools. Moreover, the Western perspective of knowledge and the understanding of that knowledge are so constricted and specialized that native students have difficulty connecting such facts and concepts to their lives. Deloria and Wildcat postulated that America continues to propagate a computerized search-engine model of education: Though efficient at processing data and performing quantitative analysis, computers can never tell us what the data mean. Likewise, if the current, traditional educational paradigm refuses to include native educational practice, place, and position, indigenous children will continue to stagnate, and educators will not be able to explain why.

Furthermore, researchers have long articulated that strong cultural identity and understanding of heritage help build pride and confidence in native children. D'Amato (1988) concluded that Hawaiian children's acting-out behavior—challenging teacher authority and disrupting classroom atmosphere—represented ways in which they dealt with peer and adult relationships. D'Amato recognized that school-imposed criteria “appear to be no more and no less important than the risks, dramas, and sheer fun available to them through participating in instructional games consistent with their own games of identity” (p. 543). Accordingly,

ethnic Hawaiian children do not possess strong structural rationales for accepting school rules and teacher authority and will readily confront and resist the structure of school unless the teacher demonstrates that there are culturally based validations for accepting normative schema of formal education.

Yamauchi and Tharp (1995) legitimized this kind of ethnocentric, culturally linked pedagogy for educating Native American students when they argued that silence in the classroom is culturally bounded. “Classroom learning is enhanced when the structure is changed so that they are more compatible with the home cultures of these children” (p. 352). When pedagogy is “consistent with a language-based educational model that focuses on [group and individual] meaning making and the interdependence of social, oral and written skills [of an ethnic community]” (p. 353), education becomes culturally compatible.

Substantial research has documented the importance of acknowledging and utilizing the Kānaka Maoli’s interconnection between place, space, spirit, and others to enhance learning. In interviews conducted with 20 noted Hawaiian *kūpuna* (elders, leaders), Dr. Manu Aluli Meyer (2003) concluded that if education is to ameliorate past political and educational injustices against Native Hawaiians while also legitimizing a Hawaiian worldview, it must be grounded in an aboriginal philosophical framework. Kamanā and Wilson (1996) asserted that the revitalization of Native Hawaiian culture and language is tied to curriculum that is indigenous at its core. Kaomea (2005), in her examination of *Kula Kaiapuni* (Hawaiian language immersion schools), found that Hawaiian history and culture ought to be interwoven with indigenous schema to be effective. Kawakami (2004) asserted that quality education for native children must be situated in a Kanaka Maoli context.

While countless researchers and scholars continue to demonstrate the need for a more indigenous curricular and pedagogical approach for the schooling of native children, the formidable pillars of standard, Western/American schooling remain firmly entrenched. In fact, with the growing movement toward standards and assessment-driven school accountability, the inclusion of other educational perspectives like Native Hawaiian epistemology and values becomes more problematic.

THE STANDARDS/ACCOUNTABILITY MOVEMENT

Carnoy and Loeb (2002) illustrated the politics surrounding the move toward school accountability via standards and assessment. These authors concluded that there is a growing dependency on standards achievement to gauge the success of a school. Unfortunately, such standardized tests have been based on American-Eurocentric values and knowledge to the point of excluding other culturally driven axiology, ontology, and epistemology.

One example of this dichotomizing positioning of Western versus native educational approaches comes in the form of the content standards generated by the International Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers of English (IRA/NCTE, 1996). While it must be acknowledged that these standards reflect only the teaching of English language and literature, and that it would be erroneous to suggest that educators of English should also be linguistically and culturally versed in the myriad of student ethnicities that exist in their classrooms, there are a number of key issues that arise when one examines the relationship between these standards and the way Native Hawaiian students are taught.

