



# MAUI

Ullana 'Ie  
Junior Cohort

Hui No'eau Visual Arts Center







## ***Maui Ulana 'le Junior Cohort***

He puke i hana 'ia e Ke Kumu Hawai'i  
Mei a me Iune 2025

‘Ōlelo No‘eau #1261  
**I ulu no ka lālā i ke kumu.**

*The branches grow because of the trunk.*



## Hui No‘eau Visual Arts Center

Hui No‘eau Visual Arts Center is a nonprofit community-based visual arts education organization in Makawao, Maui, Hawaii. The mission of Hui No‘eau Visual Arts Center is to unlock creativity through exceptional visual arts education and to enhance this endeavor through the preservation of the historic Kaluanui Estate. Founded in 1934 and designated a 501(c)3 in 1967, Hui No‘eau is the primary community visual arts center in Maui County that serves all ages through hands-on programs in painting, drawing, printmaking, photography, ceramics, jewelry, metal smithing, Hawaiian cultural arts, and more.

With more than 50 years of experience in visual arts education, the Hui’s year-round classes and workshops, youth outreach programs, open studios, exhibitions, and free community arts events support the creative growth and well-being of more than 20,000 people annually, including more than 14,000 Maui County youth ages 2-17.

Art has the power to improve individuals, our community, and our future. Hui No‘eau is committed to ensuring equitable access to the arts by providing opportunities for individuals to experience varying forms of artistic and cultural expression and engagement. Hui No‘eau collaborates with a wide range of nonprofit organizations, schools, and other partners to identify and address the needs of the community. Outreach programs eliminate cost and logistical barriers to arts education for students and community members with the greatest needs by bringing arts programming – free of charge – into public spaces, schools, public libraries, and housing communities.

### Maui Ulana ‘Ie Junior Cohort

Hui No‘eau Visual Arts Center is honored to partner with Kumūla‘au and May Haunani Balino-Sing to bring the first ever Maui Ulana ‘Ie Junior Cohort to life. This 4-month intensive cohort taught haumana (students) the skill of ulana ‘ie – the art of weaving the ‘ie‘ie root – as they immersed themselves in the cultural significance of this art form through pule, oli, and ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i. Ho‘omaika‘i ‘ana! Congratulations to each of the cohort haumana; and mahalo nui to Kumūla‘au and Haunani Sing for allowing us the opportunity to embark on this journey with all of you.

Mahalo nui to the Laila Twigg-Smith Art Fund of Hawai‘i Community Foundation and the Hawai‘i Council for the Humanities, through support from the National Endowment for the Humanities for making this cohort possible.





## Mahalo

We would like to *mahalo* the many people and organizations that have helped to create the first Maui Ulana 'Ie Junior Cohort at the Hui No'eau Visual Arts Center: The Laila Twigg Smith Art Fund of Hawai'i Community Foundation and the Hawai'i Council for the Humanities, through support from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Mahalo to **Anne-Marie Forsythe, Keri Meyer, Erin O'Kief** and the entire staff of the Hui No'eau Visual Arts Center.

Mahalo to the families and our three Maui Ulana 'Ie Junior Cohort students: **Nāpua Sardine, Terrence Kalima Kanaloa Davis** and **Keolaonākai'elua Mather**.

Mahalo nui to our cultural practitioner panelists **Kekai Kapu** and **Gayle Miyaguchi**.

Mahalo nui to **Pale Ink Hawai'i** for designing this beautiful booklet and helping to bring our 'ike to life through art.

Mahalo nui to our family for their love and support of our work. Mahalo e **Kanoena Sing, Makanaonālani Sing, Charley Tran, and Gwen Balino**.

Lastly, we would like to express our aloha and gratitude to **Patrick Horimoto** and **Raymond Nakama** for their contributions towards the advancement of 'ie'ie basketry. They were our pioneers who paved the way for us to make our passion of weaving 'ie'ie a reality.

