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NATIVE AMERICAN LANGUAGE IMMERSION

INNOVATIVE NATIVE EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES

BY

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WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY RICHARD LITTLEBEAR

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Native American Language Immersion:

Innovative Native Education for Children & Families

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INTRODUCTION

BY DR. RICHARD LITTLEBEAR

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Prejudice is hurtful, self-identity is good, and extinction means forever. This is why you need to read this report.

This study is for people who want Native American languages to not only survive, but also prosper and be so strengthened that they remain relevant and conversationally useful indefinitely. Saving and further strengthening our Native languages is the very same as saving our own core cultural beings while helping instill a long-neglected sense of pride and self-worth in our peoples.

I suspect the readership of this report will be limited. That's too bad. But, on the other hand, I also know it will be of tremendous value to those people who teach, strive to speak, or otherwise seek to acquire their Native languages, mostly as a "second language" now, coming behind their years of learning English. Those folks need to have as much information as possible about their languages, the conditions of those languages, and the resources that are available for saving and strengthening them. This study provides that information with a wealth of research on Native American language immersion programs and the remarkable benefits that derive from them.

Research on the pedagogical applications of Native American languages is scarce; research on acquiring them as second languages is equally rare. Possibly this is because most everyone thought or assumed our languages were going to die anyhow – extinction! Thus, all that was done was to classify, sort and assign them to a language stock and then sit back and prognosticate about just how long it might take for them to finally croak and disappear from the "English" landscape. The cavalrymen, ethnologists, missionaries, anthropologists and linguists who were the first to write Native American languages had their own reasons for doing so, but often they wrote them without any thought whatsoever about saving them, let alone trying to strengthen them.

Worse, the U.S. government did its best to, first, try to kill the people who spoke these languages. When that didn't succeed, it went about, through government dicta, systematically killing the languages themselves and the cultures those languages promoted.

I make these comments simply because of the comprehensiveness and quality of the research contained this report that illustrates the benefits of retaining these languages – increased self-esteem, higher Native student retention and educational attainment, and even the preservation of Native worldviews that are urgently needed as rudders in many of today's complex social situations.

Now, I want to make more comments on why our languages need to be strengthened and why this report is so important.

Ever since 1492, we Native Americans have labored under many stereotypes and misconceptions. One of the leading misconceptions concerned our languages, especially the

thought that Native Americans were all one people who spoke one common language. Beyond that, we were called wild, savage, pagan, heathen, dirty, drunken, uncivilized, ignorant, barbaric and animalistic, as well as "spiritual," "in harmony with nature" and other words or phrases reflecting contemporary prejudices. Each of these adjectives was applied according to how much land we had lost, or "ceded" as stealing land was called then, or how many of us were left. The more land we had ceded, or the fewer there were of us, or the farther away we were from "white" towns, the softer the epithet. The Europeans called us noble, notably Rousseau who labeled us with the oxymoronic appellation of "noble savages." So, we Native Americans have lived with these various misconceptions for a long time. It looks like we're going to live with them for the foreseeable future, too. The non-Native Americans are not going to relinquish them, primarily because some of them have found these stereotypes to be comforting and because they eliminate the dreadful need to think.

I write about the prevalence of these stereotypes because they are at the heart of why we need to strengthen our languages so they remain bulwarks to the prejudicial "slings and arrows" that are often flung at us. Knowing one's language – being able to speak it – situates one firmly in a given identity, for good or bad, but mostly for good.

Dealing with stereotypes is a daily occurrence here in America for Native Americans. I'm not overstating, nor am I venting because of any long festering hurt, nor am I being overly sensitive. I'm just stating a Native American reality. How a Native American reacts to stereotypical statements is often rooted in that really intangible concept known as a positive self-image. Knowing our Native American languages goes a long way toward creating that positive self-image, and when one has that, it is so much easier to deal with those slings and arrows and get about the business of life. However, I am realist enough to know that just being able to speak our languages isn't going to solve all our problems. It won't dissolve all the prejudice, either, of course, or absolve us Native Americans of doing the best parenting jobs we possibly can.

We still have great responsibilities to the youngsters of today, to the elders who are still with us today, to those who are yet journeying toward us and, especially, to those elders who have journeyed on. This present generation of fluent speakers needs to honor all the preceding generations of speakers of their languages by strengthening those languages so that they remain viable beyond the seventh generation. The really sad aspect is that if we do nothing to save our languages, we are depriving those generations who follow us of the privilege and joy of speaking our languages and of having their own true identities that come with them.

This report on language immersion is timely and relevant. It presents Native American language-immersion practices and examples for teachers of those languages. Because of the extent of language loss among many of our tribes – the family unit is rarely even teaching Native languages anymore – our languages are slowly but inevitably becoming dusty, arcane academic subjects. They are becoming "history." For that reason, the research here is extremely helpful to potential teachers of our languages. I hope it will pique their interest so they will become even more actively involved in this effort.

Our languages mean much. They encompass whole linguistic solar systems of

spiritual expression, whole galaxies that express universal human values like love, generosity and belonging, and whole universes of references that enable us to cope with an ever-changing world. Because our elders are moving on, it is up to us to help strengthen our languages. When one elder journeys to the spirit world, a whole Smithsonian Institution's worth of information goes with him or her. We have to retain that information in our languages, and that is why language immersion is so vitally important.

Native American Language Immersion:

Innovative Native Education for Children & Families

i. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Native American[1] language immersion schools and projects are the focus of this study. The W. K. Kellogg Foundation supported this analysis, to describe and analyze this innovative Native Education for children and families. A people's initiative, Native American language immersion encompasses educational practices and social development that lie outside the mainstream language teaching, education and socialization methods of American children. Native American language immersion programs are characterized by Native ways of knowing, learning and indigenous knowledge. Native American organizers demonstrate a profound faith in the traditional Native grandparents' role and their methods in language development, teaching and learning. Curriculum content and context rely on the rich Native American knowledge bases and their eminent scholars --- tribal elders and tribal land, resources. Language immersions activists and educators share two characteristics in common: fluency in the tribal language and an unstoppable commitment and devotion to language preservation among children and youth.

