

# Aloha & Welcome!

## Building Pilina

Psychology and Place-Based Values in WBL Partnerships

Chloé Yap | STEMworks, Maui Economic Development Board



# Pilina

*Association, relationship, union, connection, meeting, joining,  
adhering, fitting*

He pilina wehena 'ole

*an unseverable relationship*

# Our Time Together

- 01 Who I Am & Where I Work
- 02 Who is here?
- 03 The Problem: Asking is Uncomfortable
- 04 Hawaiian Values as Framework
- 05 Framework + AI Case Studies
- 06 Tapping Into Our Collective Wisdom**
- 07 Close + Q&A





Maui Girl

Leadership

Psychology



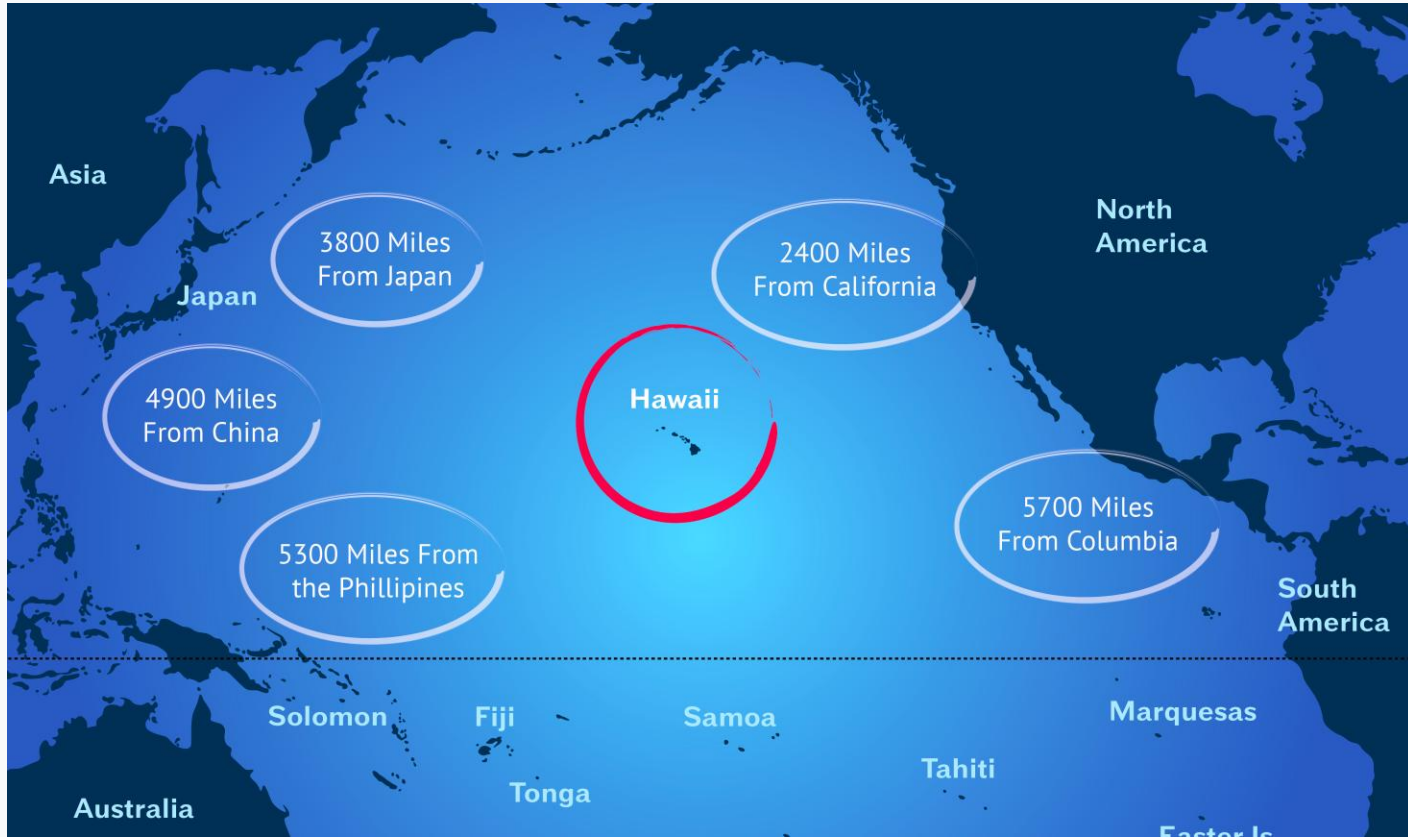
# Where I Work

## Maui Economic Development Board (MEDB),

### STEMworks Program

- Education + Workforce arm of Non Profit
- Serves as Community-based WBL intermediary
- Serving high school CTE students across Maui County
- 4 focus pathways: Healthcare, Creative Industries, Skilled trades, & STEM
- 25+ years of industry partnership history