This program is funded in part by: The Laila Twigg Smith Art Fund of Hawai'i Community Foundation and the Hawai'i Council for the Humanities, through support from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

*Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this program do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.*





## Our Weaving Journey

Lloyd Harold Sing, Jr., known as Kumulā'au, hails from Wahiawā, O'ahu, Hawai'i, where he has cultivated his expertise in native Hawaiian carving and weaving. Collaborating with his wife, May Haunani Balino-Sing, they have developed a refined methodology for teaching twined basketry, focusing on the intricate art of weaving using 'ie'ie (*Freycinetia arborea*) rootlets from the wild pandanus vine.

Formerly a Cultural Specialist and arts educator at the Ka'iwakīloumoku Hawaiian Cultural Center at the Kamehameha Schools, Kapālama Campus, Kumulā'au's journey with 'ie'ie began in 1998 after watching a film titled "Legacy of Excellence," featuring master 'ie'ie weaver Patrick Horimoto. This serendipitous encounter sparked Kumulā'au's lifelong dedication to the craft.

Initially self-taught, Kumulā'au drew upon resources like the book "Arts & Crafts of Hawai'i" by Sir Peter Buck (Terangi Hiroa) and received instruction from Patrick Horimoto. His immersion in 'ie'ie weaving deepened upon meeting Raymond Nakama, an associate of Horimoto, who became Kumulā'au's mentor. Nakama's guidance instilled in Kumulā'au a commitment to quality craftsmanship and inspired Haunani to join him on their weaving journey.

Growing up in Wahiawā, O'ahu, Kumulā'au experienced a culturally disconnected childhood before finding his roots at Kamehameha Schools, where he immersed himself in Hawaiian culture, language, and traditions. His educational journey culminated in a Bachelor's degree in Hawaiian Studies and a Master's degree in Secondary Education from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.







May Haunani Balino-Sing, born and raised in Honolulu, O'ahu, comes from a family deeply rooted in Hawaiian heritage. Influenced by her maternal grandparents' traditional lifestyle in Hau'ula, Ko'olauloa, O'ahu, Haunani developed a passion for Hawaiian culture and became the family historian, dedicated to preserving ancestral knowledge.

A former hula dancer, Haunani's journey in cultural practices expanded to include lei making, ukulele playing, and singing Hawaiian songs. Her exposure to various hula masters and cultural educators fueled her desire to delve deeper into Hawaiian traditions, leading her to weave her past and present through the art of 'ie'ie.

Together, Kumulā'au and Haunani have embarked on a mission to preserve and proliferate the art of 'ie'ie weaving. Their collaborative efforts have garnered recognition and support, including grants from the Hawai'i State Foundation on Culture and the Arts (HSFCA). They have conducted workshops, apprenticeships, and cultural demonstrations, both locally and internationally, to share their expertise and perpetuate this cherished Hawaiian tradition.

As Ke Kumu Hawai'i, the Sings are dedicated to nurturing the next generation of 'ie'ie weavers, ensuring the continuation and evolution of this cultural practice. Through their tireless efforts, they seek to honor their ancestors, celebrate contemporary Hawaiian values, and inspire future generations to weave their own stories into the fabric of Hawaiian heritage.

We chose to establish the Maui Ulana 'Ie Junior Cohort because we recognized the importance and value of introducing young learners to ulana 'ie, a traditional fiber art that is not widely practiced in Hawai'i. 'Ie'ie basketry encourages students to think critically and apply STEAM skills in meaningful ways. This opportunity has empowered our junior practitioners to realize that the knowledge of weaving lives within all of us—and that they carry a kuleana to ensure this 'ike kūpuna is passed on to their generation and the ones to come.