Native language immersion schools have remarkable benefits: students show impressive educational achievement, participants demonstrate considerable language knowledge gains in relatively short periods of time, programs contribute significantly to family strength, and college students---adult learners are retained as a positive correlate with language and culture learning. Each of these potentials have importance for tribes, agencies and organizers (both Native and non-Native) who interact or hope to interact positively and significantly with Native Americans in areas of educational and community development. Creativity and unique qualities characterize the language immersion approaches, and are especially reflective of the tribes and their language.

ii. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Native American Language Immersion, Recent Development. Native American Language Immersion is a recent phenomenon in Indigenous tribal communities in the United States. Fifty Native groups are currently engaged in language immersion; planning and operation. These Native language teaching and learning efforts include year-round schools, summer and seasonal camps, and weekend retreats and seminars. The schools, camps and programs rely exclusively on the tribal language as the teaching and learning medium. The Navajo community school of Rough Rock, Arizona, has successfully provided

[1]Author Janine Pease-Pretty On Top uses the term Native American and American Indian interchangeably, to refer to the Indigenous people of North America (The United States and Canada). The term Indigenous is used to refer to the Native populations of countries around the world. The Maori of New Zealand and the Native Hawaiians of the State of Hawaii are examples of Indigenous peoples.

their children language immersion for over twenty years. Native family groups and elders have organized Native American language immersion schools among the Blackfeet, Ojibway and the Assiniboine/Sioux people. Summer and seasonal camps and training seminars have built language understanding for participants of all ages for Northern Cheyenne, Ojibway and Crow children. Language immersion pre-schools currently serve several hundred children from the Ojibway, Cree, Assiniboine and Ute nations. Tribal language commissions and cultural authorities have mandated cultural and language learning, that includes leadership training, language teaching and certification. Master/apprenticeship relationships have developed for culture and language learning among the Salish Kootenai of Montana Northern Cheyenne of Montana, and the Three Affiliated Tribes of North Dakota, the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara. For indigenous people, these Native American language immersion activities hold great promise in the areas of education, community, family, and youth development.

Compelling Reasons for Language Immersion. Native language educators and activists have taken up the difficult and urgent work of Native language preservation with devotion and commitment. **First**, there are those who recognize the serious rate of language loss and have made a lifetime commitment to tribal language restoration, for the vitality of the tribal nation and its future. **Second**, Native American children and youth have exhibited stagnant educational achievement (among the poorest achievement of all American ethnic groups). Native language immersion has demonstrated remarkable promise in participants' educational achievement. A **third** source of motivation to Native language immersion is the greater cultural and language preservation or revitalization effort that strengthens and rebuilds the Native community. **Fourth**, culture and language teaching and participation positively correlate with Native student retention rates. **Fifth**, Native leaders foresee a world in urgent need of Native perspectives or world-view in areas including child-rearing, natural resources management and family and community development. **Finally,** there are a few activists who are motivated to this work by its political potential to allay the centuries old history of injury and subjugation of Native people. This report analyzes these factors from literature and data. Special emphasis has been given to interviews with language immersion practitioners.

Key Factors Motivating Native language immersion

1. Severe losses in Native language fluency: 155 of the indigenous languages are still being spoken in the United States, in North America and 135 of these are spoken only by elders; many of the 20 remaining languages, while still viable, will soon be fighting to survive.[2]

[2]Crawford, James. "Endangered Native American Languages: What Is to Be Done, and Why?" National Clearinghouse on Bilingual Education: Washington, D.C. 1994. Pp 1.

2. Language immersion positively impacts educational achievement. [3] *Nationally, students who took foreign languages (for four years) scored statistically higher on standardized tests including the SAT.*[4]

3. The greater preservation and revitalization of culture and language is connected to the greater Native community: language loss happens to the dispossessed and disempowered, people who most need their cultural resources to literally survive.[5]

4. Native culture and language teaching and learning positively affects tribal college student retention: five tribal colleges studied student retention rates with various factors measured for retention impact, and culture and language teaching and experiences positively correlate with student retention toward graduation.[6]

5. Native leaders identify language immersion as a strategic counter to the devastating effects of American colonization of Native people: learning the tribal language is a part of the "tough struggle to maintain the integrity of our way of life."[7]

Native Language for Communication. Native language immersion is a practice or methodology of language learning that concentrates on communication, exclusively in the Native language. Total Physical Response, TPR, is the primary methodology for the Native language immersion classrooms, camps and projects. Virtually all of the Native language immersion activities are carried out in the context of the tribal or indigenous culture. Many immersion schools are built and furnished after "gramma's home" and pattern their methods from Native grandparents ways of knowing and learning. The teachers, educators and activists have diverse backgrounds; by profession/vocation, they are teachers, bus drivers, retired BIA administrators, Head Start teachers, ranchers and more. What these educators and activists have in common is a driving, even compelling commitment to language learning and a well-spring of enthusiasm for their students' and participants' potential for speaking....

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[3]McCarty, Teresa L. "Language, Literacy and the Image of the Child in American Indian Classrooms." Language Arts 70. 1993. Pp. 187.

[4]Marcos, Kathleen. Parent Brochure. Why, How, and When Should My Child Learn a Second Language. ERIC Educational Resources Center: Rockville, MD. May 2001.

[5]Op cit. Crawford. 1994. Pp. 7.

[6]Heavyrunner, Iris. Family Based Education Model: A Report of the Native American Higher Education Initiative of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. W. K. Kellogg Foundation: Battlecreek, MI. March 2001. Pp. 5.

[7]Mistaken Chief, Duane, Sr. "Using Blackfoot Language to Rediscover Who We Are." Tribal College Journal of American Indian Higher Education. Vol. XI, No. 3. 1999. Pp 26-28.

just speaking ...communicating in the tribal language. The students are toddlers and children, middle and high school students, young adults, parents of young children, adults and elders. Where immersion is happening, all ages of Native people are pursuing the goal of speaking their Native language.

Tribal Colleges and Universities. The tribal colleges and universities of this country play a strong, leading role in Native language immersion. These tribal colleges engage their entire community, through college student development, community based projects, school-aged educational services and early childhood education opportunities. The language immersion approaches are especially experiential, and have placed the tribal elders, scholars, at the very center of these activities. Through the leadership of the tribal colleges, and in some cases, tribal schools and Indian owned non-profit organizations, the cultural experts and Native language speakers provide a Native learning experience. Tribal college students hold a strategic place among the generations of Native people. They are parents of young children, children of elder parents and grandparents, and persons of influence in their communities. Language and culture are at the heart of the TCU's mission, and now, the language immersion activities are moving this mission forward.[8]

Language Immersion, A Challenge. The Native language immersion activities have become a significant part of Native life in over **fifty locations across the nation**. For these communities, educators and activists have built language learning experiences that are unprecedented in their positive impact on education, individual and family strengthening, intergenerational partnerships and tribal health and wellbeing. As a relatively new educational phenomenon, it is understood and supported directly by many tribes and their governments, the tribal colleges and universities, and Native-based non-profit organizations. While the Native language immersion is young and part of a new genre of culture, language and educational activity in Indian country, it is not yet a movement. The educators and activists have developed custom designed strategies to deliver Native language immersion. The work of language immersion is demanding and long-term, therefore not "trendy." It's just too hard to do. Activists collaborate locally and occasionally between projects. The commitment required of organizers is immense and time-consuming. The implementation demands creativity, expertise, courage and fortitude. These conditions preclude a "get on the band wagon" potential. Native language immersion is difficult work; work fit only for those few whose devotion to the tribal language (for whatever reason) is unstoppable. This work requires knowing the tribal language and perseverance beyond all measure.