# HAWAII PUBLIC SCHOOLS



## KAUAI DISTRICT



## OAHU



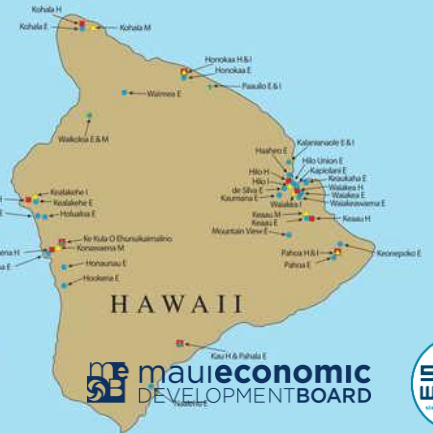
## MAUI DISTRICT

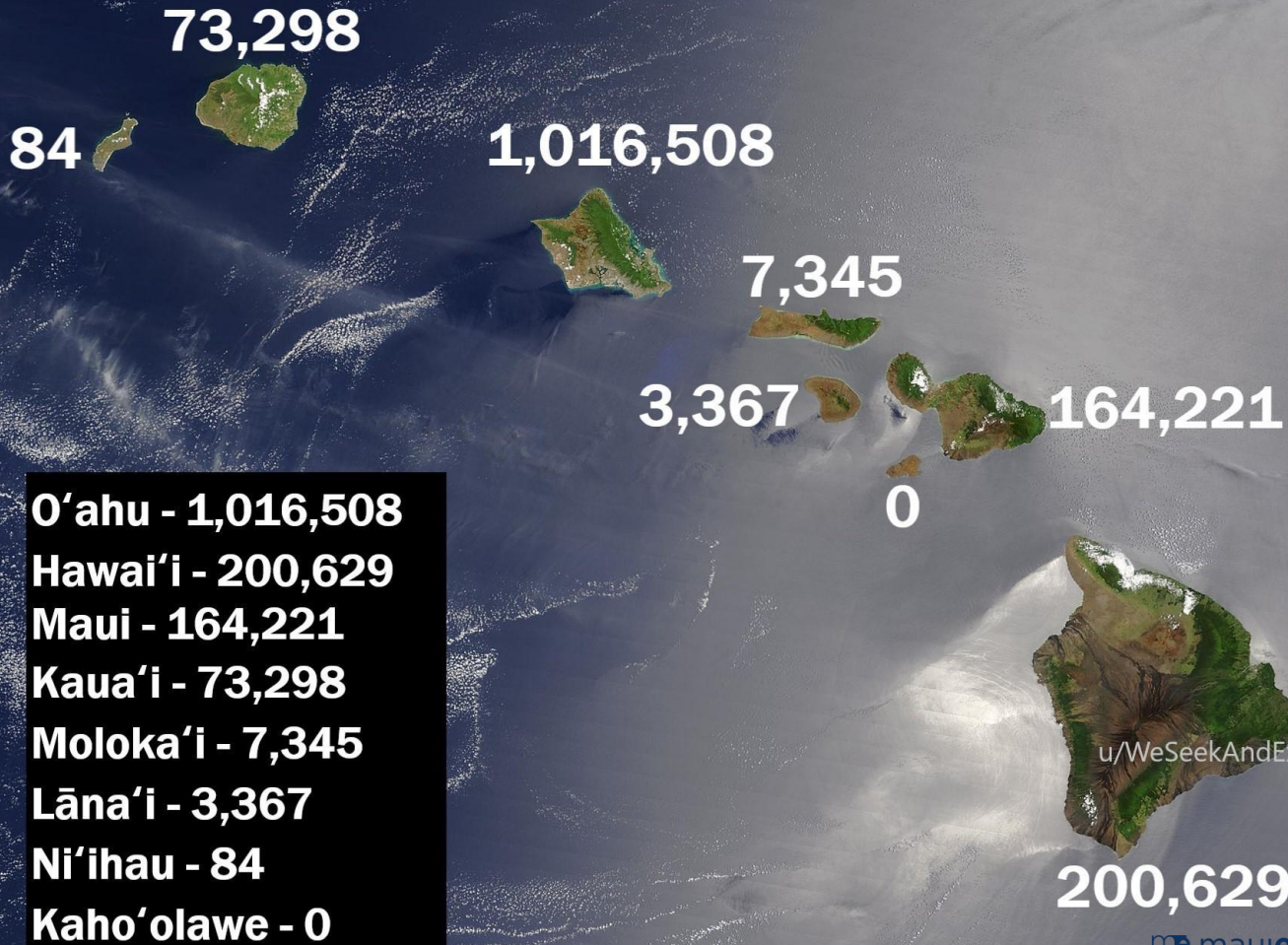


- Elementary School
- Elementary & Intermediate School
- ▲ Intermediate/Middle School
- ▲ Intermediate & High School
- High School
- Elementary/Intermediate & High School
- Special School



## HAWAII DISTRICT





O'ahu - 1,016,508  
Hawai'i - 200,629  
Maui - 164,221  
Kaua'i - 73,298  
Moloka'i - 7,345  
Lāna'i - 3,367  
Ni'ihau - 84  
Kaho'olawe - 0

u/WeSeekAndExplore

## Data Dive

# Hawai'i Could See Nation's Highest Drop In High School Graduates

The declining number of graduates from Hawai'i schools reflects larger concerns in the DOE about shrinking enrollment and the potential for school closures.

By Megan Tagami / January 29, 2026



Share Article



71

# Who is here?



**What role do you hold?**



**How many high schools are in your area?**



**Have you used AI to do your work?**



*Disclaimers:*

I am not sponsored or funded by any of the products or services I am speaking to. I am sharing them truly as tools I use. I am not a sales person.

Yes, I used AI to help shape my presentation. Though these are all my original thoughts.

# Asking for support is uncomfortable.

Or can be!  
For students. For teachers. For us.

This isn't a soft skills problem.  
It's a relational safety problem.



# The Values Framework

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## Pilina

*Connection & relationship*

The goal AND the method. This is where it all starts.



## Kuleana

*Responsibility & privilege*

Partnerships built on kuleana are durable. We are called to steward this.



## Kākou

*All of us together*

Not me doing something for you.  
Us doing something with each other.



## Ha'aha'a

*Respect for our Elders*

Honoring those who came before.  
This community existed long before our program.

# Psychology Concepts for WBL

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## The Diffusion of Responsibility

When group size increases, the individual sense of responsibility decreases, leading to inaction.

## Individual + Collectivist Society

Individualists value personal achievement and competitiveness; collectivists prioritize teamwork and collective responsibility.

## Actor-Observer Bias

We attribute our own behavior to external causes (situation), while attributing other people's behaviors to internal causes (their character or personality).

## Mentor Mindset

an approach that combines exceptionally high standards with equally high levels of support

# Bridging Psychology & Place

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Western professional norms often conflict with how people in our communities are raised to interact: especially around asking, receiving, and reciprocating.

## The Psychology

When the relationship feels transactional, asking feels threatening. The ask itself becomes the barrier.

## The (attempt at a) Solution

Place-based values create relational safety. When the relationship is grounded in shared values, the ask stops feeling transactional.

