KULEANA ‘OHANA KAIAPUNI:
A STORY OF AGENCY AND HAWAIIAN IMMERSION FAMILIES

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI‘I AT MĀNOA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN

EDUCATION

AUGUST 2014

By

Pōhai L. Kukea Shultz

Dissertation Committee:

Maenette Benham, Chairperson
Annette K. Wong
A. Kuʻulei Serna
J. Noelani Goodyear-Kaʻōpua
Hokulani Aikau
© 2014 Pōhai Kukea Shultz
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

On the rollercoast of a journey that is involved in getting a PhD, there are so many people and events along the way that shape your experience! I know that I cannot possibly thank everyone who had an impact on me and on this journey, but after writing this moʻolelo about the power of collective kuleana, I understand that none of this would have been possible without the support of those both here and passed.

Mahalo to my family – this is a journey that you have reluctantly traveled with me and I am certain that I could not have done it without you. In particular, Kānekoa, Kahikina and Tita – you are the loves of my life and mahalo nui for the sacrifices you made so that I could do this work.

Mahalo to my advisor, Maenette Benham – thank you for believing in me and taking me under your wing at a time when I needed it the most. You have taught me more than you can imagine about what true mentoring and leadership means.

Mahalo to my committee of Hōkūlani Aikau, Noelani Goodyear-Kaʻōpua, Kuʻulei Serna, Ipo Wong, and Maenette – I feel privileged to have had the support of a group of brilliant Hawaiians, mothers and scholars along this journey. I do not think I can adequately express my gratitude for being guided by this amazing group of Hawaiian wahine!

Finally, mahalo to the families who agreed to share their stories with me, who are more than just research participants – I am forever grateful for your candor and for trusting me
to retell the story of your ‘ohana and your keiki. I hope that this work and collective mo‘olelo can serve to empower you, in the same way that your stories have empowered me.

No nā ‘ohana kāko‘o kaiapuni
ABSTRACT

While there is a foundation of research highlighting the benefits of bilingual education and native language education, there is only a small amount of research written from the perspective of parents. Furthermore, research written about Hawaiian immersion education, while providing an excellent starting point, typically does not focus on how these families make the decision to enroll their children in Hawaiian medium schools and how they sustain that decision over time. The groundwork has been laid for research that is written from a parents’ perspective and can serve to empower Hawaiian immersion parents in their decision making process, but more is needed.

As such, the purpose of this study is to explore parental decisions to send their children to Hawaiian immersion, examine the effects of these decisions, and understand what families need to know so that a research and resource base can be developed that will strengthen and grow the Hawaiian language immersion program and increase the number of Hawaiian language speakers for generations to come. Using theories of agency, survivance, and kuleana as a theoretical foundation, in-depth interviews were conducted with Hawaiian immersion families and examined the impact of families sending their children to Hawaiian immersion schools on our families, our children, our language, and our lāhui.

By utilizing storytelling, this project became a mo‘olelo about the agency of Hawaiian immersion parents, their embrace of a collective kuleana, and what can happen when families are steadfast in the belief of Hawai‘i first. Research findings offer implications for the future of the Hawaiian immersion program and the preservation of
our language, and more broadly, provide insight into how the state can ensure that it lives into its kuleana to the Hawaiian language and lāhui in policy and practice.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .......................................................................................................................... ii
ABSTRACT ........................................................................................................................................ iv

## CHAPTER 1  Introduction ...................................................................................................................... 1
Ka Wehena ........................................................................................................................................... 1
Theoretical Frameworks ......................................................................................................................... 5
  Bandura’s social cognitive theory ..................................................................................................... 6
  Survivance ......................................................................................................................................... 9
  Kuleana ............................................................................................................................................ 13
The Problem .................................................................................................................................... 18
Purpose ........................................................................................................................................... 21
Research Questions ............................................................................................................................ 22
Need and Significance of the Study .................................................................................................... 24
Ka Panina .......................................................................................................................................... 25

## CHAPTER 2  Review of Related Literature .......................................................................................... 29
Ka Wehena ........................................................................................................................................ 29
Education For Our Kūpuna .................................................................................................................. 30
  Nānā ka maka, hoʻolohe ka pepeiao, paʻa ka waha, hana me ka lima ............................................. 30
  ‘Ohana ............................................................................................................................................ 32
Hawaiʻi’s Education System: A Historical Look at School Choice ....................................................... 33
Current School Choice Policies .......................................................................................................... 39
Returning to Our Mother Tongue ...................................................................................................... 41
Parental Decision Making and Immersion Education ......................................................................... 44
Ka Panina .......................................................................................................................................... 48

## CHAPTER 3  Methods ........................................................................................................................... 50
Ka Wehena ........................................................................................................................................ 50
Building My Approach ......................................................................................................................... 52
Moʻolelo: The Foundation of Storytelling ............................................................................................ 52
Indigenous Storytelling ....................................................................................................................... 56
Case Study ........................................................................................................................................ 59
Participants ......................................................................................................................................... 60
Researcher’s Role ............................................................................................................................... 63
Procedures: Data Collection and Analysis .......................................................................................... 65
  Interviews ....................................................................................................................................... 65
  Data recording procedures ............................................................................................................ 68
  Data analysis procedures .............................................................................................................. 68
Strategies for Validating Findings .................................................................................................... 70
Benefits and Limitations ..................................................................................................................... 71
Ka Panina ....................................................................................................................................... 73

## CHAPTER 4  Findings ............................................................................................................................. 77
Ka Wehena ........................................................................................................................................ 77
Introductions ..................................................................................................................................... 79
  Introducing: Storytelling and stories ............................................................................................. 79
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introducing: The lo‘i</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introducing kuleana: Binding the stories together</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introducing: Nā ‘ohana</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intentionality At The Po‘owai</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intentionality: Redefining good, choice, and kuleana</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intentionality: The importance of mo‘o</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurturing the Water: Foresight, Hindsight, and Insight</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insight</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuleana in Action – Ma Ka Hana Ka ‘Ike</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The kuleana of mākua</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impacts – Keiki, ‘Ohana, Lāhui</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impacts on our keiki</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impacts on ‘ohana</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impacts on the lāhui</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability: Tensions and Resilience</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External challenges and resilience</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The 100% belief</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The power of the collective</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hilina‘i</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pu‘uhonua: The Importance of Providing a Safe Space</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another look at intentionality</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reexamining foresight, hindsight, and insight</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuleana in a new light</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reaffirming impacts on keiki, ‘ohana, and lāhui</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective Agency and Transformation</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuleana to state policy</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity and parity</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating our Hawaiian immersion reality</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ka Panina</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 5 Discussion</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ka Wehena</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Story of Kūpe‘e</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kūpe‘e as a Framework</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation of Kuleana</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construct of Mo‘o</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construct of Ma ka hana ka ‘ike</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construct of Nānā i ke kumu</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key concept of Hihia</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The overarching construct of Hilina‘i</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implications of the Kūpe‘e Framework</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy and Practice of Kuleana</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy and Practice of Mo‘o</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy and Practice of Ma ka hana ka ‘ike</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy and Practice of Nānā i ke kumu</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hihia and Hilina‘i: The Challenge and The Hopeful Promise</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ka Panina</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Ka Wehena¹

This research study is a moʻolelo, a story about our collective journey as Hawaiian immersion parents. Now would be the time to put your seatbelt on – not because this journey is dangerous, but because there are twists and turns, ups and downs, stops and starts, that are an inherent part of the experience of being an immersion parent. This is no ordinary life! As immersion parents, we know the terrain is not always going to be smooth, and when the bumpiness starts tossing us around a bit, we refer back to The Checklist. I have talked to a few families about The Checklist and confirmed that other people have it too. What is The Checklist, you ask? It is a list of things that continue to happen along our journey that we see as hōʻailona, as confirmation that we are making

¹ ‘Ōlelo Hawaiʻi, or Hawaiian language, is sprinkled throughout this dissertation, much like we sprinkle salt on our food to bring out the best of its flavors. In the same way, I used Hawaiian words and phrases to bring out the various flavors of this research, particularly because many words and concepts in Hawaiian have multiple meanings and simply cannot be expressed adequately in English. Furthermore, in the conversations I had with my participants, Hawaiian was used frequently and I believe translating their original thoughts within the text would have been distracting and inappropriate. Pukui & Elbert (1986) and Wong (1999) also warn us of the assumption of translatability between English and Hawaiian to our revitalization efforts. As such, to aid the reader who may not be as familiar with the Hawaiian language, I have provided a glossary of terms, or ʻōlelo kōkua, for words that are within this research that may not be thoroughly explained. I provide this alphabetical list at the end of this work with the understanding that Hawaiian language, knowledge and concepts can have multiple layers of meaning and the meanings that I provide are just one of many ways to interpret and live into the words of our kāpuna.
the right decisions for our children. There are a volume of these stories, and I’m sure other immersion parents have these as well, but this particular one is about my daughter.

Here is the special part about her: she used to expend a great deal of energy trying to convince her Daddy and me that she was miserable when she was in preschool, which was a Hawaiian immersion school. She would go from I-love-my-school-and-friends when we were not there, to a child who looked like every minute of the school day was pure torture when we would show up. I witnessed her run around outside with a look of complete and utter joy on her face, and the instant she saw me, completely change her entire being. The day that happened I looked at her and said, “Busted! The game is up, sister!”

This story centers around our time-honored tradition of school picture taking. It is an artificial and somewhat meaningless experience if you think about it, because don’t we all have pictures that are ten times cuter in our own cameras and phones? But inevitably, when picture day rolls around, we choose a special outfit for our kids, brush their hair in ways that we normally do not have time to do during the morning rush, and threaten them within an inch of their lives if they stain their clothes or pull their braids out before the pictures are taken.

Buying into the hype, I had been talking up the picture taking experience all week, telling my daughter that she should smile at the camera so that we would have nice pictures to distribute to all of her grandparents. On the morning of, she refused to wear anything I put in front of her—it was jeans and a t-shirt or nothing at all. I reminded myself of the silliness of this whole exercise and let her wear what she wanted. I dropped her off at school with a parting, “good luck with her during picture taking,” to her
teachers, and went to work. That afternoon when I picked her up, I could sense a change in her teachers. Knowing what was coming next, I asked them how the picture taking went. One of the teachers pulled me aside and the conversation went something like this:

**Them:** *(In a very serious tone)* Well, we had a really hard time with her during the picture taking today. She refused to smile.

**Me:** *(Laughing)* Really? That’s okay, I don’t really care. She didn’t cry or anything did she?

**Them:** *(Tone is still serious)* No, she didn’t. But I am just concerned that she was so resistant to smiling in the camera. I don’t know if you’re going to want to buy any of the pictures and she will probably have to do the re-takes.

**Me:** *(Suppressing laughter)* Nah, she doesn’t need to do re-takes. That’s my daughtah!

Later that evening, we were sent a link to a website where the photographer had posted all of the kids’ pictures. As we scrolled down the page, we were amazed at how adorable the kids were—every single child had at least one picture where they were probably the cutest things we had ever seen. Some looked like they just finished laughing hard at something, and others made poses that we have only seen in Sears catalogs. And then we reached my daughter’s pictures. She did not smile in a single picture and, in fact, looked ticked off in every single one. Juxtaposed next to this overwhelming sea of happy, glowing children, we laughed. We laughed so hard that we cried and then we laughed some more. We can only imagine what kinds of cajoling the teachers were doing, just to get her to look into the camera. We think the conversation went something like this:

**Them:** Okay sister, smile! C’mon, just one smile for the camera!
Her: *(Silently, only speaking with her eyes)* F*#%^ you!

Them: Just one smile? I bet Mommy and Daddy will buy you something nice if you give one nice smile!

Her: *(Silently, only speaking with her eyes)* No really, f%^# you!

This little three-year old taught us much that day and it was a turning point for me as a mother. She taught me what it meant to raise a warrior, to prepare a nation. I fast-forwarded to our lives fifteen years from now, when she would be faced with decisions that would determine her future as a Hawaiian and the future of the Hawaiian nation. I saw her with a group of her friends, or a group of politicians, all trying to convince her to do something that did not feel right to her, and I saw the same look on her face that was perfectly captured in those pictures. Her eyes communicated everything that I could have ever wanted to say to the people who try to prevent us from reaching our dreams and aspirations that we have for our children in Hawaiian immersion. I was convinced that we were doing something right, and that she was growing into the warrior that she needs to be. And I knew that our ancestors may not recognize us (as we could possibly be too far gone), but that they recognized her. “If we failed to remember our ancestors, our freedom would be somebody’s freedom, not our own. Our destiny, the destiny of someone else. Our ancestors will not even be able to recognize us on the other side: we would have changed so much” (ChiXapKaid, 2005, p.32). On this day, I learned what agency, survivance, and kuleana looks like and that it has a face – the face of my daughter. And then I ordered two sets of the pictures.

I know that as a makua of Hawaiian immersion children, I am going to have to follow in my daughter’s footsteps in some ways. When challenges arise, whether they are
pictures that I do not want to take, people that do not agree with my decision, or educational policy that is harmful to my children, I am going to have to clearly articulate my decisions and the reasons for them to others who believe that we are doing our children a disservice, are indifferent, or worse. But I sometimes struggle with how to do this when I am feeling particularly defensive about my children and my decisions. Ultimately, I think all of us who make this critical decision need some support. I believe that some of that support should come in the form of sound, credible, and most importantly, relevant research that explores parental decisions to send their children to Hawaiian immersion, examines the effects of these decisions, and understands what families need to know to strengthen and grow the Hawaiian language program and increase the number of Hawaiian language speakers for generations to come.

**Theoretical Frameworks**

While there is family theory research that focuses on parental involvement (Anderson, 2007; Bengtson, 2005; Bronfenbrenner, 2004; Demo, Aquilino, & Fine, 2005; K. V. B. Hoover-Dempsey, 1992; K. V. Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; McAdoo, 1999; McWayne, Hampton, Fantuzzo, Cohen, & Sekino, 2004; Walsh, 2002), which explains why parents become involved in their children’s education and the benefits of this involvement, it does not adequately explain the reasons that native peoples make and sustain these decisions. Furthermore, these family theories are focused on how families deal with issues such as: family dysfunction, stress, divorce, and substance abuse, which are not the focus of this study. My theoretical approach is to bring together theories in social cognition and agency, survivance, and kuleana to explore the parental decision-making process in the Hawaiian language immersion program. The
rationale for marrying these three frameworks is based on the need to fill the gap in the literature about parental decision-making. This research will explore the decisions that mākua make to send their keiki to Hawaiian immersion schools from a unique cultural and political perspective and will assert that the decision to send our children to Hawaiian immersion is an intentional shift away from the mainstream to ground our children in Hawai‘i first, is deeply rooted in a commitment to a collective kuleana and all of its complexities, and is sustained by families with an ardent faith and belief that the knowledge and language of our kūpuna is enough.

**Bandura’s social cognitive theory.** Bandura’s (1993, 2001, 2002) social cognitive theory proves to be a useful tool for analyzing how mākua make and sustain their decisions over time. His agentic perspective on social cognitive theory includes four key attributes:

1. **Intentionality:** Intentionality refers to a proactive commitment to bring about future actions,

2. **Forethought:** Forethought describes our self-motivation to guide our actions in anticipation of future events,

3. **Self-reactiveness:** In the agentic perspective, we cannot merely plan ahead with intention and forethought and wait for things to happen. Values and a sense of personal identity are embedded in a set of goals that motivate us to act, and

4. **Self-reflectiveness:** The ability we have to examine our thoughts and actions is an important part of the agentic perspective. Through self-reflection, we evaluate our motivation, values, goals, and the purpose of our actions. This self-reflection allows us to deal with conflict and persevere through challenges.
A fifth aspect of the agentic perspective that Bandura discusses, which flows as an undercurrent throughout these four attributes is that of fortuity. While the above four attributes describe a high level of control over our thoughts and actions, Bandura also acknowledges that there are events beyond our control that can change the course of our lives. Bandura interprets these events as random; however, as you will see throughout this work, spiritual beliefs are an integral part of the stories of Hawaiian immersion families and are not interpreted as random events. Nevertheless, these attributes provide me with a framework to explore the political stance taken when choosing immersion (intentionality), the goals that parents have for their children when enrolling them in immersion (forethought), the values and beliefs that are imbedded in those decisions (self-reactiveness), how parents evaluate and sustain these decisions through challenges (self-reflectiveness), and how events beyond our control can affect our lives (fortuity).

Bandura’s social cognitive theory also distinguishes between three different methods of human agency: personal, proxy, and collective. Personal agency, or self-efficacy, is the conviction that we, as individuals, have the knowledge and skills to be successful. Personal agency allows us to function successfully in society, manage our lives, and work towards societal changes that we think are important. Being a Hawaiian immersion parent requires personal agency, as we must have the conviction to send our children to a school outside of the mainstream school system and the wherewithal to sustain that decision. Proxy agency is used when people do not have direct influence over the circumstances of their lives and depend on others with high levels of expertise or influence to create the outcomes they desire. As immersion mākua, we do not always have control over the policies, procedures, and curriculum that affect our schools and our
children. We are required to release control and give proxy agency to legislators, Department of Education officials, and the like to advocate for the program and make decisions that will benefit our children and our lāhui. However, this type of agency does not always result in the outcome we desire and so we must turn to the third method of agency, which is collective agency. Collective agency is used when a group of people has a shared set of values and beliefs and work together towards a collective goal. From the genesis of the Hawaiian immersion program until today, mākua have come together and demonstrated collective agency, from getting the immersion schools started and funded by the Department of Education, to advocating for equitable assessments for our children. Collective agency has been the basis for this movement.

Now that I have outlined this framework, I think it bears mentioning that as Hawaiian academics, we do this somewhat awkward exercise often. We read research handbooks from cover-to-cover and try and find theories and frameworks that somehow make sense to us, that we feel we can adapt to our own belief systems, and make fit into that nice, tidy box. So this feeling that I have, after reading pages and pages of theories and frameworks, should not feel foreign to me, for it has happened many times before. But there is something about conducting research around the stories of my ‘ohana and other ‘ohana that makes the stakes higher, and the foundation of my research much more important. If I’m writing about my work, fitting my research into a box just feels like I have sand in my slippers. Irritating, but tolerable. But the stories of and for my children and kūpuna do not let me off so easily. It is starting to hurt a bit, like the sand I have in my slippers has turned to ants and they are biting my feet. So I am jumping and dancing around, unable to keep myself grounded. However, I believe that there are concepts and
theories that help us to stay grounded as indigenous researchers. One such theory is survivance.

**Survivance.** Survivance is our counter-narrative; it is a way to tell our stories, from our perspective. Vizenor (1999, p. vii) describes survivance as, “an active sense of presence, the continuance of native stories, not a mere reaction, or survivable name. Native survivance stories are renunciations of dominance, tragedy, and victimry.” While survivance is commonly used as an ideology and in this case the foundation for an ontological perspective, Vizenor (1999) argues that it is not merely a theory or an ideology, but survivance must be seen in practice. In this way survivance is more than a way to think – it is a way to be. These ways of being, according to Vizenor (1999) include the writing of stories that provide a counternarrative to the literature of domination. Therefore, it is important to discuss the different ways that survivance has been utilized as a theory by Indigenous peoples and how I plan to use it in this project.

The (re)writing of our stories, our histories and ourselves is an important aspect of survivance that has been explored by indigenous scholars. While Vizenor (1999; 2008) has emphasized narratives and written literature as acts of survivance, other scholars have also highlighted the importance of the spoken and written word as a way to practice survivance:

Survivance lies in the word. For the more than forty million indigenous people in the Americas and for the untold millions of mixed bloods, it may mean different things: different actions to be taken, different shades of identity to be formed. But it is language, the spoken and the written word, through which survivance becomes real (Breinig, 2008, p. 57).
Baker (2005) argues that survivance allows indigenous peoples to write beyond what is referred to as resistance literature, which tends to be seen as reactionary and is typically measured (and found lacking) against mainstream thought. Writing, as an act of survivance, is a way for us to bring ourselves in from the margins, put our philosophies and actions in the center, and provide us with a sense of empowerment. Vizenor’s theory of survivance values our stories as research and provides a framework that is not reactionary, “In my understanding of survivance, Native people are active, present agents whose humanity is emphasized as their responses to struggle are poignantly portrayed” (Atalay, 2006, p. 609). While many scholars have used the concept of survivance in their work, in an effort to “theorize back” indigenous scholars have taken the aspects of survivance that resonate and made it their own:

when we theorize back, we are aiming to understand what is at the heart of this resonance, and we are working to articulate but not always resolve those (political, historical, powered) parts of a theory that do not resonate. Theorizing back is not about neatly packaged reconciliations, but articulation (speech and anatomy) of unlike parts (Tuck, 2009, p. 115).

The most powerful acts of survivance are those that restore pono to ourselves, our families and our communities, “survivance and the work to restore self, family, and community are the center of an ethical response to these histories” (Lockard, 2008, p. 217). In this way, we are not merely surviving but flourishing; we are active agents who are writing our histories, our stories, our identities and our landscapes (Atalay, 2006; Velie, 2008; Vizenor, 1999, 2008).
Theory and practice advanced and written about for Hawaiians, by Hawaiians, is nothing new. As Silva (2008) articulates, we come from a long line of intellectuals who have been writing about concepts related to survivance for generations, “The restoration of our well-being as Kānaka is enhanced by recovering the knowledge of our kūpuna as intellectuals and literary artists, and treating their works of literature as literature to be appreciated and studied” (Silva, 2010, p. 239). Furthermore, Wong (2009) posits that the Hawaiian language newspapers are filled with the ‘ike that our kūpuna have left for us – all we need to do is access it. Although it may be difficult to see through the fog of colonization, our people have a long legacy of living into this concept of survivance.

Many scholars have utilized the theory of survivance in their work as a way to ground themselves in a perspective that privileges native ways of knowing and being. Most recently, in her book The Seeds We Planted, Goodyear-Kaʻōpua (2013) describes the Hawaiian-based charter school movement, and more specifically the work done to establish and strengthen the work of Hālau Kū Māna as a story of modern day survivance. As a theory, this is a useful way to describe the empowerment and activism displayed by the hui that is a part of this movement, but as Vizenor shows us, in practice it is a powerful way of being. Similarly, the activism shown on the part of parents to establish and strengthen the Hawaiian language immersion schools is another example of survivance (Kawai‘ae‘a, Housman, & Alencastre, 2007; Warner, 1999, 2001; W. H. Wilson & Kamanā, 2001).

Another way that survivance has been articulated is through the concept of volition. According to Benham & Murakami-Ramalho (2010), volition is inextricably linked to relationships, “Mana exists in our past and future relationships (with one’s
ancestors and those to come). Mana is what defines the unique spirit of an individual, and it is the core of one’s volition to act in a self-determined way” (p. 81). Imbedded in this concept is the pilina that we have to each other – in genealogy, in work and practice, and as a lāhui – and the understanding that this pilina is the foundation of our ability to have volition or act in a self-determined way. We cannot have volition as an individual without also acknowledging the relationships and connections that we have with each other. This recognition gives us the ability to better exercise individual and collective volition, or ea.

Ea, as a concept, has been examined thoughtfully by a number of Hawaiian scholars and explains the important relationship between life and sovereignty (Basham, 2010; Goodyear-Kaʻōpua, 2013; Silva, 2004). The pilina between the definitions of this concept allows us to articulate and define, what survivance means. Moreover, the relationships we have with each other and our collective well-being are again shown to be an important part of how survivance resonates, “To practice sovereign pedagogies then is to recognize that sovereignty at both the personal and the collective levels is critical for the health and the optimal learning of Indigenous people, as it is for all people” (Goodyear-Kaʻōpua, 2013, p. 6). The concept of sovereign pedagogies also asserts that ea in our schools and classrooms cannot be fully realized until it is achieved on a political level by the lāhui.

According to Beamer (2008, 2014), the past leaders of our lāhui provide us with excellent examples of survivance. He argues that for too long, our aliʻi have been portrayed as powerless victims, who did not have enough strength to fight off the superior strength of colonization. In his work, he provides us with a clear example of how (re)writing and (re)reading can be an act of survivance. Using what he terms ‘Ōiwi
Agency, Beamer asserts that by removing our colonial optics, we can clearly see that our aliʻi were not victims of colonization, but rather exercised agency, “My interest is not what missionaries did for, or to ʻŌiwi, but rather what ʻŌiwi attempted and accomplished through their own accord, in the midst of depopulation and constant threats of colonialism” (Beamer, 2008, p.21). Beamer provides us with an excellent interpretation of not just survivance, but also agency from a Hawaiian perspective. As he says, it is what can happen when we remove the colonial optics and replace them with our ʻŌiwi glasses!

Using survivance as a framework is a way for us to reclaim our histories, our language, and ourselves. For the purposes of this research, it is a way to uplift the voices of immersion mākua and provide a story that disrupts the dominant narrative of indigenous peoples by putting our beliefs, voices, and worldview first. It is a way to help us sustain our decisions, support each other, and work towards change in our communities, “In this way, it becomes clear that Indigenous peoples who live, write, and think from a standpoint informed by survivance do so grounded in the belief and knowledge that they can and will ‘outwit dominance and victimry’” (Brayboy, 2008, p. 341). Theories of agency and survivance have been excellent starting points for me as I look to tell and re-tell the stories of immersion families. However, the most important part of this ontological perspective is a uniquely Hawaiian one: kuleana.

**Kuleana.** The importance of kuleana has been explored by a number of Hawaiian scholars (Aikau, 2008; Goodyear-Kaʻōpua, 2009; Kaʻaihue, 2010; Kaomea, 2009; Pukui & Elbert, 1986; Tengan, 2008; Thompson, 2007; Warner, 1999; Wong, 1999, 2008), and have set the foundation of my understandings of kuleana. A common understanding of
kuleana is that it is a right, privilege, obligation, responsibility and authority, but kuleana is a much more complex concept that just that (Kaʻaihue, 2010; Kaomea, 2004; Pukui & Elbert, 1986; Warner, 1999). As Goodyear-Kaʻōpua (2013) explains, kuleana is, “oriented toward relational obligations as shaped by genealogy and land” (p. 64). My discussion of kuleana here will build on these ideas, focus on the responsibilities that ʻohana have in the education of their children, and explore how kuleana is an integral part our lives today as Hawaiian immersion parents. Pukui, Haertig, & Lee (1980) state that the core of ʻohana is the sharing of a common bloodline and place, but also includes the extended family that connects us spiritually to our ancestors, the present generation and the generations to come. The ʻohana had responsibilities to each other and functioned through these shared responsibilities and interdependent relationships. This kuleana that members of the ʻohana had to each other are highlighted in the way that children were raised and educated.

Traditionally, families had the kuleana to raise their children with all of the knowledge that they needed to know to be contributing members of society. While being raised by grandparents was a common practice, it was really the responsibility of all members of the extended family to identify a child’s strengths, guide them towards an expert in a particular task, and support them to learn everything they needed to know associated with that task, both physically and spiritually. Familial relationships and the inherent responsibilities that families had in raising their children are documented in moʻolelo and ʻōlelo noʻeau (Chun, 2006; Goodyear-Kaʻōpua, 2009; Kamakau, 1961; Pukui, Haertig, & Lee, 1980; Pukui, 1983). Examining these familial responsibilities that our kūpuna exemplified highlights the traditional role of ʻohana in educating our
children, and instructs us on the kuleana of ‘ohana today in our educative decisions. These values provide us with a guide for how we can live into our kuleana as mākua and what our responsibilities are to ourselves, our families, and our lāhui.

The kuleana that we have to our next generation has also been eloquently described by a number of our Hawaiian scholars, many of whom are listed here (Benham, 2003; Goodyear-Kaʻōpua, 2013; Goodyear-Kaʻōpua, Kauai, Maioho, & Winchester, 2008; Goodyear-Kaʻōpua, 2009; Kaʻaihue, 2010; Kaomea, 2009; Maielua, 2012; Oliveira, 2006; Thompson, 2007; Warner, 1999; Wong, 2008; Young, 2006). These scholars have all discussed the importance of passing down Hawaiian culture and language to our next generation, as a part of the kuleana of this generation. However, there were two Hawaiians in particular, whose words resonate with me as a mother. As I have mentioned before – it is this resonance that is an important part of not just survivance, but also theorizing back. The first is Beniamina (2010):

> Just know that learning and teaching are a process. At a certain point, the students will become the teachers. At a certain time in their life’s journey, the light goes on. When they have all that they can acquire, they become the mentors, the teachers, the nurturers. They become the kūpuna. A laila, teach them well because at some point you are going to be harvesting the fruit of your labor (p. 23).

The second was a simple question asked by Parker (2011), “I learn from our ancestors, always remembering the question, ‘What kind of ancestor will I be?’” (p. 47)

This concept – that our children are eventually going to become kūpuna – brings it right back home to the idea that all of this has to be lived and not just theorized about. Agency, survivance, kuleana, all of it, boils down to one simple truth: the proof is in the
pudding! Our kuleana then, is to ensure that our children become the kūpuna that we need them to be for all of our future generations.

My ontological perspective, or worldview, is informed not only by what our kūpuna have written about the role of ʻohana in the education of a child, but also from my own kupuna. This perspective starts and ends with my tūtū kāne. As a child, I absorbed many life lessons from my tūtū kāne that guide the way that I behave today. He was not always explicit about what he expected of us, but I always looked to how he lived and what he knew and saw the haʻawina in that. My tūtū kāne was a native speaker, but I rarely heard him speak Hawaiian. He embraced every ounce of his Hawaiian being in other ways, but I think he believed that English was the only way for us to get ahead. I learned these lessons well as I embraced western systems of education in my own schooling. However, the biggest lesson I learned from him came at the sunset of his life here. As his health began to decline, his return to his mother tongue grew, so much so that he eventually stopped speaking English. As a young adult, but not yet a makua, I was not quite ready to absorb the lessons that this change was teaching me. However, when I became a makua, I realized that his return to ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi was my biggest life lesson and that I had a kuleana to return there as well. This ontological perspective is grounded in not just the genealogy I have from my tūtū kāne, but also the genealogy of our family’s language use. Language shift and language loss is something that has been experienced by many indigenous families and this moʻolelo of language shift resonates for many Hawaiian families. As I think about how kuleana is linked to genealogy, this story of my tūtū kāne is an integral part of my ontological perspective and how I think about my
kuleana as a Hawaiian immersion parent and how kuleana is lived into by immersion families.

Today, returning to my native language is a gift from my tūtū kāne. In my research and in my life, I continue to ponder over the idea of returning to our native language and culture. Nānā i ke kumu or look to the source, is a widely-known and generally accepted way of discussing the idea of looking back to our culture, traditions and language (Pukui, Haertig, & Lee, 1980). However, my understandings of that concept include other interpretations of that phrase. Nānā does mean look, see, observe, pay attention to, but it also means to care for or take care of. Kumu is not just teacher and source, but also foundation, goal, reason and cause. Looking at the meaning of this from a different perspective then, I see this as not just looking to a source of knowledge that was given to us by our kūpuna as a way to live our lives, but also a command for us to care for these things. I believe that we need to pay attention to and care for the kūpuna both here and gone that have taught us life lessons and pay attention to the reasons for doing so. This is also a constant reminder to me that I need to pay attention to and care for my own goals that I have for myself and my ‘ohana. Nānā i ke kumu provides me with a guide for navigating my kuleana to my children and my kūpuna.

