

## Indigenous Assessment Working Group

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The Indigenous Assessment Working Group comprised 15 members coming from a wide variety of organizations and backgrounds. The organizations represented included Nā Lei Na‘auao Native Hawaiian Charter School Alliance (3 members), the University of Hawai‘i (2 members), the Hawai‘i Department of Education schools (2 members), ‘Aha Pūnana Leo (1 member), Keiki o ka ‘Āina (1 member), and Kamehameha Schools (6 members).

In its early 2006 meetings, the Indigenous Assessment Working Group explored a range of possible directions for its work. We considered the need for a published review of research about Native Hawaiian education, the importance of transforming large-scale assessments (such as the Hawai‘i State Assessment [HSA], Stanford Achievement Tests, and the Hawai‘i Aligned Portfolio Assessment [HAPA]), the importance of and need for professional education about assessment for teachers and school administrators, as well as the design and implementation of classroom-level assessment for multicultural learners based on indigenous concepts. Our working group recognizes that one of the primary goals of Nā Lau Lama is to recommend practices that can be implemented in Hawai‘i’s schools to improve outcomes for Native Hawaiian students and their peers. Given that purpose, our working group ultimately agreed that we could best contribute to the overall Nā Lau Lama goals by focusing on classroom assessment with an emphasis on the following three priorities:

1. Identify research-based, culturally appropriate approaches to diverse forms of assessment in education for Native Hawaiian learners that:
  - Involve meaningful performances, including those that are place-based and community-based;
  - Are culturally appropriate in format and delivery;
  - Give feedback that can recursively inform instruction and learning in a frequent, timely way; and
  - Provide evidence of progress in globally valued academic skills and content, as well as in locally valued knowledge, skills, and dispositions.

2. Encourage implementation of multiple and diverse forms of such assessments.
3. Advocate for recognition of such assessments as important measures and evidence of student achievement.

To accomplish this work, we drew from our collective personal and professional experiences, informal interviews with education and assessment professionals, current theoretical and research-based writings on indigenous assessment, and the mana‘o or thoughts of our colleagues through a series of assets-based interviews. Our recommendations are aligned with traditional Hawaiian epistemology and practices; however, we note that there are many points of intersection between these culturally grounded approaches and current understandings of new research-based practices and paradigms that have transformed current thinking about classroom assessment (Kahakalau, 2005). Based on this congruence, we believe that assessments consistent with the guiding principles and design principles discussed in this chapter have the potential to enhance outcomes for all learners.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Hawaiian tradition of assessment is an ancient, rigorous, and highly specialized one, designed to ensure that all those who are given individual or collective kuleana (upon which the community depends) are able to fulfill that kuleana with excellence (Chun, 2006; University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa College of Education, 1991).

While the word ‘kuleana’ is commonly translated as ‘responsibility,’ an additional layer of meaning relates to the accountability one has—to one’s self, teacher, community, and family—to fulfill that responsibility. The notion that assessment and accountability are of “Western” derivation is a misperception; tapping the deep and elaborately developed roots of Hawaiian assessment may in fact have a great benefit if adapted in effective ways for the contexts of Hawai‘i’s schools.

Assessment within a Hawaiian context inherently includes the dimension of spirituality, which would indicate the presence of akua, or the divine, and the appropriateness of the nature, demeanor, and disposition of the learner in relation to the task. Measured internally, in the na‘au, spirituality adds a deeper level of meaning to the learning process.

Hawaiian culture-based education is based on a holistic view of the world and deep appreciation of interconnectedness. This reminds us that a system of Hawaiian culture-based education must consider the connections between all its elements. One of these elements comprises the outcomes, methods, and tools by which our schools, educational programs, and students are judged to be successful. These are not inert and culture-free. They reflect the worldviews, goals, and pedagogies of those who develop them and promote their use. Effective and fair accountability and assessment of Native Hawaiian learners require that culturally based programs, curricula, schools, and educational programs use tools and methods that reflect the value systems, goals, and traditional practices and knowledge of our communities—indigenized accountability and assessment.

