Cultural Identity and Success

Learning Objectives

Read to answer these key questions:

• How is college success related to cultural pride?

• Who are the Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders?

• How can Hawaiian Pacific Islanders increase education and income?

• What island values can empower me to succeed in college, my career, and life?

• What is the history of higher education in Hawai‘i and other Pacific Islands?

• How does the Hokule‘a increase pride in Hawaiian and Pacific Island Culture?

• How can I successfully navigate my culture and the culture of higher education?

• What are some tips for success?
Taking Pride in Your Culture

Welcome to college! This textbook is designed to help you to be successful in college, your career, and your life. It is based on the premise that students are more successful if they take pride in themselves and their culture, so it incorporates cultural material relevant to students in Hawai‘i and the Pacific Islands. Even if you are not of Hawaiian or Pacific Island heritage, your college experience will be enriched by increasing your knowledge of the culture in which you live and study.

Having pride in yourself is the basis of good self-esteem and the foundation for good mental health and success in life. Sonia Nieto did research on a group of successful students. These students had good grades, enjoyed school, had plans for the future and described themselves as successful. She found that “one of the most consistent, and least expected, outcomes to emerge from these case studies has been a resoluteness with which young people maintain pride and satisfaction in their culture and the strength they derive from it.” Having pride in yourself and your culture is an important part of good self-esteem and can help you to become a better student and worker. Having good self-esteem provides the confidence to accept and care for others. The best schools and workplaces provide an environment where people value their own culture as well as appreciate the differences and values of other cultures. With respect among different cultures, ideas can be freely exchanged and the door is open to creativity and innovation.

Who Are the Pacific Islanders?

The Pacific Islands are home to the most diverse group of Indigenous people in the world. They include many different cultural groups from Polynesia, Melanesia, and Micronesia in the Pacific Ocean. Polynesia means “many islands” and forms a triangle between Hawai‘i, the Easter Islands, and New Zealand. The islands of Hawai‘i, Samoa, and Tahiti are located in Polynesia. Melanesia includes Fiji, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, the Vanuatu Islands, and New Caledonia. Micronesia has eight territories including Guam, Kiribati, and the Marshall Islands. There are over 25,000 islands, atolls, and islets in the Pacific Ocean. Pacific Islanders speak at least 39 different languages as a second language. The largest group of Pacific Islanders in the United States includes Hawaiians, Samoans, and Guamanians.
**Diversity**

Hawai‘i is known for its Aloha spirit where many different groups of people live in harmony. Hawai‘i is one of the most diverse states in the United States with no racial or ethnic group as the majority. The minority population, which the U.S. Census Bureau defines as other than non-Hispanic White, is 77.1% of the population of the state of Hawai‘i. Hawai‘i has more mixed race residents than any other state. The latest census data show the following:

- 55.9% Asian
- 43.7% White
- 23% Mixed Race
- 26% Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders
- 2.6% Black or African American

**Journal Entry #1**

What is your cultural background? Write at least one sentence about being proud of who you are. Remember that you can be empowered by taking pride in yourself and your community. You may be asked to share this information with students in your class.

**Educational Attainment**

College enrollment and degree completion are important to improve the lives of all Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders. They have lower rates of educational attainment and corresponding higher rates of poverty and unemployment as compared to national statistics.

- About 28% of the general population of the United States has a bachelor’s degree while only 15% of Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders have a bachelor’s degree.
- Only 29% of Pacific Islanders between the age of 18 and 24 are enrolled in college as compared to 39% of non-Hispanic whites and 57% of Asians.
- About 18% of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders live below the poverty rate as compared to 12% for the total U.S. population.

**Journal Entry #2**

You have just read about the low completion rates for Native Hawaiian and Pacific Island students. You have made the courageous decision to attend college. What steps can you take to be one of the students who successfully completes his or her education?