As I grew into my kuleana as a parent, it forced me to look critically into the educative decisions I was making and look back to the lessons of my tūtū kāne. Was I being purposeful when deciding where to enroll my children in school or was I buying into how I had been indoctrinated? Did I think about how my decisions would impact the future of my children, my ‘ohana, and my lāhui? Did my decisions help to strengthen my own sense of identity and allow my children the space to understand theirs? Were my
decisions in-line with my goals and values for my children? Ultimately, it was a fortuitous event that led me to re-examine what I was doing, make the decision to enroll my children in Hawaiian immersion, and become a member of a community that was working towards this common kuleana of revitalizing and perpetuating our language. Returning to the teachings of my kupuna is a framework that I will also return to throughout this research as I explore the lives and decisions of Hawaiian language immersion mākua. I believe these three ontological perspectives of agency, survivance and kuleana come together and help us to look more critically at our role as parents of Hawaiian immersion children.

The Problem

Providing native language medium education, like the Hawaiian language immersion program, has been recognized as a basic right for native peoples by the United Nations: “Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning” (United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2008). This statement is aligned with the desire of indigenous peoples around the world to have an opportunity to educate their children in their native languages (Reyhner, 2010). According to Kahumoku (2000), “From the French in Canada to the Welsh in England to the Maori in New Zealand, indigenous communities are concentrating their attention on the power of the language as a means of generating self-worth and combating the negative effects of assimilation policies” (p.20). Kahumoku further argues that language policy is a critical site of resistance for indigenous peoples, and particularly important for Hawaiians.
However, what is important to emphasize is that the movement for Hawaiian language immersion programs did not start with government policy or with schools or universities – it started with the desire of parents to have their children educated through the medium of Hawaiian (Kawaiʻaeʻa, Housman, & Alencastre, 2007). Warner (1999) states, “The impetus for establishing these Hawaiian immersion programs was the realization that the Hawaiian language and culture would not survive another generation without the creation of new child speakers of Hawaiian” (p. 74). This realization led to the establishment of the Pūnana Leo Hawaiian language immersion preschool.

Underfunded and under-resourced, a group made up of mainly parents, fought for space, teachers and resources to establish a school where Hawaiian would be the only language spoken (Hartwell, 1996; Kawaiʻaeʻa, Housman, & Alencastre, 2007). While the burden of funding the school, paying the teachers, and finding curriculum and resources sat squarely on the shoulders of this initial group, the zeal for continuing Hawaiian medium instruction never waivered, “By 1986, parents of children who spoke the Hawaiian language and advocates of the cause began entreating the State legislature to rescind the ninety-year-old Act 57, removing the last legal barrier to the creation of Hawaiian language immersion programs” (Kahumoku, 2000, p. 203). By 1987, through a change in the state’s constitution, Hawaiian became one of two official languages of the State of Hawaiʻi.

This paved the way for the establishment of Ka Papahana Kaiapuni, a DOE approved and sponsored Hawaiian Language Immersion Program. Mākua of the initial group of immersion students were clear about their dream, “It was our deepest desire, our unwavering focus, and our families’ mission to raise our families through Hawaiian.
Although we began as separate families speaking Hawaiian to our infant children, our lives eventually intertwined, as we became Hawaiian immersion families, raising children and eventually becoming immersion educators ourselves to contribute to a growing movement” (Kawaiʻaeʻa, Housman, & Alencastre, 2007, p. 186). When the Hawaiian Language Immersion schools started in 1987-88, there were two schools situated within two English-medium schools located on Oʻahu and Hawaiʻi, two teachers, two classes and a total of 34 students. From these initial years, the Hawaiian Language Immersion Program schools experienced steady growth for the first 14 years of their existence. Hawaiian immersion public schools now enable students to attend school with Hawaiian as the medium of instruction from Kindergarten until 12th grade and have graduated over 450 students. In the 2011-2012 school year, there were a total of 21 schools, 83 teachers, 80+ classrooms and 2,108 students (Hawaiian Language Immersion Program Office, 2012). Today, Hawaiian immersion schools exist in a variety of forms – a majority are Hawaiian immersion programs that operate within DOE English medium schools, but there are also DOE K-12 Hawaiian immersion sites, and Hawaiian language-focused charter schools.

The importance of creating a knowledge base that is accessible to potential mākua is obvious – if the goal of the immersion program is to increase the number of Hawaiian speakers, then we have to create a foundation of knowledge and research that speaks to these mākua and not just our research-savvy colleagues. This work has started with critical research written by Hawaiian immersion families (Kawaiʻaeʻa, Housman, & Alencastre, 2007), but more is needed, particularly if families are going to sustain this decision over time. There are a number of tensions and challenges that we have faced as a
Hawaiian immersion family that challenge our decision and are likely experienced by others including: the prevalent ideology that English medium education is the only way a child can be “successful”, the seduction of private school resources and prestige, pressure from family members to send our children to English medium schools, and schools located far from home. These are of course not the only challenges that exist and at this point a major tension for us has to do with too much Western and English ideology being forced on to the immersion program by state and federal mandates. This study asserts that while all tensions may not be the same for all families, there are some commonalities and stories that may resonate with families across the immersion community and the lessons learned from this research could be applied to a broader community of indigenous families who are seeking to revitalize their native languages through education. The goal then, is to contribute to this small body of research that can uplift and empower families to make and sustain the decision to make this lifetime and family commitment to language revitalization and provide a roadmap for future research projects that could help to strengthen the Hawaiian language immersion program and other language immersion programs in our native communities.

**Purpose**

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore parental decisions to send their children to Hawaiian immersion, examine the effects of these decisions, and understand what families need to know so that a research and resource base can be developed that will strengthen and grow the Hawaiian language immersion program and increase the number of Hawaiian language speakers for generations to come. Hawaiian immersion, for the purpose of this research, includes the variety of different contexts where Hawaiian
language is the medium of instruction – whether in a K-12 DOE setting, a Hawaiian immersion program in a DOE English medium school, or a charter school where Hawaiian language is the medium of instruction. For this study I interviewed four ʻohana whose children were enrolled in different Hawaiian immersion programs and wove their stories together in order to understand what values and motivations drive this decision. Just as my tūtū kāne did, did these mākua feel the pull of kuleana in their decision to return to our native language? As a mākua myself, I did not enroll my children in Hawaiian immersion just so that they could learn the language; it was a decision to nānā i ke kumu. It was a political statement, an embrace of kuleana, a commitment to not just language but also our culture, and in the spirit of survivance, a huli kua to the dominant narratives that tell me that Hawaiian is not enough. Ultimately, I hope to tell and re-tell a collective story that explores the ways in which all of these experiences can become haʻawina for future generations.

**Research Questions**

The overarching question that guides the query of this study is: What are the implications of mākua deciding to enroll their children in the Hawaiian language immersion program on our families, our children, our language, and our lāhui?

Central to this broad question is examining the unique circumstances of each ʻohana and how these mākua came to and sustained these decisions over time. Social cognitive theory will be used to understand how mākua have lived into this kuleana to the Hawaiian immersion program and how their experiences are stories of survivance. Therefore, the sub-questions that will be explored are:
1. What are the factors that influence mākua to enroll their children in Hawaiian immersion?
   a. What is the purpose and intent of mākua when they send their children to Hawaiian immersion?
   b. What goals do mākua have for their children when sending them to Hawaiian immersion?
   c. How has kuleana factored into their decision to send their children to Hawaiian immersion?

2. What are the factors that help mākua persevere in this decision over time?
   a. What motivates mākua to keep their children in Hawaiian immersion?
   b. What values are important to Hawaiian immersion mākua and how do these values and sense of identity help them to sustain this decision?
   c. How do mākua evaluate their decisions and stay motivated as Hawaiian immersion parents?
   d. What are the tensions, challenges and strengths that mākua face in maintaining this decision?

3. What can we learn from the stories of Hawaiian immersion ʻohana and how can these stories help us to strengthen the program and provide a road map for our future generations of Hawaiian immersion mākua?

   These are questions that I also intend to answer as I position myself and my family within this study. As an insider within this research, I am cognizant of my relationship to the research topic, the families that I have interviewed, and my kuleana to these families, the immersion community, and our lāhui, “Indigenous academics who live
in their own community are inevitably implicated in a set of insider dynamics that make it impossible simply to present one’s findings and walk away” (Kaomea, 2004, p. 33). I also have the expectation of completing the requirements of a dissertation and adhering to the ethics and standards that are set forth by the university. Balancing these two often times competing expectations is something that I had to navigate throughout the study and dealing with those challenges as they arose required me to return back to my ontological perspective of kuleana. My relationship to this study and how I navigated this position is something that I will revisit as I discuss my methodology in Chapter 3.

**Need and Significance of the Study**

While research exists that outlines the history and vision behind starting a Hawaiian language immersion program (Warner, 1999, 2001; Wilson & Kamanā, 2001; Wong, 1999), there has been very little research done about parental involvement in Hawaiian immersion education (Hickey, 1999). One portion of the research that does exist on this issue (Yamauchi, Ceppi, & Lau-Smith, 1999; Yamauchi, Lau-Smith, & Luning, 2008), is unfortunately reflective of much of the research that informs policy on indigenous peoples (Benham, 2003) and has been done by non-Hawaiians and/or researchers who do not have children in the Hawaiian Language Immersion Program. However, there is an excellent example of research, written by Hawaiian researchers who are Hawaiian immersion parents – a group of people who have been involved in the movement from the beginning, that bring credibility to this body of research. Kawaiʻaeʻa, Housman, & Alencastre (2007) have provided those of us who have embraced this kuleana to enroll our children in Hawaiian immersion, an example that is based in experience. Through their living case study, these three women and their ‘ohana have
documented not only the progress of the Hawaiian immersion movement from where they sit, but they have also laid a foundation for us to build upon, as current and future mākua of Hawaiian immersion children. When I read the stories of these families, they resonated with me and I realized that more research needed to be written that uplift and empower Hawaiian immersion families.

I do not assert that I possess all of the answers, but I do believe that my experiences may resonate with other mākua who struggle with similar decisions. Like Benham (2003), I believe that Native Hawaiian women’s ways of knowing need to be encouraged in the research that we do. However, I would further argue that mākua ways of knowing are just as important and deserve just as much attention in the research that we conduct and the things that we write about. It is in this spirit that I plan to gather a hui of mākua voices that can empower immersion families for generations to come.

**Ka Panina**

Since I opened this section of the research with a story about my daughter, I think it is appropriate to close it with a story about my son, Kahikinaokalā. Named as a way to honor his kūpuna and a perpetual early-riser, as you will learn in future chapters, he has had to live through our decision to enroll our children in Hawaiian immersion as the first one through the gauntlet. We were not mākaukau for this kuleana from the start and as a result, he has had to display strength and resilience in ways that we probably will never fully understand. ʻO ia kuʻu wahi makahiapo.

Over the past few years we have been spending quite a deal of time at the legislature, testifying in support of a series of bills that will require the DOE to develop assessments for the immersion program in Hawaiian, rather than translate them from
English. Sounds like a familiar story, right? Immersion parents exercising their collective agency and advocating and lobbying for equity of the program is an integral part of the genealogy of the Hawaiian immersion program and it continues until today. When my son was in the third grade his class was subjected to these unfair assessments – at that time we exercised our rights as parents and opted out of the testing for him. So testifying at the legislature was not just about advocating for equity for the entire program - I wanted to make sure the playing field was level for my child.

At some point, I was talking about the bills to my son and he said wanted to submit testimony and testify. We had talked quite a bit about the testing issue, he understood why he was not taking the test even though most of the other kids were, but it blew my mind that he wanted to do this. This is the kid who is a somewhat reluctant writer, but he sat at the table, wrote out an entire page of testimony, had me check it, and then spent the afternoon typing it up. He signed it, we sent it off, and I told him I would pick him and his sister up early from school so we could make it to the hearing on time.

The next day, I picked the kids up from school, and was probably more anxious than he was. At this point, I was just floored that he still wanted to do it. He is not really the kind of kid who likes to perform in front of people, so I was thinking that he would just sit in the hearing and listen. When we got there, we walked in and the huge room was jam-packed with people. There was not even enough room for everyone to sit down, some folks were waiting outside, and some of the kids in attendance had to sit on the floor. It was overwhelming to say the least and even I was nervous. I looked down at my son and felt no anxiety coming from him so reconfirmed that he still wanted to testify. He looked at me as if I was asking a question with an obvious answer and said yes. They
called his name, he walked up to the table by himself and sat himself down in front of a panel of about ten to twelve state representatives.

Looking at him sitting at this massive table in front of this group of legislators, in this huge room full of people, I thought about how small my child looked in this scenario and my stomach tightened up. I then remembered a story we had been reading at home, one that our kūpuna have preserved for us in the old newspapers about a boy named Kalapana. I do not want to go into the details of the story here, but basically it is about a boy who is underestimated, takes on a tyrannical chief of Kaua‘i and his own uncles and beats them at their own game. This is a gross oversimplification of the story, but you can see how my mind would drift there when looking at my tiny son amongst this room full of giants. I suddenly felt as calm as he looked, said a mahalo to my kūpuna for having the foresight to preserve this moʻolelo for us, and watched him as he leaned into the microphone and read his testimony. In Hawaiian. No problem. In his testimony, he talked about how what the DOE is doing is not fair and ended with a simple question – why do I have to fulfill my kuleana but the DOE does not? The funniest thing is that after he testified, the state’s superintendent told him, “Good job!”, totally oblivious to the fact that my son had just basically called her out. After the hearing, one of my friends told me how good he did and that he was shocked that Kahikina did that - I was shocked too!

Honestly, I still do not get it because it absolutely goes against everything I think I know about his personality. But what I do think is that in his own 8 year old way, he understood what his kuleana was, understood that what was happening was not fair, and was willing to stand up and say something about it. He understood that he had a kuleana not only to speak for himself, but a larger, collective kuleana to our immersion
community and our lāhui. I would love to take credit for it, but I really think he got there all on his own with the help of our kūpuna. But the raising of our future warriors is something that we have to take seriously, and I like to think that his sister, who you met at the beginning of this chapter, learned some of these skills from him. Both of our keiki need to be as committed and passionate as we are, and maybe then some. And most importantly, we have to be honest with ourselves about what we are doing - our children provide us with all of the evidence we need to figure out if what we are doing is enough.
CHAPTER 2
Review of Related Literature

Ka Wehena

On my way driving home from my office the other night, I called my tūtū lady. I like to check in with her and usually try and take the kids to her house at least a couple times a month to visit. But we have not been to her house for a while so I called her to see how she was doing, what rooms of her house she cleaned that day and how many loads of laundry she did, as she is a living embodiment of maiau. She asked me what I was doing driving home so late, and I told her I was studying for this comprehensive exam that I was taking the following week. I didn’t really want to explain it to her in too much detail, but in her effort to understand what the heck I was doing she asked, "So what are these exams for? For one promotion or just to make sure you still smart?"

The both of us started cracking up and my response to her was, "Well, probably just to make sure I’m still smart, but I’m pretty sure I’m getting dumber by the minute." To which she responded, "Wait until you get as old as me, then you can say anykine dumb things and people don’t care because you’re old." I reminded her that she was a kupuna and that nothing she said was dumb! She is my last living grandparent and even though she thinks she is just this little old lady, her wisdom and humor continue to shine through. She continues to remind me that while I have a kuleana to fulfill in the writing of this dissertation, I also have kuleana to my family and my lāhui. It is in this spirit of recognizing these multiple layers of kuleana, that I would now like to move across the landscape of literature related to this research.
Education For Our Kūpuna

In order to understand the context of the movement to establish Hawaiian Language immersion education, it is important to first look back to the history of Hawaiian education and Hawaiian language. Beginning with a brief examination of how our people were educated traditionally prior to Western contact, this section will then summarize how traditional education and Hawaiian language was devastated by colonization.

Nānā ka maka, hoʻolohe ka pepeiao, paʻa ka waha, hana me ka lima. The first principle of educating any child was through observation. Our kūpuna knew that i ka nānā nō a ʻike: by observing, one learns. Pukui, Haertig, & Lee (1980) describe how children were taught by their grandparents, parents and other extended family members through rich and constant opportunities to observe a diverse range of experiences. Chun (2006) provides an example of how the ability to observe served a practical purpose as well:

The ability to “look” at the sea and to “see” where the schools of fish were located, or if there were any at all, led to great skill in fishing. Such skill was developed over time while gazing at the current and waves, and from the observations of teachers or mentors. (p. 3)

Connected to observing with ones eyes, was the idea of observing by listening as well. Because our ancestors had no written language prior to western contact, the perpetuation of history, culture, and genealogy was done orally. As such, i ka hoʻolohe nō a hoʻomaopopo: by listening, one commits to memory. Kelly (1982) explains that when a boy reached the age of responsibility (usually around age seven) he was allowed into the
hale mua, or men’s eating house. It was then that he started to memorize a range of things associated with his spiritual development: his genealogy, a plethora of information about his ancestors, prayers and chants. For all children, listening and observing was critical, as it was the means by which they could communicate with the gods, pass down their genealogy, and function in society.

Implicit in the idea of reflecting on one’s learning is keeping the mouth closed (pa’a ka waha) and being reserved when asking questions. In most cultures, questioning is encouraged, but for our people, it was the last step of learning. After observing, listening and doing what was taught, students were allowed to ask only the most important questions to their teachers (Chun, 2006). Pukui, Haertig, & Lee (1980) provide a practical example of this as well:

The fisherman or gatherer of opihis must constantly observe wind and tide.

Distract him [with questions] and the big wave might come, sweeping him out to sea or dashing him to death against the rocks. There was a proper time for ninau, serious and well thought out questions. (p. 51)

Many ‘ōlelo no‘eau, or wise sayings, also reveal the importance of working hard and experiencing something in order to learn it:

- Aia ke ola i ka hana – life is in labor, labor produces what is needed (Pukui, 1983, p.10)
- Ma ka hana ka ‘ike – in working, one learns (Pukui, 1983, p. 227)
- Aia nō ka pono – ‘o ka ho‘ohuli i ka lima i lalo, ‘a’ole ‘o ka ho‘ohuli i luna – the palms of the hands should be turned down (work was respected, laziness was shameful) (Pukui, 1983, p. 10)
ʻOhana. From birth, children were informally taught by caregivers, which included parents, grandparents, older siblings, and adults considered experts in their occupations. Imbedded in this form of education was the development of tangible knowledge and skills, as well as valuable socialization experiences and spiritual development. Benham & Heck (1998) and Chun (2006) explain that the Hawaiian approach to education allowed every child to be both student and teacher, given his or her particular skills and talents. Families passed down their specialized knowledge once children were identified as having an interest and gift in a particular content area. Older children were often placed under the tutelage of an acknowledged master as apprentices for the duration of their training. Pukui, Haertig, & Lee (1980) describe how the first real teaching was within the family and that it was usually an elder who taught the child his or her first simple tasks. Kamakau (1961) gives specific examples of how children were taught by their parents, “Parents before they died instructed their children, the sons to plant and fish, and the daughters to make and dye tapa and weave mats” (p. 237).

Education in traditional Hawaiian culture is again shown to be practical and family-based (Charlot, 2010; Chun, 2006; Goodyear-Kaʻōpua, 2009; Kelly, 1982; Pukui, Haertig, & Lee, 1980).

ʻŌlelo Noʻeau also confirm the importance of familial relationships:

- ‘O ka makua ke koʻo o ka hale e paʻa ai – The parent is the support that holds the household together (Pukui, 1983, p. 265)

- Ka ‘ike a makua he hei na ke keiki – The knowledge of the parent is unconsciously absorbed by the child. (Pukui, 1983, p. 151)
• Na wai hoʻi ka ʻole o ke akamai, he alanui i maʻa i ka hele ʻia e oʻu mau mākua? – Who indeed would doubt my intelligence, a path well traveled by my parents? (Pukui, 1983, p. 251)

Education in traditional Hawaiian society was practical, socially useful and family-based. These characteristics were perpetuated through families and solidified through more formal instruction as children got older. Observing, listening and doing were paramount and oratory was the primary vehicle for the preservation of language and culture. Western contact brought a new system of schooling that was devoid of these characteristics. This next section outlines the systematic breakdown of the traditional family-based educational structure and its effects on Native Hawaiian children.

Hawaiʻi’s Education System: A Historical Look at School Choice

The arrival of missionaries in 1820 changed the nature of education in Hawaiʻi from family and pragmatically focused to a classroom-centered systematic effort to spread written literacy and western acculturation. From their missionary beginnings, Hawaiian schools were organized and overseen by those who were not only foreign to traditional Hawaiian culture (as it had been before western contact), but who continuously and consistently denigrated Hawaiian culture, asserting western culture as superior (Stueber, 1982). Families were no longer the main source of education for their children. Schools were seen as the most effective colonizing tool for converting “heathen” and “savage” Hawaiians into civilized, Christian people. Until 1830, efforts focused on developing teachers from the native Hawaiian population, and most adults quickly became functionally literate in Hawaiian. Education spread to more than one
thousand schools, with instruction only in the Hawaiian language (Benham & Heck, 1998; Kanaiaupuni, Malone, & Ishibashi, 2005; Stueber, 1982).

By 1840, public education was formally organized and recognized by Kauikeaouli, Kamehameha III. The missionaries realized that they could not succeed in acculturating the Hawaiian people to western ideologies without the help of the government (Benham & Heck, 1998). David Malo was the kingdom’s first superintendent, until 1845, when William Richards became the first Minister of Public Instruction. Following Richards’ death, Richard Armstrong became the minister of Public Instruction and served from 1848 to 1860. This was a turning point for the Hawaiian education system - he expounded on the superiority of learning English over Hawaiian, laid the foundation for schools that served the upper level of the social hierarchy by establishing select and common schools, and ignored those who were of lower socio-economic status (Benham & Heck, 1998; Charlot, 2010; Goodyear-Kaʻopua, 2013; Goodyear-Kaʻōpua, 2009; Kaʻaihue, 2010; Kahumoku, 2000; Kanaiaupuni & Ishibashi, 2003; Stueber, 1982).

The beginnings of the illusion of choice in Hawaiʻi can be found in the establishment of select and common schools in the Hawaiian kingdom. On the surface, select schools were established to provide English-medium instruction to the upper class of society and prepare students for the western world, while common schools were maintained to provide “free” and Hawaiian-medium education for all children of the kingdom. However, these schools served to segregate Hawaiian society into the have and have-nots, prioritize English-medium education and non-Hawaiian teachers, and strip culture and language from Hawaiian families.
From an ideological and sociological standpoint, the choice between select and common schools was a choice between progress or savagery, enlightenment or ignorance: The common schools, taught in Hawaiian, were often referred to as inferior and the students incapable. Teachers of the select schools commented that students transferring from the common school to the select school were ill prepared to read, write, and think in English...This belief that ‘thinking Hawaiian’ was an inferior way to think eventually led to many Hawaiians believing themselves to be stupid (Benham & Heck, 1998, p. 103).

Complementary to this portrayal of the common schools, policies were enacted to prioritize the teaching of English, while societal pressures were dictating to Hawaiian families that Hawaiian language and culture were inferior and sinful. Hawaiian medium schools, Hawaiian language and culture, and Hawaiian teachers were all under attack by the rhetoric of English-only policy and Western colonialism.

Perhaps most insidious, however, was the illusion of school choice at an economic level. While parents were given the “choice” to send their children to select or common schools, common schools were severely underfunded and teachers were severely underpaid (Benham & Heck, 1998; Goodyear-Kaʻopua, 2013). According to Goodyear-Kaʻopua (2013),

By the time Bishop vacated his position at the helm of public education, the select, English-medium schools were receiving more than seven times the funding of the common schools, even though they had far fewer students. Teachers’ salaries at English schools—positions filled by non-Natives—were markedly higher, and the availability of teachers in the Hawaiian language was curtailed
when the courses of study at Lahainaluna Seminary and Hilo Boarding School, which trained many of the Native teachers, were changed from Hawaiian to English. Although some English advocates argued that rising enrollments demonstrated that Kānaka wanted to embrace English and move away from their own mother tongue, it is clear that this was no simple matter of abandoning one language for another (p. 21).

In this illusion of choice, Hawaiian parents had the choice of either sending their children to dilapidated and underfunded schools or schools that were supported ideologically and financially by the government. They had the choice of sending their children to schools with inferior teachers using a dying language or schools with superior academic rigor, superior teachers, and a superior language of instruction, according to the policies of the kingdom. Ironically enough, the illusion of choice in Hawai‘i’s educational policy is clear!

However, there was an oasis in this landscape, a cultural kīpuka (McGregor, 2006) of sorts – a Minister of Public Instruction by the name of Kekūanao‘a and the Hawaiian language newspapers that not only thrived in this landscape, but also advocated for Hawaiians to hold on to their language and culture. In educational policy, Kekūanao‘a prioritized and funded Hawaiian–medium schools, “In the debates over language in the schools, Kekūanao‘a firmly articulated the importance of the Hawaiian language in affirming Hawaiian national identity” (Goodyear-Ka‘opua, 2013, p. 19). Hawaiian language newspapers at the time also encouraged the lāhui not to leave their ‘ōlelo makuahine behind (Lopes, 2010; “Mai haalele i ka olelo makuahine,” 1907; Solis, 2009).
Despite the Hawaiian culture, language and people being effectively removed from the educational system, the kingdom as a whole was highly literate. From 1890 to 1910, estimated literacy rates for Hawaiians were between 80 to 100%, one of the highest rates in the world during that time (Dawrs, 2003). Hawaiian language newspapers were also established at this time, with over a 100 different newspapers reporting on things such as religion, local and international news, literary and historical writings, as well as translations of classic Western literature into Hawaiian. Kamakau (1961) also describes the astonishment of European governments as they came to realize the extent of Hawaiian literary prowess:

They cannot believe it. A race of man-eaters are the Hawaiian people, are they not? Books for education, books of laws from the beginning to the present time. The office has a quantity of Hawaiian manuscripts. The men interested in education look at each other and say, “This cannibal island is ahead in literacy; and the enlightened countries of Europe are behind it!” (p. 420)

Explicit in these observations, however, is the belief that Hawaiians are not legitimately literate if they are not literate in English. Kahumoku (2003) argues that there was a clear message during that time that the learning of English was a superior pursuit, “If the Native Hawaiian child was to become a dignified, refined, intellectual adult, he or she had to embrace the language of a western, Protestant civilization. The implication then was that what was Hawaiian was of lesser value” (p. 165). Ka‘aihue (2010) also asserts that the separation of Hawaiians from their language was an integral part of the colonizing project during this period. The ideology of an English-only movement was well on its way.
The final blow to Hawaiian-medium schools of this time was the ban of the use of Hawaiian language in schools in 1896 with the passage of Act 57, just three years after the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy by a small group of western businessmen and the United States military. Lucas (2000) points out that although schools technically had a choice on whether or not to abandon Hawaiian-medium instruction, all of their government funding would be cut if they did not comply with the law, and effectively put an end to Hawaiian language in schools, “The English language shall be the medium and basis of instruction in all public and private schools” (Laws of the Republic of Hawaii, 1896). This law effectively ended Hawaiian language instruction by the early 1900s, eroded the Hawaiian kingdom’s high level of literacy, shifted Hawaiian identity, and required fluency in English in order to be an active citizen (Benham & Heck, 1998; Kahumoku, 2000, 2003; Kaʻaihue, 2010).

While the causes and repercussions of Act 57 are complex and varied, and thoroughly examined by other Hawaiian scholars (see Benham & Heck, 1998; Kahumoku, 2000, 2003), this devastation is well summarized by Kaʻaihue (2010, p. 91), “The banning of the Hawaiian language caused the subsequent erasure of much Hawaiian ontology, epistemology, and in essence our knowledge. Western-based curriculum and scholarship both in the Kingdom and in the contemporary era continue to be vehicles of erasure and subsequent imperialism.” As Warner (1999) gravely reminds us, within Hawaiian ʻohana, this was the first time Hawaiian was not passed down from one generation to the next. With a thorough understanding of the illusion of choice and how it manifested in the history of Hawaiian education, it is important to now explore current
understandings of the school choice movement and its relationship to past, present and future educational policies in Hawai‘i.

**Current School Choice Policies**

The current school choice movement centers around the idea of applying free market principles to the education system and asserts that choice and competition will result in innovation and better performance (Lubienski, 2003; Peterson, 1998). The results of these school choice policies have included private school vouchers, intra- and inter-district open enrollment, magnet schools, and charter schools (Zhang & Cowen, 2009). While advocates claim that the school choice movement has been good for the “market”, leading to more diverse school populations, improved academic achievement, and innovative teaching practices and curriculum development, proponents claim that the results of school choice have been another educational policy that has maintained the status quo, “There is no convincing evidence to date that the provision of national choices of other schools is a realistic alternative solution for most families” (Whitty, 1997, p. 20). Critics of school choice also contend that applying economic principles to education does not take into account the complex sociological issues surrounding parent decision making, that most minority families do not take advantage of these “school choice” opportunities and tend to stay in under-resourced schools, and that without addressing the broader economic inequalities facing schools, that even small pockets of successful culturally-based charter schools will do little to shift our current educational landscape (Evans, 2005; Lubienski, 2003; Ravitch, 2009; Wells et al., 1999; Whitty, 1997; Zhang & Cowen, 2009). The politics of school choice on the national level provides us with a
broad perspective of the historical terrain; let us now turn to Hawaiʻi’s politics of choice and examine how these policies have impacted us here at home.

Look to the current terrain and the remnants of past policies related to the illusion of choice are still visible. While the public school system is no longer divided into select and common schools, schools in Hawaiʻi are divided by a public and private school system. According to Bayer (2009) it is a commonly held and accepted belief that public schools are failing, private schools are succeeding and so parents should send their children to private schools. Whispers of Hawaiʻi’s past educational policies can still be heard, and although everyone has a choice to attend a public or private school, that choice is largely dependent on economic status. While many parents still choose to send their children to public schools despite this negative rhetoric, Bayer asserts that the “incessant conversation” in this debate continues to lead back to the idea that private schools are the best places for our children.

In the public school arena, parents also have choices. While most parents send their children to neighborhood schools, some parents make the decision to send their children to charter schools. These charter schools, much like the charter school movement on the continental U.S., also give parents the option of sending their children to schools that employ alternative and innovative methods of learning and teaching or culturally-based charters schools and more specifically Hawaiian-based charter schools. Hawaiian-based charter schools are a modern day kīpuka for our people, but also serve to highlight the educational and economic inequalities that Hawaiians face when choosing to send their children to these schools (Goodyear-Kaʻōpua, 2013; Goodyear-Kaʻōpua, Kauai, Maioho, & Winchester, 2008; Goodyear-Kaʻōpua, 2009). Goodyear-Kaʻōpua
contends that Hawaiian-based charter schools emerged as a way to give Hawaiian families other choices to live into their kuleana:

  Whereas the broader U.S. charter school movement has largely been framed around the notion of choice, which is a market-oriented concept that centers the individual, the movement to establish and maintain Hawaiian culture–based charter schools has been framed around the notion of kuleana, which is oriented toward relational obligations as shaped by genealogy and land (2013, p. 64).