Table 1 illustrates the illusory positioning of Native Hawaiians by the IRA/NCTE standards. For instance, 3 of the 12 IRA/NCTE standards make references to the concept of culture. Although Standards 1, 9, and 10 acknowledge the existence of ethnic cultures other than American-European-Western, the underlying premise is that the English language and Western culture and knowledge become the originating point for exploring all literature, including that of other cultures. However, indigenous educators recognized that such a foreign origin disconnects Kanaka Maoli students from the material they are reading. Furthermore, Native Hawaiian students are often frustrated with the lack of connection between the literature and their own experience. To then ask these students to develop an understanding and respect for literature other than what is written by American and European writers becomes problematic, if not futile. Without a firm grasp of literary analysis tools that, in many ways, are concretely grounded in their indigenous experience, Native Hawaiian students find English courses difficult and often try to just get by in them. For instance, many of our Kanaka Maoli students, well into their high school career and on a college-bound track, claim that a Hawaiian epic or novel is the first book they actually read.

TABLE 1 Standards for the English language arts

(1)	Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.
(9)	Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.
(10)	Students whose first language is not English make use of their first language to develop competency in the English language arts and to develop understanding of content across the curriculum.

Note: From *Standards for the English Language Arts* by the International Reading Association and National Council of Teachers of English, 1996.

Also, while there is a strong indication that the IRA/NCTE standards reflect a “wide range of strategies” and “respect for diversity,” the emphasis remains on English language arts competency. English language structures, conventions, and genre take priority over indigenous patterns of speech, structure, and syntax. We argue that for the indigenous child, both native and Western language structure, usage, and word choice are important, particularly when that child is accustomed to thinking, acting, and reacting with feet planted in their native as well as the modern, English-driven worlds.

Finally, there is no clear indication of Kanaka Maoli or any other ethnic culture’s epistemological, ontological, and axiological standpoints in the IRA/NCTE standards. Granted, the intention of these standards is to be inclusive given that the nature of a standard is one of broadness. What often occurs in the analysis of native literature, however, is conflict between indigenous worldviews and values and those of Western cultures. For example, whereas Native Hawaiians and other native peoples acknowledge the intermingling of literal and spiritual worlds, Western ideology rejects what cannot be validated or tangibly proven through scientific and literary research and data collection (Deloria & Wildcat, 2001). As a result, indigenous epistemology is often interpreted by Western perspectives

as “backwards,” “sentimental,” or “naive” (Kaiwi, 2001, p. 90). In many instances, Native Hawaiian ontological and epistemological concepts are simply incongruent with Western axioms. It is precisely this variance that warrants the need for culturally relevant standards for literary analysis and composition.

Understandably, IRA/NCTE standards were written for educators of English literature and composition and not for historians, social scientists, native community activists, or foreign language speakers. However, we believe that infusing indigenous forms of knowledge, pedagogy, and content standards can truly assist with the fundamental progress of each Native Hawaiian student. To this end, we next present a project that is culturally grounded in Native Hawaiian epistemology and ontology while upholding the axiological conventions of the classical English canon.

THE MO‘OLELO PROJECT: THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

As an indigenous educator who teaches American literature to Native Hawaiian students, coauthor Kaiwi faced the philosophical question: “How will I get my students to connect with a curriculum based predominantly on the works of ‘dead White males’ who lived 100 or 200 years ago in places nearly 5,000 miles away from our island home?” To fulfill the expectations of her department and Kamehameha Schools’ college-prep curriculum, she knew she needed to “straddle the political fence” by creating projects that upheld traditional forms of literary analysis and composition yet included a Kanaka Maoli starting point for her Kanaka Maoli students. She needed to keep one foot in each world—Native Hawaiian and Western. To do this, she chose to teach American literature from a makawalu perspective by implementing a thematic approach to American literature as well as a traditional chronological presentation.