Funding Issues. The **support** for language immersion is problematic. Language immersion costs money, money that most tribal groups can hardly spare in the face of demanding issues in education, health, housing and natural resources management. Federal funds support language preservation through multiple executive branch based initiatives. Most visible is the Department of Health and Human Services, Native language preservation

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[8] Stein, Wayne. "Developmental Action for an Indigenous College." Benham and Stein (Ed.). The Renaissance of American Indian Higher Education: Capturing the Dream. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates: London. 2003. Pp. 29.

projects. Bilingual education projects in Native languages have only incidentally supported language immersion due to the 'language transition' focus. Private sector support has assisted the development of language immersion and some language immersion schools accept only private funding to avoid the regulations of public funds. Public school funding is highly regulated and therefore nearly inaccessible. The exception, the Diné and Ojibway people have managed to establish language immersion schools with public school funds. Language immersion funding is a formidable challenge, and a factor that keeps many tribes from this area of education.

Successful Indigenous Models. Native American language immersion can benefit from the models of the language resurgence among **Native Hawaiians and the Maori of New Zealand**. During the past two decades, both Native Hawaiian and Maori communities have created and implemented language immersion pre-schools, schools and colleges. Indigenous language immersion has made astounding records of educational achievement among the children and youth who participate in language immersion education. The Hawaiian and Maori populations have languished far behind the mainstream educational achievement measures of attendance and completion, until the language immersion schools. Language immersion clearly has a role in educational development for Indigenous people.

iii. PRINCIPLES OF NATIVE LANGUAGE IMMERSION

Native language immersion principles are apparent. The principles are derived from **interviews with Native American language educators/activists and observations of language immersion schools and camps.** Literature has been reviewed, authored by practitioners, Indian education scholars, and linguists. These are particularly instructive in the delineation of Native language immersion principles. The practitioner interviews have detailed the methods, strategies, planning and community support. Teacher qualities and teacher training, parental and elder involvement are delineated. All of these are critical to a Native language immersion school, camp or project that results in effective language learning and education of Native children and families. **Generally, language immersion programs "allow the child or participant to spend part or all of the day learning in the second language. Partial immersion programs operate on the same principle, but only a portion of the curriculum is presented in the second language."**[9] Here are the principles of Native American language immersion

- **Tribal nations' language authorities or commissions officially recognize the urgent and critical nature of their tribal language**, its preservation/revitalization, and its relationship to their culture and social wellbeing of the tribe. These tribes have formulated language policies that make

[9]Op cit. Marcos. 2001. Pp.2.

the tribal language the official language of the tribe or nation and establish tribal language teacher certification standards.[10]

- **Tribal community members and elders** who are fluent tribal language speakers work together to plan and initiate awareness activities and introductory language immersion projects, as a foundation for language immersion programming. Each project, program or school is uniquely designed and implemented through this careful, thoughtful and long term planning process.[11]

- The design of the Native language immersion schools/camps and programs can best be characterized as "**intensive culturally based programs**." Students learn traditional Native skills, arts and knowledge, as well as academic subject areas, taught exclusively in the medium of the Native language. Learning environments take the form of "gramma's home and rely heavily on Native knowledge bases and Native ways of knowing and learning." Camps and retreats are convened in remote traditional encampment sites on tribal lands.[12]

- **Instructors and resource people in the classroom**, schools and camps share two qualities: (1) extraordinary commitment to tribal language revitalization and (2) fluency in the tribal language. Tribal elders and cultural leaders are especially integral to the Native language immersion schools and programs, and tribal members are role models related to subject areas.[13]

- The **educators/instructors and activists** who carry out Native language immersion come from varied backgrounds. Only a few are professional linguists and teachers...most are tribal members with language fluency, from all vocational and professional backgrounds.

- Language immersion programming is **uniquely planned and implemented**. The attributes include highly interactive learning, Native traditional hands-on activities, exploration and discovery learning, intense language introduction, and parental and elders mentoring and partnerships.

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[10]Burnaby, Barbara. "Aboriginal Language Maintenance, Development and Enhancement: A Review of Literature." Cantoni, G. (Ed.) Stabilizing Indigenous Languages. Center for Excellence in Education, Northern Arizona University: Flagstaff, AZ. 1996. Pp. 3.

[11]Littlebear, Richard. President of Chief Dull Knife College and Director of the Northern Cheyenne Language Immersion Camp (1998-2001). Interview. Lame Deer, Montana. August 3, 2001. By Dr. Janine Pease-Pretty On Top. Pp.2.

[12]Wilson, William. Teacher, Lac Courte Oreille Ojibway Community College, Language Immersion Pre-School. Interview. Hayward, Wisconsin. May 11, 2001. By Dr. Janine Pease-Pretty On Top. Pp.1.

[13]Op cit. Littlebear. 2001. Pp.2.

- **Master/Apprentice** and Mentor/Mentee relationships develop language and cultural leadership. Young Native adults are in long-term learning relationships with tribal cultural elders, to carry traditional knowledge of ceremonies and traditions forward into tribal life. [14]

- **Tribal colleges and universities,** chartered by American Indian nations, are responsible for a majority of the Native language immersion programs.[15]

- A **low student/teacher ratio** of 5 or 6 students to 1 teacher promotes maximum learning impact. Native language immersion students or participants are all ages. The schools serve predominantly pre-school and K-6 children. [16]

- Native language immersion **funding varies dramatically and is problematic**. No generality can be made about sources and methods of funding or resource support. The interviews indicate difficulty in acquiring and sustaining funding.[17]

No single description fits the Native language immersion sites. The schools and programs are **a "Native people's initiative"** that relies on the millennia-old and tested Native ways of knowing and learning among the generations, and utilizes Native knowledge for content and context. Occasionally, Native language immersion educators/activists associate with one another. **Native American language immersion activity in the United States today is recent, innovative and is remarkably reflective of the respective Native identity...of the Native people**.

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[14]Boyer, Paul. "Learning Lodge Institute: Montana Colleges Empower Cultures to Save Languages." Tribal College Journal of American Indian Higher Education. Vol. XI, No. 3. 1999. Pp. 12-14.

[15]Ibid. Pp. 12.

[16]Op cit. Littlebear. 2001. Pp. 2.

[17]Kipp, Darrell. Encouragement, Guidance, Insights and Lessons for Native Language Activists Developing Their Own Language Programs. Piegan Institute with the Grotto Foundation: Saint Paul, Minnesota. 2000. Pp. 15.

