

Teaching in a Hawaiian Context: Educator Perspectives on the Hawaiian Language Immersion Program

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Abstract

Papahana Kaiapuni is the nation's only K-12 program taught entirely in the Hawaiian language. This indigenous language immersion program was established as an attempt to revive Hawaiian after a century-long ban on the language was lifted. The current study examines the perceptions of Kaiapuni educators regarding the ways in which participation in the program transforms teachers' identities as educators and as Hawaiians. Thirty seven Kaiapuni teachers and four principals participated in individual interviews and focus group discussions about their roles and experiences in the program. Many teachers regard Kaiapuni as more than a "Hawaiian" version of the English program. Teachers strive to integrate the Hawaiian culture into the curriculum and view the program as a model of school reform for Native Hawaiians. For many teachers, participation in the program has also influenced the way they think of themselves as members of the Hawaiian community.

In 1998, the National Foreign Language Center and the Center for Applied Linguistics launched the Heritage Language Initiative. This was an effort to respond to the growing concern among those in the second language research and educational communities that the United States is losing a valuable resource of a multilingual population (Marcos, 1999). Although the United States continues to maintain a steady influx of immigration into the country, and multilingual expertise is important to the nation's international and local affairs, there has not been a consistent effort to preserve the languages of immigrants (Brecht & Ingold, 1999; Marcos, 1999). In addition, there has been a decrease in the number of indigenous language speakers in this country. Krauss (1996) estimated that the majority of the 300 indigenous languages spoken in the United States and Canada are threatened with extinction. This is a grave cultural threat. Along with losing a language, other

aspects of a community disappear when a language is lost, including specific cultural knowledge and values (Reyhner & Tennant, 1995; Reyhner, 1996; St. Clair, 1982).

Educational and other policies have tended to promote the learning of English to the detriment of heritage language maintenance. Most grandchildren of immigrants to the United States speak English as their first language and often do not have an expressive use of their family's heritage language (Brecht & Ingold, 1999). Schools are not meeting the widespread need for second language maintenance and learning. The vision of the Heritage Language Initiative is to build "an education system more responsive to heritage communities and national language needs and capable of producing a broad cadre of citizens able to function professionally in both English and another language" (Brecht & Ingold, 1999, p. 3).

This paper discusses a program in Hawai'i that is consistent with the Heritage Language Initiative. We focus on Papahana Kaiapuni (Kaiapuni), the Hawaiian language immersion program. Kaiapuni is the nation's only K-12 public educational program conducted in the Hawaiian language. Kaiapuni students do not receive formal instruction in the English language until grade 5, when English is taught for one hour each day. The Kaiapuni program was established in 1987 as an attempt to revitalize the Hawaiian language after it was banned in Hawai'i for nearly a century. Following the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy in 1893, the U.S. government promoted a formal policy that replaced the Hawaiian language with English for all governmental activities including public education (Shütz, 1994). Use of the Hawaiian language decreased dramatically, as many Hawaiian speakers promoted the learning of English for their children, rather than Hawaiian (Yamauchi, Ceppi, & Lau-Smith, 1999).

Prior to the implementation of the Kaiapuni program, it was estimated that there were only 2,000 Hawaiian speakers, of whom only 30 were under age 18 (Dunford, 1991; Heckathorn, 1987). In the 1999-2000 school year, over 1,800 students and 100 teachers participated in the program on five of the eight Hawaiian islands. Kaiapuni is considered by many as one of the major ways in which Hawaiians are taking control of the education and future of their people (Benham & Heck, 1998). It is also an example of how the K-12 public schools can be more responsive to the revitalization and maintenance of a heritage language. Although the majority of Kaiapuni students and teachers are second language learners of Hawaiian, most also come from families for whom Hawaiian was their first language three to five generations ago. Our paper examines the perceptions of Hawaiian language immersion educators regarding the ways in which participation in this unique public school program has transformed teachers' identities as educators and as members of the Hawaiian community.