# The Framework

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1

## Values Informed

Pilina, Kuleana, Kākou, and Respect for Elders anchor every partnership decision.

2

## Relationship Design

Intentional architecture for how intermediaries create authentic collective engagement.

3

## AI-Supported Implementation

AI accelerates the work. The values were always already in the room.



Ma ka hana ka 'ike

*In working one learns*

# Case Study 1: Pilina Maui Nui

*Employer partnership development across Maui County*



## Research

AI identified companies by community, sector, and alignment with student CTE pathways.



## Outreach Design

AI helped craft outreach that felt like a neighbor reaching out – not a cold pitch.



## Systems Design

AI designed spreadsheet infrastructure to track relationships and partnership status.



# Case Study 2: Skills for Hawai'i's Future

*PD series for CTE interns – grounded in Hawaiian values*

1

## Grounding

I brought the cultural framework – wa'a metaphor, kuleana framing.

2

## Building

AI accelerated content development dramatically. What might have taken weeks took days.

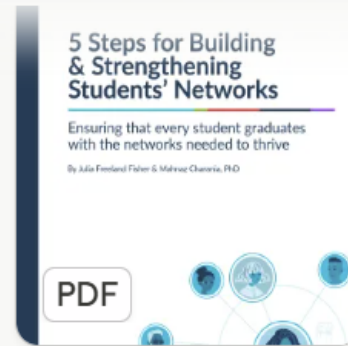
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## Refining

AI helped analyze student feedback – identifying patterns across cohorts, surfacing what wasn't landing.



# Chloé's Example Prompt for Developing Workshop



Social Capital  
Modular  
Lessons.docx

270 lines

DOCX

i am hosting a professional development for 17 high school students in the maui high next week about networking and social capital. we will have 50 minutes. they like hands on activities if we can to practice. I have attached the documents that have been provided to me about social capital. I am in hawaii - and want to take the point of view of "netweaving" and bringing resources together.



# Notes (from AI) on Prompt Engineering

**Three things to tell them it actually requires:**

- 1. Context** — Who are you, who do you serve, what's the situation?
- 2. Constraint** — What can't it do, what tone is wrong, what would offend your community?
- 3. Your values** — This is the one AI cannot supply. You have to bring kuleana, pilina, place. AI will never know your community cares about those things unless you say so.

# Tapping Into Our Collective Wisdom

Kākou – all of us, together.





A‘ohe pau ka ‘ike i ka ha‘lau ho‘oka‘hi

*All knowledge is not taught in the same school*

# Tapping Into Our Collective Wisdom

## Group Discussion

5 min

Menti-Meter!



## Paired Reflection

5 min | Turn to someone near you

- What would you do differently in your partnership work if you weren't afraid of being told no?
- Is there a value or concept from your own cultural or community context that could be the foundation of your version of pilina?

# Use your community's collective wisdom.

Your version of pilina.

And if you want to talk about how AI can support that work, I'm here.

# What to Take Home

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Pilina – relationships – is not a soft outcome. It is the infrastructure.



Place-based values are transferable as a framework, even if the specific values are yours and not mine.



AI is a powerful tool when the values are already in the room.



Being rural, being specific, being rooted – these are strengths. Not limitations.