**Hawaiian Values**

The values of the Hawaiian people are timeless and passed on throughout generations. Hawaiians lived less by what they said and more by what they did. Aloha is the root of all other values that lead to success in life and can be applied to education and careers. Aloha means love, but goes beyond that. To have Aloha is to know how to treat others with love and to show respect. It begins with loving ourselves and spreading this love to others. The Hawaiians were and continue to be humble people with Aloha (Aloha); Aloha for their ‘aina (land), ‘ohana (family), kanaka (the people), and mo‘omeheu (culture). This Aloha
is what transcends and connects them to the past, pushing them forward into the future. Some Hawaiian values are:

Ma kahanaka 'ike: By working, you learn.

Pono: This value represents goodness, uprightness, moral qualities, excellence, virtue, fairness, and being correct.

When we are “pono,” we are right all the way around. We are right in the things we say, in the actions we take, and in our thoughts and emotions. Being “pono” is more than just an act, it is a way of living.

'ImiNa'auao: This is the value of seeking wisdom.

Knowledge is something that can be found when looking, researching, and reading. Wisdom is something that goes deeper. Wisdom is knowing all of the facts, but being able to take it to the next level, looking into the character of people or the heart of situations, past the facts. The Hawaiian people are wise and understanding, often seeing things past the surface of what is presented.

Aloha Kekahi I Kekahi: This is the value of love, from one to another. Hawaiians are people filled with love, but not in just giving love, but also in receiving love. When we show love, we receive love in return and are open to being loved by others. Love often goes past the emotion and into respect. If we have aloha for something, we respect everything about it, even if we don’t agree with the lifestyle or choices and in return we are able to receive aloha from respect.

Kulia I Ka Nu'u: This is the value of striving for excellence.

Kuleana: This is the value of responsibility. Kuleana or responsibility in the sense that you don’t leave things for others to do; you take responsibility for them yourself. For example, if I see something on the ground that I didn’t put there, do I leave it there and not pick it up? Even though I did not place it there, it is still my kuleana to pick it up so the next person behind me does not have to stop and do it. Kuleana is responsibility and as Hawaiians, it is our kuleana to care for the land, to care for our people, to care for our culture, and to care for our language, making sure that the values of our kupuna, our ancestors, live on from generation to generation.

Lokahi: This is the value of unity which is the state of being one.

Lokahi is the concept that we are one with our creator, the creation and with one another; each goes hand in hand. If the land is hurting or desolate, there are no resources for the people, yet if the people do not tend to the land and care for it, it will die. Each goes hand in hand. Lokahi, we are all one.

Mālama: This term means to care for or to take care of, to tend, preserve, save, and honor.

'A'ohe pau ka 'ike I ka halau hoʻokahi: “Not all knowledge is taught in just one school.”

This is an ‘olelo no'eau, or wise saying, meaning there are many sources of knowledge, that are each different, yet valuable and we are not able to learn everything from one source. Each source can contribute to our learning and our experiences in both negative and positive ways, but without each of them individually, there would be no growth. For example, when we first enter school at five years of age, would we be able to stay in one class with the same teacher until we are 18 and ready to graduate? Would that teacher then go on to give us the skills we need for a college education? No. Each teacher comes with his or her own experiences that shaped their lives and the knowledge they gathered from their studies. Their perspectives give us one understanding of things, but they each teach us the skills to go out and explore those perspectives for ourselves, gathering our own information, and learning what makes us successful. We were created to learn differently, see differently, and experience things differently.

Ahupua'a: This term refers to land division, usually extending from the uplands to the sea containing all the resources needed for that particular community. Literally, ahu means “altar” and “pua’a” means pig. Ahupua’a is the altar upon which the pig was laid as payment to the chief for the use of their land. The ahu is a stone foundation made into a big wall marking the separation from one ahupua’a to the next. Throughout every ahupua’a, there were diverse roles and contributions and collaborations which led to the sustainability of the people. Throughout the ahupua’a, everyone knew what it meant to work together, each decision to do or not do affected everyone.
Taking pride in your culture is important because it serves as a foundation for learning. You are more likely to be successful if you approach learning with an understanding of yourself which includes a sense of belonging to your family and an understanding and appreciation of your culture and history. Since colonial times, the story of the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Island experience has been a sad one in which the colonizers attempted to destroy Native culture, language, and religious practices and assimilate these groups into the dominant culture. Fortunately, there is a cultural renaissance beginning to take hold in Hawai’i and the Pacific Islands.