Theoretical Perspective

This study is part of a larger investigation of the sociocultural context of the Kaiapuni program. The larger project incorporates three planes of sociocultural analysis articulated by Rogoff (1995). At the community plane is an analysis of the historical and current events related to the institution and development of the program. At the interpersonal plane is a study of the interactions between those involved in the program (students, teachers, administrators, family members), the communication between them, the assistance that is provided, and the conflicts that arise. At the personal plane is an analysis of the transformation of individuals as they participate in cultural activities. According to Rogoff (1995), both the individual and the activity change as a result of this participation. This paper focuses on the personal plane, with an analysis of the transformation of educators' identities as teachers and community members that has occurred through their participation in the Kaiapuni program.

Method

Participants

Participants included 37 Kaiapuni teachers and 4 principals from 13 of the 16 immersion sites statewide.¹ The principals were recruited through nominations by the Hawai'i State Department of Education (DOE) resource specialist for Hawaiian Immersion. Teachers were recruited by contacting the principal or head immersion teacher at each school site. Those contacts were asked to identify educators who would offer unique perspectives on the program. Participation was voluntary, and in appreciation of their involvement, books or supplies valuing approximately \$30 were donated to the immersion school of each participant's choice.

Teacher participants

Thirty-two of the teacher participants were elementary school teachers, four taught in middle schools, and one was a high school teacher. The majority of the teachers were female (78%, $n = 29$). All but four held teacher credentials, and of the latter, one was a part-time teacher and the other was a student teacher. Most teacher participants (89%, $n = 33$) were of Hawaiian or part-Hawaiian ancestry² (ethnicity data for one of the teachers was not collected). Eleven of the teachers were also parents of students in the Kaiapuni program.

Principal participants

All four of the principal participants were leaders of elementary schools that also housed an English language program. Three of these participants were female and one was male. Two were of Hawaiian ancestry, though none of the principal participants spoke Hawaiian.

Procedures

All of the principals and 18 of the teachers were interviewed individually by one of the authors. In most cases, interviews were conducted at the school sites. Two interviews were held at the interviewer's university office and one was conducted at a coffee shop. In addition, 19 teachers participated in focus group discussions with other teachers from their school. Three focus group discussions were held at one school and two at another. Each focus group consisted of three to five teachers from that school, and the discussion was facilitated by one of the authors. When initially contacted, all teachers from sites where there was more than one teacher were given the option of participating in either a focus group or an individual interview. Teachers from the two schools who chose the focus group option were from the two largest school sites on the island of O'ahu.

Interviews and focus group discussions followed a semi-structured, interview protocol (see Appendix for a list of the questions) that was developed by the authors. Interviews and focus group discussions were audio taped and later transcribed for analysis.

Data Analysis

The QSR NUD*IST qualitative data program was used to assist in data analysis. Themes from the interview responses were identified by the authors, who subsequently coded the transcripts. Coding categories were established through examination of field notes, re-reading of the transcripts, and discussions by the authors. After establishing the coding scheme, the three authors coded two of the same transcripts independently and met to establish consensus on category criteria. Once consensus was met, the same process was replicated for two more transcripts to attain consensus across two coders. After this process, the remaining transcripts were divided among the authors (in most cases the interviewer coded her own interviews), and these transcripts were coded independently. The authors met weekly during this process to discuss problems or questions that arose about the coding process and to further refine the coding scheme.

Results and Discussion

We were interested in the ways that Kaiapuni teachers' identities as educators and as Hawaiians were transformed by their participation in the immersion program. In our analysis, we applied Rogoff's (1995) model of development through participation. That is, we considered the ways in which the broader context of the program, as situated in the Hawaiian culture and in the institution of education in the State, contributed to teachers' understanding of themselves as educators. In addition, because the majority of our participants were Native Hawaiian, we were also interested in how participation in the program influenced teachers' notions about what it means to be Hawaiian.

Transforming a Hawaiian Identity

In their interviews and focus group discussions, educators were asked to discuss the reasons they became involved in the Kaiapuni program. Many of the teachers who were Hawaiian discussed their obligation to their community and their desire to contribute to the revival and perpetuation of their language and culture. Some teachers spoke of the discrimination they observed toward Hawaiians and those who spoke the native language:

A lot of my family, coming from Ni'ihau,³ were ostracized, ridiculed . . . because of the language barrier, the lack of communication skills in the English language. They didn't have a good command for the language, so they were ridiculed and they were labeled, and I felt that this is a way to give back to my people. And in the future, that's where I see myself. My role in the immersion program is to bring up the self-esteem of our people. (Kamalani⁴, textunit 45)