A. ACHIEVEMENT, LANGUAGE LOSS AND NATIVE AMERICAN IMPERATIVES

1. National Studies: Educational Achievement and Language Knowledge

National studies on language learning and educational achievement indicate a positive correlation: the more language learning the higher the academic achievement. "Students of foreign languages score statistically higher on standardized tests conducted in English."[18] The 1992 profile of SAT and Achievement Test Takers, published by the College Entrance Examination Board reported that students who took four or more years of foreign language, scored higher on the verbal section of the tests. The Educational Resources Information Center of the U.S. Department of Education has a parent brochure on the benefits of children learning a foreign language. The brochure cites research that shows that second language instruction improves student creativity levels, overall school performance and gives students superior complex problem solving.[19]

As it pertains to **students in bilingual classrooms**, the development of mother-tongue literacy promotes a far better chance of school success. [20] The Northwest Regional Laboratory (a regional agency of the U.S. Department of Education) reported in 1990, that learning more than one language enhances cognitive development, social growth, and promotes understanding among diverse people and cultures.[21] Dr. Kenji Hakuta, nationally known language expert, testified before the National Commission on Civil Rights in 2001, that when the school values and utilizes students' Native language in the curriculum, there is increased student self-esteem, less anxiety, and greater self-efficacy.[22] National studies from both the public and private sector emphasize the positive impact of language studies on educational achievement.[23]

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[18]Op cit. Marcos. 2001. Pp. 1.

[19]Ibid. 2001. Pp. 1.

[20]McCarty, Teresa L. and Dick, Galena Sells. "Mother Tongue Literacy and Language Renewal: The Case of the Navajo." Proceedings of the 1996 World Conference on Literacy. University of Arizona: Tucson, AZ. 1996. (Literacy On-Line.) Pp. 6.

[21]Demmert, William. "Blueprints for Indian Education: Languages and Cultures." ERIC Digest, ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools: Charleston WV. August 1994. Pp. 2.

[22]Hakuta, Kenji. Testimony, United States Commission on Civil Rights. "The Education of Language Minority Students." April 13, 2001. Pp. 2.

[23]Sugarman, Julie and Howard, Liz. "Two Way Immersion Shows Promising Results: Findings of a New Study." Center for Applied Linguistics, ERIC/CLL Language Link. ERIC Clearinghouse on Language and Linguistics: Washington, D.C. September 2001. Pp. 2-3.

2. Native Language Immersion Experience and Educational Achievement

Native language immersion schools and classrooms have existed in several locations for over a decade. **Solid data from the Navajo, Blackfeet and Assiniboine immersion schools experience indicates that the language immersion students experience greater success** in school, measured by consistent improvement on local and national measures of achievement.[24] Critical educational achievement data exists from the Native Hawaiian language immersion schools in the State of Hawaii. Twenty-two Hawaiian public schools have "*Ke Kula Kaiapuni* " immersion streams and/or entire schools. In these schools, 1700 students are enrolled, and outperform the average for Native Hawaiian children in Hawaii public schools.[25] **Maori Language Immersion Schools** demonstrate astounding educational achievement. Maori student pass rates out of grade 13 (high school equivalent) have hovered between 5% and 15% for decades. Now, with Maori language immersion schools, Maori students' pass rates have soared to 75%.[26]

The language learning carries with it significant forms of **satisfaction, to the participants** themselves, their families and the elders in the Native communities whose opportunities to communicate in the Native language are expanding.[27] Youthful language speakers participate in tribal ceremonies and public events, thereby contributing vitality to their communities. **Family participation and intergenerational connections** are built for a lifetime and create positive networks that build Native communities.[28] Native American communities now have operational and meaningful language immersion programs and classrooms, even schools. With varied sources of motivation, language immersion leaders recognize the potentials and benefits of the language immersion experience.

3. Benefits of Native Language Knowledge to Native Children

The knowledge of a Native language by Native children, youth and adults has multiple and important benefits. On an individual basis, Native students develop stronger identities, knowledge of their tribal cultures and their individual role in and deep appreciation for that

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[24]Op cit. McCarty. 1996. Pp. 5-6.

[25]Aha Punana Leo. "Our Language: *e ola ka olelo* Hawaii - the Hawaiian language shall live." Web site. www.*ahapunanaleo*.org/HTML/OL.htm. Pp. 6-7.

[26]Pease-Pretty On Top, Janine. "Bringing Thunder." Tribal College Journal of American Indian Higher Education. Vol 14, No.1, Fall 2002. Pp. 13.

[27]Op cit. Littlebear. 2001. Pp. 2.

[28]Op cit. Kipp. 2000. Pp. 14.

culture.[29] Language immersion pre-school children have developed **intense language acquisition**, a lifetime benefit in communication.[30] For families, the tribal language knowledge holds much of what tribal members need to know about them, for it **reveals and teaches tribal philosophies**.[31] For the tribal nations, the knowledge of the tribal language is crucial to the combination of factors that **build nations**, "land, lineage, language, cultures, ... a bond born out of respect, the bond links to ancestors as well as to future generations."[32] Darrell Kipp of the Piegan Institute says "language relearning is a **journey back home**," and details the new and precious bond created between the Piegan Institute pre-school children and Blackfeet elders. The Native language clearly embodies a **way of seeing, or constructing reality**, from a perspective that evolved over many generations. Knowledge of the Native language gives tribal members a unique tool for analyzing and synthesizing the world, and incorporating the knowledge and values of the tribal nation into the world at large.[33]

4. Rates of Native Language Loss

Languages across the world are in crisis. Half of the world's languages are "moribund, spoken only by adults who no longer teach them to the next generation."[34] The **language loss among North American indigenous people is "especially acute,"** where an estimated 155 languages are still spoken, 210 if you add in the Alaskan Native languages. Of these 135 are moribund; and the U.S. Census of 1990 indicated that one-third of these have fewer than 100 speakers.[35]

Clearly, the Native American **language usage is declining rapidly** in social gatherings, ceremonies, cultural observances, and in the home. Parents are not teaching their children the Native language. "The inability of American Indians and Alaska Natives to speak their language caused many to lose understanding of who they were and what their place was in

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[29]Peacock, Thomas D. and Day, Donald R. "Teaching American Indian and Alaska Native Languages in the Schools: What Has Been Learned." ERIC Digest of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools: Charleston, WV. December 1999. Pp. 3.

[30]Op cit. Kipp. Encouragement, Guidance, Insights and Lessons for Native Language Activists Developing Their Own Language Programs. 2000. Pp. 28.

[31]Op cit. Mistaken Chief. 1999. Pp. 27.

[32]Silva, Kalena. "Revitalizing Culture and Language: Returning to the Land." Indigenous Educational Models for Contemporary Practice: In Our Mother's Voice. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates: London. 2000. Pp. 73.

[33]Op cit. Crawford. 1994. Pp. 6-7.

[34]Ibid. Pp. 1.

[35]Ibid. Pp. 1.

the universe."[36] Dr. Richard Littlebear of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe, an educator and linguist, says "The real threat is that too few tribal members appreciate how endangered it (the Northern Cheyenne language) is and have a faith that is can be revived."[37]

> *"The loss of any language comes at enormous cost to its speakers. The most serious language declines have occurred among indigenous communities in the Americas, Africa, Australia and Southeast Asia. For these communities, the problem is acute. Precisely because they are indigenous, there are no language reinforcements available elsewhere, no other motherland, where children can return to hear the heritage language spoken or see it written. For indigenous people, when a language is lost, it almost certainly cannot be retrieved as a mother tongue."[38]*
>
> *-Teresa McCarty, Diné Educator and Scholar, University of Arizona*

Native American scholars, tribal officials, educators and activists articulate the damages wrought on Native American individuals, families and communities, due to the language losses.