Early Hawaiian education consisted of stories, legends, chants, songs, poems, and dance. There was no written language or books and children learned by observing their family members and then trying out their new skills. The extended family included grandparents, aunts, uncles, and people of the village. Family members looked after one another, respected their elders, and shared resources with the village.

History changed dramatically when Captain Cook arrived on the Hawaiian Islands in 1778 and claimed the land for England. The Native population was estimated to be 400,000–800,000. Native Hawaiians were quickly decimated by diseases brought by the sailors accompanying Captain Cook including tuberculosis, venereal diseases, measles, and influenza. The Native people had no immunity to these diseases and population decreased by 80% or more. Cook’s legacy is varied from different cultural perspectives, from great explorer to the destroyer of Indigenous people and cultures.

American missionaries came to Hawai’i in 1820. This was a time of great change in Hawai’i in which Ka’ahumanu had recently abolished the kapu system of rules that dictated religious, social, and political laws affecting all aspects of Hawaiian life. The kapu were rules that were made by the gods and interpreted by the ali’i who were hereditary rulers thought to possess mana or spiritual powers from the gods. Some examples of the kapu were:

- Men and women had to eat separately.
- Women could not eat certain foods including pork, bananas, coconuts, and certain types of fish.
- A commoner would be sentenced to death if his shadow fell on an ali’i house.

Those who broke the kapu were killed unless they could reach a place of refuge before they were caught.

The missionaries were able to capitalize on this major societal change to bring in Christianity. They considered the Hula dance as immoral and against their religion. They were influential in changing Hawaiian law to match Christian doctrine and converted the Hawaiian language into a written language to share the Bible with the Indigenous population. They introduced printing presses to produce Bibles and newspapers. Missionary schools taught Hawaiians to “abandon their culture for ‘civilized’ Western ways.” Children went to school to learn about God and to read and write. It is interesting to note that Hawaiians became among the most literate nations in the world during this period in history.

After the overthrow of King Kamehameha III, using the Hawaiian language in schools was banned in 1896 and students were punished for using their Native language. As a result, there...
was growing concern that the Hawaiian language would be lost. Hawaiians resisted the change to their culture. In 1901, the “Home Rule Party, passed rules promoting the growing of taro, the use of the Hawaiian language, and the honoring of their then-deposed queen, Lili‘uokalani.” Mary Abigail Pukui (1895–1985) taught the Hawaiian language, contributed to the Hawaiian–English Dictionary and began translating and preserving chants, stories, words, and sayings to preserve them for the future.

It was not until the 1960s that there was a revival of interest in the Hawaiian language and culture. Communities began demanding the teaching of music, Hula, culture, and language. In 1978 The Hawai‘i State Constitution was amended to include “the study of Hawaiian, culture, history and language . . . using the community expertise as a suitable and essential means in furtherance of Hawaiian education.” It also recognized Hawaiian as the official language of the state. Hawaiian studies programs and language immersion programs have followed.

### The Revival of Pride in Hawaiian and Pacific Island Culture: The Hokule‘a

The Hokule‘a, the double-hulled Hawaiian Canoe that has been traveling the world, has become a symbol of hope for the revival of Pacific Island and Hawaiian culture. It has resulted in increased interest in preserving the Hawaiian language and maintaining Hawaiian identity and culture. This revival is represented graphically on the cover of this textbook.

Although the origins of the Hawaiian people are still being studied, the most recent archeological research shows that the Hawaiian Islands were settled about 1,000 years ago. While it is commonly assumed that the residents came from Samoa, recent research on linguistics indicates that the settlers came from East Polynesia, a distance of about 2,500 miles from the Hawaiian Islands. A later wave of immigration came from Tahiti. These voyages are considered among the greatest accomplishments of humanity. Herb Kane Cane, a historian and artist has stated that almost every island in the Pacific was discovered before European settlers came and that “their voyaging canoes were the spaceships of the Stone Age.”