I think there's a lot we can do with for our kids as far as pulling them, bringing the overall self-esteem of the Hawaiian people up. Because we were told for so long that we lazy and . . . good for nothing. . . . You know the history. ('Iwalani, text unit 88)

Hawaiian is the second language of all but one of the approximately 100 Kaiapuni teachers statewide (Yamauchi & Wilhelm, 2001). After the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy in 1893, the U.S. government established a formal policy replacing the Hawaiian language with English for all governmental settings, including the public schools. Subsequently, the opportunities to speak Hawaiian and the general status of the language decreased in the islands (see Yamauchi et al., 1999 for a more detailed description of the policy and its relationship to the Kaiapuni program). As a result of these policies, the majority of two generations of Native Hawaiians never learned their native tongue.

All but one of the teachers we interviewed first learned Hawaiian through formal education, either in high school or in college. The one teacher who was a native speaker learned to converse in Hawaiian at home, but did not learn to read and write the language until he attended the university. Many of the teachers talked about how their interest in the language developed in response to a sense that they were losing their culture. Learning to speak Hawaiian, and subsequently teaching in the Kaiapuni program, was a part of a process of regaining knowledge about their culture and establishing their identity as Hawaiians.

One teacher, Noelani, conveyed a powerful story about her family's loss of their native language during a time when the language was banned from governmental activities in the State. Noelani's great grandparents, who were native speakers of Hawaiian, were forced to move to Kalaupapa⁵ because her great grandfather and the couple's young son contracted Hansen's disease. The family also had a daughter, Noelani's grandmother, who did not have the disease.

My grandmother, because she didn't have leprosy yet, was taken out and put into an orphanage on O'ahu, and it was during that time they were punished for speaking Hawaiian language. When I was old enough my mom, who is not Hawaiian, . . . told me the story about my grandmother being punished for speaking Hawaiian, and I remember feeling like it was just so unfair and unjust that in Hawai'i, a native person cannot speak their own language. . . . Growing up [my grandmother] ultimately forgot it, forgot the language, and then because she forgot the language, then she couldn't teach my father. And because my father didn't know, he couldn't teach me. And I just figured that if I don't do something then I'll never be able to teach my children. And then I'll never be able to teach their children, and this will go on and on. So I decided that it was going to end with me. I've got to do something. (Noelani, text units 112-116)

This teacher, like many others in our study, recognized the threat of her native language disappearing and became committed to participating in the revival of the Hawaiian language.

Many of the teachers in our study graduated from Kamehameha Schools, a private school for children of Hawaiian ancestry. Although the teachers who were between the ages of 22- and 35-years old began learning the Hawaiian language at Kamehameha, a number of older teachers recalled not learning much about their culture before studying the language in college:

I graduated from Kamehameha Schools at the time when Hawaiian wasn't taught there, so when I graduated from there, it was like I was not a Hawaiian, I was a *haole* [white] person . . . So when . . . I took Hawaiian language it was like wow you know, we as Hawaiians have something to be proud of. . . . When Hawaiian

Immersion came into being I saw it as a way that we could get back the pride that we have in our culture through the language [because] when I was learning Hawaiian people always said, “This is a dead language, why are you learning it?” And I kept going... because it was like it cannot be dead I’m here, I’m a Hawaiian. (Keola, text unit 121)

In addition to being fluent in the language, Kaiapuni teachers are challenged with increasing their knowledge of the Hawaiian culture. There is a strong expectation from other teachers and parents that the curriculum be based on Hawaiian values. For example, many educators in the program emphasize the Hawaiian concept *malama ‘aina* (taking care of the land) as a theme in their curriculum (Yamauchi & Wilhelm, 2001). The curriculum also reflects Hawaiian culture in other ways. Traditionally, siblings in a Hawaiian *‘ohana* (extended family) are very close and may interact more with one another than they do with adult *‘ohana* members. Kaiapuni teachers sometimes organize their classroom activities to be more consistent with this cultural feature (Yamauchi & Wilhelm, 2001). For example, many Kaiapuni classrooms include multi-age components to the curriculum. On the island of Maui, where the Kaiapuni program is administered at different elementary, middle school, and high school campuses that also serve English language students, weekend activities for Kaiapuni students of all levels are planned so that the students can interact across age and grade levels.