Language loss means the loss of linguistic as well as intellectual diversity. Every language loss causes serious damage to individual and group identity, for it destroys a sense of self-worth, limits human potential and complicates efforts to solve problems in the community.

> *"Each language is a unique tool for analyzing and synthesizing the world, incorporating the knowledge and values of a speech community. Linguistic categories (including) number, gender, case, tense, mode, voice, aspect and a host of others...are not so much discovered in experience as imposed upon it by language. Thus to lose such a tool is to "forget" a way of constructing reality, to blot out a perspective evolved over many generations." [39]*
>
> *-James Crawford, Linguist*

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[36]Op cit. Peacock and Day. 1999. Pp. 1-2.

[37]Op cit. Boyer. 2000. Pp. 13.

[38]Op cit. McCarty. 1996. Pp. 1.

[39]Op cit. Crawford. 1994. Pp. 7.

The threat of language death seldom comes to communities of wealth and privilege; rather, language death happens where people need their cultural resources for literal survival. **Language death happens to Native American people, the dispossessed and least empowered.**[40] How does language contribute to survival? Every Native language is replete with symbols of ethnic identity and it is a repository for much of their cultural heritage. The syntax and structure "embodies a way of seeing" the world.[41]

> *"Language and culture provide physical, spiritual and emotional sustenance, the strength of which depends on the riches of the soil where it grows. Land, lineage, language, cultures...a bond born out of respect, the bond links to ancestors as well as to future generations."*[42]
>
> *-Kalena Silva, Native Hawaiian Educator*
>
> *"We use the analogy that the language is our grandparents. Language relearning is a journey back home."*[43]
>
> *-Darrell Kipp, Piegan Institute of the Blackfeet Nation, Montana*
>
> *"In order for Blackfoot people to heal ourselves, we must return to who we are as Niisitapi."*[44]
>
> *-Betty Bastien, Blackfoot Educator, Blood Reserve of Alberta, Canada*

5. Native American Imperatives

The imperatives to save Native American languages are numerous and deliver that urgency with clear rationale. For Native Americans, the rate of language loss is enormous and the cost is immeasurable. Regaining Native American language vitality holds tremendous promise for Native people, for individual, familial and community strength and the people's overall wellbeing. For the entire world community, regaining Native American language vitality promises the treasure of intellectual and linguistic diversity. From the models established by the Piegan Institute K-8 schools in Montana, the Native Hawaiian Language Immersion Schools K-12, the *Ke Kula Kaiapuni*, and the Maori Language

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[40]Ibid. 1994. Pp. 7.

[41]Rubin, Daniel S. "Sm'algyax Language Renewal: Prospects and Options." Revitalizing Indigenous Languages. Northern Arizona University: Flagstaff, AZ. 1999. Pp. 1.

[42]Op cit. Silva. 2000. Pp. 73.

[43]Kipp, Darrell. "Commitment to Language-Based Education." Indigenous Educational Models for Contemporary Practice: In Our Mother's Voice. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates: London. 2000. Pp. 67.

[44]Op cit. Mistaken Chief. 1999. Pp. 27.

Immersion Schools, the *Kohanga Reo and Te Wharekura,* the impact on Native American and Indigenous education achievement implies a major imperative.

The Native American community is dramatically undereducated. Language immersion may be the most reliable approach/method and strategy for the acquisition of education. Education positively correlates with socio-economic status; the higher the education, the higher the standard of living, health, safety and just about every other index sociologists measure. American Indians are among the fastest growing and youngest ethnic groups in the United States. Altogether, American Indian people make up slightly less than 1% of the nation's population or 1.8 million American Indian people. The United States government recognizes 510 tribes; another fifty tribes are recognized only by their respective states. Nationally, American Indian people lag behind in high school completion at 61%, compared to 78% for the rest of the American groups. At the higher education level, the under-education is more pronounced: 6% of the American Indian adult cohort has completed a four year degree at the college level, while 28% of the white American adult cohort and 18% of the African American adult cohort has the college degree.

B. NATIVE LANGUAGE IMMERSION, THE PEOPLE'S DESIGN

Overview. Native Language Immersion Projects. The Native American language immersion activities now number approximately fifty sites. This count comes from correspondence and language immersion educators/activists interviews. The Piegan Institute convened Native language immersion educators and activists (2000 and 2001) attended by representatives from eight sites. The Learning Lodge Institute (a project of Montana's seven tribal colleges) and Northern Arizona University of Flagstaff, also assembled language immersion educators and activists. The Indiana University published language revitalization studies authored by tribal language preservation site organizers and teachers. The Tribal College Journal devoted an entire issue to language preservation and immersion projects and programs in the tribal colleges and universities. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has a division of the Administration for Native Americans, the "Native Language Projects." From these sources, it is estimated that active Native language immersion sites (schools, camps, and retreats) number fifty. This is a partial list of schools and projects:

Native American Language Immersion in 2003

- Akwesasne Freedom School, Mohawk Nation (New York)[45]
- Anishnaabe We Young of Cass Lake Language Program (Minnesota)

- Assiniboine and Nakoda Language Kindergarten at Brockton Public Schools (Montana)
- Bay Mills Community College Language Immersion Camp for Student Teachers (Michigan)
- Chief Dull Knife College, Northern Cheyenne Language Immersion Camp (Montana)
- Comanche Language and Cultural Preservation Immersion Program, Comanche Nation (Oklahoma)
- Lac Courte Orielles Ojibway Language Immersion School (Wisconsin)
- Piegan Institute - Blackfeet Language Immersion Schools (Montana)
- Rough Rock Community School of Rough Rock (Diné Nation of Arizona)
- Salish Kootenai College Cultural Leadership Project (Montana)
- Southern Ute Pre-School of Ignacio (Utah)
- Three Affiliated Tribes of North Dakota, Language Apprenticeship Project (North Dakota).

1. Immersion Schools

Overview. Native language immersion schools represent a significant development in tribal language revitalization, cultural preservation, and educational advancement.

Native Language Immersion Schools Methods	
♦ holistic learning	♦ field based learning
♦ elders as primary learning resource	♦ parent's partnerships
♦ tribal language as medium of teaching and learning	♦ Grandmother's Home as the learning environment
♦ Native oral literature, history, knowledge as content	♦ discovery and experiential learning

[45] Akwasasne Freedom School. http://www.potsdam.edu/EDUC/Akwasasne/AFS.html. Kanienkahaka Territory of Akwasasne.