Goodyear-Kaʻōpua (2013) maintains that although the basis for the charter school movement both here and nationally meant to provide further choices for mainstream students and further marginalize minority students, that in the Hawaiʻi landscape, it has been a source of empowerment for our communities. On the other hand, these schools are grossly underfunded, are required to come up with all of their own resources, have to advocate for space for their programs, all the while being evaluated based on standards and accountability measures that are not reflective of their philosophies and beyond their control.

  In traversing across the terrain of Hawaiʻi’s educational landscape, our last stop is the focus of this study, or the Hawaiian Language Immersion Program. As I mentioned previously, established and fueled by the fire of a small group of parents committed to Hawaiian language revitalization, Hawaiian immersion was a purposeful return to our native language with a focus on kuleana, rather than the illusion of choice.

**Returning To Our Mother Tongue**

  As NeSmith reminds us:
While most Hawaiians of my grandparents’ generation were fluent native speakers who could recall accounts of Hawaiian heroes, genealogies, chants, and old songs, most of my mother’s generation know virtually nothing of these things, and thus cannot pass them on to their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, even if they want to (2005, p. 3).

While there are many factors that contributed to the movement to reinstate Hawaiian as a medium of instruction in schools, Kahumoku (2000) posits that, “...when the state officially recognized the Hawaiian language in the 1978 revision to the constitution, it prepared a way for educators to campaign for Hawaiian medium instruction for native speakers” (p. 222-3). This event also happened within the context of the Hawaiian renaissance beginning in the 1970s, where our people were attempting to reconnect and revitalize many of the things that were lost, including mele, hula, traditional navigation, and language.

Established within the context of the repeal of Act 57, the naming of Hawaiian as one of two official languages of this state, and with the advocacy of a small group of parents who demanded that their children grow up with the benefit of Hawaiian as the language of instruction, Hawaiian language immersion schools now educate students in kindergarten through 12th grade (Ka‘aihue, 2010; Kahumoku, 2000; Kawai‘ae‘a, Housman, & Alencastre, 2007; Warner, 1999; Wilson & Kamanā, 2001, 2006). Primarily fueled by the passion and advocacy of parents, the Hawaiian language immersion schools on the surface, seem to be a prime example of school choice here in Hawai‘i. However, just below the surface, Hawaiian immersion schools are still affected by the educational policies from the 19th century – Hawaiian language immersion schools are underfunded,
particularly when you take into account the amount of effort that is necessary to create Hawaiian language resources and curriculum, the ideology of English is still present in our communities, and although all instruction is given in Hawaiian, students are still evaluated (and labeled failing) by high stakes assessment tests that have either been poorly translated into Hawaiian or are in English. Parents and members of the immersion community had to participate in lobbying efforts, which continue until today, in order to provide equal opportunities to children enrolled in the program (Warner, 1999). The choice of Hawaiian language immersion demonstrates the same illusion of choice that Hawaiian families faced in the 19th century – a devaluing of our language and culture, a rhetoric of inferiority, and economic and educational disadvantages that give some parents no choice but to choose another path.

It should be noted that the development of the Hawaiian Language Immersion Program was not just a way to save the Hawaiian language, but also symbolized a renewed activism on the part of our people (Kahumoku, 2000). According to Wilson & Kamanā (2001), Hawaiian language immersion was established as a way to support mākua who were interested in raising their children in Hawaiian and consistently using Hawaiian in both public and private situations, rather than viewing Hawaiian as a second-language skill. Kaʻaihue (2010) argues that along with the revitalization of the language, Hawaiian immersion provides an alternative for Hawaiian parents who saw the Hawaiʻi State DOE as failing their children. She goes on to explain the metaphorical importance of Hawaiian immersion, “…the Hawaiian language education movement symbolically represented much more than just saving the Hawaiian language. Hawaiian immersion symbolized the validation of Kanaka Maoli place and space in Hawaiʻi. Moreover,
through the law’s legitimization of ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i, a piece of Kanaka Maoli identity and history were restored” (p. 16). Ironically, from the banning of the Hawaiian language in 1896, to the humble beginnings of the Hawaiian language revitalization movement, today the Hawaiian language immersion program is now one of the most highly-recognized native language immersion programs in the world (Reyhner, 2010; Warner, 1999; Wilson & Kamanā, 2001).

With a privileging and acknowledgment of the history of the Hawaiian education and language, and an appreciation for those who have built the foundation of the Hawaiian language immersion movement, the next section will outline the importance of native language immersion programs, the critical role that mākua play in this process, and the challenges and triumphs parents face in their decision-making process.

**Parental Decision Making and Immersion Education**

Crawford (2007) stresses that despite the plethora of research that exists documenting the benefits of children being bilingual, popular attitudes about language still embrace an English-only ideology, “Especially ironic is the claim that the dominance of English is threatened in the United States today by the encroachment of other tongues” (p. 45). Burnaby (2007), Cantoni (2007), and Skutnabb-Kangas (2009) further argue that families, in making decisions on whether or not to enroll their children in bilingual or immersion programs, also struggle with the popular belief English is the only way to attain economic success. Ultimately, the struggle for making informed decisions does not depend solely on the rejection of the attitudes of society, but a recognition that colonization has completely changed the way we think about ourselves and our children, “No one today is actively punishing people, as far as I know, for speaking their language
in school. Now people are losing their languages further, because they have been
brainwashed for generations by English-only policy and pressure in the schools to give
up their languages, unnecessarily, in the process of learning English. For their languages,
they have been turned into their own worst enemies” (Krauss, 2007, p. 15). The need to
decolonize our minds (Thiongo, 1994) and have access to relevant and accessible
research is real and urgent.

The benefits of bilingual education have been well-documented in the world of
all of this research, how well-informed are parents on the benefits of this decision?
Skutnabb-Kangas (2009) asserts that if parents are to make informed decisions about
sending their children to immersion programs, they need access to the “solid and
consistent” research base that already exists on the benefits of enrolling their children in
what she terms “mother tongue medium education” (p. 3). However, research that does
exist, that could help to inform future parents of immersion children, is not always
accessible, “Despite its existence, this important information is not being disseminated to
the people who could benefit from it most, for whom it could make the most difference.
As a result, many Indigenous parents already engaged in decolonization are left feeling
isolated, frustrated, and powerless to do anything substantial to help their children in
crisis” (Abraham, 2010, p. 5).

It is clear, then, that mākua play a critical role in this language immersion and
revitalization movement. Littlebear (2007, p.xii) argues that, “…families must retrieve
their rightful position as the first teachers of our languages. They must talk our languages
every day, everywhere, with everyone, anywhere.” The acceptance of this responsibility
by families, however, is not easy, “It becomes a choice, for individuals, families and
communities to decide that language is important, and that the sacrifices and hard work
needed to see our languages revitalized is worth the effort” (Haviland, 2010, p. 77).
However, the benefits of this hard work goes far beyond the language, but includes a
revitalization of native values and culture and helps to heal communities (Parsons Yazzi,
1995; Reyhner, 2010). Abraham (2010) speaks to this being true in her research and her
life, “We are not merely revitalizing our language, I feel that we are attempting to
transform ourselves as a family” (p. 86).

Krauss (2007) asserts that teaching our languages to our children is a crucial
factor to determining whether a language is viable and will survive. While ideally, the
language would be taught using the methods that our ancestors have used for generations,
immersion education ensures that our language gets passed down to our future
generations. Kawaiʻaeʻa, Housman, & Alencastre, (2007) provide us with a useful
concept for how and why we should be passing on our language to our children in the
word pūʻā, or to feed as a parent feeds masticated food to their baby. In the same way,
they argue that passing on Hawaiian language to their children, in the same way that a
parent would feed an infant, is how the language and their families are sustained and
transformed from one generation to the next. Warner (1999) reminds us that as
Hawaiians, it is our kuleana and that we have the responsibility and authority to preserve
our language, “Hawaiians need to learn and know their language, culture, stories,
histories, and religion because they interrelate and are integrally linked to one another
and to the people” (p. 77). However, Wong (2008, p. 74) warns that simply passing down
the language is not enough, “For me, it is not enough to transmit the language across the
generations. What we need to do is transmit the zeal that was the impetus for the
movement across generations, so that the next generations do not just say, ‘Oh, okay,
they have just handed this down to us.’ They need to take it from there and roll because
there is a long way to go.” The question of how to impassion our children is an important
one, and must be answered by mākua. As Kawaiʻaeʻa, Housman, & Alencastre (2007)
advises all Hawaiian immersion families, we need to be vigilant in our efforts.

One answer to this question comes from families who were part of a group who
initially started the Hawaiian immersion program and are now passing on this legacy to
their children and grandchildren. As KaʻOhana Kaʻawa (Kawaiʻaeʻa, Housman, &
Alencastre, 2007) states, “Hawaiian immersion is a way of life.” These early families
were involved in all aspects of their children’s schooling and set an example for how to
light this fire within the next generation. Each ʻohana described their lives while their
children were in Hawaiian immersion schools – long car rides because they lived far
distances from the school, cut and paste sessions, meetings at the Board of Education,
testifying at the legislature, challenges about the validity of our language and culture – all
a part of their lives as Hawaiian immersion parents. This is perhaps best encapsulated by
Ka ʻOhana Kawaiʻaeʻa (Kawaiʻaeʻa, Housman, & Alencastre, 2007):

Our lives are a work in progress, and our immersion work is the family legacy we
leave to Kananinohea, Kamaulihawi, Kulamanu, and their future generations.
Through the struggles and joys of being an immersion family, for the many
sacrifices that Clem and the children made throughout the years, and for their
enduring patience and stamina, we are and will continue to be an ‘ohana kaiapuni Hawai‘i (Hawaiian immersion family) (p. 213).

Perhaps the best example of how this ‘ike kupuna can be sustained is how it lives on in our children and grandchildren.

**Ka Panina**

The other night our family was watching a show with a panel of Hawaiian language speakers on public television. The topic that was given to this panel to discuss was: What role does Hawaiian language play in our state? Most of the folks on the panel were our friends and examples that we look to as an ‘ohana for how to live this commitment to ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i, so of course we watched. We had brief conversations with our keiki that night during the show, but as we were driving to school the next morning, I thought it was a perfect opportunity to talk about it more with the kids, and started with the simple question – pehea ko ‘olua mana‘o?

My kids launched into the obvious things – they like the dress their kumu hula was wearing, their ‘anakala was not wearing his slippers during the whole show, and the like. Then the conversation turned to a comment that one of the viewers had sent in during the show that asserted that Hawaiian language is an imposition on the residents of our state and that the language is forced on residents here, one example being that most of the street names here are in Hawaiian. Considering the historical journey that we have just been on in this chapter, you can see how offensive and flat out wrong this statement is. The panel was pretty calm and diplomatic in my opinion, and reminded viewers that Hawaiian is an official language of the state in law, and gave many more reasons throughout the program pointing out why Hawaiian is not an imposition on our state.
When it happened, we talked about it because it was such a shocking statement, but in the morning the conversation went back to that particular comment. I repeated the question I had asked earlier, to which my daughter responded that if folks do not like the Hawaiian language, they should move somewhere else. My son chimed in and said that maybe they should go live under a rock so that they do not have to hear it and we do not have to hear them. Both comments cracked me up and reflect an 8- and 10- year old kind of response to this issue, but if you dig a little deeper, ultimately they are the unfiltered responses that the panel probably wanted to say, but perhaps felt like it was not even worth the energy to address.

The fact of the matter is, which is something that I believe is thoroughly explained in this chapter and by other Hawaiian scholars who have been engaged in this work, English has been an imposition on us. And this does not even come close to elucidating the devastating nature of western contact, English-only ideology, and educational policy in and on our lāhui and state. I think my children understand this, in their own way, and are trying to articulate what their uncles and aunties on the panel were saying – not only is the equity of Hawaiian language written in law, but this is our homeland and where the bones of our kūpuna remain – we have no other place to go where we can revitalize and live our language and culture, other than here. And if everyone in our state (both policy makers and residents alike) could understand that simple truth, then the reality that my Hawaiian-speaking children exist in could be truly reflective of the reality that we try to build around them as Hawaiian immersion parents.
CHAPTER 3

Methods

Ka Wehena

I was in a meeting the other day with group of faculty representing a wide variety of disciplines across our university campus. To say I feel like an outsider at these meetings is an understatement – the room is full of non-Hawaiian faculty and administrators who all seem to know each other and each other’s children. However, there are a couple of Hawaiians in the group and when they arrive at the meetings, I cling on to them for dear life! One day, members of this group were discussing the importance of students taking advantage of the opportunity to study abroad and one of the Hawaiian members of the committee began to talk about how the idea of sending Hawaiians away to study has a history in our community, as Kalākaua sent young Hawaiian kānaka to different countries in Europe to study. She went on to surmise that this program that Kalākaua sponsored was hugely successful because many of these Hawaiian kānaka either came home as leaders in the community or stayed in Europe, never returning home and being buried in cemeteries in places like London. The other members of this group nodded approvingly and expressed their support for initiatives that sent all students (Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian) away to study.

I sat there in silent disbelief. While I understand the value of our children being global citizens, I struggle with the philosophy that our children cannot be fully enlightened unless they leave Hawai‘i. Furthermore, the idea that a program like this was successful because the bones of our kūpuna were buried somewhere else, completely severing their relationship with their one hānau, was shocking. But what took my breath
away was the fact that this Hawaiian was unknowingly talking about my tutu kāne kualua.

What I know of my great-great grandfather on my mother’s side comes from what my uncles and tūtū lady (the same tūtū lady whose short story opened Chapter 2) have told me, as well as information I gathered at our last family reunion on Kaua‘i. He attended Punahou (a select school at the time) and was selected by Kalākaua, along with other young kānaka like Robert Wilcox, to go to Europe to study engineering. He was sent to Scotland, and while some of the boys died there of foreign diseases that they had no immunities for, my tūtūkāne kualua enjoyed good health. I know two different stories about why he was sent home – one is that the program was discontinued and the boys were sent home when Kalākaua died; the other is that they stayed there and studied until the illegal occupation of the U.S. military in 1893, upon which they were brought home and forced to pledge their loyalty to the new provisional government or risk being blacklisted in the community. He was a mānaleo, as were his children (as my tūtū lady tells it, my tūtūwahine kuakahi and her sister only spoke Hawaiian to each other when they did not want anyone to know what they were talking about), but he did not speak to my tūtū lady or any of his other moʻopuna in Hawaiian. My tūtū lady’s clearest memories of him are that he wore a pressed white linen suit to work everyday, and as long as she knew him and until the day he died, he was a janitor at Kauluwela Elementary School.

I tell this story because I intend to use storytelling or moʻolelo as my methodology in this study. I tell this story because it brings home the heavy ramifications of how storytelling is used, how stories are told, how our people are represented in stories, and who has the kuleana to tell what stories. I tell this story because as we make
decisions that impact ourselves, our kūpuna, and our moʻopuna – in education and in research – we need to understand the power of storytelling and how it shapes what we believe about ourselves. I tell my story of my tūtūkāne kualua, because storytelling as method, as long as it is done with our roots firmly planted in our kuleana to our past, present and future generations, does matter.

**Building My Approach**

The purpose of this study is: to explore parental decisions to send their children to Hawaiian immersion, examine the effects of these decisions, and understand what families need to know so that a research and resource base can be developed that will strengthen and grow the Hawaiian language immersion program and increase the number of Hawaiian language speakers for generations to come. In order to explore the stories of these mākua, I attempted to weave together storytelling and case study in order to bring together a hui of mākua voices that could inform future generations of Hawaiian immersion mākua. In my methodology, I used research as a way to privilege the voice of mākua of immersion children. The hope is that immersion is not seen as an alternative way of being, but rather as the norm – as a way of life for all Hawaiian mākua who recognize that the continued life of our language lies in us.

**Moʻolelo: The Foundation of Storytelling**

In order to explore the genealogy of this concept of moʻolelo or storytelling, it is important to start at its roots – the word moʻo. The word moʻo has many meanings, but the ones relevant to this discussion include, “succession, series, especially a genealogical line, lineage”(Pukui & Elbert, 1986, p. 253). This word shows us the importance of the relationships between people and as Oliveira (2006) describes it, “This word is quite
indicative of a Hawaiian worldview that privileges the intelligence of the collective body, rather than that of a single brilliant individual” (p. 109-110). The fact that moʻo is at the root of many words related to this concept, including moʻokūʻauhau and moʻolelo, further solidifies the importance of understanding the roots of storytelling as a method of research and living.

Similarly, moʻokūʻauhau is an integral part of storytelling and helps to situate us in the story, “In traditional times, the telling of any Hawaiian history began properly with traditional beginnings. A moʻolelo (history) would begin with the hero’s immediate antecedents or several generations further back along the ancestral lineage” (Kameʻeleihiwa, 1992, p. 1). Andrade (2008) uses the Kumulipo as an example of how moʻokūʻauhau explains our relationships to the ‘āina, our gods, and each other, and everything in our universe. Moʻokūʻauhau, as an integral part of any story, helps to understand our relationships and in the context of making educational decisions, it is the tool we use to unpack the many layers that go into the decision. Understanding the genealogy of our worldview and how that is shaped by our experiences, the experiences of those who came before and the hope for those yet to come is an integral part of using moʻokūʻauhau in storytelling. It goes beyond just knowing who your ancestors are, and includes understanding how we fit into this succession of decisions and coming to grips with how and why our ancestors made the decisions they did, “Hawaiian genealogies are an expression of those reciprocal relationships, and they allow us to see ourselves within our collective identities as ‘ohana and lāhui. Our genealogies give identity, purpose, and kuleana” (Goodyear-Kaʻōpua et al., 2008, p. 176). While moʻokūʻauhau explains some of
how we can use storytelling as method, moʻolelo plays in equally important role in this concept.

Our understandings of moʻolelo come from a variety of sources, but perhaps the best known is from Mary Kawena Pukui. In an unpublished manuscript retrieved from the Bishop Museum Archives, Pukui (n.d.) explains that our kūpuna regarded our moʻolelo of our ancestors and gods as sacred. She goes on to explain that the storyteller had kuleana – to ensure that the story they told was appropriate for the listeners, that the relationships that the gods and aliʻi had to the story were recognized, and that the story was told correctly (and not necessarily interestingly). From a Western perspective, this may seem strange, as knowledge is supposed to be free for the taking and belongs to everyone. Furthermore, the idea of correctness being paramount to entertainment when telling a story sounds preposterous! But the lesson for us today is that everything related to storytelling needs to be treated as sacred and has kuleana – some stories are not for all ears and the storyteller has a responsibility to make sure that certain stories are told only to the people who need to hear it. In the context of research it is our kuleana to have a clear understanding of the sacredness of storytelling.

Moʻolelo served a variety of purposes for our ancestors and continue to provide us with a cultural compass for how to live today. Kanahele-Mossman (2011) describes that moʻolelo, as a valid form of research, are gifts that our ancestors have left for us:

Through *moʻolelo*, *Kanaka Maoli* were able to maintain a link to the past, describing the outstanding feats of one’s ancestors, chronicling the events that happened at a particular locale, explaining the meanings of place names, attributing the formation of certain land features to the gods, and the like (p. 113).
Moʻolelo served to pass down knowledge from one generation to the next and provided haʻawina for the listeners that was distinctly Hawaiian (Kameʻeleihiwa, 1996; Kanahele-Mossman, 2011; Lopes, 2010; McGregor, 2006). Many Hawaiian scholars have written about the important role that moʻolelo plays in our lives: to be a connection to our past and haʻawina for our future, to recover the wisdom of our ancestors, to form our identities in a modern world, to restore pono in our lives, to empower ourselves, and to explore our relationships with our ancestors, our land, and each other (Benham, 2005, 2007; Kaʻaihue, 2010; Kameʻeleihiwa, 1996; Silva, 2010; Tengan, 2008). Quite simply, we use moʻolelo:

...to honor our kūpuna and to celebrate their accomplishments. We tell these stories to teach our kids about what is important to us, what we believe, and how to act. We tell these stories to help our kids understand who they are, who our hui is, and to understand their kuleana to our hui. We tell these stories to our kids so they feel proud about who we are. We tell these stories because they make us feel good (Cashman, 2012, p. 45).

Moʻolelo was an important part of the lives of our ancestors and continues to play a prominent role in how we conduct our research and live our lives today.

While Oliveira (2006) states that as Hawaiian scholars, we have a responsibility to our ancestors when we retell our stories, Aikau (2008) extends this link to our past and future: “Through moʻolelo Kānaka Maoli can know the long genealogical line that connects the ancestors to the living and the infinite generations to come” (p. 70). We need to recognize that this process of storytelling is not for us—that we are really writing
these stories for our grandchildren and for their grandchildren. Thompson (2007) discusses what his father taught him about the importance of keeping our eyes on our future, “My father said…If it only stays with you, you have done nothing over time. Make sure you keep in mind, along the path of the vision that you see children all the way” (p. 23). This responsibility is not taken lightly, as it requires humility and the ability to empower and heal our communities (Kaomea, 2004). Storytelling, then, is the way in which we, as Hawaiians, collectively share the weight of our ancestors, ourselves, and our descendants on our path to self-determination. Benham (2000) contends that this movement has already begun, “We know that the march to make visible the power of our indigenous stories, which began with our kūpuna who have passed and those who are still with us and that rally us to step up, is alive and well on its way” (p. 56). Our task then, is to figure out a way to move forward and tell and re-tell our stories. Together.

Now that I have privileged moʻolelo from a Hawaiian worldview, I would like to explore how storytelling as a methodology is also embraced by indigenous peoples around the globe.

**Indigenous Storytelling**

Storytelling serves a number of purposes for indigenous peoples, including connecting to place and genealogy, providing a roadmap for how to live, as a way to pass down knowledge and history to the next generation, as a way to heal, and as a way to forge identity in the midst of colonization. (Archibald, 2008; E. Baker, 2005; Brayboy, 2006; Corntassel, 2009; Waziyatawin, 2005; S. Wilson, 2009). As Brayboy (2006) explains, as a valid research method, stories, “serve as a way to orient oneself and others toward the world and life” (p. 439). Archibald (2008) further validates that indigenous
storywork goes beyond this orientation and is a way to regain balance and harmony in our lives.

Perhaps the most resounding connection between Hawaiian views of storytelling and those of the larger indigenous community lie in the sacredness of stories and the responsibility of the storyteller and the listener (Archibald, 2008; Brayboy, 2005; Corntassel, 2009; S. Wilson, 2009). As Wilson (2009) states:

For the storyteller to explain too much is not honouring you as the listener. It is removing all responsibility from you to do any learning. The main point of Indigenous discourse is to provide a foundation or platform from which to grow, without putting a ceiling or limit on the amount or direction of that growth. It is your responsibility as a listener to learn and to grow, as you too are accountable to all our relations (p. 135).

Storytelling within a larger indigenous context legitimizes the use of storytelling as a form of research, provides us with instructions on the role of the storyteller and the listener, and solidifies the kuleana that all involved with storywork have in this process.

Furthermore, Brayboy (2006) asserts that for indigenous peoples, stories are legitimate forms of data that are not separate from theory, “Stories as ‘data’ are important, and one key to collecting these data is ‘hearing’ the stories...Hearing stories means that value is attributed to them and both the authority and the nuance of stories are understood” (p. 440). Smith (1992) argues that stories are the way that we pass down our values and beliefs for this generation and the next. Indeed, many researchers (Alfred, 2004, 2005; R. Bishop, 1996; R. Bishop, 1999; Chamberlin, 2004; Said, 1993; Smith, 1999) argue that storytelling is our most powerful method for reclaiming our histories,
our language, ourselves. It makes sense then, that part of collecting the data for this project involves legitimizing the telling and re-telling of mākua-centered stories.

However, the dual nature of storytelling has not been lost on indigenous peoples. Smith (1999) argues that because our stories have been told and re-told by the West, indigenous voices have been overwhelmingly silenced by storytelling. Thus, the primary role of storytelling, as a colonial project, has been to convince indigenous peoples that telling the stories of their own existence and realities is not possible. However, the other side of storytelling, created by and for indigenous people, can serve to reclaim one’s voice and reclaim the voices of the community. They help us, as indigenous peoples, articulate an identity. Trinh (1989) argues for this as well:

You who understand the dehumanization of forced removal-relocation-reeducation-redefinition, the humiliation of having to falsify your own reality, your voice – you know. And often cannot say it. You try to unsay it, for if you don’t, they will not fail to fill in the blanks on your behalf, and you will be said (p. 80).

Said & Barsamian (2003) assert that intellectuals must be dogged and tenacious in telling our stories. That is why storytelling is so important—because it links us to our past, creates a space for us, it gives us a voice, it defines who we are and our struggle, and most importantly, it serves as a foundation for all who come after us.

Bishop (1996,1999) advocates for collaborative storytelling, whereby the lines between the researched and researcher are not blurred, but inextricably linked. Collaborative storytelling is a method by which people are able to reflect and make sense of their experiences within an indigenous context. Rather than searching for one
undeniable truth within a set of stories or data, collaborative storytelling embraces the complexities of the lived experiences of the participants, “Complexity in stories increases the range of interpretations, knowledge, and experiences available within research” (Bishop, 1999, p.4). This method of storytelling makes sense to me as an indigenous researcher for a couple of reasons. First, our stories are like a Venn diagram: both overlapping and on opposite ends of the circles. But the challenge is to bring those multi-layered stories together into something that serves a greater purpose. In addition, this methodology allows stories to be told collectively, honoring all of those involved in their making. In utilizing this methodology, I seek to not privilege one story over the other or ensure that one voice is louder than the rest. As a collective, I believe our stories can be at their most powerful. Our kūpuna advocate for this collaborative stance time and time again, “ʻAʻohe hana nui ke alu ʻia. No task is too great when done together by all” (Pukui, 1983, p. 18).

**Case Study**

My study collected the stories of four Hawaiian immersion ʻohana, each representing a single case. Merriam (1998) provides a useful definition of how to see a case, “Both definitions allow me to see the case as a thing, a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries. I can ‘fence in’ what I am going to study. The case then, could be a person such as a student, a teacher, a principal, a program, a group such as a class, a school, a community, a specific policy, and so on” (p. 27). Although each ʻohana that I interviewed represented a single case, their stories, as you will soon read, then came together in a collective or multiple case study so that I could see across the contexts and experiences of these families and identify their commonalities and differences (Creswell,
2007; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2011). Creswell (2007) argues that this variety of cases can provide a more compelling interpretation of the data.

Because I was interested in not just the stories of these Hawaiian immersion mākuas, but also the context in which they occurred, I also used case study as a way to explore and explain these stories. According to Yin (2011, p. 4), “All case study research starts from the same compelling feature: the desire to derive a(n) (up-)close or otherwise in-depth understanding of a single or small number of ‘cases’, set in their real world contexts.” The lives and decisions of these mākuas did not happen in a vacuum and I used case study as a way to investigate the political and personal contexts of each family and all the families as a collective immersion ʻohana.

**Participants**

Yin (2011) emphasizes the importance of defining each case when designing a case study. As such, in this study I interviewed four different Hawaiian immersion families that enrolled their children in different contexts on the island of Oʻahu – the case is a group of families with children currently enrolled in the Hawaiian immersion program. While these are not the only three contexts that exist within the immersion program, I chose these three categories in order to provide a boundary for what will be studied. Creswell (2007) and Merriam (1998) confirm the importance of the researcher purposefully selecting a case or cases that will show a variety of perspectives as well as cases from which the most can be learned. Utilizing the relationships that I had in the Hawaiian immersion community, I interviewed four different families and wove them together to construct a larger, collective story.
Although these families chose to not use pseudonyms as individuals, I decided to name them as ‘ohana for a couple of reasons. First, because kuleana has been an integral part of my ontological perspective, naming these families according to where they live and raise their families seemed like an appropriate way to tie kuleana (as genealogy and ‘āina) into the conversations. Additionally, as I thought about each family and their stories, I realized that their lives and their stories have been shaped by the places that they live and take care of, and this became even more evident as I did some initial reading about the stories of these places. I explore the stories of these places and their connections to these families more thoroughly in Chapter 4, however, I would like to briefly introduce each ‘ohana here.

Our first ‘ohana is Ka ‘Ohana Wai‘anae – their children attend the only DOE K-12 Hawaiian immersion school on O‘ahu. Hawaiian is the language of the relationship that every member of this family has with each other, and the children grew up speaking Hawaiian as their first language. The second ‘ohana is Ka ‘Ohana ‘Ewa Uka and their children attend the same school as the children of Ka ‘Ohana Wai‘anae. One parent speaks Hawaiian and the other does not, but they attend a church where Hawaiian is spoken and so the children have Hawaiian language experiences outside of school. The third ‘ohana is Ka ‘Ohana ‘Ewa Kai and their oldest child attends a Hawaiian language-based Public Charter School on the Windward side of O‘ahu. Both parents have Hawaiian language proficiency and can communicate with their children and each other in Hawaiian. The fourth ‘ohana is Ka ‘Ohana Ko‘olaupoko and their oldest child was enrolled at a DOE K-6 Hawaiian immersion school within an English-medium K-6
school on the Windward side of O‘ahu. One parent speaks Hawaiian and is a former Hawaiian immersion student and one parent does not.

These four ‘ohana represent single cases in this study but also represent a broad range of experiences and backgrounds that reflect the range of different backgrounds and experiences within the entire Hawaiian immersion community. Families have varying levels of Hawaiian language proficiency and experiences in the home. Different kinds of immersion sites are also represented in the different cases – a DOE K-12 site, a charter school site, and a school-within-a school, or a dual language campus. Each type of site has a different set of strengths and challenges and demonstrates a broad view of the Hawaiian immersion landscape. The nuances of all of these differences were an interesting aspect of this study, which are further discussed in Chapter 4.

The relationships that I have with the mākua from these ‘ohana is not contrived or determined by reading or hearing about it (Maanen, 2011); it is the result of a shared experience and a shared goal. This pilina, or relationship, comes from the root word, pili, which is defined as to cling, stick to, adjoin, associate with, or belonging to (Pukui & Elbert, 1986). Pili and pilina, in all of its meanings, is a useful metaphor for thinking about the relationships that immersion mākua have with each other and elucidates how I am able to purposefully select my participants. These relationships would not be possible if I were not an immersion mākua myself and the understanding that I have of the context of my participants’ lives provides me with the perspective that I need to approach and talk to these mākua appropriately and respectfully. It also provides a way to explore my kuleana as the researcher.
Researcher’s Role

The importance of kuleana, both as the foundation for my ontological perspective, but also as a way to look at methods that I use to conduct my research is something that I take very seriously. Kuleana, as defined by Pukui & Elbert (1986), is right, privilege, responsibility. The concept of kuleana, and how it applies to Native Hawaiians today, has been discussed by many Hawaiian scholars (Benham, 2005, 2007; Goodyear-Kaʻōpua, 2009; Kaomea, 2009; NeSmith, 2005; Osorio, 2006; Warner, 1999; Wong, 2008). Ultimately, kuleana is what will determine my role in this research – as an insider, outsider, parent, academic, storyteller, story weaver – all of these roles were dictated to me as I negotiated the boundaries of my kuleana to this research, to the Hawaiian language immersion program, to mākua, and to our lāhui.