Kaiapuni teachers may also emphasize those modes of learning that have been used in traditional Hawaiian culture, for example, hands-on learning, learning through observation, memorization, and recitation (Yamauchi & Wilhelm, 2001). Thus, teaching in the Kaiapuni program may be very different from the way teachers learned to teach in their teacher preparation programs, and a focus on Hawaiian studies may not be something teachers acquired at home or at the university. Becoming an educator in the program often marks the beginning of Kaiapuni teachers learning more about the Hawaiian culture:

But it’s not only with the language. When you learn the language, you learn everything, the culture, too. . . . A lot of things that I’m learning now as a *kumu* [teacher] and teaching . . . to my kids about protocol and culture . . . I never really knew when I was growing up. So this is like a learning experience for me as well as the students that I teach. So I guess that’s . . . why I’m here, in immersion. (Kēhau, text unit 77)

Two of the non-Hawaiian teachers we interviewed were drawn to the program because of its emphasis on the Hawaiian culture and their desire to contribute to the de-colonization of the native people. The other non-Hawaiian teacher in our study admitted that not being Hawaiian makes teaching in the program a bit difficult:

I'm not Hawaiian and I wasn't raised in the Hawaiian way. . . . I feel that I don't offer enough Hawaiian [culture] to the children. . . . That's one of the goals . . . to bring the Hawaiian ways into the classroom. . . . And I guess I struggle to learn those things so I can bring it to the children. . . . For now, I guess I don't feel totally competent to give them all of those ways, but I try, you know, [I] consult a lot of people. (Kamana'o, text unit 285)

For many teachers, learning and teaching in the Hawaiian language was part of a larger process of changing the negative stigma associated with being Hawaiian. Although Kaiapuni is a public school program and, therefore, open to students of any ethnicity, the majority of the students (and teachers) in the program are of Hawaiian ancestry. Thus, many, both in and outside of the program, view the program as a kind of school reform for Hawaiians (Benham & Heck, 1998). That is, they view the program as more culturally sensitive than other schools and a better way to teach Hawaiian students. The educators we interviewed were aware that students of Hawaiian ancestry often do not fare well in the public schools. On many indicators of academic achievement, Native Hawaiians lag behind students of other ethnic groups. As a group, Hawaiians score among the lowest on standardized achievement tests and are over-represented in special education, working class professions, the prisons, and among those who drop out of high school (Benham & Heck, 1998; Office of Hawaiian Affairs, 1994; Takenaka, 1995). At the same time, Hawaiians are under-represented in higher education and in many professions.

Many of the educators viewed the Kaiapuni program as an opportunity to educate Hawaiian youth in a context that is culturally meaningful and sensitive:

My goals for becoming a teacher . . . I guess I kind of realized that this was a chance to educate Hawaiian students in a way that would benefit them. And I don't think that they had that chance before. Like, I didn't have that chance. So I guess that's my biggest goal, is to educate Hawaiian children about themselves through their own language. (Kaleohone, text unit 43)

One teacher of Hawaiian ancestry spoke about her view that the program is addressing problems that have led Hawaiians to drop out of school and to become involved in illegal activity:

All of the ills that we as Hawaiian people are named for, dropouts, filling up the prisons, all those kinds of things, I think in some way . . . this school . . . indirectly addresses things like that. Because, you can look at cost, it would be way cheaper to fund a program like this and help individuals understand who they are so they can deal with real life situations and do the right thing. It's cheaper to invest in a program like this than it is to invest in

prisons, than it is to invest in all of these other things that exist right now. . . . If we're looking to break the cycle . . . this is the program that we can really do it with Hawaiian people. It's not a band-aid program. It's a life long program. [I am] your teacher, I will be with you in terms of support, in terms of if you have a problem, [if] you need to talk . . . [I will] be with you for the longevity of your education. I don't think any other school can say that. (Ka'umealani, text units 271-272)

Thus, participation in the program for many teachers has provided a path to both learning more about what it means to be Hawaiian and to participating in educational reform for Hawaiian people. Since the 1970s, Hawai'i has experienced a "renaissance," or renewal, of interest in the Hawaiian culture (Benham & Heck, 1998; Linnekin, 1983). The Kaiapuni program developed during this movement and continues to indicate for many that Hawaiians are taking control of defining what it means to be Hawaiian (Benham & Heck, 1998). In this way, teachers in the program are at the forefront of a movement to articulate what it means to be Hawaiian, at a time when the history and culture of their people is being revised, revisited, and reclaimed.