♦ Native role models that present subject areas	♦ cooperative, group and team learning
♦ hear, see, speak, read, write Native language	♦ culture and language rich classrooms & environments
♦ educators/activists fluent in Native language	♦ seasonal rounds, circular word charts, talking circles

Only the tribal language is used for teaching and learning in all subjects. Every school has a **unique configuration or blend of activities**. Language immersion school planning, organization and implementation requires intense commitment and effort, sustained for many years.[46] The strategies and methods used in Native language immersion schools cover a broad range and are reflective of the Native educators/activists implementing the teaching, tribal culture, its oral history and literature, and sciences.

For this study, ten language immersion schools were reviewed: Akwasasne Survival School (Mohawk of upstate New York), Piegan Institute in Browning, Montana, Lac Courte Orielles Ojibway Language Immersion Charter School (Hayward, Wisconsin), Southern Ute Language Immersion Pre-School (Ignacio, UT), Katzebue Public School (Inupiaq People of Alaska) and Brockton Public Schools Kindergarten and First Grade (Brockton, MT). Additionally, three schools instruct in a balanced format of Native language and English, two-way immersion, and serve the Diné people: the Rough Rock Community School (Rough Rock, AZ), the Rock Point School (Rock Point, AZ) and the Chinle Public School - select grades (Chinle, AZ).

Medium of Learning. The Native language immersion schools, camps and activities are a significant development that addresses language revitalization, cultural preservation and educational advancement, concurrently. Teaching and learning in all subjects is conducted only in the tribal language. [47] A holistic curriculum is used, that is interdisciplinary and without time boundaries.[48] The context and content of the curriculum is the tribal culture in its comprehensive knowledge and tradition. This includes seasonal settings in the traditional tribal lands and knowledge bases appropriate to the time of year.[49] Schools have a strict "No English Rule." Language immersion builds fluency in the same learning pattern as an infant learns a first language. The methods rely on a level of fluency that allows the children to think and speak in the Native language, without the delay of translation time. The schools must build sufficient language proficiency, particularly where the students begin school with English as their first language. Based on proficiency, the schools conduct their entire

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[46] Op cit. Kipp. 2000. Pp. 20.

[47] Op cit. Rubin. 1999. Pp. 3.

[48] Op cit. McCarty. 2000. Pp. 5.

[49] Op cit. Wilson, W. 2001. Pp. 1.

learning environment through the Native language. Generally speaking, the Native language is not a "subject" but the medium through which all subjects are instructed.[50]

Teachers. Teachers (also called instructors, educators, or activists) are tribal members who possess tribal language fluency and the personal stamina to teach and facilitate learning. The educators' common trait is an unwavering commitment to tribal language teaching and learning.[51] Tribal elders are often the focus of language learning, as they serve as teachers and through their comprehensive cultural knowledge, provide the curriculum content and context.[52] Few teachers are certified by mainstream or state standards, although there are projects that have retained teachers who are also certified in the state systems.[53] Many tribal colleges are preparing language immersion teachers, following tribally designated learning experiences; some of these students are also enrolled in a teacher education bachelor's degree program.[54] Searches for language immersion teachers may extend in to Canada or across the tribal nations, to locate fluent speakers.

Methods. While many methods are utilized in Native American language immersion, three methods have surfaced as key to the schools now in existence. First, the traditional grandparents teaching methods from Native ways of knowing and learning predominates among the schools. Second, the Montessori pre-school learning strategies are in use at the Brockton Kindergarten and First Grade in Montana, as well as in the Southern Ute Pre-School in Ignacio, Utah. Third, the "Total Physical Response," or TPR, is a methodology for language learning currently in use at the Piegan Institute and the Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Language Immersion School. These three are often combined or blended to make a unique methodology that particularly suits the teacher and students.

The **traditional grandparents** teaching methods are predominant, particularly where the tribal elders and fluent tribal members are the primary instructors. The Native ways of knowing and learning follow the household activities and traditional seasonal knowledge areas.[55] This methodology is accessible for most communities, as it consists of the ways in which Native American grandparents have taught their grandchildren, for millennia. William

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[50] Op cit. Kipp. 2000. Pp. 29-32.

[51]Op cit. Littlebear. 2001. Pp. 2.

[52]Real Bird, Lanny. "Formalization of Native Languages and Cultures Through Teaching and Learning. *Ash-ammaa-ehkuua*: Newsletter of the Learning Lodge Institute. Spring 2000, Vol. 1, No. 1. (Crow Agency, Montana). Pp. 12.

[53]Hermes, Mary Fong. Director of the Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibway Language Immersion Charter School (Wisconsin). Interview. October 19, 2001. By Janine Pease-Pretty On Top. Duluth, Minnesota. Pp. 1.

[54]Stornberger, Amy. Coordinator of the Fond Du Lac Tribal and Community College, Teacher Training Project and Ojibway Language Immersion Camp for Teachers. Interview. October 18, 2001. By Janine Pease-Pretty On Top. Cloquet, Minnesota. Pp. 2.

[55]Op cit. Wilson, W. 2001. Pp. 1.

Wilson of the Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Language Immersion preschool described this method, "we talk with the children; it is intense interaction… we take walks in the woods and all the while, we talk in Ojibwa."[56]

The **Montessori method** has been adopted by many Native language immersion preschools, in tandem with the resources to train the instructors and in partnership with a four year college or university training center tied to this pre-school method. Montessori approaches the classroom with interest islands, and follows each child's level of interest. The Native American language immersion schools that utilize Montessori as the delivery method provide the tribal knowledge base and culturally rich learning resources in the "islands of interest." The method does not pre-suppose content or context, and the tribes who have selected this have noted the similarity between this method and "gramma's way of teaching."[57] The Southern Ute language immersion pre-school is conducted with Montessori methods.

Total Physical Response is a methodology of progressive learning experiences and language acquisition levels developed with language immersion schools (a Center for TPR is located at the University of Minnesota). TPR is useful with "second language teachers, Indigenous language teachers, as it allows students to be active learners, and produces quick results...in meaningful contexts."[58] Strategies include a scaffolding technique that actively demonstrates and builds the learners' receptive language skills. LaFortune describes TPR as a methodology that affords students "the opportunity to recognize fairly sizeable vocabularies...useful for early second language acquisition."[59] Observations of the immersion schools demonstrate the creativity and effectiveness of approaches, especially the Native ways of knowing and learning, a naturally Native approach.[60] Activists and educators narrate extensive planning and direction throughout the school's existence, with a heavy reliance on a designing committee of advisors and the leadership/stamina of the language instructors.[61]

Culture and Curriculum. One practitioner describes the Native American language immersion school, "a living experience, centered on the learners with tribal grandparents."[62]

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[56]Ibid. Pp. 1.

[57]Baker-Olguin, Carol. Director of the Southern Ute Tribal Private School. Interview. August 17, 2001. By Carlene Old Elk. Ignacio, Utah. Pp. 1.

[58]Cantoni, Gina B. "Using TPR - Storytelling to Develop Fluency and Literacy in Native American Languages." Revitalizing Indigenous Language. Northern Arizona University: Flagstaff, AZ. 1999. Pp. 54.