In traditional Hawaiian pedagogy, learning is experiential and relies on focused observation and extensive practice that increases in complexity under the guidance of kua'ana, mākua, kūpuna, kumu, loa, and/or kāhuna (older siblings, parents, grandparents, teachers, skilled practitioners, and/or experts). As an integral part of the learning process, assessment is formative, with the learner internalizing and applying criteria for excellence in process and product. This traditional learning process includes reflection on one's own work and a high degree of ownership. It follows that Hawaiian culture-based assessment reflects culturally grounded and valued ways of knowing, such as focused observation and reflection, authentic performances of meaningful work, and judgment based on relevant criteria. This approach to assessment is strengths-based, emphasizing what the learners can do rather than what they cannot do, with attention to identifying each learner's developed understandings and abilities and the zone where optimal learning can occur. Priority is placed on individual growth and the internalization of standards of excellence. To assure validity, one must conduct assessments in the language of instruction, with 'ōlelo Hawai'i (Hawaiian language) used and promoted with every possible opportunity.



Assessments should be conducted in the language of instruction.

In summary, we suggest that Hawaiian culture-based assessment is characterized by the following attributes:<sup>1</sup>

- **Kūlia i ka nu‘u** (Strive to reach the highest: 1913): The pursuit and achievement of attaining the best possible and working toward excellence is important in a Hawaiian context. Within Hawaiian culture, with its deep understanding of interdependence and respect, excellence is a characteristic of a particular performance or product and not a result of a competition (i.e., excellence reflects individual and collective achievement rather besting someone else).
- **E kuahui like i ka hana** (Let everybody pitch in and work together: 323): Assessment is strengths-based, respectful, and constructive—looking for the particular attributes, contributions, and potentials of the individuals or groups assessed with particular emphasis how they contribute to the larger community. Implicit in this is a respect for the “funds of knowledge” (Moll & Gonzalez, 2004) of the students and their communities. Also consistent with this attribute is an emphasis on growth and continuous improvement that results from diligent effort.

<sup>1</sup>The ‘ōlelo no‘eau used here are found in Pukui’s *‘Ōlelo No‘eau* (1983) with the numbers following each citation referring to the location of the specific ‘ōlelo in that volume.

- **Ma ka hana ka ‘ike** (In working one learns: 2088): Assessment is personal in that it is appropriate to a particular individual, place, and time. There is an emphasis on engagement as well as application of knowledge and skills in authentic ways.



Wai‘anae High School students participate in hands-on activities such as this archaeological project where they can demonstrate and apply specific skills learned in the classroom.

- **I ka nānā nō a ‘ike** (By observing, one learns: 1186): Creating the ambiance, that is, the appropriate conditions such as time and place, for focused observation and reflective dialogue promotes mindful learning as an internal and external form of assessing the levels of engagement, processing, and application.

As education professionals and policymakers in Hawai‘i, we have a kuleana to create meaningful learning experiences for youth that empower our children to become *kānaka mākaukau*—people who are thoughtful, responsible, and grounded in a strong foundation of traditional knowledge, skills, and ways of knowing. Cultivation of these qualities through responsive assessment and purposeful learning will develop inner strengths and depth of character, enabling our children to access, participate, challenge, and actively create contemporary society as they work toward improving the well-being of ‘ohana, community, and environment.

## DESIGN PRINCIPLES

As a result of our discussions, readings, interviews, and personal experiences, we offer the following design principles for indigenous assessment in draft form with the intention that there will be future opportunities for implementation, dialogue, and research. With further refinement, it is recommended that there be systemic application of the design principles in Hawai‘i’s classrooms and schools, as well as inclusion in pre- and in-service teacher training.

We do not expect that all assessments of Hawaiian students embody all these principles, but that an awareness of the principles and their use whenever and wherever appropriate brings assessment practices more in line with the guiding principles and benefits all stakeholders in the assessment process.



Hō‘ike is a culturally relevant assessment tool that can be used to measure student learning.

Assessment most accurately reflects indigenous learners' knowledge and abilities and promotes further learning when...

**...the purposes for the assessment include**

1. creation of shared meanings and clear expectations that increase understanding and build relationships between teachers and learners;
2. identification of learners' strengths and support of teachers' efforts to build on those strengths; and
3. authentic opportunities to explore learners' roles and function within a community (as in stewardship, citizenship, service learning).

**...the design and content of the assessments incorporate**

4. methods that are aligned with the curriculum, language of instruction, and pedagogy;
5. a diverse range of approaches, tools, methods, and venues that allow learners to demonstrate their knowledge in multiple contexts;
6. culturally grounded practices such as hō'ike and intergenerational participation;
7. indigenous knowledge systems that span families, generations, and communities; and
8. consideration of all dimensions of the learner's development—the physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual.