These early explorers were able to navigate great distances by using wayfinding, a method of navigation using the stars and being aware of nature and the ocean environment. Wayfinding is a complex skill using a memorized star compass with houses of stars and knowing where they rise and set. The star compass is also used to understand the direction of waves and the flight of birds. Using the star compass involves memorizing your point of departure, direction, and time, without the use of mechanical devices. It requires careful observation of natural phenomena such as the rise and setting of the sun. There are different names for the colors and widths of the sun’s passage over the water from sunrise to sunset. On cloudy days, navigators rely on different wave patterns that show the direction of the canoe. These wave patterns and the behavior of dolphins and sea birds change when approaching an island.

The Hawaiian ancestors told stories about voyaging canoes that set off across the vast ocean and brave explorers who were compared to modern day astronauts. However, the canoes used in the original voyages had not been
The first voyage of the Hokule'a was challenging because there were no Native navigators left from Polynesia or Hawai'i. The Voyaging Society found a navigator, Mau Piailug, from a small island in Satawal, Micronesia. This navigator guided the original voyage from Hawai'i to Tahiti to prove the theory that the ancient Hawaiians had successfully traveled great distances to settle on the Hawaiian Islands. Finding Tahiti from Hawai'i is a difficult task without modern navigation. When the Hokule'a arrived in Pape'ete Harbor, Tahiti, it was met by 17,000 people, which demonstrated much interest in the cultural revival. In 1978, the voyage was attempted again, but the canoe capsized in stormy waters off Molokai. Fortunately, the crew was rescued by Eddie Aikau who left on a surfboard and was able to summon help and rescue the adventurers. In 1979, Mau Piailug shared his navigation skills with Nainoa Thompson and they were successful in navigating from Tahiti to Hawai'i, which was the first voyage of its kind in 600 years.

Nainoa Thompson has become a spokesperson for the revival of Hawaiian and Pacific Island culture.

Nainoa recalls his conflicted youth, when his grandmother spoke with pride of her own grandfather, an independent fisherman, and then averted her eyes as she discussed the more recent Hawaiian period, when people were beaten with sticks for simply being Hawaiian. “Hawaiian had a negative connotation,” adds Nainoa. “People tried to wash the brown off their skin.” Young Nainoa came under the influence of an artist, Herb Kane, who was obsessed with images of the great open-hulled canoes that the ancients must have used to cross the oceans. Kane instilled in Thompson and others the dream of building such a canoe, re-creating the voyages, and raising the pride of the people over the feats involved in these monumental voyages and the many skills required to make them. The ocean is a severe and unforgiving adversary for anyone who ventures out unprepared. “We dreamed that the voyages would bring dignity to people,” says Nainoa. “We could take our anger about our self-image and put it to a positive use. Our language and culture were asleep, but perhaps the re-created voyages would wake us all up.”

The Hokule'a completed a two-year voyage to Aotearoa from 1985 to 1987, and in 1999, a voyage to Rapa Nui, one of the most isolated islands on earth located at the far southeastern corner of the Polynesian Triangle. Since 1976, there have been 25 voyages around the world as people are drawn to experience the ancient ways and challenges of navigation. The Hokule’a has visited the South Pacific, Indonesia, the Indian Ocean, the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa, Brazil, Chesapeake Bay, and the Panama Canal. A new generation is planning future voyages.

At each stop the canoe is greeted by Indigenous people and organizations concerned about climate change and keeping the ocean clean. Voyages continue to “spread the message about what the world could learn from island people about how to live sustainably and care for the ocean.” The message delivered by the Hokule’a is called Malama Honua, which means taking care of Island Earth. This message is particularly important to the inhabitants of the Pacific region concerned about rising sea levels, extreme weather, flooding, coastal erosion, coral reef bleaching, ocean acidification, loss of sensitive habitat, and the contamination of fresh water by sea water.