[59]LaFortune, Richard. Native Languages as World Languages: A Vision for Assessing and Sharing Information about Native Languages across Grant-making Sectors. Grotto Foundation: Saint Paul, Minnesota. 2000. Pp. 9.

[60]Op cit. Little Bear. 2001. Pp. 2.

[61]Op cit. Rubin. 1999. Pp. 11.

[62]Op cit. Mistaken Chief. 1999. Pp. 26.

The learning experience is approached from tribal perspectives, and is highly interactive, and, like a family, is discovery oriented and deals with the student as a whole person.[63] Immersion schools' curriculum surrounds elders' and instructors' wealth of language and cultural knowledge, and provides experiences, values, protocol, spiritual and traditional philosophical teachings.[64] This combination of elders with children makes an especially powerful learning environment, as it builds significant relationships among generations, and affords cultural immersion along with language immersion. [65] Children learn their tribal language in a culturally appropriate content and context, and achieve educational objectives according to national academic standards.

Technology. The application of technology to the Native language immersion experience is a topic of great discussion and even controversy. Dr. Richard Littlebear recommended technology as an important supplement to the Native Language experience, especially for today's students and their daily interaction with television and computer assisted instruction. Littlebear said that where a tribal language is in critical condition, and the fluent speakers numbers are dwindling, technology is a significant and effective way to apply "life support" to the language learning.[67] With advancing technology, there are "unprecedented possibilities" and a basis of hope for aging traditional languages.[68] There are language immersion activists who criticize technology as a waste of precious resources, a trade-off for real time and applied teaching and learning directly with children. [69] The virtue of technology is directly related to the degree of language loss and the stamina or lack of stamina of tribal language speakers. If language loss is severe and the number of elders few, then technology may be the primary resource for Native language teaching and learning, if not the only resource.

> *"Computer learning programs are becoming common...used at home, in schools and in the workplace. The positive qualities of such programs are that they are inexpensive, can be reproduced in large numbers, are predictable, and have self-evaluation built in and are interactive."* [66]
>
> -Daniel S. Rubin

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[63] Keami, Sarah. "Advocating for a Stimulating and Language-Based Education." Benham and Stein (Ed.). Indigenous Educational Models for Contemporary Practice: In Our Mother's Voice. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates: London. 2000. Pp. 52.

[64] Op cit. Real Bird. 2001. Pp. 12.

[65] Op cit. Rubin. 1999. Pp. 10.

[66] Op cit. Rubin. 1999. Pp. 7.

[67] Op cit. Little Bear. 2001. Pp. 2.

[68] Op cit. Rubin. 1999. Pp. 1.

[69] Op cit. Kipp. (Correspondence). 2001. Pp. 1.

Fort Peck Community College (Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes of Poplar, Montana) has Assiniboine and Sioux language learning on-line. The community at-large has full access to this site for language learning.

Indiana University linguist D. Parks has provided important leadership in the development and implementation of **computer assisted language learning** with the Arikara people at White Shield Schools in North Dakota, as well as at Fort Belknap College in Montana with the Nakoda speakers, and ten additional tribal groups.[70] The Indiana University approach is particularly appropriate to the bilingual education Native language teaching environment, and the integration of language experiences into self-contained elementary classrooms. Native language projects in Canada with the Yinka Dene Institute in Saskatchewan and the Shimshian People of British Columbia utilize CD-ROM formats that link traditional stories to dictionaries, translations of a story into English, puzzles and games about the story, images and reference materials.[71] The Little Big Horn College has an on-line "Place Names Site" that provides an inventory of 800 historically and culturally significant places on the Crow Reservation in Montana. The sites are documented with images, video-clips of the place, and elders recounting the information respective to the site.[72]

Interactive language learning has been happening at Fond Du Lac Tribal and Community College in Cloquet, Minnesota, where the master teacher instructs from a central facility to remote locations in middle and high schools in five locations concurrently. The expertise of the Ojibway language scholar can be shared via distance learning technology. Technology has important significance to Native language learning and teaching, and has been successfully applied to immersion schools and camp experiences, as well as language learning within the mainstream school settings.

Native Ways of Knowing and Learning. The traditional Native American methods of learning are well known to Native people. Every tribal nation has a specific set of ways of knowing and learning. The following diagram illustrates some of these methods. For millennia, Native peoples have been self-sufficient in the training of their precious children, youth and adults. They became full and productive members of their families groups and tribal societies. Learning among the people took varied and unique forms, and brought about fine and well-educated tribal members, men and women, who possessed common and special knowledge. The diagram on page 24 illustrates Native ways of knowing and learning from the Plains cultures.

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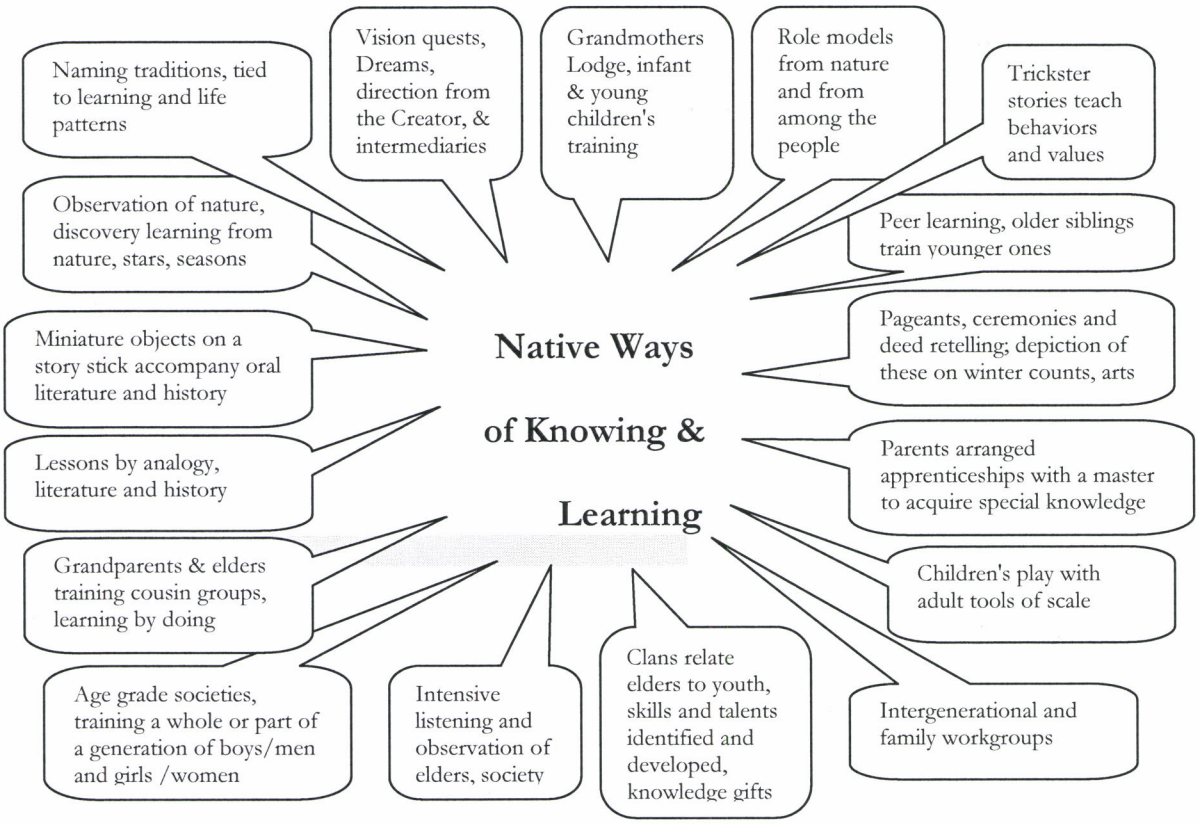
[70] Parks, D.R., Kushner, J., Hooper, W. and Flavin, F. "Documenting and Maintaining Native American Languages in the Schools: What Has Been Learned." ERIC Digest of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools: Charleston WV. December 1999. Pp. 3.