As you will see as you continue to read on in the following chapters, my role as the researcher is complex – during the duration of the study I continually juggled my role as an insider, with an insider perspective, opinions and biases, with my role as the researcher, who is expected to be objective above all else. I found myself on more than one occasion wanting to have a genuine dialogue with my participants, because these issues are important and because it is such an important part of my life, but holding my tongue because of the expectations of Western research. This is an important tension that we face as Hawaiian researchers – my genealogy and relationships make me an insider. But when I have to deal with Western expectations of research, this status becomes disrupted and I get catapulted to outsider status to some extent. And this disruption affects my interaction with my participants and is an example of the larger tension that
exists for us – that Western research methods are a huge disruption to how we do things as Hawaiians. And it is as simple and as complicated as that.

Journaling was a method that I used throughout my data collection and analysis to balance my role as an insider and researcher. It was here, while I was writing in my journal, where I was allowed to be as opinionated, passionate, and biased as I wanted to be – supposedly without impacting other families in one way or another. It was during this extensive journaling that I realized that it was time to throw out my pre-conceived notions of being removed from my research subjects – it was just not possible. I did not know at the time if this was a normal part of the interview process, but I think because of the nature of my position within the research, it was impossible to not think about the words of my participants and look at what I am doing too. I do believe that this self-reflective piece is an important part of my methodology, and I also realized that it served as a way to weave my story into the stories of my participants. How could I possibly have these deep conversations about decisions and children and not look at myself in the mirror too?

This is the part of the research that really brings the question of subjectivity versus objectivity and the insider versus outsider to the forefront. For me, this is not just a research topic, it is my life. From a Western perspective, how can I possibly be objective, but from a Hawaiian perspective, do I want to be? Many indigenous researchers (Ka‘aihue, 2010; Kaomea, 2004; Smith, 1999; S. Wilson, 2009) talk about the unique and necessary position of an indigenous researcher when conducting indigenous research and emphasize the fact that any research we do needs to make a positive difference for our communities, what Wilson (2009) refers to as relational
accountability. However, what about when the research makes a positive difference for the researcher? All of my own self-reflections would not have happened without this research and without the opportunity to talk to other parents in similar situations. Because I believe that while relational accountability is important and making a positive impact on our immersion community is important, what is equally important is the positive impacts that Hawaiian or indigenous research can and should have on the researcher. None of this could have happened if my role was any different in this study. I think you will see, as you continue to read further into this dissertation, the positive implications that this study had on my life and my role as the researcher.

**Procedures: Data Collection and Analysis**

**Interviews.** In order to collect my data, I conducted two in-depth interviews with each family. I interviewed my families for the first time and as I was transcribing the interviews and doing an initial analysis of these transcripts, I realized that there were additional questions that I wanted to ask of my participants, so I scheduled a second follow up interview with each family. The second interview allowed me to probe families further on issues that I wanted them to elaborate on, as well as do some initial fact checking to make sure that what I was hearing from them was accurate. All of the interviews were face-to-face, semi-structured interviews, as this method allowed me to gather some specific information that I needed for this study, while remaining flexible to the possibilities and respond to the worldview of the participants (Merriam, 1998).

Fontana & Frey (2003) advocate for this type of semi-structured or unstructured interview, as a way to ensure that the interview will provide a greater scope of data and as a way for the interviewer to not impose categories onto the participants that will influence
the collection of data. Fontana and Frey also provide a useful framework for describing the reciprocal nature of the relationship between the interviewer and the participants that is in-line with the pilina and kuleana that I have with and to these participants, “There is a growing realization that interviewers are not the mythical, neutral tools envisioned by survey research. Interviewers are increasingly seen as active participants in interactions with respondents, and interviews are seen as negotiated accomplishments of both interviewers and respondents that are shaped by the contexts and situations in which they take place” (2003, p. 90-1). As I mentioned previously, my unique role as the researcher allowed me to conduct the interviews in such a way that not only provided me with a wealth of data, but also strengthened my relationships with my research subjects.

I also found that utilizing a serendipitous approach to collecting data was beneficial when conducting my interviews. As Wong (2011) describes it, “In the serendipity approach, the agency must be assigned to the knowledge itself. It is the knowledge that is responsible for revealing itself to the researcher. This is not luck nor is it a less rigorous approach. The researcher must work to be in a position to receive the knowledge at the point of revelation” (p.166). An example of this serendipitous approach happened while I was interviewing the families. Initially, I only had selected three families to be interviewed as a part of my study. However, in the process of interviewing one of the families, I was serendipitously introduced to a fourth family during the interview. This fourth family went from being distant acquaintances to research subjects in a matter of seconds and was an integral part of my study, allowing me to include a population of immersion families that I did not have initially. In this instance, I was
prepared to go where the knowledge took me, and added a level of rigor and authenticity to my study that I would not have had otherwise (Eisenhardt, 1989; Wong, 2011).

Ultimately, what I think this points to is the spiritual aspect of research that we rarely read about and brings our kūpuna into this conversation about serendipity. I always expect that our kūpuna are guiding us down the path that we are supposed to take and that all we have to do is be open to it, and in this instance, they did just that. There were a large number of families that I thought would be good research participants – some that I knew well and some that I did not know that well, but I never asked them if they would want to participate in my study because it never felt like the right time. So I waited. And in the waiting, my kūpuna provided me not only with the answer, but with an opportunity to find participants for my study based on the pilina that I spoke of earlier. It is the serendipity method taken to a spiritual level – the idea that as researchers we have to be open and willing to seize the opportunities that our kūpuna provide for us. As I re-read my journal entry from that day, I think it captured my application of this methodology perfectly, “All of the questions that have been swirling in my head since I began my interviews, about methodology, participants, the role of the researcher, etc. – many of them were answered tonight as I sat in someone’s backyard, who I barely knew at the start, but became ‘ohana by the end, and had a conversation with a group of mākua about their most important decision. I cannot say enough about the sense of wonder and amazement I feel about the guidance of my kupuna on this research today and every day. Mahalo!” (April 21, 2013)

There are also a number of things that I did to make sure that the interviews took place in a comfortable setting. First, I provided food to all of my participants every single
time we met. This is an integral aspect of how I was raised – my grandparents and parents taught me the importance of providing food for guests or for people who are giving something of themselves. I understood that the participants of this research trusted me with their stories and trusted me to listen respectfully and retell them appropriately – providing a meal was one way to demonstrate this reciprocity to my participants. Second, I made sure that the interview took place in a setting that was preferable to them, rather than asking them to come to a location that was convenient or perhaps more conducive to a formal interview. As such, interviews took place in a variety of settings – in people’s houses, in their backyards, and in offices. This sometimes presented logistical and technical issues with recording equipment, but I believed the more comfortable my participants were, the more comfortable they would feel in sharing their stories with me. These logistical and technical issues were not significant enough to alter the findings of the research.

**Data recording procedures.** For the interviews I conducted with the ʻohana, I used a voice recording device with permission from each research subject. After conducting each interview, I downloaded the recording on to a computer and also kept a backup copy on an external hard drive. During each interview, I took some basic notes in an unobtrusive manner to provide me with an outline of each interview as I started my analysis. After my first round of interviews were completed and the transcripts were done, I sent them to my research participants for corrections. I followed the same procedure after my second round of interviews as well.

**Data analysis procedures.** Once all of the interviews were completed, I analyzed them for, “the story they have to tell, a chronology of unfolding events, and turning
points or epiphanies” (Creswell, 2007, p. 155). In order to analyze my interview data, I first listened to each interview in order to fill in the outline of the notes I took during the interview. Then I transcribed the interviews, and began to look for patterns and common themes, recognizing that the process of data collection and analysis is dynamic (Merriam, 1998). I went through two different iterations of this process as I analyzed my data. First, I grouped my data following the framework of my research questions, populating different questions with quotes from the transcripts. This gave me an initial analysis of the data and provided me with a jumping off point to dig deeper. Next, I created a blank column on my transcripts and re-read them three to four times, making notes in the column, identifying common themes, connecting different transcripts to each other, and referring back to my initial analysis within the framework of my research questions. Within this two-step process I used both iterations as a way to triangulate the data and provide further contextual and descriptive information about each case and about the cases as a collective (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998; S. Wilson, 2009; Yin, 2011). I then looked for common elements across the cases to did a cross-case analysis (Creswell, 2007). This analysis developed into a larger collective story of the decisions parents face when sending their children to Hawaiian immersion.

In re-telling these stories, however, I did not want to put forth that there is only one story, “we use storytelling as a method for inviting them [our readers] to put themselves in our place...The usefulness of these stories is their capacity to inspire conversation from the point of view of the readers, who enter from the perspective of their own lives” (Ellis & Bochn, 2003, p.224). I recognize that as the re-teller of these stories I have a heavy responsibility, however, I also know that in using a more indirect
approach to re-telling these stories that I placed some responsibility onto the reader as well, “Stories often are the guardians of cumulative knowledges that hold a place in the psyches of the group members, memories of tradition, and reflections on power. Hearers ultimately understand the nuances in stories and recognize that the onus for hearing is placed on the hearer rather than the speaker for delivering a clearly articulated message” (Brayboy, 2006, p. 440). This shared responsibility and the idea that my story, beliefs and values were woven into this larger collective story, is an integral part of indigenous research (S. Wilson, 2009; Wong, 2011). These perspectives informed the way that I represented these stories as a collective voice, and like Baron (1993) I aspired to present these stories as the reality only from where I sit, with the recognition that there are multiple perspectives and multiple places to sit.

**Strategies for Validating Findings**

I employed relational accountability in order to validate my findings (S. Wilson, 2009). Relational accountability refers to the reciprocal relationship that the researcher should have to participants and how I am held accountable to the research that I write. In my case, it refers to the kuleana that I have to my participants and holds me to a higher standard than just making sure that I have transcribed interviews correctly, “…rather than the goals of validity and reliability, research from an Indigenous paradigm should aim to be authentic and credible. By that I mean that the research must accurately reflect and build upon the relationships between the ideas and the participants. The analysis must be true to the voices of all the participants and reflect an understanding of the topic that is shared by researcher and participants alike. In other words, it has to hold relational accountability” (S. Wilson, 2009, p. 101–2). The first thing I did, as I mentioned, is a
second interview in order to get feedback from my participants on my initial analysis of the data. This process allowed them to check for accuracy and build upon their ideas. When I wrote up my findings in Chapter 4, I had each family review and make sure that how they were represented on the page was accurate. Based on their feedback, I made revisions to the chapter and did not finalize it until all of the families gave their blessing to do so. As kuleana and relational accountability prescribes, I made sure the analysis did not just belong to me, but belonged to all of my participants as well.

I also utilized the expertise and experience of one of the members of my doctoral committee to do final fact checking of my analysis. This committee member is a native speaker and was one of the original teachers of the Hawaiian immersion program and has first-hand knowledge of the context surrounding the beginnings of the Hawaiian immersion program. This person’s feedback was critical to my analysis, not only for fact checking purposes, but also to ensure that the findings and analysis were relevant, useful, and beneficial to the immersion program (Smith, 1999, 2005; S. Wilson, 2009).

**Benefits and Limitations**

The most obvious issue that I believe is both a benefit and limitation is how close my work and personal life is to the topic of this research. I am about as much of an insider as one can be, which is extremely beneficial from the standpoint of being able to access my research participants and have a rapport with them that will benefit my data collection (Fontana & Frey, 2003; Merriam, 1998; S. Wilson, 2009). I have a fairly good understanding of the context in which the research sits, because I am living in it. I believe this insider knowledge and position enabled me to collect and analyze the data in a richer and deeper way than someone who is an outsider.
However, this position could also be viewed as a limitation, as I could be seen as having bias, which could skew the data. I believe that by not just acknowledging this bias but also embracing it, I can ensure that the data is not just valid, but also relevant and useful to my community (S. Wilson, 2009). I do not see this connection to the project as being a limitation, much like Guajardo et al. , “On the other hand, we believe our long-lasting and deep relationships with the community validate the data, which are triangulated by the longevity of the work and the products we see in the people and our community” (2008, p.8).

The other major limitation is the scope of my study. I recognize that although my results may resonate with many Hawaiian immersion families, they may not resonate with all of them. I believe that my research participants represent a good cross-section of Hawaiian immersion families, but they certainly do not and cannot possibly represent all of them. My study is also O‘ahu-based and I recognize that the issues that Hawaiian immersion families tackle on other islands may be different. I focused on O‘ahu for a number of reasons, the most obvious being that it is where I live and logistically it would have been difficult for me to travel to different islands to interview other families. The other reason is that I have genealogy on O‘ahu – it is my one hānau, most of my experiences and relationships with immersion families are with families who live here, and I believe it would be somewhat maha‘oi for me to travel to other islands and interview other families without knowledge of the context of those immersion communities. If I return to the concept of kuleana – my kuleana is bound by place and relationships, and to travel outside of those boundaries without being asked is not how I was raised.
However, I believe these limitations serve as a roadmap for future directions of this research. Not a week went by when I did not talk to a mother or father of an immersion child and think, “they should be one of my research participants!” I met so many people along this journey that I thought would add richness to my data, but I simply could not include them and finish my dissertation too. I believe this research study is just the jumping off point – there are so many more stories of immersion ‘ohana that need to be told, stories that could help to empower our immersion families and strengthen the immersion program. I hope that this research is just the beginning.

Ka Panina

All of this discussion about methodologies, insider/outsider, relational accountability, interview procedures…may be a good thing to read if I am having a hard time falling asleep, but does not feel like the right thing to end this important chapter with. So I would like to wrap up this discussion and remind us why storytelling matters with a story about my daughter, Hoapili. Recognizing my kuleana as a māmā, researcher, and storyteller, I checked with her first before telling this story. My first proposal was shot down immediately with a woeful, “‘A‘ole!!!!!” Thinking that I am the mākua (and have final veto power), I told her ok, but knew it was a great story and planned to tell it anyway. Later that night, with my mind racing as I was trying to go to sleep, suddenly all of the thoughts swimming around in my head fell away and the only thought left was that the story I had proposed to my daughter (and that she had vetoed) was the wrong story to tell. I spent about 10 minutes reaching into the far recesses of my brain for a new one (because I needed it in the morning!) and then finally let go. In that moment, I recognized which story I should tell, thanked my kūpuna for the gift, and promptly fell asleep. In the
morning, I submitted a new proposal to The Boss and she said it was cool! So with a clear reminder of my role (and kuleana) as a māmā, researcher and storyteller, I would like to tell you a story of my mali.

As her name suggests, she is a mama’s-girl. While there are some circumstances that happened early in her life that I believe made her that way, she also lives into her name in a variety of ways. I am not into comparing my children, but where my son is fearless, she is conservative; where my son is malleable, she is unbending; where my son is indifferent, she is considerate. She is the ying to his yang. Or perhaps a better way to describe it is she is the Hina to his Kū and the Kū to his Hina. In either case, she possesses the best of me and my husband, provides much needed balance to our ‘ohana, and is without a doubt (and I have a large number of witnesses who can confirm this), the funniest person in the entire universe.

A couple years ago, at the Hawaiian language immersion school she attends, she had a teacher who brought our lives full circle and illustrated how moʻolelo and moʻokūʻauhau can impact our lives. He is a former student of mine and his dad and my mom are friends. He is also a student of one of my Hawaiian language kumu, and some of the knowledge that we have about ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i overlaps. I have seen examples of this in haʻawina that my daughter brings home, in the songs that she sings when she thinks I’m not listening, and the words and sentence patterns that she uses on a daily basis. I see these things and feel so well-acquainted with them that it is easy to see and appreciate the genealogy of his pedagogy.

One day as we were driving into school in the morning, my daughter asked me if she could tell me a story. When I asked her what kind of story, she said the story of
Halaʻea, a chief from Kaʻū. Interested in what this would sound like (as she has a tendency to go off on tangents that even a satellite could not track), I said sure. She promptly launched into what sounded like a well-rehearsed version of this story. Along the way she would stop if she made a mistake and start the story over from the beginning, making sure that she went in the right sequence, and told each part of the story correctly. She also emphasized certain parts with short oli and finished the story with a mele that was obviously written by her kumu. While her brother was rolling his eyes and telling her, “just tell the story already!”, I sat in silent amazement as I saw her embody what a storyteller should be, just as Tūtū Pukui taught us. She understood the important kuleana she had, as the storyteller, to tell the story in the right order and with the right details. She was maiau like her tūtūwahine kuakahi – she was thoughtful about who the story was about, who her listeners were (besides ignoring her brother’s comment) and the impact that her moʻolelo was going to have on all of us. She used moʻokūʻauhau, mele and oli as a way for us to understand the story and our place in it. And she acknowledged the genealogy of the knowledge she had and the story she had to tell by linking herself back to her kumu. And the next day on the drive to school, she told a different story, in the same way! This girl never ceases to amaze me, and this time, she amazed me by teaching me what using storytelling as method truly means. She did not read what Tūtū Pukui taught us about the sacredness of stories, or the kuleana that we have as Hawaiian and indigenous storytellers, but she embodied everything I have read and written about what storytelling and moʻolelo should be.

Our kūpuna were master storytellers and stories were an innate part of their lives. This story about storytelling merely scratches the surface of how we can live into our
kuleana as storytellers. Rather than simply write about what masterful storytellers they were, it is also a part of my responsibility as a Hawaiian, in carrying on that scholarly legacy and embracing survivance, to be a storyteller myself. I may make mistakes along the way, but I am not going to get better at it if all I do is talk about it. My kūpuna and my daughter taught me that important ha’awina: ma ka hana ka ‘ike! Therefore, the following chapters represent the kuleana that I have as a Hawaiian storyteller to re-tell and re-present the collective stories of Hawaiian immersion ‘ohana.
Ka Wehena

“Ho, Māmā! E nānā i nā wailele!” This was a particularly rainy Sunday, and my keiki were trying to count how many waterfalls they saw as we made the drive from one end of the Koʻolau to the other. Too many to count, so they gave up and just started identifying the major ones by sporadic “Ho!” from the back seat. Kānekoa and I looked at each other and laughed as we drove to a place the kūpuna of the area call Hoi. We go to this loʻi, nestled in the bosom of ‘Ioleka’a and Puʻu Māʻeliʻeli, for a number of reasons, which hopefully will be illuminated throughout this chapter. On this day, we came to talk about and see with our own eyes how a heavy rain affects the system, from ma uka to ma kai.

You see, my husband would never call himself a farmer or a scientist. But I think he is both and the best parts of what he has to offer this world have melded together within our son. All the conflicts that we feel about what is Hawaiian, what is science, what is Hawaiian science, is there such thing?? My son entertains none of it – he knows it as what his kūpuna did as scientists, engineers, intellectuals, the list goes on and on – and embraces all of it. So today, we came here to talk to him and his sister about the important role that the loʻi plays in this ahupuaʻa.

We start ma uka at our friends’ place and watch the river carve its way through rocks, up embankments, through the weeds and carefully planted native plants along the stream bed, and our kids describe the water as moving fast and dirty. We drive down to the canal and watch the water ripping down the concrete channel. The water looks the
same as it did before – it flows freely, unconcerned about the things in its path or what it is taking with it. This water is accelerated and in a hurry, as if it is participating in some kind of race that we cannot see.

We then move down to the loʻi and this is where the majority of the ha'awina takes place. We talk about how this water flows from an external source and we do not always know where it has been, what kinds of things have been added or taken out, and that sometimes the condition of the water is not what we want it to be. The kids notice immediately that some thing is different about the water here – although it is still flowing quickly in the kahawai, at the point that it gets diverted into the loʻi, the pace slows and the water’s movement is more purposeful. It is as if it knows that it has a job to do here at the loʻi, a kuleana to nurture the kalo in its path, and so has taken a pause from the race it is in. The loʻi are swollen with this water almost to the point of overflow, but the kalo are firmly rooted in their puʻepuʻe and seem oblivious to the increased flow and water volume, accepting the raindrops on their leaves and fluttering playfully in the stormy weather. We walk to the point where the water returns back to the race in the stream and my children conclude that the water is cleaner now than when it first came into the loʻi.

My son confirms that assumption because it is something that he has learned in the loʻi at their school and starts talking about pH levels, which gets my farmer and scientist husband all excited. This leads to a discussion about whole point of our day – what role does the loʻi play in this system? What is its kuleana?

Suddenly, I hear my daughter saying something softly, almost to the point of a whisper, while she is looking at the stream. I lean in and hear, “He ui, he nīnau, e ui aku ana au iā ‘oe – aia i hea ka wai a Kāne?” By this time, my son is finished talking pH
levels with his dad, understands the cue, and responds, “Aia i ka hikina a ka lā, puka i Ha’e ha’e – aia i laila ka wai a Kāne.” And they continue this back and forth, question and response, all the way through the chant. Kānekoa and I immediately stop and stare at each other in wonder and amazement. We do not have to say a word to each other, but we know in that instant that our kūpuna are sending us a message. In the pitter-patter of the rain we can hear them, “Good job you two. But don’t give up because you still got a lot of work to do…”

**Introductions**

**Introducing: Storytelling and stories.** I chose to begin this chapter and the initial analysis of my research with a series of stories. In utilizing this methodology, I seek to privilege storytelling as a method of conducting research and provide an opportunity to navigate my role in this research, much like Guajardo et al. (2008), “We find storytelling as a critical mode through which we conduct our day-to-day work, build our curriculum, and enhance our pedagogies. It also serves as the genre through which we explain the historical context. Storytelling is the way we place ourselves in the middle of the text, as we engage as reflective practitioners” (p. 4).

My role in this portion of the research is simply as the re-teller of the stories of these families. I understand that I have a unique kuleana in all of this and as some wise native scholars remind us (Ka‘aihue, 2010; Kaomea, 2004; Smith, 1999; S. Wilson, 2009), part of fulfilling this kuleana is to ensure that they are transformational for the reader, for the families, for our children, and for our lāhui. I retell this mo'olelo acknowledging the deep and complex relationship I have to the research, my participants, and the context in which this story sits. I also understand as an immersion parent myself,
I have my own set of strengths, challenges, and biases that have affected and are affected by this moʻolelo. With the acknowledgment of my positionality in these stories, I will be using the words and thoughts of the families I spoke to in different ways throughout this chapter as a way to highlight the most important lessons that we can learn from their perspectives and their life experiences. This will enable me to fulfill the purpose of this study, which is to explore parental decisions to send their children to Hawaiian immersion, examine the effects of these decisions, and understand what families need to know so that a research and resource base can be developed that will strengthen and grow the Hawaiian language immersion program and increase the number of Hawaiian language speakers for generations to come.

This story is one within a volume of stories about immersion children and immersion families. As Behar (1993) demonstrates, while they may seem mundane and ordinary as individual stories, as a collective, these stories may resonate and can transform a listener into a storyteller as well. The genesis of this research really started there – I had questions to ask, as well as stories to tell, about our decision to send our children to a kula kaiapuni, or Hawaiian immersion school, and was looking for other people who had questions and maybe some answers. I did not set out to create a proposal or a paper, really, I just wanted to talk to other ʻohana who may be going through similar things. These discussions evolved into a story that I thought was important to tell, and as I hope you will see, the power of this story, the story of mākuʻa who have accepted this kuleana, lies in its collective impact, more than a collection of individual stories. So I have decided to re-tell it that way, for the most part. One family had a very different story to tell and provide us with an opportunity to think critically about current educational
policy and how it affects our decision-making process. However, I think you will see that this idea of collective agency (Bandura, 2001) or the power of our collective kuleana, will surface again and again.

In order to retell this collective story in a meaningful way and to provide a roadmap to the terrain of these stories, I chose to use our aforementioned loʻi as our companion on this journey.

**Introducing: The loʻi.** In order to give us a good start to this journey, I would like to return to ka wai a Kāne, or the water that my family watched flow from ma uka to ma kai, to frame our discussion of these families and their decisions. We start with the kahawai, the stream that flows (hopefully unimpeded) from the mountains to the sea. This water flows quickly and represents the main stream, or mainstream education. As I described in my story, this water moves quickly, and is unconcerned with what is in its path. Like the mandate to “race to the top”, this water is in a race to the finish.

We then travel to the poʻowai, where the water takes a different path, much like families who decide to enroll their children in Hawaiian immersion. At this point, these families have intentionally decided to divert their children from mainstream education into Hawaiian immersion schools. As the water travels more intentionally through the ʻauwai and into the loʻi, these loʻi represent the individual families that make this decision. While this kuleana is nurtured within these families and individual loʻi, we are keenly aware that each ʻohana is connected through the makawai, or the places in the banks where the water moves between loʻi. The decisions that we make, the ways in which we strengthen and take care of our children and kuleana, impact and are impacted
by these other families, or interconnected lo‘i. Within the system, we also impact the water that flows through it, creating health, well-being, and balance.

This more well-balanced water returns into the mainstream educational system at the ho‘i, in the same way that our children may return to mainstream education at different points in their lives – more balanced, more enriched, thereby impacting the mainstream in positive ways. As you read through the collective stories throughout this chapter, I encourage you to return to this lo‘i as a way to guide you through, much like ka wai a Kāne guides us as it meanders through our lo‘i system.

**Introducing kuleana: binding the stories together.** As we proceed through the lo‘i and use it as a way explore the stories of these families, it is an opportune moment for us to be reintroduced to kuleana, as it is a fundamental part of my conceptual framework. The relationship between land and kuleana is so important that it is even reflected in its definition (Pukui & Elbert, 1986). However, at its most fundamental level, we have kuleana to the ‘āina because it is a part of our genealogy. As our elder sibling, we have a responsibility to take care of the land as it has a responsibility to take care of us:

The familial relationships established by the Papa and Wākea story place human beings as the younger siblings of the kalo (taro plant) and the ‘āina (islands) in the family of life. These relationships carry with them responsibilities and examples for proper behavior. The ‘āina is the eldest sibling, and therefore responsible for protecting and feeding the younger ones. As younger siblings, Hawaiian people inherit a kuleana (responsibility) to mālama (keep, obey, pay
heed to, care for) ʻāina and kalo. These primary values set a course for the system of living patterns developed by the ancestors (Andrade, 2008, p. 25).

Oliveira (2006) provides us with a useful way to further look at this relationship. While she emphasizes the relationship that we have with ʻāina as our kuaʻana, she also describes how we come to know our kuleana or other words, know our place, “To know one’s kuleana was to be accountable for one’s actions and effect that one had on both place and society” (p. 88). We cannot examine what kuleana means in our own lives without examining our relationship to place. As such, much like the ʻauwai and makawai that curve through and connect the loʻi system, I chose to weave kuleana throughout the retelling of this collective story, as a way to ground us to our genealogy, our responsibilities, and our ʻāina. I used kuleana as a way to bind these stories together and also as an overarching theme, concept, and way of living that we can always return to. This recognition of kuleana and place has significance and defines each of us – with this understanding, I would like to introduce you to the families that contributed to this story and collective kuleana.

Introducing: Nā ʻohana. We start the introduction of the ʻohana of this collective story in Waiʻanae, Oʻahu. The moku of Waiʻanae was always known as a place where the oceans were abundant with fish, however, in many old accounts, written by people from their view from the ocean, Waiʻanae looked like a place whose abundance was only present in the ocean. Like a well-kept secret, Waiʻanae had its loʻi kalo tucked into its valleys, nourished by the waters born at the top of Kaʻala. Kaʻala is the guardian of this place and of Komohana, where the sun lies down to sleep (Sterling & Summers,
1978). In the same way, Ka ‘Ohana Waiʻanae live under the protection of Kaʻala and serve as a guardian of our language and our culture.

Kalehua and Kīhāpai live in Waiʻanae and their three children attend a K-12 Hawaiian immersion school in Pālolo. I work with Kalehua, the makuakāne, at the university and have for about eight years, but prior to him coming to work at the university, Kalehua was a teacher at a kaiapuni school that sat within an English medium elementary school in the ‘Ewa area. He was a student of Hawaiian language at the university and received his teaching licensure from the College of Education. Kīhāpai, the makuahine, until just recently was staying home raising her children because as an ‘ohana, they had decided that Hawaiian was going to be their children’s first language and the language of their relationship. This decision also impacted when their children started school, because Kīhāpai homeschooled all three of their children until third grade, when they all started at the same K-12 Hawaiian immersion school my children attend on O‘ahu. They described the decision in this way:

Kalehua: That if we’re really going to get married and do this, and we’re going to have kids sometime soon, one of the first things that I envisioned was, that it has to start that way. That if you don’t start ‘um, if you don’t establish the relationship with people, it’s gonna be hard. Cause you know that first impression is important, whoever you meet. And that’s what I also felt with baby, that she had to have some sort of level of that relationship, even if you’re saying the same thing over and over and over again, for her, so that later on, it doesn’t just shoot out, you know? It’s hard, because if you speak to them in English, the relationship
is already there, even though you’re trying to speak Hawaiian it’s going to shoot out in English.

**Kīhāpai:** When he talks about that relationship, you know, all they know is that we’ve spoken Hawaiian to them since they were born. They only know us as Hawaiian speaking parents because Hawaiian has always been the language of our relationship with our kids. And you know, as a family, I was gonna make it work. Together, do it as a family.

In order to meet our next two families, we need to travel across the plains of Honouliuli, and into the moku of ‘Ewa. A place that was delineated by Kāne and Kanaloa in their travels across O‘ahu, ‘Ewa was known for their terraced lo‘i systems and abundant water, which produced kalo that was known across the island. One such variety, called kāī koi, was known to be so delicious that it was said that once someone tasted it, they would choose to stay in ‘Ewa until their last day of life. However, in order for the poi to be this ‘ono, it had to be prepared by a native of ‘Ewa. Figuratively, this kāī koi also referred to a sweetheart that was difficult to forget - *Ua ʻai i ke kāī koi o ‘Ewa* (Pukui & Elbert, 1986; Sterling & Summers, 1978). Ka ‘Ohana ‘Ewa Uka and Ka ‘Ohana ‘Ewa Kai provided me with stories, insights, and memories that I will never forget, much like the kalo of their place.

Joey, the makuakāne, and Genny, the makuahine, of Ka ‘Ohana ‘Ewa Uka, live in the upland region of Hālawa. They both grew up in homestead communities – Joey in Papakōlea, and Genny in Nānākuli, but had no previous experience in immersion prior to sending their oldest son to Hawaiian immersion preschool. Currently two of their children attend a K-12 kaiapuni school on O‘ahu and their youngest son is at the same
Hawaiian immersion preschool that their other two children attended. Joey can speak Hawaiian, while Genny does not; however, they attend a church on O’ahu where Hawaiian is the language spoken, so it is an integral part of their lives outside of school. Joey and Genny described how they came to the decision to start on this journey:

**Joey:** And when that first orientation when we wasn’t picked yet and I talked about it at Lā Puka in front of the church, I mentioned that our determining factor was we watched that video, we got to see the kids singing and that video, was like...

**Genny:** When we had to sit in that circle and hold hands and sing the song

**Joey:** Ya, that orientation, when we left it was like...

**Genny:** How could we not?

**Joey:** We’re bringing our kids here.

**Genny:** Ya, it was like...

**Joey:** ...we talked about it, and no if, ands or buts...

**Genny:** ...it was not a question of if we were going to do this, it was like, how can we not do this? I could feel it. I’m going to get emotional now. I just knew inside that I gotta do this for my keiki. And even though there’s this obstacle for me, like I don’t know the language, I can’t let that take away from my keiki. And I felt that sense of responsibility, that kuleana, I can do this. I can contribute. Maybe I don’t know right now, but I can contribute the fact that we are going to commit to doing this with our keiki. And give them something that we didn’t get as keiki. So after that, it was a matter of, how can we not do this? And it was weird because I don’t know if we were next to each other, but after we were pau and said goodbye and
stuff and we were outside, we just looked at each other and everything changed.