## About 'Ie'ie and the Gathering Process

Patrick Horimoto is recognized as the first person in modern times to have researched and remastered the art of 'ie'ie weaving. When he began his journey of ulana 'ie, he couldn't find an artisan who knew how to weave the aerial roots. He began exploring the forests of Hawai'i, collecting the sturdy woody rootlets, and sought out native artisans. Since his early efforts, he has perfected the technique of weaving 'ie'ie to recreate the many different forms of this style of Hawaiian basketry.



Raymond Nakama was an accomplished craftsman of Hawaiian material culture; weaving came naturally to him. His many years of crafting hula implements and his sharp mind and intuitiveness enabled him to unravel many secrets of 'ie'ie weaving. Raymond spent many years working and traveling alongside Patrick Horimoto, sharing 'ike and space in many venues and public demonstrations.

Lloyd Harold Sing Jr. (Kumulā'au) met Raymond Nakama in 1998 through a pahu drum and ipu heke workshop. Unknown to Raymond, he would learn of Kumulā'au's interest in ulana 'ie and became his mentor for 14 years until his passing in May 2014. It was Raymond's words of encouragement that inspired May Haunani Balino-Sing to take up weaving and join Kumulā'au on this journey of ulana 'ie.



## About 'Ie'ie and the Gathering Process

The 'Ie'ie (*Freycinetia arborea*) vine is an indigenous plant found in our native forests at higher elevations between 1,000 to 4,500 feet. The vine grows upward to the tops of *koa* and 'ōhi'a trees and can have stems about an inch in diameter. It has thin and pointed leaves that can grow up to two and a half feet long. At the center of the leaf cluster are rotund and elongated flowers resembling spikes. The fruits of the vine are orange with seeded berries. Long and thin 'ie, or rootlets, extend from the stem of the vine downwards, sometimes reaching lengths of twenty feet before settling into the ground (Caldeira, 2003).

The rootlets can take about six months to a year to mature before they can be harvested, usually collected during the summer in ideal dry conditions. We were taught that it is good practice to gather with a partner and to never go into the forest alone, always respecting the forest. Over the years, we implemented our own protocol for harvesting 'ie, inspired by *hula* gathering practices. It is and always has been *pono* to ask permission to enter the forest. We offer and engage in the following:

- Offering *oli kāhea*, asking for permission to enter the forest
- *Pule* for acceptance and protection
- Selective harvesting to avoid over-harvesting and promote growth
- *Ho'okupu* (offering) or clearing/cleaning the area
- *Mahalo* – offering thanks for the gifts of knowledge and 'ie'ie collected

The following steps detail the preparation of 'ie'ie prior to weaving:

- Sort and bundle rootlets by size (length and thickness)
- Removal of outer bark skin
- Cutting off nodes (small pin-like thorns)
- Soaking rootlets in water to soften the skin for scraping off organic film
- Splitting rootlets into half-round pieces to create *koana* or wefts
- Using splints from the middle portion of the rootlets as *mā'awe loloa* or warps
- Dyeing 'ie'ie can occur before or after weaving a product







## Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death (ROD) and its Effects on the Practice of Ulana 'Ie

Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death (ROD) poses a dual threat to Hawai'i's ecological and cultural heritage, endangering both the native 'ōhi'a tree and traditional practices such as *ulana 'ie*, or *'ie'ie* weaving. As ROD ravages 'ōhi'a forests, the essential 'ie'ie vine faces habitat loss, imperiling the intricate craft of ulana 'ie. Due to ROD, we've had to adapt, using an alternative fiber called "rattan" to continue our practice of weaving.

Ulana 'ie is a sacred art form passed down through generations, woven into the fabric of Hawaiian culture. Each woven piece tells a story, reflecting the *mana* (spiritual energy) of the weaver and the cultural significance of the design. For centuries, ulana 'ie has played a central role in Hawaiian society, serving as both a practical craft and a symbolic expression of identity.

However, the spread of ROD threatens to disrupt this ancient tradition, as the decline of 'ie'ie vine availability hampers the practice of ulana 'ie. Without intervention, this invaluable cultural heritage may be lost to future generations.