**...the assessment is conducted in a context in which**

9. relationships are sustained over time and include high levels of mutual respect and trust;
10. connections are explicitly made between the knowledge assessed, the learners' past experiences, and the future path of the learner/community;
11. the learners' roles in and relationships to the knowledge studied (kuleana) are recognized in addition to the content itself; and
12. the assessors accept responsibility for using culturally appropriate methods and for using the data in a community-sensitive manner.

**...the assessment results are used in a way that**

13. informs the structure and content of next steps and future learning experiences (i.e., "formative" assessment, differentiation, recursive data use, etc.);
14. empowers learners and increases their opportunities for success;
15. improves the situation and conditions for the learner as well as the community; and
16. gives the indigenous community control over interpretation of results and of how findings are reported within the community and beyond.

**APPLICATION TO PRACTICE**

During our working group's early conversations, we sought to better understand the types of assessment often found in K–12 classrooms. While the field could be described in many different ways, the two dimensions shown in the following figure seemed most helpful to us in revealing how various assessment tools differ in their nature and in the information they provide about learning.



When a particular assessment is considered, its position along the vertical axis is determined by the relationship the assessment tool has to the context in which it is used (see Figure 1). Those assessments designed without regard for the specific school context, curriculum, language, or culture are considered more decontextualized; an extreme example of this would be a nationally normed multiple-choice test, like the Stanford Achievement Test. Less extreme but still relatively decontextualized is a standardized test of student achievement of state standards, like the Hawai'i State Assessment.

On the other end of the contextualization continuum are assessments that are designed to measure the development of student knowledge within a particular classroom curriculum, language, or set of practices. Hō'ike (literally a demonstration of learning, typically denoting assessment based on a meaningful task to an authentic audience) is an example of a contextualized assessment. Examples of hō'ike include a drama presented in the form of hula that communicates students' understanding of a particular event, the contribution of an individual or group, or a phenomenon. However, this is not limited to culturally based knowledge and skills. For example, science fair exhibits representing investigations that are meaningful to the students and their community and that are evaluated by experts using a rubric with prespecified criteria is also a form of hō'ike.

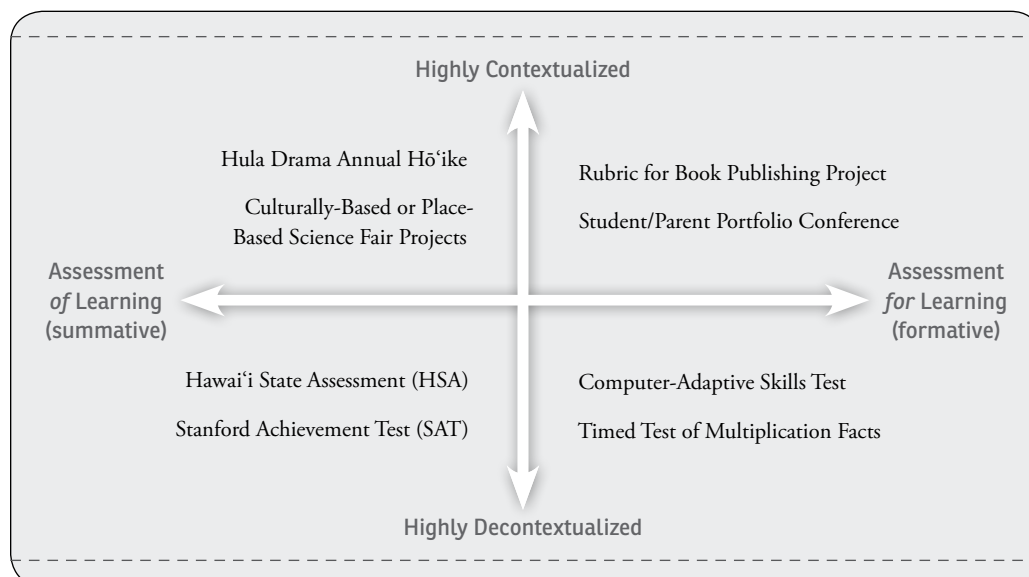


FIGURE 1 Mapping of assessment tools by contextualization and purpose.

An assessment's place along the horizontal axis is determined by the aim of the assessment. At one end of this continuum the aim is to obtain a snapshot of the learner's performance in a one-time event. At the other end of the continuum, the purpose is to contribute to an accumulation of knowledge about a learner's progress as a means of informing day-to-day instruction and learning. This distinction is often called assessment for learning versus assessment of learning (Chappuis, Stiggins, Arter, & Chappuis, 2004).