He felt it, I felt it, in our naʻau.

My next family, Ka ‘Ohana ‘Ewa Kai, I met and interviewed on the same day that I interviewed Ka ‘Ohana ‘Ewa Uka, as they are good friends, live down the street from each other, and were preparing an imu together that day. By using a serendipitous approach (Wong, 2011), I was able to meet and talk story to Brandon, the makuakāne, and Sarah, the makuahine, and enfold them into this collective story. During our introductions, I learned that Brandon and Sarah’s daughter attends a K-12 Hawaiian immersion charter school on the Windward side of the island and that both of them have a background in Hawaiian language and are able to communicate with their children in both languages. Sarah is a childcare provider and works out of their home, and Brandon works for Kamehameha Schools. There were obviously a lot of things that I learned that day and in the days following about this ʻohana, but when I asked them about how they came to the decision to send their daughter to Hawaiian immersion preschool, they had this to say:

**Sarah:** And then we had our first daughter and she got to the preschool age and started thinking where are we going to send her. And we hadn’t really talked in-depth about it, but we both knew we wanted ʻōlelo in our children’s lives. And so, Pūnana Leo.

**Brandon:** I think for us, it was more of a, we just knew. Before we even had kids. We knew we didn’t want our kids to have to wait until high school or college to learn Hawaiian. We have an opportunity to start them off at an early age, we have
these language acquisition studies, right? So we were just anxious to get our daughter in.

In order to meet our fourth family, we need to climb, much like the ‘iole of ‘Ewa, up and over the Koʻolau mountain range and into the moku of Koʻolaupoko. There are many stories about the relationship between the rats of ‘Ewa and Koʻolaupoko, and some of them end with the rats of ‘Ewa (one aptly named ‘Ioleka’a) rolling down the hill in defeat, mainly because they are not native to the area of Koʻolaupoko and so are not used to the landscape. One such rat of Koʻolaupoko, named Maka-iole-nana-wai, was a guardian of this place and took care of the land and its resources (Sterling & Summers, 1978). Much like the loʻi in the beginning of this chapter, KaʻOhana Koʻolaupoko is nestled under the protective eye of Maka-iole-nana-wai, but also dedicate their lives to protecting our resources and lāhui.

Bubba, the makuakāne, is Native American and was raised in Oregon and Puni, the makuahine, is a former Hawaiian immersion student. Like KaʻOhana ‘Ewa, one parent speaks Hawaiian and one does not. At the time of our interviews, Bubba had just finished his PhD and was working at the university and Puni was in the process of finishing hers. Puni’s experience as a former immersion student gave her a unique perspective that was not shared by any of the other families and brought a richness to the data that I could not have foreseen. She continuously described her experience in immersion as, “the most amazing experience of my life” and her mother was instrumental in the movement while she was a student there. Their children attended an English medium preschool, and their oldest daughter entered a kaiapuni school housed on an English medium campus on the Windward side of the island in kindergarten.
However, right before her kindergarten year was completed, their daughter decided she no longer wanted to go to that school, and Bubba and Puni supported that decision and pulled her out of kaiapuni. This happened in the time between my first and second interview with them and I think it is an important part of setting up a context for their story. I also believe it is important because this is the reality of immersion – families turn to alternative educational options for a variety of reasons. We cannot paint the complete picture or figure out ways to keep students in, increase enrollment, and strengthen the program if we do not include everyone’s voices. Talking about why they initially sent their daughter to immersion, they described it this way:

**Bubba:** We’ve always talked about making sure they learn the language. And to me, it makes sense that if you’re going to learn the language, go to it when you are in school as well. You gotta hear it to speak it, to understand it, to know it, and so I think we’ve always known.

**Puni:** Yes, definitely, we had all these critical moments and I mean, I always envisioned that she would go to immersion.

You will see that the story of Ka ‘Ohana Ko‘olaupoko is very different from the stories of the other families, but no less important. I have positioned their story towards the ending of this chapter because I believe it can teach us the most about the policy changes that need to happen in our educational system to ensure that the dreams and aspirations that immersion families have for their children are reflected in the immersion schools they send them to.

Before moving on, I want to return back to the lo‘i and the ha‘awina that my children were learning. One of the things that Kānekoa confirmed to us that day was that
when the water is redirected into the lo‘i it does slow down and move with purpose. This decision, to send our children to immersion, is our way of redirecting the water for a different purpose. We know that it could continue to live its life in fast-flowing stream, but we decided that we wanted something different for our children. All of the ‘ohana in this collective story have exercised intentionality, “It is not simply an expectation or prediction of future actions but a proactive commitment to bringing them about” (Bandura, 2001, p. 6). Come with me now as we examine the intentional diversion of water at the po‘owai into Hawaiian immersion schooling.

**Intentionality At The Po‘owai**

**Intentionality: redefining good, choice, and kuleana.** For Ka ‘Ohana Wai‘anae, ‘Ewa Uka and ‘Ewa Kai, they want for their children what any parent wants – a good education (Bayer, 2009). Like a conversation, all of the families at different times, articulated this wish for their children. However, this wish was firmly planted in the kuleana of fostering their children’s Hawaiian identity. Brandon distinguished the difference between choice and kuleana, “So for us, the choice to go to immersion, maybe it’s not a choice, it’s just something that we do. As any parent would send their kid to a good school, we send our kid to a good school, and for us that good school is an immersion school.”

Like the stream water being diverted at the po‘owai, this re-definition of good and choice and this idea that ‘ike and ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i is where the worldview of their children should start, was an intentional paradigm shift towards survivance. Vizenor (1999) argues that survivance is not just a theory, but is a state of being and is seen best in practice. Kalehua articulated this as well:
To me, I want people to understand that this is not just a cultural decision. The impact on them is cultural, spiritual, it has to do with their identity, it has to do with their relationships with their families and communities, the responsibilities that we have and first and foremost, it’s a good education. To me, it’s a very good education. We’re talking about spirituality, we’re talking about culture, we’re talking about language, and identity and all of those things, but first and foremost, in the theories of western education, bilingual education, based off of tangible, cultural beliefs, that have a source, that have a philosophy, and a lens that can be comparable to other lenses…it’s a better education than any private school you can go to, to me, holistically speaking. So that decision is not a choice.

Kalehua articulates the myriad of reasons that he sends his children to Hawaiian immersion, but also understands that at its core, it is a good education.

Like Lockard (2008) and survivance affirms, Kalehua and Brandon have redefined and reimagined what it means to restore their families, children and lāhui. However, if we drill down to the pith of their statements, we understand that survivance has the power to turn the alternative into the norm. The critical message here is that if we approach this decision making process using survivance, then within this context, Hawaiian immersion is the criterion by which all other schools and educational decisions are measured, and not the other way around. As we travel through this moʻolelo, you will see the power of survivance repeatedly, as our loʻi turns into the main stream.

**Intentionality: The importance of moʻo.** As presented in a previous chapter, the word moʻo can describe a succession, order or sequence and is the root of many important words in our language. For Ka ‘Ohana Waiʻanae, ‘Ewa Uka and ‘Ewa Kai this
decision to build the foundation of their children’s worldview through ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i is not just about survivance, but also embraces this idea that for these families, Hawai‘i needs to come first. These families talked about the idea that they do not want their kids to just know ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i, but that going to immersion allows their foundation to be built there. In a conversation between Ka ‘Ohana Wai‘anae, they agreed:

**Kalehua:** I want my children to know both languages very well, but I don’t want it to be done simultaneously. I want one to be established very strong, and I want one to be added on, English, as an additional language. It has to be from that perspective. Because the point of this whole schooling is to take this ‘ōlelo and push English aside and shove it deep within ‘um, that’s the point.

**Kihāpai:** The perspective we want them to have…

**Kalehua:** …to take through life… But it’s order. The Hawaiian gotta come first, gotta be established, and then you learn that strong Hawaiian language means strong in any language, I believe.

Ka ‘Ohana ‘Ewa Kai had also thought deeply about the perspective they wanted their children to have, and how it could be established early and throughout their schooling. Brandon stated:

But I think for us, no matter what you goin’ do in your life, you will be influenced by the western world, so our goal is for you to be very firmly rooted in Hawaii. From beginning to end. Because we want you to do well enough that if you wanna go away, fine, you always gonna know that you gotta come back. So I think that’s it, to be firmly rooted. The ‘ōlelo is important, but really it’s the worldview, the

92
perspective that is of upmost importance for us. Ya, Hawaiian gotta come first.

And then everything else is cool.

Brandon further explained what he felt his responsibility was in ensuring that his children are firmly rooted in Hawai‘i, “I don’t expect schools to tell our students, but I do have an expectation that how we inspire and want our kids to seek their own, I expect the same. So that our stories are straight. Same mo‘olelo I’m telling at home is the same mo‘olelo that she’s getting at school. So it’s the things that mainstream does not do or does not teach is what, for me, that’s what I expect. Not to do it for me, but to do it with me, because that’s what we’re trying to do here.”

This recognition that immersion provides these children with not just a foundation in language, but also in worldview, was an expectation of the program and the school shared by other families as well. Brandon shared that this mo‘o was a factor in his family’s decision making process, “Ya, for us, that’s why our daughter is at the school that she is at. Because it’s not just the classroom, it’s the entire structure of the school that we like about an immersion school. When you have a principal who has to divvy up his or her limited budget between the English and immersion side, versus a principal who has to divvy it up between the whole school. Immersion is not going to be the priority in that system.” Ka ʻOhana ʻEwa Kai felt that sending their children to a K-12 immersion site was one way to ensure that this mo‘o was followed.

Ka ʻOhana Wai‘anae also talked about their expectations of the school as Kīhāpai insists, “To me, it’s simple. That’s the part, by sending them to immersion, this is what I expect. And I don’t even think it’s just us, I think a lot of parents do, that’s why you send ‘um.” Kalehua agreed, “Believe in full immersion until 5th grade and one hour a day of
English …that’s it. The rules that were established, believe, braddah. That’s it. I don’t believe anything different.” For Ka ‘Ohana Wai’anae, ‘Ewa Uka and ‘Ewa Kai, purposefully redesigning the direction that their children’s educational experiences would take was only the first step – much like in the lo‘i, once the water is redirected it is just as important to make sure that it is nurtured and grounded in identity, knowledge and language of our ancestors.

Nurturing the Water: Foresight, Hindsight, and Insight

If you can return back with me to that day at the lo‘i, when Kānekoa was talking to the kids about the lo‘i’s responsibility to the system, part of his mo‘olelo had to do with the condition of the water in the stream versus when it enters and integrates into the lo‘i. When there is a heavy rain, like there was on that day, the oxygen levels in the stream become so low, that it chokes out the native species that need a higher oxygen level to survive. However, when they measure oxygen levels in the lo‘i, they have realized that they are much higher than in the stream, providing a habitat for our native species to thrive.

Doesn’t this make perfect sense to you? And isn’t it amazing that our kūpuna knew this and have been doing this for generations upon generations? Can you imagine if we had the opportunity to operate this way from when we were keiki, the kind of growth we would have as Hawaiians and the kind of growth our natives would have in the lo‘i for generations to come? The families I spoke to recognized this kind of foresight and Genny stated, “It’s more like yay, that’s the way my keiki is thinking, that’s her normal way of thinking in ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i. And if it is in you growing up, then it’s that much more natural, it’s the way you are. You know, having that respect for the ‘āina that you
usually don’t get taught in school. So it’s not just the language, it’s everything else that comes with it, as a result of the language, that is what I want my keiki to experience going to immersion.” Genny knew that planting this knowledge, language, and worldview in her children when they were young could transform the way they thought about things, big and small, for the rest of their lives.

Bandura (2001) talks about this idea of foresight, and I think it is relevant to the discussion we have been having, “Through the exercise of forethought, people motivate themselves and guide their actions in anticipation of future events. When projected over a long time course on matters of value, a forethoughtful perspective provides direction, coherence, and meaning to one’s life” (p. 7). Taking this a step further, or maybe looking back a bit, there is the idea that in order to have foresight, one must also have hindsight, “It is as if the Hawaiian stands firmly in the present, with his back to the future, and his eyes fixed upon the past, seeking historical answers for present-day dilemmas” (Kameʻelehiwa, 1992, p. 22-23). In my discussions with these ‘ohana, what continually emerged as a source for not only parents’ decisions to send their children to immersion but also for their goals for their children, was this marriage of hindsight and foresight, which resulted in insight. This insight, based on what they have experienced and learned along the way, was an integral part of their decision-making process.

**Insight.** Many of my participants grew up knowing they were Hawaiian, but not being allowed to completely engage in it. As Sarah explained:

I come from a hula family, and so from when I was 2, I was put into a hula class, my mom’s a kumu, my grandmother’s a kumu, so that was my exposure to the Hawaiian culture, was through hula. So that was my only exposure with ‘ōlelo
and culture. And then when I went to high school it was put in my ear that I should take Hawaiian language. And so I didn’t really pay attention that much and I didn’t really internalize it as much as I could. So looking back, I wish I had.

Alternately, Genny shared that she was only able to observe culture from a distance, “But I guess all this is to say, that’s kinda my experience with Hawaiian stuff, just seeing it from afar, not really getting to experience it first hand, not until my kids entered Pūnana Leo, to even think about culture, I never realized.” Genny’s experiences were different from Sarah’s, but just as impactful. Furthermore, the stories that Sarah and Genny shared about their past experiences resonated throughout the stories of the other families that I interviewed and demonstrate how they used insight to guide their decision making process.

Ka ‘Ohana Wai‘anae did not just connect to and reflect on their early experiences, but also connected these experiences to their kūpuna. In the same way that we think about using the knowledge of our kūpuna to improve our current practices at the lo‘i, Kalehua looked to his tūtū as he explored his decision to raise his children in Hawaiian and consequently, send his children to Hawaiian immersion:

And I think to me, I continue my tūtū’s same belief, but I think tweak, I just made a generational adjustment. Take ‘um back, from what she wasn’t given, and so now all I doing is setting ‘um right. I don’t believe I making a choice to go back in time, or change my ‘ohana. I feel I’m healing my ‘ohana, I’m putting it back. So I think from her, it’s just setting the course right, you know, turn the wheel little bit, set the canoe back on course and we go from there. While using that tie - how do you spiritually link up to your āina, your ‘ohana, your ‘aumākua, all
those people, all the names we look up and say, oh, I come from this person? We have to do that in Hawaiian.

Kīhāpai agreed that her family and other immersion families may have different perspectives, but can come together around a similar kuleana, “I think each of our families are trying to find our own way in what this is. And everybody has their own perspective, we’re all at different places, but whether it’s we shared the belief in this, there’s something we share, I don’t know, there’s something there.”

As most parents do, Ka ‘Ohana Wai‘anae, ‘Ewa Uka and ‘Ewa Kāi wanted to give their children better educational opportunities than they had (Bayer, 2009). Using insight to inform and shape their decision making process enabled all of the families in my study to see immersion as a way to provide their children with knowledge, language, experiences, and culture that they did not have as children. However, if we recognize this as an act of survivance, then we also know that the decision was intentional and a clear understanding of their kuleana. Genny provides us with such a powerful understanding of her kuleana:

I think it always stems back to why I felt like we had to try our best to get into Pūnana Leo just because that’s what we can give to our keiki as far as culture. I know personally, I cannot hand down anything because I don’t know and I’m actually learning along side them. But that’s why I send them to immersion, to give them that, that’s what I can do, that’s my contribution to the world, to Hawaii, to our community - is that I can send our keiki there and give them the opportunity to learn ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i from the beginning, when it’s natural.
Genny’s view of her kuleana can help all of us to explore how to live in to our kuleana in our own lives and what our contribution is to the betterment of the lāhui.

**Kuleana in Action – Ma Ka Hana Ka ‘Ike**

Kānekoa’s discussion with the kids is now focusing on what this re-oxygenated water is doing in the lo‘i. He starts rapid-firing all these questions like, what can happen with this better water? How does it affect the kalo? How do we know? Is it helping anything else? Why is this important? I feel like the questions are coming as quickly as the rain is falling, but my kids are ready for all of it, as if they have rehearsed all of this before.

This learning process continues and reminds me of something that Joey said about the recognition of his kuleana as an immersion parent:

So every year, there is something to learn, for me, for our ‘ohana, so that’s why I say it’s a learning process every year, that’s the reason why we do it. So I always thought that was the foundation. So kuleana, so that falls right into place. After we got into Pūnana Leo, we started figuring out, that ya, this is our kuleana, and for me, I always thought that the language was the foundation of the culture. So in order to perpetuate culture, we should learn the language because a lot of the language and the reasons why we do stuff, there’s mo‘olelo and mana‘o behind all that language on why we do things, why it is done during certain times, if you don’t know that or if we learn that or if the kids learn that...like if he wanted to become a taro farmer, if he knew the language he would know why he would plant kalo at a certain time or whatever.
Joey shows us that his understanding of his kuleana and his decision to send his children to Hawaiian immersion is a lifelong learning process.

Back at the lo‘i, my kids continue the back and forth with their Daddy and start talking about the intricacies of the system. Like the fact that at the surface, the kalo is healthier because of these improved oxygen levels, but there are other things that are being allowed to thrive that we cannot see at the surface, like ‘opae and ‘o‘opu. My kids have an understanding of kuleana – not only because they spend time at the lo‘i regularly and actually live this relationship, but also because they learn these things at home and at school and the kuleana to tell this story and live this mo‘olelo, falls on all of us. Sarah affirmed that just like learning how to take care of a lo‘i, recognizing our kuleana in the immersion program takes work, “If you can do it, then you need to make it happen. If this is truly what you want for your keiki and for your ‘ohana, you will make it happen.”

Genny also recognized her role in fulfilling this kuleana, “I know they have their challenges, as all schools do, but we also know that part of that is involvement, how much are we willing to put in, of ourselves, to be able to get out what we want for our keiki.”

Ka ‘Ohana Wai‘anae also reflected on their responsibilities and were extremely honest about their own strengths and limitations, as Kīhāpai reveals, “We don’t expect the school to be the sole provider of culture and language to our keiki, but we understand that what we can provide is not enough. We’re never enough. So putting our keiki in immersion, it is all a part of that bigger goal. It’s not perfect, but if we don’t fix it, then who will?” Their perspective suggests that the decision to send their children to Hawaiian immersion was a recognition not only of their unique responsibilities as parents of
immersion children, but also an affirmation that enrolling their decision in immersion was done not just for their own ‘ohana, but for the betterment of the entire lāhui.

**The kuleana of mākua.** This discussion about kuleana included not just how kuleana factored into their decision, but also what they saw as their kuleana, as a mākua, within this larger immersion system. At a lo‘i, we do not re-direct the water and then expect things to improve themselves on their own – we understand that we have work to do to make sure that Hāloa, our kua‘ana, can grow big and healthy enough to eventually feed us. Similarly, Brandon explains that the school is merely a way to support what he is doing at home, “In immersion, we have a major kuleana in this. And we are relying on our school to help us with the Hawaiian ‘ike. We’re relying on the school to merely support us, because we can bring that back home. But if we find a gap, it’s up to us to pick it up at home. But we agreed that we’re gonna make sure she is pa’a in Hawaiian first.”

Kīhāpai confirmed this stance as well:

For our family, we don’t send them there hoping to gain all this ‘ike, I’m not saying they don’t have it in the schools, but I think we’re sending them, because of what we do at home and what we believe in, and we started before we even sent them to immersion, is that’s our kāko‘o. It’s to kāko‘o what we do at home, so it’s not where I’m sending them, I mean we do kāko‘o the school, you know what I mean? I’m sending them there to support what we already established at home in our family with the kids.

If we remember the history of the immersion program, and the kuleana that the original families embraced in their fight to establish the program, then we understand that
continuing this personal and collective agency (Bandura, 2001) is one way in which current immersion families can mālama their kuleana to these past immersion families, or their kuaʻana. Carrying on this understanding of their kuleana was an important point that was made in these discussions. As Kalehua reminds us:

We are the only ones who can do it. So all the teachers, principals, all administration, faculty, staff...So to me, we’re the ones who can say what they cannot. Because it is always going to be a challenge to their job. I mean, we all gotta take care of our ʻohana, but we’re outside of that system. For me, the reason why the Board of Education and the Department of Education can’t just discard any of us, is we are connected, we are constituents to them. They are administrators of the system that we put our children into, in Hawaiian language. So because it is their program, under their jurisdiction, we can reach them because we are their constituents.

Brandon also understood the important role that the entire ʻohana can play in the immersion program:

I think too, if mākua don’t believe in immersion education and what it’s set out to do, then it’s just school for the haumāna. It no longer becomes about community building, regenerating a lāhui, it no longer becomes about that – it’s just school in Hawaiian. Not a big deal. But if the mākua really believe in immersion education and really believe in being Hawai‘i and living it, and it not being some token thing, but that’s the chosen lifestyle for the family, then I think that’s most important.
Like Abraham (2010), Brandon recognizes the responsibilities that he has as a parent of an immersion child and that the decision is a deliberate attempt to transform the entire family. Ka ‘Ohana ‘Ewa Kai, ‘Ewa Uka and Wai’anae made an intentional move back towards the way that our children were raised traditionally and so knew that they had more of a kuleana to the school and their children than what is typically expected in our public school system. As Brandon continues to explain:

> Just the potential you can see at a school, when the student then sees how involved the makua are. So you know, it’s going back to the early days of culture-based education. At immersion, the pieces are all there. So when the kids see it, I think that just elevates their pride in the school that they are at. I don’t go to school, just me, we come to this school, it’s a school that our whole ‘ohana are a part of."

Kīhāpai also understands her kuleana insisting, “So that’s it – the parents have the mana to hold people, they are the check and balance. If parents don’t care, then the language can go to the tubes. But if parents care, and expect the best, then everything else can build on that.”

This commitment of the whole family to what our kua‘ana have taught us is just the start of making sure that the kalo in our lo‘i, or Hāloa, is nourished for all of our future generations. Across the terrain of these stories and my participants, we can see Ka ‘Ohana Wai’anae, ‘Ewa Uka and ‘Ewa Kai articulating their kuleana as immersion parents. What also emerges is the commitment they have, as they travel through the immersion program as an ‘ohana, to transform themselves, their future generations and
In the loʻi, ma ka hana ka ʻike directs us to get in the mud and get to work; in this context, it compels us to answer the question: if not us, then who?

**Impacts – Keiki, ʻOhana, Lāhui**

The rain is coming down harder now, so Kānekoa and I decide that we should start wrapping up this session and head home. But the next lesson is an important one, and so we continue our walk through the different loʻi and make a pit stop at what they have been calling Number 5. It is the fifth loʻi they opened up by hand, which took an amazing amount of work, because the California grass was taller than me and there was a lot of it. My husband starts asking the kids to reflect on what we have talked about today and the big question is – how do we know that we are doing the right thing? I see in my daughter’s eyes that a light bulb has gone off, “Daddy – we see more ‘oʻopu and less crayfish! We want more Hawaiʻi in the loʻi, right?”

**Impacts on our keiki.** And right there, she has articulated the goal in what we are doing – whether it is healing our lands, revitalizing our language or sending our kids to Hawaiian immersion – the goal is to be “more Hawaiʻi” in our language, our actions, in everything. As Kalehua says, “Everybody wants to make themselves a better or a bigger or a more, what we know as Hawaiian. We want to do it. We miss it, we crave it.” A big part of this, what motivates Ka ʻOhana Waiʻanae and Ka ʻOhana ʻEwa Kai to put their children in immersion and to stay in immersion, is building this sense of identity.

Brandon offered this perspective:

I was just thinking...if there’s anything I would hope out of an immersion is that they continue to instill the desire into our students, our keiki, to know what Hawaiʻi is. What it means to be Hawaiʻi, to be a part of it, to be of it, because the
times are changing and the times are changing fast. If we don’t continue to instill that desire to know and to seek, and that’s where we goin’ lose. To function in the way that our kūpuna did because times is changing, you know? Because if they don’t understand it from that, they goin’ see the impossibilities that the world around them presents. But if we can show them that you are of Hawai‘i and you are Hawai‘i, you have it in your DNA to be sustainable, to sift through all of this stuff going on, and it’s all found in our value systems, our way of living, the way of life, and that it is possible to do that.

The goal for Kalehua and Brandon when sending their children to immersion is inextricably linked to the development of their children’s identity as Hawaiians, and as such, is a principle driver of their decision making process and agency. Bandura tells us that self-reactiveness involves, “Goals, rooted in a value system and a sense of personal identity, invest activities with meaning and purpose… Agency thus involves not only the deliberative ability to make choices and action plans, but the ability to give shape to appropriate courses of action and to motivate and regulate their execution” (2001, p. 8).

All this time that we spend at the lo‘i, the beach, up in the mountains – is not just to take our kids on cool field trips or provide outdoor experiences. Taking them to these places is purposeful and provides them with opportunities to connect with our kūpuna, in our language. The goal, then, is to ground their identity in these lived experiences both at home and at school and to shape these experiences through ‘ike Hawai‘i and ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i.

Genny has similar goals for her children:
I think for me, what I envision for my keiki is for them to, well they have already surpassed me as far as ‘ōlelo, but for them to continually learn what it is to be Hawaiian. So I see myself learning through them, just in the Hawaiian way to think. But then when they go to school and their kumu is saying the same thing or their friends are saying the same thing, then it makes a little bit more sense to them.

Genny reveals that the development of her children’s identity is important, but she also recognizes that the school can have a role in this development.

Because Ka ‘Ohana Wai‘anae’s relationship with their children is in Hawaiian and they were homeschooled until they were in third grade, they often talked about the decision to raise their children in Hawaiian and their decision to send their children to immersion as one and the same. However, when we started talking about the impacts of immersion on their lives, they were able to draw a very clear line between the two decisions and their impacts. Kalehua explains:

I think immersion offers an environment for our children to see the world more realistically. I think when they were kids, we built a pseudo-Hawaiian language environment because we kept them home until third grade, that made them think that the world is a certain way. And we all know that’s not it. I don’t think it has negatively or positively impacted what we’re already doing at home, I think it continues that, the kids can see the reality of the language of our world and how people interact with the world, who we are as a Hawaiian people across the board, the broad spectrum of who we are and what we identify with. But I think it also
reinforces that we come from a certain perspective and that they want to continue that perspective.

These little mounds of Hawaiian language and knowledge that are being built within these ʻohana are hopefully giving our keiki the space and water flow that they need to navigate who they are as Hawaiians. This establishment of identity was an important goal for Kalehua as well:

I think too immersion is the best tool in the development of identity. You can see it in your kids. I can see the difference between them and me. Where I at least answer the questions that I had, they don’t have the same questions that I had, they have much different questions that maybe I cannot ask or answer. But, I know they’re not going through what I went through, so that’s helpful. That’s one strength. And just to be clear, I think language loss is identity loss, is cultural loss, you can call yourself something and have no clue what it means.

Kīhāpai agreed that immersion has supported this goal as well, “I think they’re definitely stronger than us, as far as how they go about thinking. And not just language. But how they live their daily lives about what they’ve experienced, what they continue to experience.”

Finally, Sarah and Genny provide us with an excellent way to think about how Hawaiian immersion schooling can shape the worldview and identity of our children, through a story that Sarah told during our interview and Genny’s response to it. They remind us that it is not just about what we can see or hear, but that feeling it is an important part of making and sustaining the decision to be Hawaiian immersion parents.
Sarah: I think a great example is just the other weekend, our youngest when ku‘i kalo for the first time. You know, we got it on video and the oldest was the one helping him. It wasn’t me, it was her. Showing him how to do everything and what he needed to do. And I sent the video to my family. And my mom was the one who called me and she was crying, she’s just so proud that someone in our family finally stood up to teach these things, to take it upon themselves to take on this kuleana. Because they never had that opportunity and to see it in one of her own children and to see it in her moʻopuna and to be able to make that connection with them, to her own kūpuna.

Genny: That’s how you know it’s right, when it hits you right there (pointing to her naʻau).

Ka ʻOhana ‘Ewa Uka and ʻEwa Kai were acutely aware of what they hoped the impacts of this decision would have on their children in terms of their worldview and identity. And while this is their primary focus, the implications of this decision reach much further than just their own children.

The stories of Ka ʻOhana Waiʻanae, ʻEwa Uka and ʻEwa Kai suggest that these families confirm their decision making process in the same way that we look for signs at the loʻi that we are doing the right thing. My daughter’s question about having more Hawaiʻi in the loʻi is mirrored in the goals these families had for their children – can we see more Hawaiʻi in our children? Obviously this means different things to different families, but this is a question answered in practice more than a theoretical exercise. If our children have a better understanding of who they are as Hawaiians, earlier in life than we ever did, then the expectation and hope is that they will think and act differently than
us, because their worldview is grounded in Hawai‘i. As such, when our children ask different questions, as they do in Ka ‘Ohana Wai‘anae, or can ku‘i kalo under the direction of their elder siblings, as retold by Ka ‘Ohana ‘Ewa Kai, then these are the things that show us that we are approaching the goals we have in sending our children to Hawaiian immersion.

**Impacts on ‘ohana.** The impacts that the decision had on Ka ‘Ohana Wai‘anae, ‘Ewa Uka and ‘Ewa Kai were obvious throughout our conversations. Ka ‘Ohana ‘Ewa Kai explained the impact it had on their use of ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i within their ‘ohana. As Sarah notes: “I know it’s made me more confident in the ‘ōlelo, because for me I’m deathly afraid of using it in front of people, just ‘cause I don’t want to be wrong. I’ve had the experience of ‘what you tryin’ to say?’ It’s like, e kala mai...you know?” Brandon also explained how they have gained the confidence to use Hawaiian more regularly:

> It has raised the confidence level. When we go out, not that we do it all the time, so we’re not 24/7...we would love to be. But it’s become natural for us, depending on the situation or where we are at, or just how we believe in the ‘ōlelo, and we’re fine, we could be here, we could be with our family, at the mall, in a restaurant, we just use it. And we’ve gotten props for it too, and that’s the good thing, we got our criticisms of course, but we’ve gotten props for it.

Genny talked about her enhanced awareness, “It made an impact on the way that I think. If anything it’s made our life richer and better and more connected to our Hawaiian culture side.” This decision has also impacted how she interacts with her own family:

> And the way that I make decisions and as far as an example, being a better example, because most of my family has never really gone through the process or
been around the Hawaiian language or knowing about the Hawaiian language movement. But I think just the fact that they know that, knowing that our ‘ohana represents that to them. So I think knowing that not only that it has impacted our little ‘ohana, but for my ohana, that we’re representing that part of it, that it’s a cultural thing that you can do too. It’s just little baby steps, you can send your kids to immersion to also perpetuate Hawaiian culture in your household, that kind of thing.

Ka ‘Ohana Wai‘anae, ‘Ewa Uka and ‘Ewa Kai noticed that the decision impacted their ‘ohana as well. Kīhāpai explained that their parents have become guardians of the language and their decision, “Ya, in terms of the grandparents, I know there’s definitely a sense of pride. And definitely now, our mothers come to Hawaiian language class, so it has had a positive impact on them too.” Sarah noticed that it impacted her ‘ohana as well, “I notice my mom tries a lot more and it’s encouraging her to use ‘ōlelo again. And also my grandma, she’s seeing it. She was one that was kind of skeptical, but she’s seeing it. ‘Cause she came from the time where she would get whacked if she was to use it. So she already has that mindset like, you shouldn’t be doing that. And it’s hard to get out of that mindset once it’s literally beaten into you. And in that way, it’s impacted our whole ‘ohana.”