# Chloé's Favorite Things



Book: 10 to 25: The Science of Motivating Young People by David S. Yeager



Podcast: "The Happiness Lab" by Dr. Lori Santos

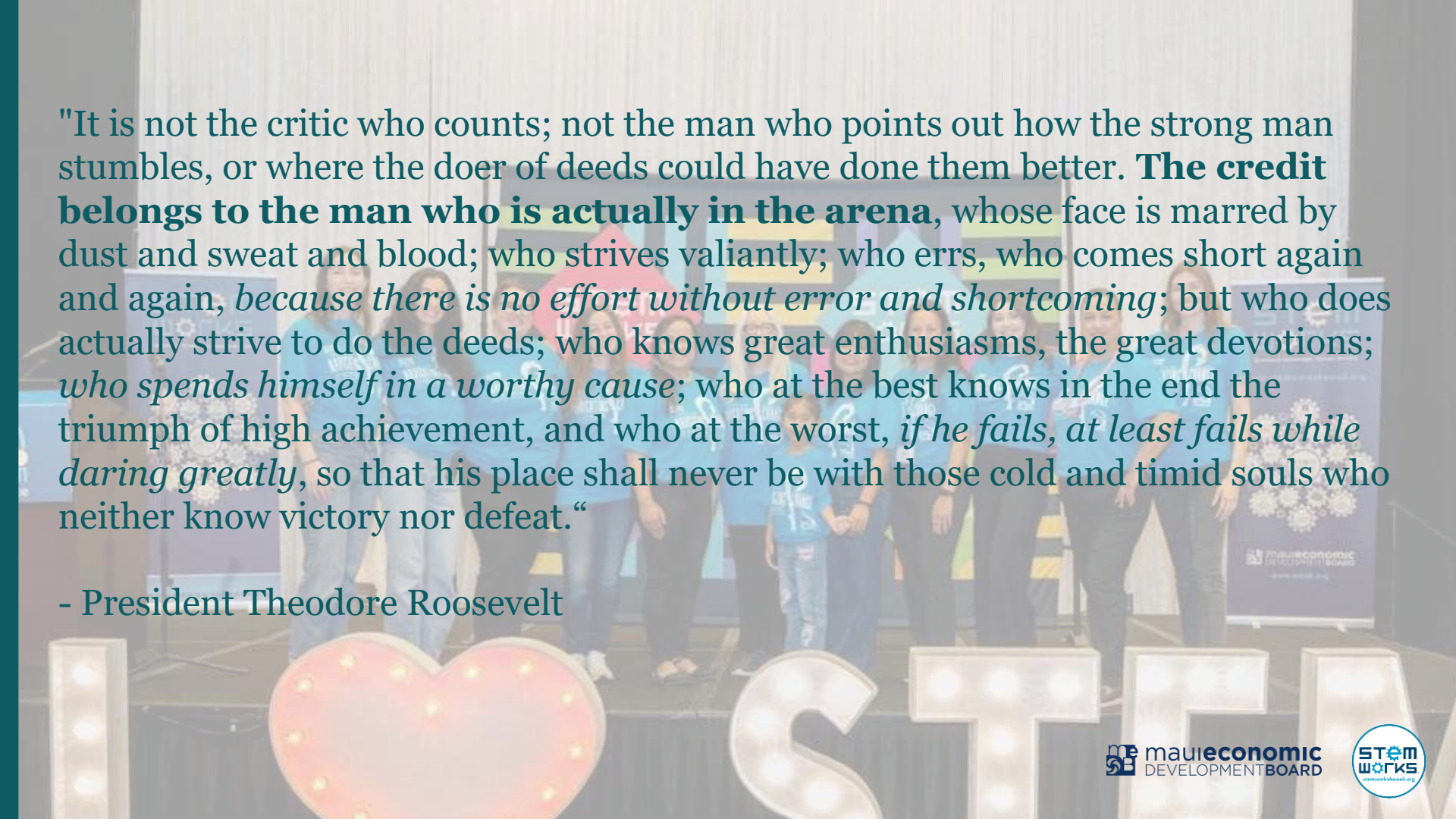


AI Tool: Claude by Anthropic



A thought leader in WBL you can follow on LinkedIn



A group of people, including children and adults, are standing on a stage. They are wearing blue t-shirts with a logo. In the foreground, there are large, illuminated letters spelling 'STEM' and a large, glowing heart-shaped light fixture. The background features a banner with the text 'maureconomic DEVELOPMENT BOARD' and 'STEM WORKS'.

"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. **The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena**, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, *because there is no effort without error and shortcoming*; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; *who spends himself in a worthy cause*; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, *if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly*, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat."

- President Theodore Roosevelt

# Mahalo nui loa

Thank you for your time, attention, and your shared wisdom.

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Stay in touch!

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