When using a thematic approach to American literature, she needed to begin at “home”—to ground her students in what was familiar and to give them a frame of reference from which to examine and compare the “unfamiliar” literature. From this evolved four themes that guided her curriculum over four quarters:

- What is an American?
- The building of a nation
- A philosophy of life
- Looking to the future

The theme of the first quarter focused on those who make up America—both indigenous and immigrant. Because all of her students have one common ancestry—Kanaka Maoli—she started at home with a *mo‘olelo* (story) of our ancestors who came to Hawai‘i more than 2,000 years ago. Then she focused on the people who comprised the 1900s plantation era in Hawai‘i before moving on to study the Native Americans on the continental United States and those who arrived at Plymouth Rock and Ellis Island.

In terms of chronology, she followed the traditional organization of many American literature anthologies; the first quarter included the Puritans, the next quarter focused on the Deists, followed in the third quarter by the Transcendentalists, Realists, and Gothic writers, before moving to more contemporary literature in the fourth quarter. The presentation of American literature did not stray from the traditional canonical approach; however, by incorporating an indigenous perspective, she placed the canonical literature within an indigenous paradigm that compared *mo‘olelo* of Mo‘ikehā with records of the Puritans. Through a *makawalu* approach, she was able to start with the indigenous self as a bridge to the study of American and European literature.

Thus the Mo‘olelo Project began the study of literature from an indigenous standpoint through the major elements of indigenous identity: language, epistemology, and text. It used *‘ōlelo Hawai‘i* (Hawaiian language), Native Hawaiian epistemology, and translated orature to ground students in a way of thinking about and analyzing literature. Once this Kanaka Maoli literary perspective was established, the students were then able to compare it with other, more traditional approaches and text.

The following segment includes the Mo'olelo Project guidelines and student testimonies that describe their experiences while undertaking and completing this project.

Mo'olelo Project

As discussed on the first day of school, this year you will read mo'olelo written by individuals who are or became Americans and who may have written or lived before you were born. As an American citizen, you too have a story to tell about yourself and your 'ohana (family). For this project you will search for the mo'olelo that makes you who you are as an individual and as a member of your 'ohana.

Your research will include every aspect of the *mo'o* (lizard, figuratively, as well as in the sense of genealogical lineage): you, as 'ōpio (children)—the head—will write about yourself, what you feel, think, and observe about yourself as you learn more about the mo'olelo of your 'ohana. You will write about your *mākua* (parents), those who have established the stability and foundation of your being. And finally, you will write about your *kūpuna*, those who are living and those who have gone before, who make up the tail, your balance, which stretches far into the past to *Akua*, or God (Willis & Lee, 2001).

As I have told you before, you do not stand alone. Your daily decisions and actions reflect your *mākua*, *kūpuna*, 'aumākua (ancestral gods), and *Akua*. This project is aimed at helping you to discover who you are and where you come from as a Hawaiian and as a descendent of all of your ethnicities.

For people of an oral tradition, a mo'olelo is intended to be shared. Therefore, you will have the opportunity to share your project, personal mo'olelo, with your *mākua* and your classmates. As with all your efforts, you will want to do your very best work.

NAME MO'OLELO. Include as much of the mo'olelo surrounding your FULL name as you can discover or have experienced. How was your *inoa* (name) given? Who gave it? What does it mean? How has your *inoa* translated into who you are?

WHAT IS AN AMERICAN? Include the first draft of an essay defining an “American.” Include your opinion of the traits, values, beliefs, lifestyle, etc. of an American. This essay will be returned for rewrite 1 week before the final project is due. You will be expected to rewrite your reflections, incorporating what you have learned about Americans through your readings.

MO‘OKŪ‘AUHAU (GENEALOGY). Include as much information about your mo‘okū‘auhau that you and your ‘ohana can provide. Rewrite your mo‘okū‘auhau in a creative or well-presented fashion. You may use the *oli* (chant) format provided.

ETHNICITY CHART WITH MO‘OLELO. Include a detailed list of ALL of your ethnicities OR at least all of which you and your ‘ohana are aware. Indicate the parent from whom you gain each ethnicity and provide the mo‘olelo of each that you and your ‘ohana know/remember.