To preserve ulana 'ie and other traditional practices, concerted efforts are needed to combat ROD and restore affected ecosystems. By protecting the 'ōhi'a forests and ensuring the sustainability of natural resources, Hawai'i can safeguard its cultural identity and ensure the continuation of ulana 'ie for generations to come.



## The Piko

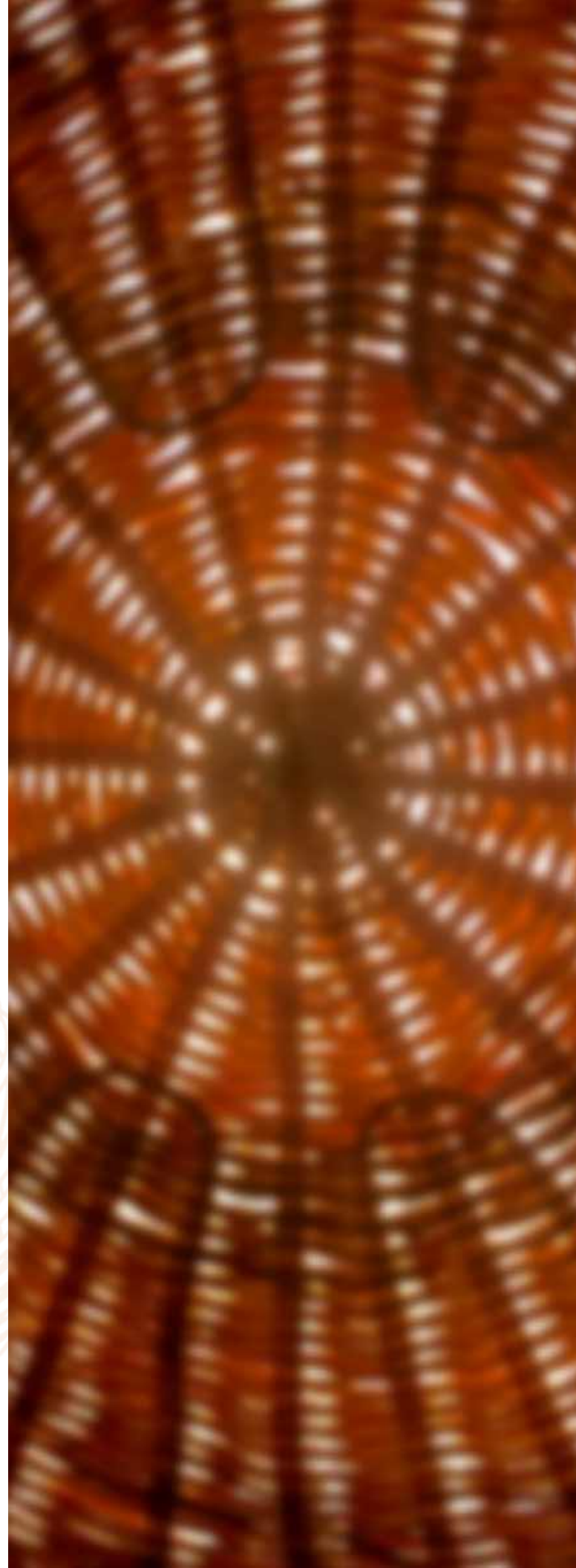
In the sacred practice of *ulana 'ie*, the *piko* serves as the spiritual and physical foundation of the weave, much like the piko of our bodies connects us to our *kupuna* and descendants. The piko, or center, is where the weaving begins, holding the intention of the practitioner and anchoring the work in tradition and *mana* (spiritual energy). Just as our navel reminds us of our genealogical ties, the piko in *ulana 'ie* symbolizes our interconnectedness with those who have come before and those who will follow.