The Hokule’a has connected the Indigenous populations of the world. The search for traditional Koa wood to build the Hawai’iloa, the second voyaging canoe, was unsuccessful because of deforestation of the islands. The SeAlaska Corporation owned by the
Tlingit, Haida, and Tshimshian tribes of Southeast Alaska volunteered to donate Large Sitka spruce logs.

Byron Maillot, the CEO of SeAlaska, explained the connection between the native peoples of Hawai’i and Alaska: “Both the reality and the symbolism of the [Hawai’iloa] project breathe hope and inspiration into all peoples seeking to maintain their traditions, heritage and culture in a society that does not place a high priority on such things except when they may touch a nerve or help nurture shared values through an expression of such vision, initiative and sheer innate beauty that all can feel ennobled by it. . . . You do it for the Hawaiian people, but it reaches far beyond. In your canoe you carry all of us who share your vision and aspiration for a people to live and prosper with their future firmly built on the knowledge of their heritage and tradition.”

The Hokule’a project is helping students around the world to take pride in their culture and view the world in a different way, inspiring students to organize beach clean-ups, school beautification, and discourage pollution and littering. The crew share the information about life on the ocean with students around the world.

The Hokule’a has received worldwide attention from the United Nations when past Secretary Ban Ki-moon boarded the canoe in Samoa and delivered a gift in a bottle, a message pledging worldwide support for ocean protection.

**Journal Entry #4**

How has the Hokule’a contributed to a revival of Hawaiian and Pacific Island culture?

**Navigating Different Cultures and Finding a Safe Place**

The world is constantly changing and we have to constantly adapt to new situations. It is difficult to balance “fitting in” and maintaining our own cultural identities. Researchers describe a process called transculturation, in which a person adapts to a different culture without sacrificing individual cultural identity.

Successful Native and Indigenous students are those who are able to navigate the terrain of two distinct worlds as they bridge the gap between their own culture and that of the college/university setting. We also know that those students with confidence in self and strong feelings of culture have an anchor from which they can draw strength.

According to Dr. Mario E. Aguilar, in a research study he conducted called The Ritual of Kindness, he suggests that a healthy aspect of this transculturation is to learn to create your own unique Third Space, a safe space. He explains that the First Space is where you live or where you have come from, and the Second Space is where you must learn to negotiate [college]. Learning to adapt as needed within the two realms can be challenging, but with practice and introspection, you can develop a healthy place that he calls the Third Space.

Give some thought to how you will create your own safe place between your own culture and that of the university environment. Once you learn to trust in your culture and gain strength from knowing who you are in this world and why you are in college, you will be invigorated and increase your chances of success.
Chapter 1

Tips for Success
Celebrate your culture. Taking pride in yourself, your family, and your culture is the basic building block of self-confidence that can empower you to be successful. Traditional island values can help you to be successful in college, your career, and your life.

Your ohana (family) is a source of strength, support, identity, and confidence. Maintain a support network at home with family and community. It is like going back for nurturance, especially during those challenging times when cultural conflicts arise. Your task will be to find ways to include your family in your college experience, explaining to them the experiences and challenges you face as you move through college.

Learn about other cultures. Every culture has a different perspective that can be of value in solving the problems of the world.

In college, you will have the opportunity to learn from your professors and other students who are different from yourself. You may have professors with very different personality styles and teaching styles. Your success will depend on being aware of the differences and finding a way to adapt to the situation. Also, each student in your classes will come from a different perspective and has valuable ideas to add to the class.

It is through networking with other people that most people find a job. You are likely to find a job through someone you know, such as a college professor, a student in one of your classes, a community member or a referral from a previous employer. Once you have the job, you will gain proficiency by learning from others. The best managers are also open to learning from others and help different people to work together as a team.

Be an advocate for the value of Malama, protecting and caring for the earth, to improve the lives and futures of all the earth’s inhabitants.

Appreciating Island Cultures:
The Story of the Kahuli Shells
Located at the end of each chapter are traditional stories of Hawai‘i and the Pacific Islands. These stories are presented as a way to learn about island culture and values and to connect them to success in college, careers, and life. Here is the story of the kahuli shells.