Transforming School To Be A More "Hawaiian" Place

Although DOE administrators often claim that the Kaiapuni program is the same as the English language program, only taught in the medium of the Hawaiian language (Yamauchi et al., 1999), the teachers disagree. They feel that it is, or should be, more than a Hawaiian translation of the English language program. One teacher expressed that she thought the program should be more culturally-based:

The thing that I think the program is lacking right now is that, in many cases, it's just a regular program where the kids are taught through Hawaiian. What needs to happen is it needs to be encompassed, not just in the language, but in everything in the culture, in the history, and . . . how we teach our kids, what tools we use to teach them. . . . If I could have something change, it would be that the curriculum and the way that the teachers teach encompass more of what it is to be Hawaiian, and how to learn as a Hawaiian. (Leimomi, text unit 217)

The teachers suggested that their vision of the program, as it continues to develop, is to become a program that is deeply embedded in the values, knowledge, and activities of the Hawaiian culture. The DOE has promoted this vision by sponsoring workshops for teachers to collectively plan lessons around Hawaiian themes.

Many of the classroom activities seen in the Kaiapuni program indicate attempts to integrate the Hawaiian culture into the curriculum (Yamauchi &

Wilhelm, 2001). Educators in this study provided examples of how what occurs in their schools and classrooms is different from the curriculum and activities of their English counterparts. For example, every teacher we interviewed talked about beginning the school day with an *oli* [chant]. The students stand outside their classroom as a group and *oli* to the teachers asking them for permission to enter the classroom to learn. The teachers then *oli* back to the students, indicating their role as providers of knowledge and granting permission to enter:

I mean [it] happened that way back [in] ancient days, and that's what it was. They [the students] would *kāhea* [call out] to be asked to come in so they learn all the knowledge . . . and then the *kumu* [teacher] would do . . . the *oli komo* [chant welcoming students], and that would be to say, yes, to come in, we'll feed you the knowledge until your mouth no can take no more. (Ka'umi, text unit 59 – 66)

Another classroom activity that indicates the integration of the Hawaiian culture into the Kaiapuni curriculum is the teaching of Hawaiian proverbs (*'ōleo no 'eau*):

We would introduce an *'ōleo no 'eau* every week and we discuss it and then we have the kids share their *mana'o*, their thoughts, on the *'ōleo no 'eau*. And then for the end of the week they take it home and then they write about it in their journal, how they can apply it to their own lives. Things like "*ho'okahi na leo*" [just one teacher's voice or one person's voice]. . . . We don't need all the people talking . . . so they go home and they share that. And hopefully it not only affects them in the classroom, but also outside . . . how they present themselves to the public. (Kamalani, text unit 113)

The teachers also suggested that Kaiapuni curriculum results in students learning about Hawaiian history, traditions, and values. One teacher said that she became so accustomed to Kaiapuni students being knowledgeable about the Hawaiian culture that it surprised her when she taught children in the English language program:

I took a lot of things for granted what kids in immersion knew that a lot of the kids outside of immersion don't know. About the place where they live, about the history, their culture. They didn't know a lot. . . . I was really surprised. (Kenoa, text unit 221)

Another teacher in our study taught at a school that served a Hawaiian Homestead area.⁶ The majority of the students attending the school were of Hawaiian ancestry, even those who were not in the Kaiapuni program. The teacher observed some of the non-immersion Hawaiian students referring to immersion students as "the Hawaiians":

At one point we were having problems between the “us and them” thing, you know, “Oh, those are the Hawaiians.” And even though the kids here . . . majority are Hawaiian, they’ll say, “Oh, those are the Hawaiians.” We’re like, “but you’re Hawaiian too!” (Pi’ilani, text unit 193)

The reaction by these non-immersion Hawaiian children indicates that even those who are not directly involved in the program often view it as a very “Hawaiian” program.