Assessments *of* learning can provide opportunities for educators and others to reflect on what is and what is not being achieved. These types of assessment can also help clarify achievement expectations. Assessments of learning are usually not specific enough for an individual teacher to use to determine the instructional steps that would be needed to meet the needs of an individual student. However, high-stakes assessments without supportive classroom assessment environments may harm struggling students (Stiggins, 2004).

Assessments *for* learning possess the following characteristics:

- They are student-centered: Students can and do use the assessment results to understand what success looks like and how to do better next time.
- They are part of the instructional process: Frequent, high-quality assessments provide accurate information and are used effectively by students and teachers to achieve success. (Stiggins, 2004)

Examples of assessments for learning include timed tests of multiplication facts, collection, and use of running records (miscue analysis) to diagnose students' reading errors. Progress conferences based on student work with students interpreting and applying performance criteria (typically in the form of rubrics) to their own work are another form of assessment for learning. In these conferences students often evaluate their own progress toward their

personal goals and set new goals based on their guided self-evaluations. Finally, projects such as those that lead to publishing student writing can involve a series of assessments guided by the teacher that help students understand and apply performance standards. Typically the students create several versions of their text, each one an improvement over the earlier versions until they reach a standard required for the actual publication process.

While Figure 1 makes it easy to locate certain types of assessment, the locus of other types may shift, depending on how they are used. Take, for example, the essay as a form of assessment. A history teacher could assign an essay as a summative term paper assessment in which the student's level of content knowledge is evaluated on the basis of his or her performance on a one-time product. Alternatively, that teacher could assign an essay as part of a series of reflections that catalogue the maturation of the student's thinking about an issue over the course of a semester. In both cases, content knowledge is assessed, though the term paper use would be charted on the summative side and the series of reflective essays on the formative side. The level of contextualization would depend on the essay prompt in each case.

A primary principle of indigenous assessment in the Hawaiian context is that both formative and summative assessments are used by the teacher to monitor and develop student understandings. For this reason, our working group recommends the use of diverse assessments that fall into all quadrants of Figure 1. Use of a range of assessments types benefits the teacher, who receives multiple streams of information about student knowledge at different points in time, and benefits learners, who have opportunities to use information generated by the assessments to improve their own learning and to demonstrate their knowledge in diverse and meaningful ways. The use of diverse assessments also benefits learners by preparing them to respond effectively in a variety of assessment contexts; they gain experience across the spectrum from performance-based assessment to large-scale multiple-choice tests.

Recognizing that most assessments in K–12 curriculum and state testing fall on the decontextualized and summative side, we want to encourage and empower teachers and schools to build their repertoire of high-quality assessment strategies that are more formative and contextualized. This improved balance in assessments will help us “make success a driving force in the learning life of every student” (Stiggins, 2004, p. 27).

## NEXT STEPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As we noted earlier, the work initiated by the Indigenous Assessment Working Group to promote indigenized accountability and assessment is essential to the transformation of education in Hawai‘i. Accountability and assessment are integral components of the system of education and must be aligned with the goals and practices of the system. In that spirit, we suggest the following next steps for Nā Lau Lama and our working group:

1. Increase integration between our working group and all other Nā Lau Lama working groups and partnering organizations because good assessment choices depend on the context of the assessment event and content to be assessed (*Design Principles 1, 4*).
2. Articulate the indigenous assessment design principles and recommendations with those of the Culture-Based Education Working Group because the appropriate choice of assessment is determined by the content, context, and purpose of the particular assessment event (*Design Principles 1, 10*).
3. Support the development and publication of a Web-based, annotated repository of assessment tools consistent with the guidelines represented in this report, to include a literature review of relevant research with copies of, or links to, the research reviewed (*Design Principles 4, 5, 6*).
4. Support expanded research and development of culturally appropriate assessment tools and evaluation methods (*Design Principles 2, 6, 15*).
5. Establish and support a “K–12 Assessment Hui” within the state that can serve as a readily available (virtual or real) gathering of educators and community members with whom ideas and experiences with culturally compatible assessment tasks can be shared, discussed, and nurtured (*Design Principles 3, 6, 9, 16*).