Joey also noticed that the decision opened the door for all kinds of experiences for their ‘ohana, both in language and culture. He explained how his mom and brother started taking Hawaiian language classes once their children enrolled in Hawaiian immersion, but that was just the start, “So immersion not only gives us a chance for learning the language, but it opened up everything associated with culture too.” It is apparent that
although Ka ‘Ohana Wai‘anae, ‘Ewa Uka and ‘Ewa Kai have nurtured the lo‘i of their individual families, that the water that connects them to other ‘ohana through the makawai has had an impact as well.

**Impacts on the lāhui.** Much like the water that returns to the stream at the ho‘i, Ka ‘Ohana Wai‘anae, ‘Ewa Uka and ‘Ewa Kai realized that the decision impacted their families, but also affected their relationships with people outside of their ‘ohana. Kīhāpai described the impact that the decision has had on her friends, “Even some of my friends, I think, I don’t see them all the time, and not like we wanted to be out there, but they saw the news stuff at the capital, they see him, they saw in the magazine, some of them, the Hawaiian ones especially, will say, ‘Eh, I seen you doing this! I’m so proud of you guys! You did all of this with your kids, and look at them!’ So I think it does have some sort of impact.” Genny also commented on the positive impact it has had in their relationships with others, “As far as relationships, more than knowing people, it’s opened us up to richer relationships. Like it’s so true, when someone told us one time that you’re going to meet people that you’re going to be lifelong friends with. And we thought, ya, really? We thought of course we’re going to meet friends, but as far as having a long-term friendship with them, we didn’t realize how true that was until we started.”

The conversation then turned to the impacts that the decision had on the broader lāhui and Kalehua understood that whether the impact was positive or negative, Hawaiian immersion definitely makes people more conscious about being Hawaiian. Brandon further talked about this raised level of consciousness:

I think immersion education in broad terms, calls out that this is not a homogenous society, there exists an indigenous group of people that have a
distinct culture, a distinct language, and that we as a people have not faded into
the history books. I think, back in the 1980 census, we’re talking about 5000
native speakers, and then you look at the 2000 census, you’re upwards of 25,000
people that identify Hawaiian as a language in their household. If there is any
impact on the community – look at that right there. I mean, we have a long ways
to go, but just look at that – from 5,000 to 25,000 in a span of 25-30 years, I think
that’s huge. And I think that’s solely attributed to immersion education. If it
wasn’t for the foresight of the early Pūnana Leo, none of this would have fallen
into place. So there’s an impact – that’s huge.

At a most basic level, Hawaiian immersion has not only raised the consciousness of the
lāhui, but it has also increased the number of Hawaiian language speakers. Brandon
understood the moʻokūʻauhau of the program and also how his ʻohana fit into this larger
movement.

Recognizing the genealogy of the immersion program, but also understanding its
impact on the broader community is something that Ka ʻOhana Wai‘anae talked about.
Kalehua shows us the all-encompassing nature of this impact – from how our Hawaiian
speaking children can carry on this kuleana to how it will impact the broader community:

I think outside of immersion, the broadest impact is that it’s creating or re-
creating or supporting some form of Hawaiian language reality. And that to me is,
if you can imagine a world without Hawaiian language education, then that to me
is the road to complete destruction of our people, our ways, our culture. Kaiapuni
was the saving grace, I think, in the genealogy of Hawaiian language, that even
though we could be creating a language monster, we could be moving far away
from what the kūpuna left for us, at least it is a pathway, a gateway to enter into a
discussion, to interacting with the text, the literature, that our kūpuna left for us.

Because ultimately the answers are there.

Kalehua can see that Hawaiian immersion has the potential to impact not just this
generation, but future generations as well.

Like the families I have interviewed, we can see the most obvious impacts of our
decisions at the lo‘i and my kids have identified most of them, but were missing an
important one. As if on cue, we hear a shrill sound up above our heads and see a black
and white bird circling over us. This native bird is a new resident of the lo‘i and the first
native bird they have seen regularly in this area. The kids realize what they are forgetting
and both shout “Ae‘o!” We watch as the ae‘o lands on its long, toothpick legs and starts
plucking out small fish from around the kalo. My husband reminds my keiki that it is not
just the native things by our feet that show us we are having a positive impact, but that
we have to look above and all around us. Without this lo‘i, this ae‘o would have never
returned to this place and this one bird shows us that the impact of this work was simply
to provide a place for her and the rest of her ‘ohana to thrive.

Kīhāpai too reminds us, “And I think that’s what we tell the kids. For us right
now, we are directly focusing on our kids and our mo‘opuna and the next generation in
our family, I think that’s where we try to constantly talk to them about that. But we also
know that it will affect outside families, other people in our lāhui. And that collective
impact, that kuleana that we all share – us as makua, the teachers, the administration, the
community, the state...is what it is all about.”
Sustainability: Tensions and Resilience

Back at the loʻi, Kānekoa is now going into more detail about how they plant the kalo. He explains this style of planting kalo as puʻepuʻe, where you mound up dirt around each one, like a little hill. He says that this is just one way to do it, but they have found that here at Hoi, it has been an effective way to prepare for big rains and also provide a better habitat for the native invertebrates, like ‘o’opu and ‘opae. My daughter asks, “what difference does it make?” and my husband starts pointing out that by building these puʻepuʻe, they are able to create a deeper water system because without them there are no channels or pockets of water and the natives have a hard time surviving there because the water levels are too low. This style of planting has also provided the kalo with a way to be resilient through drought and heavy rain.

Ka ‘Ohana Waiʻanae, ‘Ewa Uka and ‘Ewa Kai display similar signs of resilience, as Genny shows us:

I wonder sometimes, but then I go back to the checklist, when things happen that I realize would never have happened if they weren’t in this program, in this school. So that’s what kind of helps me, when I get those things. Because sometimes I do wonder, am I doing what’s right for them academically? Because of the naysayers and it could be because I have self-doubt in what I know to be, I don’t have enough self-confidence, maybe, in what I know, so I’m thinking maybe I’m making the wrong decision, because I don’t know as much as that Joe Shmoe over there who may be saying it’s not right. That kind of thing? So, then I start to doubt. But then I either run into somebody or I go to a parent meeting, or you
know, I meet someone or someone shares a story, something is there that helps me remember, reminds me, this is why we did it.

At the lo‘i, we can see and hear things that remind us we are on the right path too. My son notices that even though there are crayfish and frogs still, that sometimes he sees ‘o‘opu and ‘opae in the lo‘i, so we know the natives are coming back. My daughter talks about how big and ‘ono the kalo are, and so that’s one sign they are doing something right. Staying resilient, despite challenges is something that Ka ‘Ohana Wai‘anae, ‘Ewa Uka and ‘Ewa Kai talked about quite a bit. Brandon described these challenges in a broad way, “I think one challenge too that I think about is, in short, the hardest challenge is changing the mindset of the people around you. A few understand, and we experienced that, but a few will support, but struggle to understand. They will let you be parents, but you still get the side mana‘o here and there.” These families understand that tensions can come from all directions, but have also identified ways to use those challenges as a source of strength and resilience.

**External challenges and resilience.** Ka ‘Ohana ‘Ewa Uka also talked about challenges that they faced from family and friends. Joey shared a story about a co-worker hearing about the fact that his children went to Hawaiian immersion and telling him, “you bettah get ‘um out now”. Joey’s response to him was a simple, “what you mean by that?” but embedded in these five simple words was a fierce protectiveness over the decision that was echoed by Nā ‘Ohana ‘Ewa during our interview that day. In sharing these stories, these two families illustrated that like the rain, these challenges can happen anywhere – at work, at home, at a doctor’s office - but can also serve as motivation for staying the course.
Ka ‘Ohana Wai‘anae also talked about how external challenges helped them in this way, Kīhāpai recalls, “I think it was the fight against, ok we decided, we were going to do this. And if we’re going to do this, we gotta uphold it and then, I gotta let everybody know this is what we’re doing. And I wasn’t gonna fold. So I think it pushed me to keep going.” Kalehua described it in this way, “For us, learning Hawaiian wasn’t the problem. Dealing with everyone else was the challenge - just getting others to believe in your vision, getting others to feel what you feel.”

Challenges and tensions are a normal part of life – whether they are rainstorms or an English-only ideology that our society bombards us with. So how do Hawaiian immersion parents, continue down this path despite these challenges? Bandura tells us that self-reflection is a necessary part of exercising agency, “People choose what challenges to undertake, how much effort to expend in the endeavor, how long to persevere in the face of obstacles and failures, and whether failures are motivating or demoralizing” (2001, p. 10). Furthermore, if we are operating according to the values of survivance, then continuing this work to transform ourselves, our families, and our communities through Hawaiian immersion education, despite these challenges, should be our response.

The 100% belief. So what is the response of Hawaiian immersion families, to these challenges? As Kalehua points out, “It’s all going to link back to beliefs. I don’t think people 100% believe that we can be successful in Hawaiian. And that’s a huge challenge for me, for someone who is a believer. And I don’t just believe because I think my manaʻo is best, I believe it because it works. We never go out and tell people what we were doing in the beginning, you know, people didn’t believe us.” Being steadfast in their
belief system was one way in which Ka ‘Ohana Wai‘anae, ‘Ewa Uka and ‘Ewa Kai maintained the decision. Genny also asserts, “Because if you’re in it 100% then it’s almost a non-issue. I mean, isn’t that why we’re here? I guess there are times when you start to doubt yourself, but I think that would happen anyway. But what we are trying to teach our keiki, we couldn’t do it if we weren’t in immersion. If there is tension, then we always return back to why we’re doing it, for us. If you’re in it, then it should be a non-issue. Believing in it, in our decision, in why we put our keiki here, it helps us keep it all together.”

Using a set of beliefs, or 100% belief, as some of my participants referred to it, was one way that these families sustained the decision through these challenges. In a conversation with Nā ‘Ohana ‘Ewa, Genny and Brandon talk about how strengthening their belief in Hawaiian immersion permeated other decisions they made:

**Brandon:** You know, there are things that call into question the values that we have adopted for our family to this point. Because we gonna adopt some more, we gonna change some, and that’s going to be a huge shift. We were about to put in an offer for a house, nice town house, and we talked about the impact it would have on our lives, and when it came to school, that was a non-negotiable. And this is just in the middle of kindergarten – non-negotiable. So we’re not going to change her school. So the next question was – would we drive from Makakilo to Kāne‘ohe twice a day? No. Ok, end of the discussion and didn’t put in the offer. So these values that we have adopted to this point, so if she does get into any private school, it’s not a slam dunk. I mean, our immersion schools are far, far ahead. That’s the bottom line.
**Genny:** I think that for me, that’s the lure of somewhere else, this idea that a private school has more and better resources, that’s the part that I feel like my kids could be missing out on, because they don’t have the resources to offer the kids, like private schools. But I would have the same struggle I think, even if they weren’t at immersion. Because there are so many more reasons why we send them there, they have this other richness that’s there that does not amount to dollars. But to me, that’s the lure, the shiny-ness, for lack of a better word, it looks good, but they don’t have all the parts, right, the Hawaiian part of it. So that outweighs the shiny-ness.

**Brandon:** And I’m going to go back to that cultural tension we talked about – if there’s 100% belief, there’s no question. The shiny-ness doesn’t matter.

The external challenges are easy to recognize when they are flung at us – we hear the tone in people’s voices, we see the hopohopo in their eyes, and feel the defensiveness within our bodies. But the internal challenges, the ones that we have been indoctrinated with from birth, the voices telling us that Hawaiian is not enough, those are harder to recognize, and perhaps harder to combat. In this brief conversation, these ‘ohana demonstrate exactly how to sustain the decision, whether the challenges come from without or within and embody the belief in what an immersion education has to offer their children. Kalehua reminds us of the power parents have if they believe in immersion, together, “And we’re not just doing it for our kids. And that’s the major part, I think it took a few years for people to see that we’re not pushing an agenda. The agenda is: believe.”
**The power of the collective.** The agenda of the 100% belief, as the foundation of a collective belief system, articulates a collective agency that Bandura presents as a part of his agentic perspective:

Group attainments are the product not only of the shared intentions, knowledge, and skills of its members, but also of the interactive, coordinated, and synergistic dynamics of their transactions. Because the collective performance of a social system involves transactional dynamics, perceived collective efficacy is an emergent group-level property, not simply the sum of the efficacy beliefs of individual members (2001, p. 14).

The revelation of this perspective, which is validated by Ka ʻOhana Waiʻanae, ʻEwa Uka and ʻEwa Kai, is quite simple really – we are stronger as a coordinated alliance than as a group of individuals working in isolation of each other. Furthermore, our successes and our challenges have a pilina or relationship with each other, as do our understandings of our kuleana to not only our ʻohana but the lāhui. I would like to posit that the agenda should also include a 100% belief in the power of our collective agency.

Ka ʻOhana ʻEwa Uka recognized the power of coming together, as another tool they use to sustain the decision, as Genny illuminates:

We all are together in this waʻa, you know doing it together. ʻCause I notice the strength is there overall, the experience is better when all of us are able to help each other. Ya, so having that support is important. And because I’m around people who have the same vision for their keiki, it’s been easier. Having people that are making the same decisions, that are going in the same direction, helps me feel better about my decision.
Kalehua confirmed this idea that coming together is one way that his ‘ohana and other immersion ‘ohana can sustain the decision:

Our groups are our way to shape the kids’ education. And I think using the collective parent group of whoever shows up, you know, and slowly build more capacity, but I don’t think that’s going to happen very quickly. For those people who come from these internal, individual questions, I see people who question themselves – how can I make this better? I’m Hawaiian, I want to continue working towards making a better Hawaiian. And I think that’s what guides people to these meetings. But I think being engaged and that’s a good way to show the administration that commitment too.

Joey also explained that there are places outside of the school community that help them to sustain the decision as well:

Because my family is real into church and they speak ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i over there, when they hear about our children, when they hear them speak, or when they know that our children are going to immersion and stuff like that, that’s like three-fourths of the family being supportive of our decision to send them there. I mean, a lot of them are real supportive and a lot of them that go there are a part of immersion too. So already, from my side of the family, because a lot of them are at church, we get plenty support from that side.

Ka ‘Ohana Wai‘anae, ‘Ewa Uka and ‘Ewa Kai understood that surrounding themselves with people who have the same vision for their children was one way to protect themselves from challenges. However, they recognized that there were spiritual aspects of sustaining the decision as well.
Hilinaʻi. Bandura (2001) describes that the power of his concept of fortuity lies not in events that occur, but rather in the changes these events cause in people’s life trajectories. While Bandura views these events as random, chance occurrences, Ka ʻOhana Waiʻanae, ‘Ewa Uka and ‘Ewa Kai have a very different perspective of the nature of these events and have transformed fortuity into spirituality. Bandura’s concept of fortuity has given us an adequate starting point, but these moʻolelo require us to explore how belief and faith in something higher than ourselves impacts the lives of Hawaiian immersion families. In other words, we need to contemplate how these ʻohana live with hilinaʻi.

During one of our interviews, Genny referred to her naʻau as she talked about finding strength in the decision, but she and Joey also talked about that fact that Akua had put them on this path and they understood that making and sustaining the decision was a spiritual belief as well, “I’m so grateful that we were put in a place that it was so encouraging, and it was just meant to be. Ke Akua put us there and that’s where we were able to feel a part of the ʻohana.” Ka ʻOhana ʻEwa Uka made it clear throughout our conversations that the decision to send their children to immersion and sustain the decision was an inherently spiritual one.

Ka ʻOhana Waiʻanae spoke about the spiritual nature of the decision as well, but in a different way. In Kalehua’s view:

Because it’s not just about language, everyone thinks language is just about phonemes and grammar and orthography, it’s not about that, language also carries mana. And so by using the mana of that language, that’s how, to me, you connect with the kūpuna. English doesn’t carry that mana, so you cannot generate that
spiritual connection through English. To me, that’s what immersion is all about.

It’s not about language. Because if it starts at the spiritual level, for me, then everything else comes.

Kīhāpai affirmed this by saying, “That’s the hilina‘i part and why the kids won’t leave their language because they know that’s their way to connect to their kūpuna. Our kūpuna got us here. Our kūpuna will take us where we’re going.” This ‘ohana maintained that the decision to not only raise their children in Hawaiian, but also to send their children to a Hawaiian immersion school, was based on maintaining their spiritual connection to their kūpuna.

Ka ‘Ohana ‘Ewa Kai also acknowledged that spirituality is essential, as Brandon explains:

Not to say that this is a spiritual belief system, but maybe it is? Because it is the thing that binds us in immersion. We are relying on this belief of what we know is right. And whether it is or isn’t, we’re not the ones to say. We will see the fruits of that labor in time. So I think without an immersion education and without that worldview, you cannot negotiate that space.

Brandon confirmed that not only was the decision a spiritual one, but also that his hope is that with his keiki in immersion, they will be better equipped spiritually to navigate through any tension or challenge that they face.

Ka ‘Ohana Wai‘anæ, ‘Ewa Uka and ‘Ewa Kai were not impervious to these challenges and actually acknowledged their existence on an almost daily basis. At the lo‘i, these appear regularly as well – when crayfish snap at our toes or rainstorms cause massive flooding – but the real challenge is how we rise above these tensions and
continue on in the restoration work. These families continue to engage in their own form of restoration work and their level of self-reflection (Bandura, 2001) allowed them to see these tensions as sources of strength. What was amazing to me, is that these families have developed similar strategies, separately of each other, to deal with these tensions head-on. They included recognizing the power of the collective, having a steadfast belief in their decision, and understanding that there is a spiritual aspect to the decision that can be a source of strength.

Puʻuhonua: The Importance of Providing a Safe Space

Although it is still raining buckets, we are all feeling great. We have seen and talked about all of the positive impacts that the loʻi has had on the entire system and can feel proud and hopeful that these changes will continue to take place and benefit all of us. We spin around and look towards the stream and see a garbage bag and a piece of plywood floating by. We are suddenly struck by a hard truth: this loʻi exists smack dab in the middle of an urban area. Although we cannot see the road from where we are, we know it is there. My daughter yells, “Get it!” and both kids take off towards the stream. My son finds a stick and runs along the streambed, trying to fish the rubbish bag out of the water, but cannot reach it; my daughter runs along side the floating plywood, but it is too big and too heavy for her to grab without falling in. They eventually realize that there is nothing they can do, and come back to us with a look of defeat, aware that this rubbish is going to end up in the fishpond and maybe in the ocean, but knowing that they have no control over what happens next.

From Bandura's perspective, it is at this point that we are depending on others, a concept he calls proxy agency, “In this socially mediated mode of agency, people try by
one means or another to get those who have access to resources or expertise or who wield influence and power to act at their behest to secure the outcomes they desire” (2001, p. 13). In the lo‘i, we are at the mercy of the people living in the urban area above us. In immersion, this proxy agency is exercised by the state and their educational policies. And while we attempt to build this Hawaiian environment around our children so that they can thrive, we also understand that there are some things that we do not have control of and we depend on the state DOE to look after our children’s well-being and work towards the goals that have so thoughtfully been laid out by Ka ʻOhana Waiʻanae, ʻEwa Uka and ʻEwa Kai through their moʻolelo. But we recognize another hard truth: the state and the DOE are not always paying attention to these goals and values.

Another look at intentionality. This is a good time for us to meet the ‘ohana that was noticeably absent from our moʻolelo so far. Ka ʻOhana Koʻolaupoko had similar dreams and aspirations for their children in Hawaiian immersion as the other families had. As Puni describes it: “I had this dream of her growing up in the exact same place I did, you know? And so, that is a huge part of the story, of how we got to where we were.” If you remember, their daughter entered kindergarten at a dual-language campus, where an immersion school sat within an English medium school. This campus culture (Jayakumar & Museus, 2012) proved to be hugely problematic for this ‘ohana, and I decided to re-tell their moʻolelo separately, because the context in which they were engaged in was so dramatically different from the other families. I also believe that their moʻolelo can shed some light on the flaws in the execution of current educational policy related to immersion and what we can and should do as an immersion community to improve those policies.
Ka ‘Ohana Ko‘olaupoko also believed that their children’s education should be grounded in survivance, much like the other ‘ohana of this story, but they did not necessarily find this in the immersion school they were at. As Puni stated, “I agree that I want her to have a good education, but what the definition of ‘good’ is to us, is something that is congruent as possible with our values and beliefs.” This ‘ohana understood that part of survivance is redefining and reimagining what education could look like for their children and initially thought they would find it in the immersion school they sent their daughter to.

**Reexamining foresight, hindsight, and insight.** An important part of their story is Puni’s experiences as a child in Hawaiian immersion – and the fact that when they started this is the vision they had for their children. Bandura’s (2001) concept of foresight implies that past experiences inform and guide the decisions we make today, and Puni reflected on the decision in a similar way:

I went to a dual language campus and had such a different experience. So when we enrolled my daughter, I wanted to be involved. And I’m not sure why…maybe because of administration, maybe because NCLB didn’t exist, or maybe because my mom was there…I don’t know why the issues were so different, or maybe because I was a student in the very beginning, maybe it hadn’t gone so far in one direction that it was really hard to go the other way… So I was taken aback by how problematic the dual language campus was because of the environment and culture that it created. I didn’t feel like that as a child. But I think that’s part of it – it was hugely problematic, the dual language campus.
Along the way, they realized that things had changed in the program and in the school, and that these changes did not adhere to what they wanted for their children. As Bubba explained, “So if it’s a dual campus, you can’t say it’s dual if you lean to one side 90% of the time, right? Even the simplest things, to put a Hawaiian sign on the bathroom, for boys and girls. None of that stuff changed. So it’s not really a dual campus, they gave a little space for Hawaiian and that’s it.”

**Kuleana in a new light.** During our first conversation, Ka ‘Ohana Ko’olaupoko understood the kuleana that they have to the school and to their children’s education. They started their journey with a particular vision of the kuleana they had as immersion parents. Puni said:

> It’s like this shared genealogy. And because of that, and maybe it’s an assumption, but because of this, there’s this shared aloha, this common ground of aloha for our keiki. I don’t want to say it’s overwhelming, but I feel like there’s so much to do and given the tools that I have had and been privileged to be a part of, it’s a kuleana. That’s another part that really excited me about being involved in immersion and my keiki’s education, is that opportunity to really collectively transform families and communities.

Bubba felt similarly about their kuleana to the school, “We’ve been fortunate enough to learn this through mentors outside of the education system and within it. And that’s kuleana for us to help other families and our community now that we’re engaged with. To help, not just the school, the parents, the families and everybody who is involved.”
Along their journey, however, as their experience in their child’s immersion continued, the reality of how they could be involved changed as well. Bubba said, “My kuleana, I think, I take great responsibility… I think we need to be really involved. I wanted to be in the school making sure that they’re also teaching what I want my children to know. So, that’s important. And I thought too, at immersion, there was room to be involved.” Puni reflected that things had changed since she was an immersion student, “I agree, that leo makua can be huge, I’ve seen it work as a child. And I think those parents of my mom’s generation had a certain set of skills, understanding policy, understanding politics, understanding power…and that needs to continue in our current generation of makua.”

Puni and Bubba understood that although they had reservations initially about sending their daughter to this particular immersion context, they still got involved as much as they could, because as Puni describes it, “I was searching for little openings to help make it better.” This involvement included getting to know the other ‘ohana, attending school and statewide meetings, and advocating for the equal treatment of the children at their school and throughout the program. And although Ka ‘Ohana Ko‘olaupoko did as much as they could to get involved and engage in the immersion community of their school, it was simply not enough to change the culture of the school and create a learning environment that they envisioned and their daughter envisioned for herself.

An important part of this mo‘olelo is this ‘ohana’s understanding of their kuleana to their children. Puni and Bubba wanted their daughter to stay in immersion as long as she was happy. When she asked to stop going, they discussed it as a family and honored
her request. As Puni explains, “I was not happy about her leaving. On the other hand, I was not happy with immersion as it was. So when she told us she didn’t want to go anymore, we felt like it was our kuleana to support her and find a place that would foster more of her spirit.” Ka ‘Ohana Ko'olaupoko recognized that the decision had nothing to do with which language was used as the medium of instruction, but rather with the belief that in order to fulfill their kuleana to their daughter, she needed to be in an environment that would cultivate her imagination and support her many interests and energies.

**Reaffirming impacts on keiki, ʻohana, and lāhui.** It was clear during our time together, that this ‘ohana had put a lot of thought into what they wanted for their children and what they needed to do as a family to make that happen. Bubba said, “I wanted my daughter to be able to speak her language, something I didn’t get. And that’s going to be a point, a big decision, even, with what we do with her in the future. To me, it’s a must. It has to be.” Puni reinforced this idea by stating, “Foundationally, it’s just being super strong in her identity and then being able to have the skills to go wherever she needs to go.”

Bubba affirmed these goals, but also saw that the school was not necessarily following these beliefs, “The school did not reinforce it. She’s not going to live just in a Hawaiian place, any more than she’s gonna live in a Native American place, or English place, our kids are very much tri-lingual kids, so I want them exposed to that so that they understand how it works and how to make change in both worlds. She’s going to be a person that crosses borders, a border crosser.”

This ‘ohana soon realized though, that there were many roadblocks that were making it difficult for them to have the level of involvement and influence that they
aspired to. As Bandura (2001) teaches us, we sometimes have to depend on proxy agency to fulfill our goals and ambitions, by putting our faith in the competence and favor of others. In this particular instance, this proxy agency did not work to their advantage and instead went against the goals and values they had as a family. Bubba explained:

For me that’s huge. Because they weren’t allowed to be a Native Hawaiian setting, it was very much a Western, English…it was very influenced. To the point where the Hawaiian group would sit at the very back of the school. And the administrator, even though she may have been Hawaiian, she followed a very Western way of doing her school. You’re talking about a Hawaiian-based school, at some level, in language, and you’re not outside of the classroom. So to me, that goes back to the experience, when we have conversations about it still, what do we want our children to be exposed to and the school setting, and how do we find a setting that fits best with their way of learning. And there is some good and some bad. Like their oli in the morning and the cultural aspects that they were exposed to was great, but then they are so focused on meeting AYP and all of that, they did worksheets 90% of the time and they did all of these things, like walk in a straight line, don’t touch each other, like those kinds of things.

Puni further discussed the impacts of policy on the school and on the immersion program in general, “The DOE has changed and NCLB scares me. That’s really my issue. It’s not immersion, it’s DOE and how crazy NCLB has gotten and all of that. Like I said, I don’t think it’s an immersion thing.”

Ka ‘Ohana Ko‘olaupoko talked about how their goals have not changed, but that for them, leaving immersion was the best decision for their daughter and for their ‘ohana.
In choosing to leave immersion, they recognized the kuleana they had to their children and their ‘ohana and defined this kuleana for themselves:

**Bubba:** I think for us the school has changed. But every foundational thought for what we want for our kids has not changed a bit. What we want for our kids has stayed the same, it’s just in a different school setting.

**Puni:** Right. And I think I come from a place of privilege that I can sustain that decision to be a Hawaiian speaking family at home. And it would be great to find a place, a school that could support us, but I don’t want to leave that kuleana to an institution.

Although their experiences did not meet their aspirations and goals for immersion education, Ka ‘Ohana Ko‘oolaupoko recognized the impact that immersion has had on them as an ‘ohana. During our conversations, Puni reflected on the fact that she did not speak to her daughter in Hawaiian initially and so immersion allowed her to change the way that they communicated as an ‘ohana. As Puni explained, “The growth in my daughter’s Hawaiian was really important, was necessary, so that at home, where we are a bilingual family, I could speak Hawaiian to her more, and she got it, so sending her to immersion helped that to become more of a reality for me to speak Hawaiian to her at home. So that was a huge impact, in my opinion.” This self-reflection changed how Puni engaged with her youngest son and because her daughter was in immersion, she now communicates with both her children in Hawaiian.

Bubba also poignantly described the impact that their initial decision had on his relationship with his daughter, “I think for us, in my relationship with my daughter, it’s made her the teacher. So we were on this hike, and we’re walking along and she always
corrects me. And I think it’s caused us to have a different relationship, between me and her. It’s a totally different level now that we didn’t have before. Her level of Hawaiian is really different since being in immersion.”

Puni also talked about how she believes immersion should be impacting families, both in and outside of the immersion program, “I think over time, just even…I get people all the time asking me, “Are you speaking Hawaiian to your children?” And they think it’s the most amazing thing. And you have these conversations where you show possibilities that people never thought of. But I also think it has to do with parents. Because there are plenty of kids who go to immersion and their parents don’t speak to them, even if they can, outside of school. So I think that’s huge, how immersion can impact other parents.” It is clear from their moʻolelo that although they are no longer immersion parents, they are still engaged in restoration and revitalization work within their ʻohana.

Both Puni and Bubba recognized the potential that Hawaiian immersion has to impact our entire state and the opportunity we have to change policy, in order to collectively transform ourselves as a lāhui. Puni states, “Equity and parity are not there. And I think for me, a huge part of it is there is not equity because there is so much education and dialogue that needs to go on because the values are so different. And we don’t have a platform at the moment, like a safe space to really begin those really necessary conversations.” If we return to the story of the loʻi and the aeʻo that soared over our heads – this is one of the essential functions of the loʻi, to provide this safe space. Puni’s comment and the experiences of their ʻohana caution us that despite the attempt to build a puʻuhonua for our children to thrive in, sometimes it is not enough.
Bubba provides us with some recommendations for the future, “A quick lesson for me, and something I hear from Puni all the time, is that just because something gets established, it still takes work to move it forward. We can’t expect that things are going to get better if we are not actively transforming things for the better. It takes constant commitment to make it keep changing.” At the same time, Puni, in looking back at her childhood experiences and thinking about all that has transpired with her own children, has the following piece of insight on what the program should do moving forward:

And I think more than commitment, it takes pedagogical practices, like storytelling, purposeful transmission of knowledge from one generation to the next, of parents and families. The stories of every generation of parents who come into these schools need to be told, as well as the story of immersion in general. I think this is really important. Then I think we can really strengthen what we’re doing here in immersion.

Ka ‘Ohana Ko’olaupoko reminds us that our impact and the impact of the mo’olelo and mo’okū‘āhau of Hawaiian immersion needs to have a much further reach so that all families who decide to send their children to immersion feel that it is a place where their children can thrive. I do recognize that the story of Ka ‘Ohana Ko’olaupoko may resonate with many families who struggle with this decision. While the focus of this study is on sustainability, and seeks to answer the question of why families stay in immersion versus why they leave, I believe this fourth family and their alternative story places some diversity upon the immersion landscape. The impact of this diversity on the Hawaiian immersion program and our lāhui will be revisited in Chapter 5.
While factors that I have examined are rooted firmly in the perspectives and lived experiences of these families, one factor that was not the focus of this study was the structural factor of school. It was clear that the structure and culture of the school impacted the decision making process of this fourth family, but this structure also had an impact on all the families that I spoke to. The power possessed by the structure of a Hawaiian immersion school should not be underestimated – in the case of the fourth family, it completed disrupted the vision that they had for their family and their daughter and resulted in them choosing a different school setting and structure for their child. But in an optimal state, the school structure has the potential to support the values and goals of Hawaiian immersion families and can be a tool that they use to fulfill their kuleana. Although not the focus of this study, the impacts of the structure and culture of the school on Hawaiian immersion families could be a promising focus of future research.