Transforming the Role of Teacher

The strong commitment Kaiapuni teachers have to preserving the Hawaiian culture and language is reflected in the ways their roles as teachers extend into other domains of their lives. The sentiments that school does not end when the bell rings and that the responsibilities of being an immersion teacher extend beyond the expected boundaries of the classroom were echoed by several educators. Many teachers take on the role of “auntie” or “mentor” and spend time with their students outside of school. In fact, there is a common in-joke among Kaiapuni educators that program teachers do not “have a life” beyond their role as teachers. For example, one teacher talked about spending the weekend with her students:

I spend a lot of time with the kids during the weekends. . . . I’ll say, “okay, tomorrow let’s go paddling.” I’ll tell them, “OK, meet down at the canoe *hale* [a structure where canoes are kept],” [at a] certain time and, we go paddle, we go play, or we go surf or do something. . . . I try to spend more time with my kids because I don’t think school stops at two o’clock when the bell rings. It goes on. . . . [And we give] homework help because many parents do not speak Hawaiian. Students call teachers at night. (‘Iwalani, text unit 74)

Many of the Kaiapuni teachers talked about how their role is different from what is generally expected from teachers in the English language program. For example, many of the Hawaiian teachers viewed being an educator in the program as an extension of their role as Hawaiians. In response to a question asking whether she viewed teaching in this program to be different from teaching in the English language program, Kahiau explained:

Every way spiritually, emotionally, culturally. I mean it’s just a whole different story, if you ask me. Like when I see, what I’ve observed with English side, this is more of a *kuleana* [responsibility or privilege]. I don’t know how to explain it to you, but it’s something that we need to do so the rest of the generations to come can carry on, and for me personally it’s not a job, so . . . it’s not like get up to go to work everyday, it’s my lifestyle, it’s what I

do. . . . So it's different in every which way you can think of. I mean I think everybody's closer, the community is smaller. . . . Things that we do are always, will always, reflect cultural aspects first and foremost. (text unit 148)

A Different Relationship With Students

As Kahiau suggested, the values embedded in the Hawaiian culture influence Kaiapuni teachers' interactions with their students. For example, an emphasis on *'ohana* or extended family was mentioned. Teachers also talked about the Hawaiian value of *aloha*. The word *aloha* has many meanings, including love, affection, compassion, mercy, sympathy, pity, kindness, sentiment, grace, and charity (Pukui & Elbert, 1986). Some of the teachers we interviewed talked about there being more *aloha* in Kaiapuni classrooms than one might find elsewhere:

It's just different from a regular school, I guess because of the values, the concepts that they use like *'ohana* and *aloha*. It really, it makes it a little bit more close knit. . . . I'm not saying that regular teachers don't care for their students, but there's, I guess a lot more *aloha* in the classroom . . . I guess for me it's to give back . . . to these children so when they grow up they can feel proud about their culture. . . . And to me, just seeing that they practice what I've taught them, it's something gratifying. (Kepano, text unit 109)

One principal noted that the Kaiapuni teachers in her school influenced the non-immersion teachers by setting an example of choosing to give up their "non-duty" time to spend more time with their students:

Teachers have a duty-free lunch, and they never eat with their children. Well, the immersion teachers from day one at this school last year ate lunch in the cafeteria every single day with their classes. And there was no concern about whether or not they had a duty-free lunch cause it was all part of the *'ohana* [extended family] concept of eating together, and . . . it was just really really nice. (Edna, text unit 213)

For some teachers, this notion of *'ohana* (extended family) extends beyond the present generation of family members to include one's ancestors and future relatives. For example, Kalina described her students as the future *kūpuna* (grandparents or elders) who must learn the language and traditions so that they can someday teach the next generation of *kūpuna*. Another teacher mentioned that she didn't think she would ever consider quitting as a teacher, until her original class of elementary students graduates from high school. Thus, a feeling of connectedness to students as members of an extended family seems to transcend teachers' notions about their role as educators.