For young learners engaging in this art, the act of establishing the piko is more than a technical step—it is an act of recognition, an honoring of lineage, and a bridge between the past and the present. As their hands carefully shape and tighten the initial strands, they are engaging in a conversation with the ancestors who have woven before them. They feel the rhythm of the past flowing into their present movements, grounding them in the wisdom of *kupuna* while allowing them to add their own essence to the craft.

This connection is not merely metaphorical; it is deeply spiritual. The piko reminds practitioners that their work is not isolated but woven into a greater tapestry of existence. The focus and intention placed on beginning correctly—on centering oneself and the weave—mirror the importance of staying rooted in one's values, culture, and identity. It teaches patience, reverence, and the understanding that each creation carries its own spirit and story.

As young hands continue the practice of *ulana 'ie*, they do not simply learn a skill; they awaken a lineage, calling forth the knowledge and presence of those who have passed while preparing the way for those yet to come. The piko reminds us all that we are strands in a continuous weave, bound together by love, tradition, and the ever-present guidance of our ancestors.

Each *haumana* (student) in the cohort was invited to share their reflections on this journey, which are featured on the following pages.







### **Terrance Kalima Kanaloa Davis**

My name is Terrance Kalima Kanaloa Davis. I've been attending Hawai'i Technology Academy (HTA) since kindergarten, which is what inspired me to join this cohort. I love doing hands-on creative projects—whether it's building Legos or carving wood—and because I've been at HTA for so long, our counselor, Mrs. Atay, knew how much I enjoy these kinds of activities and recommended me for the cohort.



*Ulana 'ie*, although not as well known as other Hawaiian traditions, is still a vital link to our past. It reflects the willpower and patience required for weaving. The process takes time and a strong willingness to continue, even when you feel like giving up. But the result—a beautifully crafted piece—is a reward for that dedication and hard work.



***Learning ulana 'ie has taught me not to give up. It reminds me to do my best and have patience, especially when working on long-term projects that matter to me. These lessons will help me in the future, particularly in my goal of pursuing a career in video editing, where focus, patience, and persistence are just as important.***





**‘A’ohe loa’a i ka noho wale.**

*Nothing is gained by idleness.*

*Success is achieved by working hard; no success can be achieved by doing nothing.*

Hawaiian Proverbs and Poetical Sayings, #173







## Keolaonākai'elua Mather

When we speak about identity, pride is often one of the most important factors. As Hawaiians, our identities often center around resilience and activism in the contemporary struggles we face in our day-to-day lives. But we must also acknowledge the arts and crafts that created the very platform upon which our identity was built. When one is born on an island with no meetings, no deadlines, and no social media, practices like *ulana 'ie* become the occupier of hands. To weave, one must sit and reflect on one's culture—for what is art without its culture?

From silk textiles to spoken poetry, humans have long turned necessity into art. Fibers that needn't be anything but tightly woven were dyed in bright, vibrant shades. Words that need only communicate simple messages like danger or direction were molded into beautifully complex systems we now use to express even our most intricate inner thoughts. Cloth that could have remained plain was instead printed with carefully hand-stamped patterns.

***If there is anything that connects us to our kūpuna, it is our appreciation for the beauty of our art—not just what meets the immediate eye, but the art of sitting and speaking with one another while working, and the necessity of taking our time with practices such as ulana 'ie. Learning patience is vital, but applying it is just as essential.***





Since I began weaving, I've found meaning in the absence of constant chaos and in the simple act of being patient with those around me. If I can spend hours cinching and twisting, I can wait a few more minutes to let someone speak their full mind, rather than brushing them off as rambling. Instead of dreading the most boring, mind-melting class of my day, I can try to understand that the teacher, too, is going through their own challenges.

Not only can I apply the patience I've learned through ulana 'ie, but I can also teach others to appreciate it and bond with them through the essential art of conversation. A simple inquiry—"What is ulana 'ie?" or "How was it used?"—can open up an entire realm of cultural sharing with those eager to learn.