RESEARCH OF TWO ETHNICITIES. Include two pages or more for each ethnicity, describing the information found on the two different ethnic cultures you have chosen to research. You will cite your research sources by using proper MLA (Modern Language Association) parenthetical citations. Your research focus may be on a place/country, cultural practice, religion, or historical event that affects or affected you or your ‘ohana. Throughout your research, you will include your personal commentary regarding what you have learned about your ethnicity—how does the knowledge relate to and affect your understanding of your personal mo‘olelo?

THREE CREATIVE ORIGINAL WRITTEN REFLECTIONS ON YOUR PERSONAL MO'OLELO.

These can be in the form of a mo'olelo, oli, prose, and/or poetry, whichever genre seems to best reflect your feelings. (Note: At least one of the three pieces should be an oli or poem.)

Here is where your personal mo'olelo takes shape; your identity becomes more defined. You can use all that you have felt and learned to create a mo'olelo—prose form—which reflects and records the interview or a family story that has been told in your 'ohana for generations. This could also be a place where you imagine what life was like for your kūpuna or ancestors when they were younger. For those of you who enjoy writing oli or poetry, here is your opportunity to explore and to express your emotions, both positive and negative.

NĀNĀ I KE KUMU (LOOK TO THE SOURCE). Include one written dialogue, conversation, or interview with someone who will give you insight into your ethnic heritage or 'ohana by sharing their knowledge about the subject you have chosen to research or insights regarding your 'ohana. This person can be your mākua, kūpuna, neighbor, *kumu* (teacher), or anyone you know or can meet who has knowledge and is willing to share with you, adding to your understanding of your personal mo'olelo.

As your daily actions reflect on your 'ohana, this aspect of the project also reflects on your kumu. Therefore, you must conduct your interview with respect and within a timely fashion. This means way in advance of your project due date! Below, proper protocol has been defined that will make your interviewing experience beneficial for everyone involved.

Preinterview Protocol:

- a. Politely ask the person you have chosen if they would be willing to spend one hour or more with you to help you with your project.
- b. Set a time that is convenient for your guest. You are the one who must be flexible. Be polite and considerate.
- c. You may want to ask permission to tape the conversation. Make sure your interviewee is comfortable with a tape recorder before you bring it to the interview.
- d. Write a minimum of 10 questions that you would like answered. You may get through all of your prepared questions or you may find that the conversation carries itself. You don't want to be silent, waiting for the interviewee to say something; therefore, you need to come prepared to the interview.
- e. Your questions may vary. You can begin with: "What was Hawai'i like when you were young? Is there a tradition that we practice in our 'ohana that reflects our ethnic heritage?" "Describe a significant event or events that affected your life or our 'ohana." "Share an 'ohana story that you feel is important for me to know." "What is your favorite tradition that our family practices?" "How did our 'ohana come to Hawai'i?" This is your opportunity to learn the reason why your kūpuna or mākuā do the things they do or view the world the way they do or are the way they are. Take time to really think about what you want to learn.

Postinterview Protocol:

- f. When you have finished your interview, make certain that you thank the individual with whom you have had your interview and let him or her know how grateful you are for their time. *Writing a thank you note as a follow-up would be most appropriate.*
- g. When you have written your interview write-up and/or poem or story, make certain that you share what you have written with your interviewee, checking for accuracy. *You never want to misrepresent the person you interview.*

Hopefully, these guidelines will make your experience memorable for both you and the one with whom you interview.

FINAL DRAFT OF “WHAT IS AN ‘AMERICAN?’ ESSAY” Include a revised copy of the original draft you turned in at the beginning of the school year. After reading and discussing the mo‘olelo of fellow Americans past and present as well as researching your own mo‘olelo, has your definition of an “American” changed? If so, reflect on the changes in your final draft. If not, revise your draft for clarity and completion. All good writers revise and revise and revise again.

PERSONAL REFLECTION. Include a one- to two-page response to the entire project and process. What have you learned about your ‘ohana, about yourself, and how you fit into the mo‘olelo of people who make up America?