Politics and Teaching

Many of the participants in our study discussed the intense political nature of the program. Since the 1970s, there has been much discussion in the State about whether and in what form Native Hawaiians should reestablish political sovereignty (Benham & Heck, 1998). Although not directly related to sovereignty activities, Kaiapuni is often associated with this movement. Many of the Native Hawaiian teachers we interviewed viewed their participation in the program as part of their role in the Hawaiian sovereignty movement. They viewed the reestablishment of the Hawaiian language in school as one step toward Hawaiians regaining the rights and privileges their people lost through colonization.

The political intensity of the program is also reflected in the expectation that teachers will be involved in political lobbying for program resources. Each year, Kaiapuni resources are determined by the state legislature and the Board of Education (BOE).⁷ Kaipau teachers testify and demonstrate at the State Capitol and before the BOE to assure support for issues such as program expansion, student transportation, and curriculum development. Prior to becoming involved in the program, many teachers had never experienced being involved in politics to this extent, and for some, these experiences transformed their perception of themselves:

As a teacher here at this school, it's been more than just your regular DOE teacher type thing and more than just committees at the school. We've taken it a dimension further. Some of us here are parents and staff. All of us get involved with the lobbying with the legislature. All of us get involved in Hawaiian issues that involve making decisions for our future generations to come as well as those that are here in school. So I think we've internalized the *kuleana* [responsibility or privilege] of being there to express our *mana'o* [knowledge] when it comes to our kids. I don't think I would do this in any other capacity as a DOE employee. I don't think I could go to the legislature or be a part of a statewide council as intensely as we do it here. (Kahiau, text unit 138)

The politics of being involved in the Kaiapuni program extend into the classroom as well, as Kaiapuni teachers often bring their students with them to demonstrate and testify. Some teachers feel that an important part of their curriculum is to teach students about the politics, past and present, surrounding Native Hawaiian issues. These teachers expect their students to be politically aware and active:

I am counting on them [students] to continue, be even stronger. I mean, they've been watching this from the very start of the program, their parents doing it, the teachers are doing it. That's our excursions

to State Capitol, I mean who takes their kids to the State Capitol to go . . . *kūe* . . . oppose or protest . . . certain bills? (Ka'umi, text units 27 – 33)

Conclusion

Those involved in establishing the Heritage Language Initiative suggested that U.S. schools have not adequately promoted the maintenance and learning of heritage languages, regarding both immigrant and indigenous languages (Brecht & Ingold, 1999; Fishman, 1999). Such is the case for the Hawaiian language, which was banned from classroom use for over 90 years. Partly as a result of this, Hawaiian became a threatened language. Considering that the number and age of speakers is an indicator of the health of a language (Krauss, 1996), the Kaiapuni program has been successful in contributing to the revitalization and maintenance of this indigenous language. Although the program has become a model for other communities interested in developing an indigenous language immersion program, there are still many issues of interest to consider regarding what resources are needed to begin and sustain such a program. One of the most important resources of any language immersion program is its teachers (Genesee, 1996). Teaching in a language immersion program is very demanding, especially for those involved in a program that promotes a threatened language. As such, it is important to understand the role of teachers and how participation in the program influences their personal and professional development. In this paper, we described some of the ways in which participation in Kaiapuni has influenced program teachers.

Rogoff (1995) views development as “participatory appropriation,” a process by which individuals’ participation changes as they take part in cultural activities. From this perspective, individuals make sense of their involvement, contribute to it, and communicate and negotiate with other participants. Development includes individuals’ changing views of themselves in a particular situation and the extension of these roles and self-perceptions to similar contexts. Our study found that Kaiapuni teachers’ involvement in the immersion program transformed their views of themselves both as educators and as Native Hawaiians. The teachers viewed the nature of their work as educators to be different from what they would experience if they were teaching on the “English side.” Teaching in the Kaiapuni program means incorporating Hawaiian values and traditions into the classroom and educating Hawaiian youth about a more indigenous perspective of life. Teaching in the program also means participating in a movement to reestablish what was lost when the Hawaiian monarchy was overthrown over a century ago and rethinking one’s role in the larger context of Hawaiian language and culture revitalization and political activism.

The roles that Kaiapuni teachers described for themselves as educators and as Hawaiians are connected to their understandings of their people's history in education and politics. These roles also encompass teachers' visions of their own and their students' futures. This is consistent with a perspective of development that does not assume segmentation of time into units of past, present, and future. As Rogoff (1995) put it, "any event in the present is an extension of previous events and is directed toward goals that have not yet been accomplished. As such, the present extends through the past and future and cannot be separated from them" (p. 155).