Long ago when the forests of Hawai‘i were uninhabited by other animals, there lived these tiny, beautiful shells called kahuli, or pupukani ‘oe (shell with the long sound). They were said to sing as their shells moved from side to side while the wind blew through them.

These beautiful shells lived either high up in the hau tree or on the leaves of the ki, or ti, leaf plants. They were beautiful and their shells were made up of different, delicate colors: yellow, green, and pink. They were said to have inhabited the forests of Hawai‘i by the millions. The kahuli would often be found coming down from the tree tops to search along the streams of the mountain for the nectar of the ‘akolea fern, which had beautiful

Journal Entry #5
What do you think you need to do to be able to navigate two world views: your own culture and that of the institutional culture? Think about how you can create your Third Space, your safe space. What will you draw upon from your culture, your spirituality, and the universe during those times when you must travel the first and second spaces of your world?
bright red blossoms. The blossoms were filled with nectar that they loved to eat and fill their 'opu, or stomach. Once they were pau, or finished eating, they would climb back up into their trees and fall asleep.

One day, there were foreign animals brought over on the different ships from other lands. These cows, horses and many other large animals came and invaded the forests. This scared the kahuli shells and kept their 'opu empty because they were too afraid to go down to get the nectar from the 'akolea blossoms thinking that if they left the trees to walk along the forest floor, the animals would trample and kill them. After a time, they could not take being hungry any longer. They decided to have a council meeting with their elders high up in the tree tops. They were asking one another “What should we do? How will we get the ‘akolea nectar to eat again?”

As they were talking, their friends, the kolea birds, were sitting in the branches of the tree. They heard everything and knew they wanted to help the kahuli. They looked at the sad little shells and said “Little shells, little shells! We are your friends; we want to help you. We know how! We can fly down to the streams and gather the nectar from the ‘akolea blossoms and carry it back to you in our beak and feed you. How does that sound?” The kahuli were so excited that they cheered! “Yes, friends! Mahalo NUI (Thank you SO MUCH!) Now we don’t have to be hungry!!”

The Pacific Golden Plover or kolea bird of Hawai‘i

The very wise snail thought and said “Since they are doing this for us, we should also think of something to do for them.” So they sat and thought for a while. Suddenly, a tiny little voice came from under a leaf. It was the tiniest of all the kahuli snails! “I know what we can do! We can promise to sing to them every night when the moon is full!” The wise snail smiled and looked at the kolea bird asking, “How does that sound?” The kolea loved that idea because they loved to hear the sweet notes of the kahuli shells as the wind blew and their singing filled the forest. “We agree!” they shouted. “We will fly down to gather the nectar in our beaks and fly it back up to you in the trees so you do not have to go hungry. In return, you will sing to us every night when the moon is full!”

Since that day, the kahuli snails and the kolea birds have kept their promise. Every night when the moon is full, the forests of Hawai‘i are filled with the kahuli shells singing to their friends, the kolea birds.

Here is their song:

KaHuliAku, Kahuli Mai
Kahuli lei ‘ula ____________
Lei ‘akolea
Kolea, Kolea
Ki‘i I kawai
Wai ‘akolea, wai ‘akolea
Lulu luluuluLuluuluulu

Turn little shell, turn this way
The tree shell is a red ornament
In the lei of the ‘akolea fern
Little Kolea, Little Kolea
Go down to the stream
Sip the sweet nectar from the ‘akolea fern

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Questions

1. What struggle did the kahuli shells have?
2. Did their struggle stem from something that was already there or was it something that was introduced to them?
3. How was the problem solved? What made the kahuli shells successful?
4. Does it make a difference when there are others trying to help you succeed?
5. Did the kahuli shells just take what their friends, the kolea birds offered them, or did they prepare to give something in return? Why is that an important thing to do?

Notes

2. Pacific Islander Diversity Cultural Information, BYU David O. McKay School of Education accessed from http://education.byu.edu/diversity/culture/pacificislander.html
7. Ibid.