The Presentation of the Project

THE COVER. The cover will include an illustration, a creative title, your name, and your class period. Choose an illustration that reflects your interpretation/ expression/feelings about your personal mo‘olelo and complements your title, inviting your reader to read your mo‘olelo. Your cover should reflect the time and effort you have given, and your title should be creative, capturing the process of searching for your personal mo‘olelo. You will want it to be unique, expressing *your* project.

TYPED LETTER OF INTRODUCTION. Include a half-page introduction to prepare your reader for the mo‘olelo that will follow.

TYPED TABLE OF CONTENTS. Include a page that reflects the order of the presentation. Once you set your order by your Table of Contents, your project must remain in the order established.

Your final project will be permanently bound.

Although students are encouraged to explore all their ethnic identities, the Mo'olelo Project reflects a makawalu paradigm in that it honors their Hawaiian heritage while also meeting Western expectations of research and reflection. This particular project is aligned with our philosophy of teaching: to present each unit or project from the starting point of our shared Kanaka Maoli experience. It is from this indigenous grounding that we write curriculum, linking our Hawaiian cultural perspective to the established standards and expectations of our department and institution. Most important, we have seen our Kanaka Maoli students make greater connections between their own experiences and those expressed in standard American curriculum. For example, in biology, the flora and fauna of Hawai'i become the point of reference when examining a cactus in the Sahara desert; and within the social sciences, the political strategies of our *ali'i* (leaders) are used to measure and analyze democracy, communism, and global politics.

The following sections—which include quotations from students' evaluations of the Mo'olelo Project—illustrate the power of using makawalu in teaching Kanaka Maoli students. Organized thematically according to sound qualitative practice (Merriam, 1998), the testimonies represent the most common, recurring responses from project reflections generated by students. Each section begins with a short explanation of the theme and is then followed by one or two quotations that best represent the theme.

Connection to Ancestors

Within our Hawaiian culture, we have a common understanding that those who have passed are still with us and stand behind, beside, above, and below us. We reflect all of those who have come before, and reciprocally, our actions reflect back on our ancestors. Many of our Native Hawaiian students lose sight of this concept and, in most instances, do not recognize to whom they are accountable. Through this project, however, students seem to regain a connection between past and present as well as physical and spiritual planes of existence:

The stories I've been told from my mom about my ancestors and her life changed the way I view my ancestors and parents. I forget that they were once going through some of the things I am, and that there is so much I can learn from them if I only ask.

—Boy

My ancestors have paved the way for me and have made my
life the great one it is today.

—Girl

Appreciation for Ancestors

A second theme that surfaced from these evaluations is an appreciation for those who have gone before. Not until these students began uncovering the many mo'olelo of their parents, grandparents, and other relatives did they begin to see and understand how life was for their ancestors. More important, we recognize that few contemporary teenagers have an appreciation for the struggles and sacrifices of their ancestors. Through the literature read and discussed, students began to imagine and have an admiration for the conditions and lifestyle of their predecessors:

I have completely taken a new stance on my family origins.
I feel an overwhelming sense of respect for my ancestors.
They have truly set the standard of what I have to live up
to as a person. They were perseverant, determined, strong,
and all around good people.

—Boy

Appreciation for Kūpuna

A third outcome generated from the examination of the evaluations is the growing connection between students and the older members of their families, including grandparents. Countless student comments suggested that the interview process was instrumental in reconnecting the generations.

I didn't realize it, but she [grandma] is a really deep person...
I always thought that she was just a cruise grandma who
had no worries, but she does, and she looks at lots of things
from different perspectives...I never really got down and
talked to her like how I did that day...there will be more of
these talk sessions.