All but one of the teachers in this study said that they planned to be involved in the program indefinitely. Some reported they might change roles to become more engaged in curriculum development or teacher education for the program. However, the majority envisioned themselves continuing as Kaiapuni teachers. For many, this commitment reflects their belief that they are fulfilling an important role in the future history of their language and culture. As one teacher expressed:

We teach here with our whole heart, soul, mind, everything, spirit. Everything we do here is . . . not a choice, it's for our people . . . if we don't mälama [take care of] [the children] and teach them the ways of our people . . . then when we get old, it's not gonna be there anymore. (Kalina, text units 176-184)

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Appendix

Interview Questions

1. Would you state your name and spell it for us?
2. If you don't mind, would you tell us your age?
3. What is your ethnicity? (If multiple, is there one that you particularly identify with?)
4. Where did you grow up?
5. Could you describe your post-secondary education?
6. What is your current occupation?
7. Do you speak Hawaiian?
 - a. If yes, when and how did you learn the language? And from whom?
 - b. In what contexts do you use the language?
8. What roles have you played in the program?
9. What were your goals or reasons for getting involved in the program?
10. What have you learned about the program since you have been (or were) involved in it?
 - a. How, if at all, have your feelings about the program changed over this time?
11. Describe a typical day in your classroom (probe).
 - a. Have you ever taught in an English-only classroom? (If so,) how was a typical day similar or different to your experience in a Hawaiian immersion classroom?
12. What do you consider to be the goals of the Hawaiian Immersion program?
 - a. How successful do you think the program is at accomplishing these goals?
 - b. Which of these goals do you think are the most important? Why?
 - c. Do you think there any other successful outcomes of the program?
13. What do you see as the most difficult challenges of the program?
 - a. How do you think the program can move to overcome these challenges?
14. How long do you think you will continue to teach or otherwise be involved in the program?

- a. Why do you think you are still here (while some decide this is not for them)?
15. If you could have anything for your classroom/teaching, what you want? (If it is materials, specifically what kind of materials?)
 16. What is your vision of a Kaiapuni (high school) graduate? What do you think graduates should be like and be able to do?
 17. From your perspective where and when in the curriculum do you think the English language should be introduced and used? Why?
 18. In what ways, if any, do you think the program influences students and their families when they are outside of the school setting?
 19. In what ways, if at all, do you think the program influences how Hawaiian students in the program think about themselves as Hawaiians?
 20. In what ways, if at all, do think the program is important for people who are not of Hawaiian ancestry?
 21. In what ways, if at all, do you think the program is important for people who are not Hawaiian speakers?
 22. How do you think the families of the students influence the program?
 23. How supportive do you think the general public is of the program?
 24. What advice do you have for people thinking about becoming Hawaiian immersion teachers? What advice do you have for parents thinking about sending their children to the program?
 25. What advice do you have for other Native American communities who are considering developing an indigenous immersion program?
 26. What are important points for such communities to consider in making a decision to start an immersion program?
 27. Are there any other comments that you would like to make regarding your perspective on the program?
 28. Are there other people that you recommend that we talk to about these issues?

Endnotes

¹ Except for two of the sites, the program is administered as a “school within a school,” so that most of the sites also serve students in the more typical English language program.

² In this paper, we use the terms “Hawaiian” and “Native Hawaiian” to refer to those of both Hawaiian and part-Hawaiian ancestry.

³ Ni‘ihau is a privately owned island where the Hawaiian language continued to be the first language of its inhabitants throughout the century long ban on the language that occurred everywhere else in the state.

⁴ In this paper pseudonyms are used, except for participants who requested that we use their real names.

⁵ Kalaupapa was an isolated settlement on the island of Moloka'i for those with Hansen's disease.

⁶ Established by the Hawai'i Rehabilitation Act of 1921, the Hawaiian Homelands were initially intended to provide low income Hawaiians with land for housing and farming (Benham & Heck, 1998).

⁷ Hawai'i is the only state in the nation for which there is one unified school district administered by an elected Board of Education and a superintendent who is appointed by the Board. Funding for education is appropriated each year by the state legislature.

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