Objective(s)

- Students will be able to identify the hula as a significant part of the culture of Hawaii
- Students will be able to appreciate the Hawaiian tradition of the Hula dance
- Students will be able to compare the way traditions and cultural celebrations are important to their families.
- Students will be able to make the connection that learning to do new things helps a person to feel motivated to work harder in other areas.

Materials/Preparation

- Whiteboard or chalkboard space
- Hula hoop
- Markers
- Handout 1: Hula Dancer Picture Cards (print and cut one set)
- World map
- Handout 2: Pictures of hula hand motions (Print and cut one set)
- Hawaiian music (CD or play through the computer or MP3 player, etc.)
- Construction paper/white (one piece per student)

Suggested Grouping Structures

Whole group discussion and activity, and partner activity.

Estimated total lesson time: 45 minutes
Opening the Lesson (10 minutes)

Hooping to Learn about the Hula: Introduction to the Hula Dance

1. **Show** the students a hula hoop and ask them what it is and what they know about it.

2. **Write** the word “Hula” on the board and ask the class if they have ever heard the word used for anything else beside the hula hoop. (Prompt: hula dance). List their responses.

3. **Tell** the class that the term hula hoop came from sailors who had seen hula dancing in a place far away called the Hawaiian Islands. Children a long time ago used to play with hoops by rolling them and spinning them around their waist. The hula dancers reminded the sailors of that.

4. **Ask** the students if they had ever seen hula dancing. Show the hula dancer pictures (Handout 1). Have them compare hula dancing with the hula hoop. (Possible response: Both require movement and motion.) Pass around the hula dancer pictures. (Handout 1)

5. **Explain** to the class that Hula is a traditional dance of the Hawaiian Islands. It is performed to songs or chants known as meles. There are two types of hula dances: Hula kahiko, which tell the stories of important historical events of the Hawaiian people and Hula auana, which is more modern. In the past the hula was performed for kings and used as a religious celebration.

6. **Tell** them they will learn about a man who helped people understand how to do the hula dance and how he used this dance to help students.

Leading the Lesson (20 minutes)

Exploring the Importance of Cultural Traditions

7. **Ask** the class if they know a state that is part of the United States but is far away and surrounded by water. (Answer: Hawaii.)

8. **Have** a student locate Hawaii on a World or North American Map. (Help locate if necessary).

9. **Explain** that this is a place far away but still part of our country. Have a student locate the rest of the United States.

10. **Tell** the class that people who live in different places around the world, in different countries and different states, often have special events, celebrations, traditions, customs, activities, etc. or ways of celebrating that are unique to their community and area. Some of the ways may be like the celebrations your family shares and some may be something that you have never heard of before. The way a community celebrates special events and the ways they communicate and entertain, through songs and dances for example, are a very important part of our history and culture as a society. Continued preservation (through teaching, honoring, and recognizing such traditions) is an important social justice cause to advocate for.

11. **Ask** students to think about family members or friends who live in different places or geographic locations and focus on different celebrations, traditions, holidays, etc. than...
they do (i.e., a cousin who lives in a different state who cheers for different football team). Ask for one or two volunteers share.

12. **Ask** students to try to think of ways someone else they know celebrates a holiday or event different from theirs.

13. **Ask** if they have any special traditions for a holiday or special events that their families recognize. (Prompt if needed: Some people like to eat turkey for Thanksgiving because that is/was always part of their meal that day.)

14. **Explain** that a long time ago, people in Hawaii had a special dance called the hula that had been part of many of their celebrations. As time went by, many of the people living there, and in other parts of the world, didn’t really know how to do that dance or understand its meaning. A person named Blaine Kamalani Kia decided to help people become interested in the dance again. He opened many schools to teach students to dance.

15. **Ask** them what they think a dance is. (Movement to music)

16. **Explain** that in the Hula the music is telling a story. Say something like, “There are hand movements, foot, and hip movements in the hula. The hand movements are often used to tell about nature; the clouds, rain, the trees, etc. The movements of the hands and feet help to give the music more meaning.” Teach the students a few basic hula movements. You can use the following directions, model the steps and have students repeat. (Note: This activity is a great way to get your students moving in the classroom while learning, and weather permitting, this could be an excellent opportunity to take the class outside as well).

- Hula dancers stand with bended knees. This is called Ha’a. Slightly bend your knees.
- The ‘Ami is a hip movement. Make a big circle with your hips. There are many variations of this basic step.
- The Hela foot movement. Tap one foot to the side at about a 45-degree angle in front of your body. Keep body weight on the other foot. Return the foot to the starting position and repeats with the other foot. There are many other foot movements in hula dancing.
- There are many hand movements in hula dancing.
  - The Swaying palms hand movement – left arm becomes the land; right arm and fingers sway showing a swaying palm.
  - Rainbow hand movement - palms of hands meet at the left; right hand makes an arch shape across the front of body to show an arching rainbow.
  - Tide roll hand movement – hands roll over each other to show the rolling sea.
- Put on a selection of Hawaiian music and have students move to the music using the motions.

17. **After** a few moments ask students to return to their seats. Encourage their efforts to try the hula and ask them if they had fun. Ask students to imagine that they practiced and learned to be a hula dancer. How would they feel if they knew how to do something well. Guide the conversation to the connection that the Hula students who learn to dance well often feel happy too, and that helps them to try harder to do well in school. In addition to preserving the history and culture the Hula dance is a skill that can help children to be successful in
school and adults to be successful in life. It increases opportunity for the Hawaiians and all people, and this is an additional positive result of Blaine Kia's dance schools (e.g., benefit to society, addresses social justice through education).

18. **Tell** students that there is another cultural area where Blaine Kia advocated for the native Hawaiian culture and that was to continue the teaching of the Hawaiian language in the schools.

19. **Ask** students what they feel was important about Blaine Kia’s actions. (Possible answers: He helped students learn about something important that people living there a long time ago did. He helped students understand how to do the hula and it helped them to feel like they could accomplish something important. He stood up for continuing to teach the hula to students even when others wanted the hula to no longer be taught. He stood up for his ancestors and took action to preserve the Hawaiian customs.)

**Closing the Lesson (15 minutes)**

**Family Tradition Picture**

20. **Ask** students to name some activities that take place in their communities, festivals, etc. Tell them to think about how they would feel if many new people moved to the area and collectively decided to cancel those events and activities and no longer hold them, what if they suddenly disallowed the activities? Ask, “How would you feel if people who knew little about your area or the culture all of a sudden wanted to change everything that is custom and tradition in your community?” That is how the Hawaiian people felt, until advocates like Blaine Kia, made their voices heard.

21. **Direct** students to draw a picture of something they do with their families as part of a special way of celebrating.

22. **Direct** students to write a sentence below the picture to tell what that is.

23. **Assign** partners and conduct a “Walk and Talk About” where partners show and share their pictures with one another while walking side by side around the classroom (or take the class outside to open space if weather permits, or use the halls). Give students turns trying to hula hoop while they are making their pictures. (If possible have two or three hoops to have time for all who want to try.)

**Assessment Suggestions**
- Answer discussion responses
- Picture drawing and sentence explanation

**Adaptations, Enrichment, Cross-curricular Opportunities**
- Have enough hoops for groups of four students each. Go outdoors and have one member from each group start hula hooping, allowing one minute per student.
- Alternative closing: Discuss the Hawaiian lei and have students make leis from yarn, straw, and construction paper shapes. (Paper die cut flowers of various colors are great). Have several colors available. Have students work in groups of four, giving each group a box of shapes. Review patterns, and have students create a pattern on their leis.