—Boy

Appreciation for Mākua

Most of these students are of the age when they find little connection to or value in their parents. In fact, countless mākua over the years have expressed their gratitude for a requirement that expects their child to understand how life is from a parent's perspective. While there are no specific criteria for making children understand their parents, students are encouraged to talk story with and interview their parents, and such interaction has opened the door for both to learn something about the other. Through these conversations, many students experience a revelation and the fourth thematic outcome: They learn they are more like their parents than they may want to admit.

As a teenager, I think I live a harsh life, but I learned from this project that my life is nothing compared to my ancestors. My parents and their parents both lived harsher lives as a youth. Therefore, I have little to complain about.

—Girl

My family was happy when they saw the completed project because they said it was a good opportunity for me to connect to my ancestors and learn about my roots. My Hawaiian grandmother was the most happy...I am glad that they enjoyed the project as much as I did.

—Boy

Increased Desire to Learn

Educators create opportunities; however, it is the student's choice and responsibility to take the journey. One of the most exhilarating feelings for a teacher occurs when students choose to fan their flame for learning and ignite their desire for knowledge.

From reading the evaluations over the years, one quotation stands as perhaps the most moving. This young man's motivation to seek new knowledge was stronger than any given grade or comment:

I feel stronger now that I know more background information about my family...I became hooked on asking my grandma about her mom and grandma. Every little bit of information I could absorb I did...I learned that I am a curious boy. My grandpa kept trying to walk away during my interview...I kept asking questions about his life.

—Boy

A Sense of Kuleana (Responsibility)

A sixth outcome of this project centers on the ability of students to understand their responsibilities to the physical, emotional, and spiritual worlds around them. As Native Hawaiians, we are taught that we have a kuleana to our kūpuna (past), our family and community (present), and the generations to follow (future). Through new knowledge gained from this experience, some students begin to comprehend and accept their kuleana as Kānaka Maoli.

I realize that I make a difference to my ancestors, and to my future descendents. Without me, my ancestors will never live on.

—Girl

Traditional versus Indigenous

A seventh theme that arose illustrates the tension students experience when they are first introduced to the Mo'olelo Project. Many students have a very traditional notion of an English class: reading, writing, and vocabulary. Even the slightest move away from the norm elicited discomfort and sometimes consternation. The application of a Hawaiian literary analysis technique to the study of all literature causes great concern for some learners. Students often think that this project

should be assigned to an advanced rather than a regular English class. However, once into it, students begin to recognize the value of an indigenous approach to learning American literature.

Some of my friends think that I spend too much time on English because of the many parts of the project that had to be completed all during the first quarter. They said that the project isn't even English related. This is where they'd be wrong. Not only does writing and composing essays, conducting an interview, and writing original poetry have to do with English, but the entire essay in general...this project has really helped me grow and appreciate my different cultures and ethnicities.

—Boy

Creativity and Freedom of Expression

The final theme relates to the openness and freedom students have for creating the final product. Students are known to write better when they choose topics that have personal meaning; therefore, creating assignments that foster such freedom of expression is crucial and, as this young man expresses, the potential for genuine originality is limitless. Students have yet to create a project that is identical to another.

I also liked the freedom we were given with this project. We were given the bare necessities and from there we could put in our own flavor...I think this is going to result in some very creative and original ideas...it made learning into a real life example, thus making it fun.

—Boy

CONCLUSION

When applying a concept like makawalu to the teaching of American literature or literature in general, we are changing the perspective from which literature should be examined. Traditionally, Western literary theory and literature curriculum work from the perspective of elevating Euro-American literature while devaluing indigenous and “ethnic” literature.

Not only does makawalu start from an indigenous grounding, specifically that of Native Hawaiians, but it also uses such a foundation as a springboard for further literary exploration and the reporting of it. While the supplemental inclusion of multicultural literature is a commonplace strategy utilized in the modern American literature classroom, it is our opinion that the concept of starting from a common indigenous base and then moving out to other “cultural” literature indigenizes such a Western discipline and equalizes the literary playing field. Rather than examining unfamiliar literature through “Western eyes,” students begin assessing and analyzing literature through “native eyes” and a “native paradigm.”