Before I learned how to weave, I often chased other forms of art that never quite fulfilled the cultural role I felt I needed to take. Ceramics, painting, crochet—they all felt disconnected from the land that raised me. But ulana 'ie gives meaning to my restless hands and my constant need for enrichment. It has opened doors I never knew existed and has granted me a greater sense of purpose within the *lāhui*, even if just in a small way.





## Nāpua Sardine

Nāpua Sardine is a senior at Kamehameha Schools Maui, where she is passionate about exploring her culture, serving her community, and deepening her understanding of Hawaiian traditions. She will be attending Seattle University, where she plans to major in social work. With strong interests in social work, mental health advocacy, and cultural preservation, Nāpua is committed to making a positive impact on the people and places around her.

Inspired by a desire to strengthen her connection to *‘ike kūpuna* and traditional practices, Nāpua joined the Maui Junior Cohort to learn the art and skill of *ulana ‘ie*. She was drawn to the opportunity to engage with *‘ike Hawai‘i* in a hands-on, meaningful way and to continue building a foundation in cultural practices that she can carry forward into her future work and life.

Throughout her journey in the program, Nāpua has most enjoyed learning the meaning behind the practices—not just the techniques, but the deeper lessons about patience, intention, resilience, and respect that *ulana* teaches. For her, each weave became a reminder of the importance of slowing down, paying attention, and honoring the process—lessons that extend far beyond the *‘ie*. She is grateful for the mentors and friends she has met through the cohort and for the sense of community that grew through shared learning and support.

Looking ahead, Nāpua is excited to carry these skills and values into her next chapter. She hopes to integrate the knowledge, discipline, and cultural grounding gained through *ulana* into her future work as a social worker—always guided by the belief that culture and community are essential to healing and growth.





*Ulana 'ie* is more than just a *hana no'eau*—it is a connection to our *kūpuna*, a bridge between past and present that continues to shape our Hawaiian identity and culture. This traditional weaving practice carries the *'ike*, values, and skills of generations before us, ensuring that their knowledge remains alive in the modern world. By continuing to learn and practice *ulana 'ie*, we preserve an essential part of who we are—preventing it from becoming a forgotten cultural practice and instead allowing it to thrive as a living tradition.

***One of the most powerful ways ulana 'ie connects us to our past is through the transmission of 'ike itself. Our kūpuna did not develop this skill simply to create decorative objects; rather, weaving served functional purposes that supported daily life. This practice is a form of living history—one that reminds us where we come from and of the importance of carrying this wisdom forward. Every time we weave, we engage in the same process our ancestors did, following the same motions, using the same knowledge, and reinforcing the values they passed down.***



In today's fast-paced world, where modernization threatens indigenous practices, *ulana 'ie* stands as a symbol of cultural preservation and resilience. Many Hawaiian traditions have faced challenges due to colonization and the loss of *'ike*, but the act of weaving strengthens our commitment to keeping these traditions alive. By learning and practicing *ulana 'ie*, we actively reaffirm the importance of our identity. It is not just about making woven objects—it is about honoring the knowledge of our ancestors, respecting the resources of the land, and ensuring that future generations have the opportunity to learn and connect with this tradition.





### ***E Ulu***

*E ulu, e ulu, kini o ke akua  
Ulu Kāne me Kanaloa  
Ulu ‘ōhi‘a lau koa me ka ‘ie‘ie  
A‘e mai a noho i kou kuahu  
Eia ka wai la  
He wai e ola  
E ola nō e!*

Grow, expand multitude of gods  
Grow in your forms of Land and Sea  
Grow in your forms of upright plants and twining plants  
Settle here and dwell in your altar  
Here is your water  
Life giving water  
Grant life indeed!

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Mahalo.







Ôlelo Nôeau #203  
*'A'ohé pau ka 'ike i ka hālau ho'okahi.*

*All knowledge is not taught in the same school.*