We also offer the following recommendations to teachers, the Hawai‘i Department of Education, the University of Hawai‘i, and the Hawai‘i State Legislature, as well as others with the power to act on them:

1. Provide an orientation on indigenous assessment for administrators, principals, and teachers (*Design Principles 1, 2*).
2. Require coursework in Hawaiian culture and language for all public school teachers (*Design Principle 7*).

3. Require a geographic, demographic, socioeconomic, and cultural orientation for all teachers to the specific communities in which they teach (*Design Principles 2, 3, 11*).
4. Collect and publish (via the Internet) a set of assessment tools and methods that may be used in alignment with the guiding principles (*Design Principles 4, 5, 6, 8*).
5. Compile case studies of context-rich examples to serve as models of indigenous assessment for educators and administrators (*Design Principles 4–8*).
6. Collaborate with the Teacher Education Coordinating Committee to ensure that pre- and in-service courses in assessment design and methodology are required for teacher certification and require the inclusion of information on indigenous and culturally based assessment as part of those courses (*Design Principles 4, 5, 12, 13*).
7. Convene a task force to work with the Department of Education Evaluation Department to identify ways to include indigenous assessment in the HSA (*Design Principles 1, 3, 13, 14*).
8. Develop multiple alternatives to HSA to permit demonstration of standards proficiency in diverse ways, for example, portfolio and authentic performance-based assessments (*Design Principles 5, 14, 15*).
9. Incorporate *Nā Honua Maoli Ola* guidelines into the Hawai'i Content and Performance Standards (HCPS) (*Design Principles 7, 8, 13*).
  - a. Short term: Develop alternative benchmarks with accompanying sample performance assessments and rubrics across content areas in the HCPS that incorporate *Nā Honua Maoli Ola* guidelines.
  - b. Long term: Develop a comprehensive culture-based educational strand within the HCPS that incorporates *Nā Honua Maoli Ola* guidelines.
10. Develop a long-term, systemwide strategy for implementing additional assessments (multiple, frequent, diverse) that complement the HSA and provide critical information that guides classroom instruction (*Design Principles 2, 5, 15, 16*).

In closing, we would like to express our sincere appreciation to the Nā Lau Lama partners and our employers for making the opportunity to do this work possible. Mahalo piha.

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### INDIGENOUS ASSESSMENT, SUCCESSFUL PRACTICES #3

*Use assessments that are culturally appropriate in format and delivery*

Students enrolled in Ka Papahana Kaiapuni Hawai'i, the state's Hawaiian Language Immersion Program, are educated in the Hawaiian language and are immersed in Hawaiian cultural traditions. Ka Papahana Kaiapuni Hawai'i (PKH) seeks to develop dual proficiency in Hawaiian and English for students while increasing academic achievement. Under requirements of

the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) all Hawai'i students must be assessed. Prior to 2001 and NCLB, PKH students were exempt from taking the Hawai'i State Assessment (HSA). In order to meet accountability requirements for all students under NCLB, the state translated the HSA into Hawaiian for Hawaiian immersion students. However, when the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) for PKH evaluated the translated version of the HSA, the committee found it difficult to compare the results of a norm-referenced test translated into Hawaiian for Hawaiian immersion students with an assessment designed for English program students. Thus, the committee recommended a structured portfolio assessment for PKH students.

Working with PKH teachers in the field, other Hawaiian language professionals, Hawai'i Department of Education (HIDOE) and the Pacific Resources Educational Laboratory, a prototype was developed and field tested. The structured portfolio assessment addresses three major limitations of the translated version of the HSA. The first is that the Hawai'i Aligned Portfolio Assessment (HAPA) would be designed with Hawaiian, the language of instruction, in mind. This test would not merely be a translation of the HSA. The HAPA consists entirely of constructed response items written in Hawaiian and students respond in Hawaiian. Secondly, a structured portfolio would allow the use of the various dialects of Hawaiian. And lastly, the HAPA would not require translating English items into Hawaiian words that may not precisely match the meaning of English words. The HAPA is just as rigorous as the HSA, both the reading and math components of the assessment address the Hawai'i Content and Performance Standards III.

Development of the HAPA provided PKH with valuable insight into the testing process. Involvement of PKH teachers in the field, working within the DOE system and advocating for the HAPA helped to focus on both benchmark articulation in Hawaiian and in the development of cultural standards. By creating an assessment that is culturally appropriate in format and delivery, PKH can better measure student learning. Baseline scores for the HAPA have been established and PKH has been able to demonstrate an increase in proficiency for students in the Hawaiian language immersion program.