To this end, we suggest that in addition to the content standards established by the IRA/NCTE, (a) schools that have the responsibility for teaching indigenous students should adopt a standard that recognizes and respects native perspectives and (b) teachers of native students should start with an indigenous context to teach their curriculum. As an example, in the 2002 publication *Nā Honua Mauli Ola*, the first and probably most important standard for Native Hawaiian education is to

Incorporate cultural traditions, language, history, and values in meaningful holistic processes to nourish the emotional, physical, mental/intellectual, social and spiritual well-being of the learning community that promote healthy maui [spirit] and mana [power/life force]. (Kawai‘ae‘a, 2002, p. 17)

Clearly, there is need for a follow-up essay that further defines the makawalu paradigm. However, in the interim, if these steps are actuated, students, especially our native students, will understand how to live in this complex world without losing themselves to it.

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APPENDIX A

WORKS USED WITH MO‘OLELO PROJECT

(Listed in the order of presentation)

INTRODUCTION OF MO‘OLELO PROJECT

Willis, K., & Lee, P. J. (2001). *Tales from the night rainbow*. Honolulu: Night Rainbow Publishing. [Hawaiian]

NATIVE HAWAIIAN/PLANTATION ERA—INDIGENOUS AND IMMIGRANT

Henry, T., and others. (1995). *Voyaging chiefs of Hawai‘i*. Honolulu: Kalamakū Press. [Oceania—Mo‘ikehā, Hiro, Tafa‘i, Pa‘ao]

Takaki, R. (1983). *Pau hana: Plantation life and labor in Hawai‘i 1835–1920*. Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press. [Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Filipino, Portuguese]

CONTINENTAL AMERICA—INDIGENOUS AND IMMIGRANT

Iroquois. (2000). The world on the turtle’s back. In A. N. Applebee (Ed.), *The language of literature: American literature*. Boston: McDougal Littell. [Native American]

Momaday, S. N. (2000). The way to Rainy Mountain. In A. N. Applebee (Ed.), *The language of literature: American literature*. Boston: McDougal Littell. [Native American]

Edwards, J. (2000). Sinners in the hands of an angry God. In A. N. Applebee (Ed.), *The language of literature: American literature*. Boston: McDougal Littell. [Puritans—European]

Equiano, O. (2000). The interesting narratives of the life of Olaudah Equiano. In A. N. Applebee (Ed.), *The language of literature: American literature*. Boston: McDougal Littell. [Slaves—African-American]

Gordon, M. (1993, September). More than just a shrine: Paying homage to the hosts of Ellis Island. In *Literary Cavalcade*. New York: New York Times.

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MODEL FOR NĀNĀ I KE KUMU FORMAT

Harden, M. J. (1999). *Voices of wisdom: Hawaiian elders speak*. Kula, HI: Aka Press. [Hawaiian]

MODELS FOR CREATIVE POETRY/PROSE FORMAT

Poetry

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- McKay, C. (1989). America. In R. Anderson (Ed.), *Elements of literature, fifth course: Literature of the United States*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston. [Scottish-American]
- Hughes, L. (1989). I, too. In R. Anderson (Ed.), *Elements of literature, fifth course: Literature of the United States*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston. [African-American]
- Jeffers, R. (1989). Shine, perishing republic. In R. Anderson (Ed.), *Elements of literature, fifth course: Literature of the United States*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston. [Euro-American]
- Alvarez, J. (1989). How I learned to sweep. In R. Anderson (Ed.), *Elements of literature, fifth course: Literature of the United States*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston. [Hispanic-American]
- Ginsberg, A. (1989). Homework. In R. Anderson (Ed.), *Elements of literature, fifth course: Literature of the United States*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston. [German-American]

Prose

- Kingston, M. H. (1989). The girl who wouldn't talk. In R. Anderson (Ed.), *Elements of literature, fifth course: Literature of the United States*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston. [Chinese-American]
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