**Collective Agency and Transformation**

What then, can we learn from the story of this ‘ohana? It is the same lesson that the lo‘i teaches us – that the impact of a thriving lo‘i system must reach both ma kai and ma uka in order to be transformational. Sitting in the middle of an ahupua‘a, it is easy for us to see the impact that the lo‘i can have on what sits below it, but how can it have an impact on what is going on above it? I believe the lesson of this mo‘olelo can be seen in the power of our collective kuleana, or the power of Bandura’s (2001) collective agency, and a commitment to share our mo‘olelo with the broader community. Kalehua echoes this view:

> You know, now, everybody has to know what’s going on, and it has to be loud and it has to be solid. What we’re doing and how we’re doing it gotta be right on.
And if it’s not, then somebody gotta call us on it. Same as the school. That’s where I think, if we could prepare teachers to prepare children to rebuild families...because I think kaiapuni is a weird decision to make if you don’t care. If you make this decision, you obviously care about something, you know? So I think if the child was raised that way in the school, and the activities were sent home for parent engagement about those issues, I think by the time they get to high school, they would be set, they would be engaging with the school on a much deeper level.

This is similar to the recommendation that Puni gave earlier about making sure that the mo’olelo of immersion has a broader impact on our communities, but also speaks to how we can do this collectively.

In the story of Ka ‘Ohana Ko‘olaupoko, and in the case of many immersion schools that sit within a dual-language campus, immersion families are required to give proxy agency to these schools, the administration and the state DOE. In this scenario, we have faith that our values and goals that we have for our children are going to be fulfilled, but as this family has demonstrated, this does not always happen. Bandura encourages us to then look to collective agency as a way to have more of an impact on the educational policies of the state – both at an individual school level and at a programmatic level, “The findings taken as a whole show that the stronger the perceived collective efficacy, the higher the groups’ aspirations and motivational investment in their undertakings, the stronger their staying power in the face of impediments and setbacks, the higher their morale and resilience to stressors, and the greater their performance accomplishments” (2001, p.14).
**Kuleana to state policy.** This collective agency or kuleana needs to include not just our Hawaiian immersion families but the state as well. Genny’s exasperation is obvious:

I don’t understand why Hawaiian isn’t more a part of our entire state. I’m so baffled - when I started learning about the fact that the struggle that immersion kids had with testing, that when they made Hawaiian an official language of the state, why wasn’t it thought through? Was it just for marketing reasons? Was it just cool cause now we’re going to be the state that has two official languages and we’re cultural now because we recognize it? I don’t think so. Because right now we’re not doing it, it’s some changes that are comfortable or whatever, but nothing else. It feels like in everything, we’re just skipping over ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i and I don’t understand it. It seems ludicrous to me.

Kalehua also has some explicit recommendations for how the state can live into its kuleana to the immersion program:

Every statute of law, should have a Hawaiian language counterpart, and it could come down to the constitution and every session, new acts are drafted, that everything is written in Hawaiian, that we start engaging at that level. And I think that’s what got to them, saying that to some guys in the DOE, that’s the one where they grab their forehead and lean back and stop talking to you for two minutes, because they say, “Do you realize how much that’s going to cost?” And my reaction is always going to be, ya, you see the costs already. My language, my culture, my people, we’re on the bottom because of that. We weren’t on the bottom. So the costs, ya, I realize the costs, oh you mean money? To you, you
mean money. To me, I mean my people. That’s the cost. So if they want to measure that, ya, there is an impact already. There’s already been a price paid, and it is monetary too, if you look at the supports given Hawaiian programs, but the price is already paid.

Hence, the kuleana that the state has to the Hawaiian immersion program was something that bubbled to the surface of our conversation again and again, much like the spring water bubbles to the surface of the lo‘i during a hard rain.

**Equity and parity.** The idea that immersion is one way that the state should live into its constitutional obligation to both official languages of the state, was something that many families spoke about in terms of being a political tension, but also an area where there is an opportunity for positive change. As Puni reminded us earlier, this can only happen if equity and parity exist for our schools.

Brandon further clarifies what equity and parity could and should look like in the schools, particularly in the way the schools and students are assessed and evaluated:

Because if you gonna measure us against other schools, then resource us in the same way. It is a resource issue, but it is huge systemic change. It starts at the top, right? Not to say that it is the only solution and it is going to solve all of our problems, but I think it will achieve at least us being able to articulate and govern our education in our district, which we can call our system. So earlier this week they released the Strive High Scores. So Hawaiian schools they are all at the bottom. So I guess so a part of being 100% in is that if you are not, you’re gonna look at that and pull your kid out. But if you understand the context of Hawaiian education and how our schools are being measured…I mean it’s not as bad as
AYP testing and stuff like that, but it considers other factors, so stuff like that make me worry. Because ultimately, we want the best, we want our schools to be good, but maybe it’s not an apples to apples comparison. Maybe we need to relook at the way schools are evaluated and look at these kinds of schools separately. I think competition is good, and being competitive for the good of our students is awesome, right? But if we’re all being tossed into this one bunch and we’re being compared against Mililani Mauka schools and Hawaii Kai schools, that’s not a fair comparison, right? But I think the way to push the conversation about a fair comparison is decentralize the department and allow Hawaiian schools it’s own district and department to be governed and operated in ways that work best. And don’t pit us against a non-comparable school.

Kalehua also reiterated the idea that we cannot depend on evaluations done by people and entities outside of immersion to determine the program’s worth for our keiki, ʻohana, and community:

And there’s no test score that’s going to convince you that immersion is where you should send your keiki. You’re either in or you’re out. You either feel the loss of that part of your language or you don’t. And if you don’t, then don’t come over here, that’s fine. Someone else will, one day, down the road. That’s the hardest part, for me, we’re trying to fight upstream as hard as we can, so that we put them in a place as far ahead as they can be. You know, and farther ahead than most other people may even get. But, it just makes our lāhui that much better when they take it from that spot and I can’t even imagine where they are going to be. Or where my grandchildren are going to be, I can’t even begin to understand it.
Brandon and Kalehua’s recommendation was one suggestion that was made to ensure that Hawaiian immersion lives into its promise to provide an alternative and safe space for families who decide to engage in this kind of transformation, much like the lo‘i can provide that space for the ae‘o.

**Creating our Hawaiian immersion reality.** Transforming the Hawaiian immersion program can include a number of different strategies and policies. Related to what Brandon had already stated, Kalehua had a clear vision for what the structure of our schools should look like:

That’s why there has to be teachers, right in front of them, who believe, so when families show up to school, they believe too. And administrators, standing in front of them, who believe. So that the teachers believe, the families believe, the keiki believe and makes their family believe and we all believe. That’s what’s going to make it real. It’s just about what we believe in and if we believe our keiki are successful, no matter what the tests say, no matter what any thing says, if we believe they are successful, then they are. The assessment is, are our parents happy? That’s the assessment. Are our people happy with who we’ve become?”

Kīhāpai agreed and also talked about how we might engage, as parents, at different levels:

I think that’s just a part of the fight. We gotta keep going, to get the word out, we want our language to live, and we want it to be somewhat parallel to the resources they receive in English medium schools. This is a political fight that all of us who are involved in immersion, and especially us parents, should be involved in. So it is our kuleana as mākua to keep fighting this. And being part of a bigger group,
like ‘Aha Kauleo – because it’s not just the parents at our school, but it’s parents from all the immersion schools, and teachers, and administration. And we realize that all of these things that are happening in different places, like the lottery in Pā'ia, Maui, it affects us just as much, even if we are here on O'ahu. We can make a difference, we can kākoʻo them in different ways.

As Genny reflected on her experiences as a Hawaiian immersion parent, she shared that hearing and being a part of the moʻolelo from the beginning was a major factor in her understanding the impact she could make:

I mean, my opinion before was that I couldn’t be a part of it because I didn’t know, but once I understood that it was ok for me to not know and still be learning, and oh my gosh, that opened up doors that I didn’t know existed. That realization that I have a role here, that I have a place in this movement, it would not have happened if I didn’t talk to someone who could tell me the moʻolelo and make me feel like I could be a part of this too. So knowing that you can make an impact, even if right now, today, you don’t know Hawaiian, but you believe that immersion is where your children need to be and that you can still have a positive impact at any level and any age. That was huge.

This belief that one can have an impact on the transformation of our children, families, schools, and lāhui, at any age, any level, no matter where you are in your life, is a moʻolelo that we have to tell again and again, in as many places as we can, to as many people as we can. If we truly want to live into the promise of survivance, then we need to use our own stories, from our own perspectives as a way to “outwit” the dominant narrative (Brayboy, 2008, p. 341). In this way, we can make the largest impact, both ma
uka of where we are and ma kai of where we are, on our ʻāina, our ʻohana, our language, and our community.

Ka Panina

The rain is coming down really hard now and it is obvious that it is time for us to go. As we make our way back to the truck, Kānekoa wraps up the haʻawina by returning to the water that is returning back in to the main stream. We have already talked about the improved oxygen levels, cleaner and more balanced water that returns back in to the main stream when it leaves the loʻi, but right now the big question is why. Why do we want the water to be “better”? Why should we have more loʻi? And does this loʻi system impact anything else?

My kids know the answer to this final question immediately because it sends us right back to the fishpond that is down the road. They knew the water flowing down from the mainstream into the loko iʻa is healthier and positively impacts that habitat. They also know that the water eventually flows out into the reef systems, which positively impact the species that live there. And this more balanced freshwater is vital to the productivity of the fishpond itself. This cleaner and more balanced water brings about positive impacts not only to the loʻi, but also to everything else in its path.

Through this conversation, my mind wanders off again, and I think back to when we first got here and my children’s unified voices are ringing in my ears,

He wai puna, he wai e inu, he wai e mana, he wai e ola, e ola nō ea!

Just like the water, Hawaiian immersion schooling can bring mana, sustenance, and life to our children, our families and our immersion community. Our children, nurtured in the protective space that Hawaiian immersion schools should provide, learn language, culture
and worldview that afford us with a crucial link to our kūpuna. We understand that
sometimes these lo‘i can be negatively impacted by educational policy, but despite that,
our children and our families are enriched by this decision and have a positive impact on
our extended ‘ohana, our community and our lāhui.

In the next chapter, we will progress from our streams to our oceans, as our
framework and model for understanding Hawaiian immersion families evolves and is
transformed. This transformation will allow me to further explicate the findings and
implications of this decision on our ‘ohana, the Hawaiian immersion program, and our
broader lāhui and the power of our collective agency. It will also enable me to explore
more deeply parental decisions to send their children to Hawaiian immersion, examine
the effects of these decisions, and understand what families need to know so that a
research and resource base can be developed that will strengthen and grow the Hawaiian
language immersion program and increase the number of Hawaiian language speakers for
generations to come.
CHAPTER 5

Discussion

Ka Wehena

The moʻolelo of the loʻi served us well as we delved into the stories of these Hawaiian immersion families and how they lived into their decisions. It enabled us to come to a better understanding of how kuleana is nurtured within the loʻi of immersion families and how this kuleana radiates to other families and to the broader lāhui. We were able to examine every part of the decision making process that these families went through, much like we can see different parts of the loʻi system – kahawai, poʻowai, makawai, and hoʻi – and understand the intentions, goals, impacts, and tensions that exist in each part of the decision. Much like we look at the loʻi as an example of the brilliance of our kūpuna, we can look at this collective moʻolelo as an example of the ingenuity and resilience of immersion families as they fulfilled their kuleana to their keiki, their ʻohana and their lāhui.

However, as I reflected on my role as the storyteller, and my responsibility to illuminate the important lessons this collective moʻolelo can teach all of us, I realized that my metaphoric guide needed to transform so that it could better answer my primary research question: what are the implications of mākua deciding to enroll their children in the Hawaiian language immersion program on our families, our children, our language, and our lāhui? The loʻi has aided us in having a preliminary understanding of these implications, but if we want to see the profound impacts that a thriving loʻi system can have within an ahupuaʻa, then we need to look at the state of our coastlines and our reefs and the many organisms that live there. Accordingly, this new companion on our journey
advances us to a place where we can explore the important implications that the moʻolelo of Hawaiian immersion families can provide. My goal in providing you with this evolved metaphoric guide is to provide a framework that can embrace the fortitude exhibited by these families, while also leaving room for the intrinsic tensions, entanglements, and faith exhibited by these families as they live into this decision.

I found what I was looking for in a small, but very important inhabitant of our coastlines, where fresh and salt water meet – the kūpeʻe. The kūpeʻe provides us with a good guide to understanding and revisiting the purpose of this research: to explore parental decisions to send their children to Hawaiian immersion, examine the effects of these decisions, and understand what families need to know so that a research and resource base can be developed that will strengthen and grow the Hawaiian language immersion program and increase the number of Hawaiian language speakers for generations to come.

The kūpeʻe also gives us the means to explore the answers to my primary research question stated above and the sub-questions of this research. In order to prepare us for this exploration, it makes sense to revisit the sub-questions here:

1. What are the factors that influence mākua to enroll their children in Hawaiian immersion?
   a. What is the purpose and intent of mākua when they send their children to Hawaiian immersion?
   b. What goals do mākua have for their children when sending them to Hawaiian immersion?
c. How has kuleana factored into their decision to send their children to
Hawaiian immersion?

2. What are the factors that help mākua persevere in this decision over time?
   a. What motivates mākua to keep their children in Hawaiian immersion?
   b. What values are important to Hawaiian immersion mākua and how do these
      values and sense of identity help them to sustain this decision?
   c. How do mākua evaluate their decisions and stay motivated as Hawaiian
      immersion parents?
   d. What are the tensions, challenges and strengths that mākua face in
      maintaining this decision?

3. What can we learn from the stories of Hawaiian immersion ʻohana and how can these
   stories help us to strengthen the program and provide a road map for our future
   generations of Hawaiian immersion mākua?

Now that we have an understanding of the queries that this research seeks to answer,
unpeeling some of the different layers of meaning that are possessed by this tiny shell
seems like a good way to kick things off.

**The Story of Kūpeʻe**

Kūpeʻe, according to Pukui & Elbert (1986), have a couple of different meanings
– they are both the bracelets or anklets that we wear as adornments and protection, and
they are also the small edible marine snails that we find on our shorelines. Kūpeʻe attach
themselves to rocks to feed on limu, but will jump off the rocks and bury themselves just
below the surface of the sand when they are startled or have had enough sustenance. They
spend most of their time just under the surface of the sand, in their own unassuming way.
These characteristics that kūpe‘e possess are also reflected in Hawaiian immersion families. Like kūpe‘e, immersion families serve as the protectors, not just of our language, but also of our culture and this idea that we need to feed our next generation with the worldview of our ancestors through our language. These kūpe‘e and immersion families are not just for decoration and have an important role in protecting who we are as a lāhui. Additionally, kūpe‘e also provide us with ‘ai or sustenance, and in the same way, immersion families help to sustain the Hawaiian language revitalization movement, and the knowledge passed down to our children will help to sustain our lāhui for generations to come. Kūpe‘e also live in the ocean, and if you can recall the ending point of our story in Chapter 4, and how the implications of the decisions we make on the ʻāina manifest themselves in the ocean and on our reefs, it makes sense to finish this story in the area where these kūpe‘e live as a way to discuss the implications of families sending their children to Hawaiian immersion.

Another characteristic of kūpe‘e is highlighted in the idea of pe‘e, or to hide oneself. Kūpe‘e obviously do hide in some instances, but actually they come out and expose themselves to the elements only when it is necessary and remain under the sand and out of the spotlight most of the time. The immersion families in this study demonstrated a similar philosophy towards their lives and their decision to send their children to immersion – they do not hide, but most of their lives are spent just engaged in the work, not worrying about what others think and what others see in terms of the implications of their decision. They have approached the decision with humility and with no intention of hiding; rather, they understand that there is a right time to advocate for their children and the program, and will show up whenever it is necessary to do so. The
best example I can think of to demonstrate their humility and advocacy-when-necessary stance is the fact that none of my participants wanted to use pseudonyms. I have the upmost respect and appreciation for them and their willingness to expose themselves to the elements, much like a kūpeʻe.

Now that we have a preliminary understanding of the role that kūpeʻe plays in this moʻolelo, I would like to first explore each part of this framework that utilizes the kūpeʻe, and then use these understandings to provide some answers to my primary research question and sub-questions that were outlined previously.

Kūpeʻe as a Framework

The crafting, re-telling, and re-presenting of the stories of Hawaiian immersion ‘ohana in a collective way in Chapter 4 allowed me to look across these stories and see key points of resonance. Tuck (2009) reminds us that the act of theorizing back requires us to identify the things that resonate within our stories, build upon them, and create new frameworks, new stories and frankly, a newly empowered narrative that is expected of us if we approach our research and lives using the theory of survivance. Using survivance as a part of my theoretical framework then, requires me to approach this final chapter from the worldview of Hawaiian immersion families first.

However, I do recognize that there is an alternative story within this larger story – another story that may resonate. My initial goal in this research was to tell a collective story and an institutional story of Hawaiian immersion that would help the program to continue to grow and flourish. But in the course of the study I was presented with a particular tension; the story of a fourth family, Ka ‘Ohana Koʻolaupoko, was not the same as the other three families that I interviewed. I understood that this alternative story
was important, but also wanted to ensure that my study focused on persistence and sustainability of these families, rather than focusing solely on the tensions and challenges these families face. Ka ‘Ohana Ko‘olaupoko provided me with an opportunity to show the diversity within Hawaiian immersion families and also a direction for future research. To put it simply, while this work is a story that focuses on the reasons why families stay in Hawaiian immersion, there is also a need to better understand the reasons why families leave immersion. Most importantly, this understanding can be at its most powerful if it is told from the perspective of survivance.

While we understand from the previous chapter that the Hawaiian immersion program has a unique set of challenges, positioning this discussion at the core of current Hawaiian immersion families allows us to revel in the power and strength of the promise of immersion. Furthermore, sub-question three requires me to identify what these mo‘olelo can teach us and how these mo‘olelo can strengthen the program and provide a road map for the future – I intend to make this clear throughout the chapter. In order to examine how we might use this Kūpe‘e Framework, I would like to start at the core of the framework and move my way outward to connected elements. Let’s start at kuleana.
**Foundation of Kuleana.** If we remember the ways in which the stories of kuleana have been told throughout this work, we know that kuleana is not just about a right, privilege, and responsibility, but can encompass a great many things. Brandon and Kalehua both talked about the fact that for their family, immersion was not a choice, but a kuleana. Genny and Sarah both acknowledged that parents of immersion children have a unique responsibility, and Genny expressed, “We also know that part of that is involvement, how much are we willing to put in, of ourselves, to be able to get out what we want for our keiki.” Kalehua understood that Hawaiian immersion had a kuleana to impact our broader lāhui, “I think outside of immersion, the broadest impact is that it’s creating or re-creating or supporting some form of Hawaiian language reality.” In the stories of these families, we understand kuleana includes our relationship to our ‘āina, the
responsibilities mākua have to their children, the things we are required to carry and pass on to our future generations, and our kuleana to not only our own families, but to the broader lāhui. Genny summed it up by saying, “I felt that sense of responsibility, that kuleana, I can do this. I can contribute. Maybe I don’t know right now, but I can contribute to the fact that we are going to commit to doing this with our keiki.” Kuleana, and all that it embodies, is the most important factor that parents consider when making the decision to send their children to immersion, and it is a concept that they turn to that helps them sustain the decision.

As such, kuleana also allows us to answer sub-questions one and two. Sub-question one asks us to think about the factors that influence the decision to send their children to immersion, the purpose and intent of mākua when sending their children to Hawaiian immersion, and how kuleana has factored into their decisions. The ‘ohana in this study, in expressing the answer to these questions, understand that sending their children to immersion is how they fulfill their kuleana to their children, their ‘ohana, and the lāhui – it is the deciding factor and their reason and purpose for making the decision. Furthermore, kuleana provides us with an answer to sub-question two as it is one of the factors that help mākua sustain the decision over time and motivates them to stay in Hawaiian immersion despite challenges that may arise.

Kuleana, and the collective kuleana that we have as Hawaiian immersion families, radiated through every aspect of this research and consequently, touches every part of the Kūpe‘e Framework. If we move from kuleana into the other parts of the iʻo of this kūpe‘e there are three key inner elements of the model to include: moʻo, ma ka hana ka ‘ike, and
nānā i ke kumu. Each of these concepts are explored throughout the stories presented in Chapter 4, but will be more thoroughly contemplated here.

**Construct of Moʻo.** Within this Kūpeʻe Framework, moʻo is an expectation of an order, of Hawaiian first. This intention manifested itself in different ways – as a way to approach their decision making process through survivance, as an expectation of themselves as mākua and of the school, and as a conviction that helped them to sustain the decision. As Kuhau explained, “The Hawaiian gotta come first, gotta be established, and then you learn that strong Hawaiian language means strong in any language, I believe.” Sub-question one is addressed by the construct of moʻo in this framework because it is the intent and goal of these mākua, when sending their children to immersion, that Hawaiian comes first.

This is inherently different than the idea of walking in two worlds, and I think it is important to make that distinction here. Henze & Vanett (1993) problematize the use of this metaphor in describing the educational journey of children, particularly because it requires children to reconcile two value systems that often times contradict each other. In addition, it assumes that there are only two worlds to walk in, which oversimplifies the complex, transitional, and ever-evolving nature of our lives as indigenous peoples. Indeed, these families did not articulate that they wanted their children to walk in two worlds and were clear about the order in which they wanted Hawaiian knowledge and language to be fed to their children. Their moʻo meant that Hawaiian needed to come first and be the foundation of their children’s worldview, and then everything else could come after. Brandon confirmed “But we agreed that we’re gonna make sure she is paʻa in Hawaiian first.” Sub-question two is answered with the moʻo of this framework as well,
because it articulates the values that these families have and how mo‘o enables families
to shape their children’s Hawaiian identities at home and at school.

Furthermore, having kuleana to this mo‘o is something that families articulated
again and again, and a commitment to this mo‘o also demonstrated why families
sustained their decision over time. Brandon further explained his kuleana through mo‘o
in this way:

I don’t expect schools to tell our students, but I do have an expectation that how
we inspire and want our kids to seek their own, I expect the same. So that our
stories are straight. Same mo‘olelo I’m telling at home is the same mo‘olelo that
she’s getting at school. So it’s the things that mainstream does not do or does not
Teach is what, for me, that’s what I expect. Not to do it for me, but to do it with
me, because that’s what we’re trying to do here.

Unfortunately, the mo‘olelo of these families also show us what happens when
this mo‘o and the expection of Hawai‘i first is disregarded within a school culture. Ka
Ohana Ko‘olaupoko’s experiences demonstrate the deleterious effects this disregard can
have on the decisions that families make and their ability to fulfill their kuleana to their
children. Puni described the problematic nature of the dual language campus and how it
disrupted the mo‘o of not only her childhood, but of what she expected of the school, “So
I was taken aback by how problematic the dual language campus was because of the
environment and culture that it created. I didn’t feel like that as a child. But I think that’s
part of it – it was hugely problematic, the dual language campus.” While the disruption
of mo‘o contributed to Ka ‘Ohana Ko‘olaupoko no longer being involved in immersion
per se, it did strengthen their resolve to provide their daughter with an educational
experience grounded in their own mo‘o. It also provides us with a way to further explore the kuleana we have as immersion ‘ohana to ma ka hana ka ‘ike.

**Construct of Ma ka hana ka ‘ike.** Ma ka hana ka ‘ike in this framework compels us to move beyond just talking about preserving our language, but actually living it. Survivance also substantiates this position and teaches us that it is not enough to just talk about something, we have kuleana to actually do it. As Genny reminds us, “I know they have their challenges, as all schools do, but we also know that part of that is the involvement, how much are we willing to put in, of ourselves, to be able to get out what we want for our keiki.”

Ma ka hana ka ‘ike, from the perspective of this framework, can encompass a number of things, including the intentional and necessary involvement and advocacy of parents in the immersion program, a link back to the ways in which our children were educated traditionally, and the understanding that the immersion program and movement cannot grow and improve if we are not in it. As Kīhāpai so eloquently stated, “We don’t expect the school to be the sole provider of culture and language to our keiki, but we understand that what we can provide is not enough. We’re never enough. So putting our keiki in immersion, it is all a part of that bigger goal. It’s not perfect, but if we don’t do it, then who will?”

Brandon understood the role that parents should play and the importance of ma ka hana ka ‘ike, “But if the mākua really believe in immersion education and really believe in being Hawai‘i and living it, and not it being some token thing, but that’s the chosen lifestyle for the family, then I think that’s the most important.” Although set within a different context, Bubba acknowledged his responsibility as well, “I think we need to be
really involved. I wanted to be in the school making sure that they’re also teaching what I want my children to know. So, that’s important. And I thought too, at immersion, there was room to be involved.” As Ka ‘Ohana Ko‘olaupoko explained in their mo’olelo, although the educational setting changed for their daughter, their embrace of their kuleana to their keiki did not waiver.

These families understand that their involvement, commitment, and engagement in the school and the movement is critical and that only when everyone, including the school and the state, is held accountable to the mo‘o of Hawaiian immersion, can we fulfill our kuleana to our children, our families, and our lāhui. It also allows us to explore the answers to sub-question two when considering how mākua persevere in this decision over time, motivate themselves to get involved and stay involved, and weather the storm of challenges that they may face as they live in to their decision. I would offer that using kuleana as a touchstone to ground the mo‘o of these ‘ohana and the work that is required to live in to this kuleana, reveals the strengths and tensions that exist within this model. On one hand these families demonstrated how holding fast to the kuleana of upholding the mo‘o of Hawai‘i first enabled them to persist in immersion, but also what happens when a school culture does not adhere to that mo‘o. On the other hand, ma ka hana ka ‘ike supports the kuleana that these families believe they have to the immersion program and their understanding that the program cannot be ameliorated if they are not there to do the restoration and transformation work.

Construct of Nānā i ke kumu. The last part of the meat or core of this framework, is nānā i ke kumu. While I have briefly explained this concept in previous chapters, the stories of participant families more fully illuminate the deeper meaning.
Genny reminds us, “Because if you’re in it 100% then it’s almost a non-issue. I mean, isn’t that why we’re here? I guess there are times when you start to doubt yourself, but I think that would happen anyway.”

In the Kūpeʻe Framework, nānā i ke kumu is the 100% belief, a not-so-gentle reminder to remember the moʻokūʻauhau of the Hawaiian immersion program. As Kalehua contends, “The agenda is: believe.” It is the way in which immersion families stay committed to the papahana of kaiapuni and was sometimes referred to in this research as the reasons why families send their children to immersion or even “The Checklist”. Looking to the source of the decision to send their children to immersion is something that these families have to engage with on a daily basis, because of the overwhelming number of tensions that are an inherent part of being a parent of an immersion child.

We can see what can happen when families are 100% believers. Brandon and Genny explained how they prioritize nānā i ke kumu when contemplating the enticement of private school resources. Kalehua recalls that Hawaiian immersion was the “saving grace” in the genealogy of Hawaiian language revitalization. The present state of Hawaiian language demands staunch resolve and Ka ʻOhana Waiʻanae, ʻEwa Uka and ʻEwa Kai exemplify the kind of courage that is necessary to nānā i ke kumu. Sub-question two asked us to explore the different ways in which Hawaiian immersion families sustain the decision over time – nānā i ke kumu and the 100% belief answers that question clearly.

We should also contemplate, however, what happens when nānā i ke kumu is hindered by the culture of a school. In the case of Ka ʻOhana Koʻolaupoko, all of the
elements were there at the start – Puni understood the moʻokūʻauhau of the immersion program because she lived it as a child and Puni and Bubba wanted Hawaiian language to be a part of their children’s lives. Lamentably, the school culture had changed so drastically from what they imagined that this family looked outside of the immersion school setting for a place that they felt was better suited for their daughter.

The importance of nānā i ke kumu and how it must be embodied at the school level brings us right back to an examination of the kuleana parents have to hold the school and the state accountable to the moʻo and moʻokūʻauhau of Hawaiian immersion. The power of this framework and the power of Hawaiian immersion parents lies in the convergence of all of these constructs – kuleana, moʻo, ma ka hana ka ʻike, and nānā i ke kumu. However, as these moʻolelo have taught us, this convergence does not occur in a vacuum, and is laden with tensions that this model and these families have to wrestle with.

**Key concept of Hihia.** Hihia is the passive form of hihi, and describes the idea of entanglement, kink, difficulty, problem, or trouble. (Pukui & Elbert, 1986) I use the word hihia here, because if we dig deeper into this idea of entanglement, I think it provides a meaningful way of exploring the tensions that Hawaiian immersion families face. Hihia are the tensions, conflicts, and challenges that come either from internal or external forces that Hawaiian immersion families have to grapple with. Hihia includes the internal battle that we fight, born out of our own educational experiences and what we have been raised to believe by society, our own schooling, and the devastating process of colonization, that tells us that Hawaiian is not enough.
The immersion program and all those who work within it have spent their lives building a Hawaiian language reality for our children – what happens when they leave the protection of the program and are thrust out into a world that does not reflect that same reality? I think about our immersion children and when they are old enough to go to the university – will the university reflect their worldview that the immersion program has fostered within them – or will they be relegated to the one corner of campus where it is allowable for Hawaiian to come first? And when they go out into the workforce, armed with the knowledge and skills of Hawaiian and English, will they be able to utilize both skills sets, or will they have to put one on the side because the system they have entered into does not recognize both?

These families also pondered how these hihia are revealed in their own lives and also included external conflicts that we face from our families, friends, and even educational policies that ensure that our children’s educational experiences are fundamentally unequal. Brandon and Genny had a conversation about the lure of sending their children to private schools, and how believing in their decision and remembering the richness that immersion can offer was the way that they overcame those challenges. Joey talked about a challenge to his decision that he experienced at work and how remembering the reasons why he made the decision helps him work through this tension. These hihia are messy and complex, and parents can sometimes get ensnared in this tangled net of tensions that feel like they are coming at them daily. As a result families can be conflicted, confused, and down right tired, despite the fact that they are holding fast to these concepts of kuleana, moʻo, ma ka hana ka ʻike, and nānā i ke kumu that are ever-present in this framework. Hihia provides some answers to sub-question two, which
requires us to understand the tensions, challenges and strengths that mākua face in maintaining this decision, but there is more to this moʻolelo.

**The overarching construct of Hilinaʻi.** The important part of this moʻolelo also helps us to comprehensively answer sub-question two of this research – how do immersion families sustain this decision, despite all of this? The final component of this framework, answers this question in the most beautiful way, and was uttered during an interview by Kihāpai, “That’s the hilinaʻi part and why the kids won’t leave their language because they know that’s their way to connect to their kūpuna.” Hilinaʻi is to believe, trust, and have faith, in something larger than yourself, and is an essential part of these families’ spiritual foundation. It can be a faith in our kini akua, kūpuna or a belief in God, but all families in this research expressed this hilinaʻi, or this spiritual belief that their decision to put their children in Hawaiian immersion was done through a spiritual force higher than themselves. Just as importantly, they also acknowledged that ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi is the way that their ʻohana can access that spirituality. Genny referred to hilinaʻi and how their decision to send their children to immersion was something that they felt in their naʻau, “It was not a question of if we were going to do this, it was like, how can we not do this? I could feel it. I’m going to get emotional now. I just knew inside that I gotta do this for my keiki. He felt it, I felt it, in our naʻau.”

Hilinaʻi also describes the belief, some referred to it as a 100% belief, that Hawaiian is enough, and that this belief should be reflected in what we do as families, as a school, and as an immersion program and movement. In our discussion, Brandon referred to the release of school test scores and rankings and the fact that Hawaiian immersion schools were ranked on the bottom, but that hilinaʻi allows him to rise above
this tension, “So I guess a part of being 100% in is that if you are not, you’re going to look at that and pull your kid out. But if you understand the context of Hawaiian education and how our schools are being measured…Because ultimately, we want the best, we want our schools to be good, but maybe it’s not an apples to apples comparison.”

Hilinaʻi is the protector against all of the hihia that I described earlier, and serves to not only shelter families from these hihia, but also is the element that holds all of the other elements of the framework together. Much like the shell of the kūpeʻe protects the soft and life-sustaining meat from the harsh pounding of waves and other elements, hilinaʻi too, protects these families and their decision, from all of the tensions that may wash over them. As Kalehua reminds us, “And there’s no test score that’s going to convince you that immersion is where you should send your keiki. You’re either in or you’re out. You either feel the loss of that part of your language or you don’t.” This belief in what Hawaiian immersion can do to benefit our keiki, our families, and our lāhui helps families sustain the decision through all of the tensions that are an inherent part of life.

Hilinaʻi is one of the biggest things we can learn from the stories of these immersion ʻohana, it can help us improve the program into the future, and provide guidance and strength to current and future Hawaiian immersion ʻohana. The remainder of this work will focus on further refining our understanding of the implications of mākua sending their children to Hawaiian immersion and what we can learn from these moʻolelo, as articulated by my primary research question and sub-question three.
Implications of the Kūpeʻe Framework

What are the implications of mākua deciding to enroll their children in the Hawaiian language immersion program on our families, our children, our language, and our lāhui? In the next section, I intend to focus on these implications and discuss recommendations for future policy and research that can help us strengthen the program and provide a road map for future generations of Hawaiian immersion mākua.

Policy and practice of Kuleana. Kuleana has evolved and grown into so many important things throughout the journey of this research. It started as my theoretical framework and ontological perspective, and based on the data, blossomed into an integral part of the discussion and the moʻolelo of these Hawaiian immersion families. I believe how Hawaiian immersion families understand and live into kuleana is the single biggest impact that they have on our families, children, language, and lāhui.

These families do not just embrace the idea of a collective kuleana – they understand that the very act of enrolling their children in immersion is not just for their own keiki, but for everyone in the lāhui. This decision was summarized by Genny, “…That’s what I can do, that’s my contribution to the world, to Hawaiʻi, to our community - is that I can send our keiki there and give them the opportunity to learn ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi from the beginning, when it’s natural.” All of the families recognized that they were doing this for something bigger than themselves.

From the perspective of these families, the order in which things are prioritized and lived into, collective kuleana comes first. In a simple act of survivance and an embrace of this moʻo, these families have said “us first”. As Kalehua states, “And we’re not just doing it for our kids. And that’s the major part, I think it took a few years for
people to see that we’re not pushing an agenda. The agenda is: believe.” This is not to say that they are not thinking about the well-being of their children and that they have disregarded what is “best” for them. What it does mean is that they understand that the well-being of their family, and consequently our lāhui, depends on the continuation of our ‘ōlelo. And they know that it has to happen within their children in order for it to continue to the future generations of our entire lāhui.

For those of us who are Hawaiian immersion parents, this understanding of collective kuleana can impact us in a variety of ways. It can validate and empower those families who already base their decisions on this collective kuleana, as this mo‘olelo should resonate with families of past, present, and future immersion children. It is also an appeal to all of us to accept this kuleana and be more involved in our schools, in our immersion community, and in the advocacy work that is expected as an immersion parent. If we want our schools to live up to their promise and work with us to raise the next generation of Hawaiian language speakers, then we need to recognize, embrace, and ho‘okō our kuleana within this larger movement. The impacts of kuleana in the Kūpe‘e Framework truly start at home.

Brandon reminds us that he does not expect the schools to “do it for me, but to do it with me”, and this statement highlights the implications that this work can have on teachers and administrators. Imagine if we all made the collective decision – parents, administrators and teachers – to embrace and live in to this collective kuleana, and this was reflected in everything that was done in the school and without? Imagine the impact that would have on our keiki, when, as Brandon suggests, we are all telling the same mo‘olelo? Administrators and teachers need to rethink how they can better engage with
parents, get them involved, and show them that the school is a pu‘uhonua for their keiki and their entire ‘ohana. And we, as families, need to rethink how we can better engage with the school – collective kuleana requires it.

At a broader level, this understanding of kuleana can and should impact the immersion schools across our state. One particular issue that emerged during this work was the problematic nature of a dual language campus, as Ka ‘Ohana Ko‘olaupoko experienced a disregard for the kuleana of ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i at their school. Even families who did not send their children to a kaiapuni school in an English medium school recognized that the entire structure of the school needed to be different and sent their children to K-12 immersion sites for this reason. As Brandon said, “Ya, for us, that’s why our daughter is at the school that she is at. Because it’s not just the classroom, it’s the entire structure of the school that we like about an immersion school. When you have a principal who has to divvy up his or her limited budget between the English and immersion side, versus a principal who has to divvy it up between the whole school. Immersion is not going to be the priority in that system.” While a dual-language campus could work in theory, it can only work if the resources provided to the English side of the school are equally matched on the Hawaiian side of the school, which was not the case in the mo‘olelo of Ka ‘Ohana Ko‘olaupoko. As such, every single Hawaiian immersion school should have their own campus, their own administrator, faculty and staff, and be able to manage their own resources and have a level of self-determination that they do not have under the current system. This would ensure that Hawaiian immersion programs are not treated like a school’s less-favored child.
Giving the Hawaiian Language Immersion Program a more prominent place in the DOE organizational structure was advocated for in my interviews with these ‘ohana, and interestingly enough, accepted into Hawai‘i Board of Education policy a few months later. In particular, the redraft of Policy 2105 (http://www.hawaiiboe.net/Meetings/Notices/Documents/02-18-14%20GBM/BOE%20Policy%202104%20and%202105%20Final%20Draft.pdf) is a positive development and provides us with an example of collective kuleana at a more systemic level. The redraft of this policy brought some much needed clarity to the kuleana that the Hawai‘i DOE has to the Hawaiian Language Immersion program, with highlights being the establishment of an Office of Hawaiian Education within the Office of the Superintendent and a requirement that the DOE develop an assessment that is in-line with Hawaiian Language Immersion Program curriculum.

The promise of this redraft is that it could give the Hawaiian Language Immersion Program, schools, and teachers the power to make decisions that are better aligned with the goals of not just the program, but also of the ‘ohana that I spoke to in this study. While a work-in-progress, this redraft could also ensure that our children are assessed in the language of instruction, rather than evaluated by and subjected to discriminatory assessments. It remains to be seen how this policy will be implemented and the level of autonomy the program will have moving forward, but fulfilling this collective kuleana in a sincere and meaningful way will ensure that ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i takes its rightful place as an official language of our state.

If the state, in its capacity as the upholder of the state constitution, would embrace this idea of collective kuleana in the same way that these families have, then taking care
of ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i, one of the two official languages of our state, is a kuleana that belongs to all of us. The Hawaiian language immersion program and the community that is committed to it, is not solely responsible for taking care of this kuleana. And while there have been some positive policy developments recently, it is our kuleana to make sure that these kinds of policies are not just written down, but lived into. To put it simply, if our Department of Education is a makua to all of the children in the state of Hawai‘i, including our Hawaiian-speaking children, then I expect them to love and nurture them in the same way they love and nurture their English-speaking children. While this analogy may seem odd and not necessarily the way one might describe the relationship between the department and its school children, it should be. This makua needs to stop playing favorites and treat all of their children, despite the language that they speak, as equals. Only then will we see the true impacts of kuleana on our families, our children, our language, and our lāhui.

Policy and practice of Mo‘o. The sequence, or order, in which knowledge, language and worldview is introduced was a major issue for these families. The aspirations and dreams that these families had in terms of this mo‘o was simple – Hawai‘i first. These families reflect and confirm what the papahana has been telling us from the beginning, that ‘ōlelo Hawa‘i needs to come first and be pa‘a, before anything else can be introduced. Survivance also necessitates this stance as we re-prioritize the dreams we have for our children. If you remember in our beginning chapters, the Hawaiian immersion program started with families who wanted to raise Hawaiian-speaking children in a Hawaiian-speaking household and wanted that reality to be present in every aspect of their lives, including school. Brandon affirms this by simply saying, “Ya,
Hawaiian gotta come first. And then everything else is cool.” This imperative steers us back to the original path of the immersion program and should be reflected in every aspect of the immersion program.

Like kuleana, the implications of this mo‘o should start within our families. When our keiki return home from school, the mo‘o of Hawai‘i first can and should be reflected in the ‘ohana, no matter what level of language they possess in their household. These families have shown us that although we should all be working to improve our Hawaiian language proficiency, that even those of us who are still getting there can contribute. Our rhetoric and our actions as parents, to our keiki, our families, our schools, and all who will listen, should be Hawai‘i first. This is not an easy task, as we are bombarded by messages that run counter to this mo‘o. But if we are to re-write and transform our own mo‘olelo, as survivance and mo‘o teaches us, then it is our kuleana as parents to make sure we are implicit about the mo‘o that we value, that our children understand how and why we chose this mo‘o for our families, and that this mo‘o is fostered in our future generation of Hawaiian language speakers.

Upholding this mo‘o is our collective kuleana, and as such, it can also impact every aspect of our schools. Ka ‘Ohana Wai‘anae explained their expectation for the school to adhere to this mo‘o, “That’s the part, by sending them to immersion, this is what I expect.” If ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i is the foundation of the school, then this mo‘o should be an intrinsic part of the school’s culture and includes the language teachers and administrators use when interacting with our keiki, the language mākua use when interacting with teachers and administrators, and how and in what language curriculum and assessments are designed, prioritized and implemented. The administrators, faculty,
and staff in a Hawaiian immersion school have the potential to serve as the models for what this moʻo can look like – we need to recognize the powerful impacts this commitment could have on our keiki. In pedagogy, it could be as simple as looking to resources and texts written in Hawaiian as the source of haʻawina for students, rather than adopting a mathematics curriculum written in English and created from a worldview that runs counter to this moʻo. In theory, it is an intentional shift away from automatically looking at English and outside resources and curriculum, and a commitment to look to the knowledge of our kūpuna first.

I recognize that the work of living into this moʻo is not easy and that we have to do it together – at school and at home. I believe that this is where our collective kuleana and moʻo can come together. This work, of revitalizing our language through our keiki, has already shown to be its most powerful when it is done as a collective; perhaps it is time for schools and families to come together once more and exercise our collective agency. This is a critical moment in the moʻokūʻauhau of the Hawaiian immersion program – we have a kuleana to make sure that this moʻo of Hawaiʻi first is still recognizable to generations to come in the Hawaiian immersion program.

Additionally, the implications of this moʻo to our state and the Department of Education should be reflected in their policies and how they implement (or do not implement) federal policies that are irrelevant at best and discriminatory at worst. Giving our children high stakes assessment tests in English, when their entire educational experience is in Hawaiian, is harmful to our children on so many levels. When our children’s teachers have to implore the students in their class not to cry when they are taking the test, then it is obvious that these tests are damaging our children to their core.
Evaluating our children, our schools, our teachers, and our administrators, and determining whether they are succeeding or failing, based on these tests that are not even created in the language of instruction does irreparable harm to their morale, the school, and the Hawaiian immersion program. Steps have been taken to correct the situation in recent Board of Education policy mentioned previously, but this particular part of the policy needs to be carried out immediately, as the youngest members of our immersion community are being hit the hardest.

I understand that our state and the Hawaiian language immersion program do not live in a vacuum and that federal policies are difficult to ignore. However, as past and present Hawaiian immersion parents have demonstrated, this decision to enroll our children in immersion requires some courage; the bravest members of our families are our children. I believe it is time for the state and our DOE to exhibit some courage, take a stand, and advocate for our children, both here and to their federal counterparts.

Policy and practice of Ma ka hana ka ‘ike. The crux of ma ka hana ka ‘ike was clearly illuminated by Kīhāpai with a simple question: “It’s not perfect, but if we don’t do it, then who will?” This is a clear realization that we cannot expect the program to better adhere to the moʻo that we aspire to if we are not there doing it. Ma ka hana ka ‘ike teaches us that the strength of the decision and the strength of the program depends on how families foster relationships between themselves, other families, and the school. For some of these families, they have impacted their ‘ohana and the broader community in positive ways, by raising awareness of Hawaiian issues and serving as an example for how to learn more about and live our language and culture. Sarah shared a moving story
of how her children, equipped with their knowledge of Hawaiian language and culture, impacted her family. These families serve as a living embodiment of ma ka hana ka ‘ike.

The impact of this decision also appears as we think about this idea of parental involvement. These families have reimagined what their kuleana is in their children’s education and it has impacted how they interact with the school as an entire ‘ohana. Brandon expressed how they support and are supported by the school, “But at immersion, the pieces are all there. So when the kids see it, I think that just elevates their pride in the school that they are at. I don’t go to school, just me, we come to this school, it’s a school that our whole ‘ohana are a part of.” This kuleana that ‘ohana have to the school is not just about the idea that families should help out and come to meetings once and a while – they understand that mākua are the only ones who can do the heavy lifting of pushing the movement forward. Ma ka hana ka ‘ike reminds us that the advocacy for the program, the schools, the language, and our keiki, falls squarely on our shoulders. As Kīhāpai reminds us, “So that’s it – the parents have the mana to hold people, they are the check and balance. If parents don’t care, then the language can go to the tubes. But if parents care, and expect the best, then everything else can build on that.”

However, if we have learned anything during this journey, we know that ma ka hana ka ‘ike cannot be carried by families alone. Administrators and teachers are already engaged in the work, but how can ma ka hana ka ‘ike impact and support them? The university and teacher educators can support the schools and administrators, by preparing future Hawaiian immersion teachers that understand their kuleana and embrace all aspects of this Kūpe’e Framework. I understand, as a member of a hui of teacher educators here at the university, that this work has been ongoing, and I understand my
role in making sure that ma ka hana ka ‘ike has an impact in this context. This framework captures some of the aspirations that Hawaiian immersion families have for their children and could be explored by all Hawaiian immersion teacher candidates as they develop their teaching philosophies.

The DOE can play a major role in how ma ka hana ka ‘ike is realized in our schools, and I believe it is the kuleana of the DOE and universities to work together in the spirit of collective kuleana to provide useful and relevant professional development supports to schools. Fulfilling this kuleana takes time – Hawaiian immersion teachers need and deserve the time and support it takes to continue to develop resources and curriculum that adhere to the mo‘o of Hawai‘i first. If we think about the amount of time and resources that are poured into professional development workshops for teachers who teach in our English medium schools, then we should be looking at an equivalent amount of time and resources being directed to professional development opportunities for teachers in our Hawaiian medium schools. In other words, for every penny that is spent on Singapore Math workshops, we should be spending at least a penny on helping Hawaiian immersion teachers research and develop resources in ways of quantifying and measuring things from a Hawaiian worldview, in Hawaiian. In this way, the DOE can not only live into its kuleana to the Hawaiian language and Hawaiian immersion schools, but it can also support teachers in designing curriculum that is grounded in the concept of mo‘o. The implications of ma ka hana ka ‘ike are demonstrated in how kuleana and mo‘o can come together to impact teacher pedagogy, curriculum development and ultimately our keiki.

**Policy and practice of Nānā i ke kumu.** The implication of nānā i ke kumu is that it facilitates the retelling and remembering of the mo‘olelo and mo‘okū‘auhau of the
revitalization of our language and culture by our families and our broader lāhui. Warner (1999) has already reminded us that at a point when our language was on the brink of extinction because of English-only policy, Hawaiian immersion was the way our predecessors envisioned a world with a whole new generation of Hawaiian language speakers. We would not be here without them. And the continuation of their legacy, of this moʻo, lies in us.

Remembering the source of our belief system and the foundation that was built for us, is an important part of nānā i ke kumu. As Genny said, “But what we are trying to teach our keiki, we couldn’t do it if we weren’t in immersion. If there is tension, then we always return back to why we’re doing it, for us. If you’re in it, then it should be a non-issue. Believing in it, in our decision, in why we put our keiki here, it helps us keep it all together.” For these families, there is no other alternative – immersion is the way that a Hawaiian foundation is reinforced in every level of their childrens’ lives.

At the core, this decision has strengthened these families’ belief systems and enabled them to articulate it and reflect on it in ways that all māku who are grappling with educational decisions in any context, can leverage strength from. Brandon and Genny’s conversation about the seduction of private schools and their resources, is a conversation that many Hawaiian families could have, whether they are in Hawaiian immersion or not. What their conclusions teach us is that holding fast to the reasons we made the decisions and believing in the richness that our educational decisions have to offer is one way that we continue down this path of restoration and transformation.

To that end, I believe this research project is just the start and points us towards critical future research directions. Kalehua also advocated for the continued re-telling of
our stories when he said, “Everybody has to know what’s going on, and it has to be loud and it has to be solid.” There are so many more stories of Hawaiian immersion mākua that need to be told that can represent the vast array of perspectives and strengths that lie within the program. We have an opportunity to provide immersion families with relevant research that they can use to sustain the decision over time, which was part of the justification of this work presented in the first chapter. Recognizing the foundational work of Kawaiʻaeʻa, Housman, & Alencastre (2007), I see the telling and preserving of these stories as a way that nānā i ke kumu can empower immersion families beyond those in this initial study.

Nānā i ke kumu can also have a broader impact if we include other stakeholders in our future research directions. Telling the moʻolelo of other members of the Hawaiian immersion community, including, but not limited to: alumni, teachers, administrators, and staff, will enable us to identify the strengths that stretch across these different role groups. Understanding the implications of Hawaiian immersion on all members of the Hawaiian immersion community will enable us to comprehensively celebrate our strengths, address our tensions, and embrace the kuleana we all have as a part of this community.

Most importantly, while research can help us to figure out ways to overcome the challenges we face, if we can embody the idea of survivance and disrupt the dominant narrative that comes from a deficit-perspective, then we can write and create moʻoolelo and research that uplifts, empowers and accentuates the strength of the program, the strength of our families, and most importantly, the strength of our keiki. Yosso (2005) and Goodyear-Ka’opua (2013) also challenge us to look beyond deficit-thinking and
create and use theories that focus on the community cultural wealth and the multiple strengths that our schools and keiki possess. I think we have written and read enough research that highlights all the challenges we face; we have an opportunity here to approach research from a different perspective, one grounded in survivance and kuleana. This work is a small contribution to this effort.

**Hihia and Hilina‘i: The Challenge and The Hopeful Promise**

While I was writing Chapter 4, I could almost see the hihia, like a loosely tangled lei, strewn across the moʻolelo. But in the end, what you can see from those discussions is that despite all of these ever-present hihia, these families are thriving, and more importantly their keiki are thriving. The transformation that is taking place within immersion families is embodied in our keiki. They are the transformation! So the tensions continue to wash over us, but if we remain steadfast and hang on tightly to the papahana of Hawaiian immersion, then we can accept that like the waves in the ocean, the hihia are not going anywhere. But we are not giving up and we are not letting go. And we also recognize that there is an outer layer that protects us - hilinaʻi is the thing that is helping us hold it all together.

Falling in line with this idea of writing our research from the perspective of survivance, I would like to transition to the hilinaʻi aspect of this framework. I do not mean to flatten or ignore these tensions because they are real, valid, and an important part of the moʻolelo. However, I think these tensions have revealed themselves quite clearly to all of us and I would rather claim this space to explore the aspirations of hilinaʻi. As I mentioned previously, hilinaʻi is not just about a spiritual belief, it is also the way that families articulate their commitment to the immersion program. Kalehua expressed their
commitment in this way, “Believe in full immersion until 5th grade and one hour a day of English …that’s it. The rules that were established, believe, braddah. That’s it. I don’t believe anything different.” The impacts of hilina‘i, have already been far reaching – other family members enrolling in Hawaiian language classes or sending their children to Hawaiian immersion schools, an elevated sense of pride in our language and culture by extended family and friends, and a forging of relationships between other immersion ‘ohana that would not have happened if not for the level of faith and belief that is required to be an immersion parent.

Many participants recognized the tensions that are present, like the pull of other schools with more resources, or the challenge of remaining in immersion when the school does not consistently reflect the ideology of Hawai‘i first, but hilina‘i is what keeps them in immersion, undeterred by these tensions. Kalehua explains, “To me, I want people to understand that this is not just a cultural decision. The impact on them is cultural, spiritual, it has to do with their identity, it has to do with their relationships with their families and communities, the responsibilities that we have and first and foremost, it’s a good education. So that decision is not a choice.” The impact of hilina‘i is a uniquely Hawaiian one – how we acknowledge the spiritual aspects of the decision making process in every aspect of our lives and not just in our decisions to send our children to immersion is an important part of this discussion. Typically, hilina‘i is something that we may talk and hear about within our own ‘ohana and close friends, but is not something that we read or write about in this context. Hilina‘i does not advocate that we should start talking openly about our spiritual beliefs; rather, it is an acknowledgement that spiritual
beliefs are an integral part of our lives as immersion parents, and that families exercise these beliefs with intentionality and purpose.

This belief in the decision and how it impacts us in our relationships with our children, each other, and our kūpuna is the greatest implication that hilina‘i has to offer. As Brandon reminds us, the decision to send our children to immersion is an inherently spiritual one and forms the foundation of our belief systems. The impact this can have on families is that it can be a source of strength as they encounter challenges and tensions along their journey as immersion parents. These families have already demonstrated the power that hilina‘i can have on their decisions.

This hilina‘i does not just have to reside in our individual families – the implications of hilina‘i can enable administrators and teachers to continue in their efforts to create an environment for our students that lives into the constructs of kuleana, mo‘o, ma ka hana ka ‘ike and nānā i ke kumu. Although not a focus of this research, we are all well aware that administrators and teachers are on the front line and often times are caught in the middle between a 100% belief that Hawaiian is enough, and policies or mandates that run counter to this belief. It is my hope that hilina‘i can impact how administrators and teachers persevere through these tensions and that we can all come together around this 100% belief. With a critical mass of believers in the program and a new generation of them, our language will live on and thrive in perpetuity.

Moreover, I believe hilina‘i could impact the state and the DOE and the ways in which they interact and treat our immersion schools. I think it is abundantly clear that the state DOE does not believe that our children can be successful in Hawaiian – forcing schools to implement Common Core Standards, high stakes tests in English rather than
Hawaiian, and evaluations that use instruments that are inappropriate and oftentimes discriminatory, all confirm that the state does not share this belief. However, they should, and while the new BOE Policies are a step in the right direction, the state need only look at Hawaiian immersion parents to see how they might use hilina‘i to guide their decision making process regarding Hawaiian immersion schools. The agenda is still: believe!

The beauty and value of the Kūpe‘e Framework as a whole, is that it does not have to just reside within the Hawaiian immersion program. These constructs of kuleana, moʻo, ma ka hana ka ʻike, and nānā i ke kumu are born out of the language and wisdom of our kūpuna and as such, can impact and be embraced by all of us in the lāhui. How we prevail in fulfilling our kuleana to our past, present and future generations, while approaching our lives in a posture of survivance is a life long endeavor that we can only undertake if we have hilinaʻi. I believe I have heard through the stories of these ‘ohana, that we have reached a moment in which we are starting to turn back towards the moʻo families aspired to when sending their children to immersion, and we have an opportunity to nānā i ke kumu and reimagine the dream and potential of Hawaiian immersion education. This shift in the tide does not make the struggle for equity in the immersion program any less important. It simply means – ma ka hana ka ʻike – there is much work to do.

Ka Panina

Kūpeʻe hunting is a fairly regular activity for our family. These experiences provide us with opportunities to teach our children not just about the ocean, but also about kuleana, sustainability, and preserving what we have for the next generation. One day, Kānekoa gifted me with a lei kūpeʻe that he had made from all of these shells we
had gathered and I understood the incredible amount of work it took for him to do this. To make a lei kūpe‘e, you have to be meticulous about finding similarly-sized shells, and put them together while also paying attention to their color and design. There are many different varieties of kūpe‘e shells, and so part of the goal in making the lei is also making sure that while there may be variations in shape and color, that the shells look somewhat the same. You then have to drill tiny holes in each shell, and weave them together facing each other, interlocking each shell and binding them all together. Kānekoa transformed this collection of individual shells into a beautiful and highly valued object and I enjoyed wearing it and being able to use it as a way to tell our story. I cherished that lei and then you know what I did with it? I gave it away.

Some of you may be shocked to read this part of the story, that I would give one of my most prized possessions away, but that is exactly what I did. I gave it to one of our most treasured friends and someone I consider to be my kua‘ana. I understood (and still do) that this object, which symbolizes the aloha that can exist between two people, also is the carrier of our collective mana and so should not be given freely and to just anyone. We thought carefully about the impact that giving this lei would have on us, our family, our relationship, and our relationship to our friends and decided that the mana and beauty of the lei had already impacted us in the way that it needed to, but it still had more work to do. Do my husband and I still long for that lei sometimes, as we reminisce about our lives? Absolutely. But I understand now that there is power in this simple, selfless act of returning and giving. This is transformation.

In the same way, I would like present this research to you, dear reader, as a lei. My hope is that I have gathered these kūpe‘e of immersion families and weaved them
into an object that is more beautiful and powerful than they would be as individuals.

These families are not all uniform in thought and they have variations, but they are united in purpose, much like the varied shells that are bounded together on a single lei. This lei, with all of its beauty and imperfections, similarities and variations, knots and string, still has kuleana to fulfill. It should be worn, re-strung, re-imagined, and transformed, so that it is useful and brings meaning and beauty to you. The stories of these immersion families and the lessons we learn from them do not belong to me and are for all of us – let this lei embrace you as it has embraced us. As Kimura (n.d.) and this research has taught us, there is much more work to be done, but it is possible if we embrace our kuleana together as a lāhui – i mua a loaʻa ka lei o ka lanakila!
‘ŌLELO KŌKUA

Glossary of Terms

All terms in this glossary are listed alphabetically (except for words starting with ‘okina), following the style and definitions of Pukui & Elbert (1986) and/or Pukui (1983). The definitions provided here are to aid readers unfamiliar with Hawaiian in understanding the text, but may not represent all of the multiple meanings of these words. They are simply one perspective of these words and concepts and how they could be applied to this specific research project.

A

ae‘o – Hawaiian stilt bird

‘āina – land, earth

ahupua‘a – land division usually extending from mountains to sea

akua – gods, God

ali‘i – chiefs, ruler, monarch

‘anakala – uncle

‘a‘ole – no, never

‘aumākua – personal or family gods or ancestors

‘auwai – ditch, canal

E

e kala mai – excuse me

ea – sovereignty, independence, life

H

ha‘awina – lesson, revelation
Hāloa – son of Wākea, kalo

haumāna - student

He ui, he nīnau… - beginning line of the chant, Ka Wai a Kāne

He wai puna, he wai e inu… - ending line of the chant, Ka Wai a Kāne

hilinaʻi – to believe, trust

Hina and Kū – a goddess and god in Hawaiian tradition

hōʻailona – sign, signal, omen, portent

hoʻi – to go or come back

hoʻokō – to fulfill

hopohopo – uncertainty, doubt, fearful

hui – alliance, group, organization

huli kua – to turn one’s back

I

ʻike – knowledge, awareness, to see, know feel, recognize

ʻike kūpuna – knowledge of our ancestors

iʻo – flesh, meat, essence

ʻiole – rat

K

Kaʻala – highest mountain range on Oʻahu, located in Waiʻanae

kahawai – stream, river

kākoʻo – to uphold, support,

Kalākaua – the last reigning king of the kingdom of Hawaiʻi, from 1874-1891

kalo - taro
kānaka, kānaka maoli, kānaka ‘ōiwi – person, Hawaiian

Kāne and Kanaloa – two major Hawaiian gods

keiki – child, offspring, descendent

kini akua – the countless spirits and gods

kīpuka – variation or change in form, as an oasis within a lava bed where there may be vegetation

Koʻolau – windward sides of the Hawaiian islands

kuaʻana – older sibling of the same gender

kuʻi kalo – to pound taro

kula kaiapuni – Hawaiian medium school

kuleana – right, privilege, responsibility, small piece of land within an ahupua‘a

kumu hula (p. 51) – hula teacher

kūpuna – grandparent, ancestor, any relative of the grandparents’ generation

L

lā puka – graduation day

lāhui – nation, people

lei – garland, wreath

leo makua – parent voice

loʻi – irrigated terrace, especially for taro

loko iʻa – fishpond

M

ma ka hana ka ʻike – in doing, one understands

ma kai – at the ocean
ma uka – at the uplands
mahalo – gratitude
maha‘oi – rude, presumptuous
maiau – tidy, meticulous
mākaukau – ready, prepared
makawai – small waterways through banks of taro patches
makua – parent, any relative of the parents’ generation, any one who cares for and
makuahine - mother
makuakāne - father
mālama – care for, protect, preserve
mana – supernatural power, spiritual
mānaleo – native speaker of Hawaiian
mana‘o – thought, belief, opinion
mele – song, chant
moku – land district
mo‘olelo – story, history, tradition
mo‘opuna – grandchild
muli – youngest child

N
na‘au – guts, mind, heart
nānā ka maka, ho‘olohe ka pepeiao, pa‘a ka waha, hana me ka lima – observe with the
eyes, listen with the ears, secure the mouth, and then do the work. Thus one learns.

O

179
ʻohana – family, relative, related

ʻōiwi – native

ʻōlelo – language, speak

ʻōlelo Hawai‘i – Hawaiian language

ʻōlelo makuahine – mother tongue

ʻōlelo noʻeau – proverb, wise saying

oli – chant

one hānau – birth sands

ʻono – delicious, tasty

ʻoʻopu – general name for certain species of Hawaiian fish that are able to live in salt or fresh water

ʻopae – general name for shrimp

P

pa‘a – solid, steadfast, tight

panina – closing

papahana – program, policy

pehea ko ‘oluia mana‘o? – what do you (2) think?

pilina – relationship, connection

poi – kalo pounded and thinned with water

pono – goodness, well-being, benefit

poʻowai – water source

puʻepuʻe – hill

puʻuhonua – place of refuge and safety
W

wa’a - canoe

wailele - waterfall

wehena – opening

T

tūtū – grandparent

tūtū käne – grandfather

tutu käne kualua – great great grandfather

tūtū wahine kuakahi – great grandmother
REFERENCES


*Atlantis*, 29(2), 1.


*Educational Psychologist*, 28(2), 117.


Mai haalele i ka olelo makuahine. (1907, March 11). *Kuokoa Home Rula*.


doi:10.1080/1361332052000341006

Zhang, H. (Charlie), & Cowen, D. J. (2009). Mapping Academic Achievement and
Public School Choice Under the No Child Left Behind Legislation. *Southeastern