[71] Op cit. Rubin. 1999. Pp. 8.

[72] Op cit. Real Bird. 2001. Pp. 3.

NATIVE WAYS OF KNOWING AND LEARNING[73]



Literacy. The Native language immersion schools develop literacy in their students at all levels of instruction. Pre-literacy skills are important in the pre-schools. Teresa McCarty, Navajo language and education scholar, writes about the Navajo immersion schools, "we need to see Navajo literacy in terms of social context...an affirmation and expression of indigenous identity and validation of community held knowledge."[74] Literacy in the Native language is powerful in that it affects cultural learning across eras, from knowledge of history, literature and science in tribal times past, with children in today's classrooms.[75]

Literature and Artistry. Native language immersion schools are involved with the whole culture, and have delved into language learning through the music and artistry of the

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[73] Pease-Pretty On Top, Janine. "Native Ways of Knowing and Learning." An unpublished manuscript, presented at the Crow Education Summit, Crow Agency, Montana. September 2000.

[74] Op cit. McCarty 2000. Pp. 6.

[75] Bielenberg, Brian. "Indigenous Language Codification: Cultural Effects." Revitalizing Indigenous Languages. Northern Arizona University: Flagstaff, AZ. 1999. Pp. 6.

tribe.[76] "Oral literature as curriculum...belongs to a real world setting that is natural, traditional and imbued with its own set of meanings and ways of seeing."[77] McCarty recounts the storytelling, drama and arts that are learned through student participation with elder instructors in the Diné dwelling, during summertime literature camps.[78] The place names site at Little Big Horn College associates stories, histories and songs with the historical and cultural places through an interactive on-line database. Lodge Grass School on the Crow Reservation in Montana sponsored a battle reenactment, a battle pivotal to the destiny of the Crow People. Crow children in the reenactment designed and constructed era based regalia and an encampment. They retold the circumstance leading up to the battle, and recounted war deeds. Together with elders, they scripted the narrative, and interpreted the value and meaning of the battle. Warriors' leadership profiles were written in classes, and the songs of war, lullabies and travel were sung.[79]

Parent and Community Involvement. Broad-based community and tribal involvement is paramount to the planning and implementation of Native American language immersion schools. The public schools require considerable formal and official community involvement and policy development on behalf of the school boards and tribal governmental authorities. The private schools have developed through non-profit corporate status, and have entailed extensive legal, cultural and financial structures. They have relied on long-term and solid community involvement and support. Parents participate in formal partnerships with the Native American language immersion schools. Often, parents are required to enroll in summer language immersion camps, to attend weekend language seminars, and participate in school activities as an extended family unit. Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibway Immersion School has parent homework via audio and videotapes, to accompany student homework.[80] The Piegan Institute requires tuition payments from parents, and parental loyalty to the principles of Blackfeet language learning...no English anywhere in the school, respect for elders, and more.[81]

> *"You can demonstrate your love for them (the children) by protecting and shielding the language in a different way. You can begin to embrace it, to use it, to foster it, to renew it, to teach it to your daughters, to teach it to your sons."*
>
> *- Darrell Kipp, Piegan Institute of Browning, Montana*

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[76] Op cit. Boyer. 2000. Pp. 14.

[77] Op cit. Rubin. 1999. Pp. 4-5.

[78] Op cit. McCarty. 2000. Pp. 5.

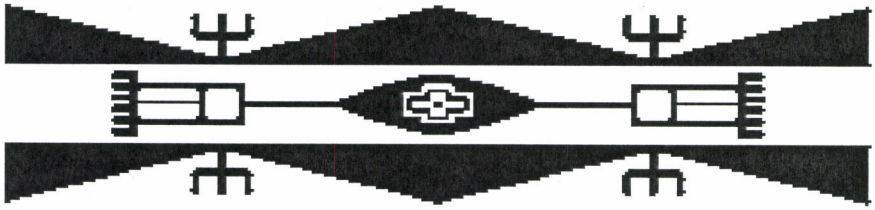
[79] Op cit. Real Bird. 2001. Pp. 21.

[80] Op cit. Hermes. 2001. Pp. 2.

Quite literally, the Native American language immersion schools rely on the teamwork, cooperation and commitment of elders, students, educators, parents and community members.[82] The commitment to language learning is one of major proportion. Darrell Kipp likens the commitment to the literal love that tribal elders have for their own grandchildren and great-grandchildren.[83] This commitment is far beyond lip service to the principle of language learning. It means that tribal members must confront any issues attached to the language, and step up to actually "doing" language teaching and learning. Northern Cheyenne language scholar Richard Littlebear, president of Chief Dull Knife College, states, "the struggle in teaching and learning the tribal language is not with the children, it is with the adults. The adults have personal, often painful issues with their histories and experiences with formal education and the Native language."[84]

Among the most difficult issues for tribal adults are those that connect Native language knowledge with negative school experiences. American Indian educational history is replete with negative associations. These associations have injured generations of American Indian people and promoted language loss. Community commitment and cooperation must move beyond the impact of these issues, and get to the first hand work of language teaching AND education; a new complex....one of promise. In a recent keynote speech, Darrell Kipp of the Piegan Institute observed that some tribal members are actually obstructionists. To them, he says: "If you can't help, then please, just get out of the way."

Funding and Support for Immersion Schools. The Native American language immersion schools are funded in unique and dramatically different ways. For all of them, the challenge of respectable funding has been, is and will be a challenge. How are they funded?



On the following page is a chart that summarizes the funding sources for language immersion schools.

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[81] Op cit. Kipp. 2000. Pp. 15.

[82] Op cit. Rubin. 1999. Pp. 1.

[83] Op cit. Kipp. 2000. Pp. 7.

[84] Op cit. Littlebear. 2001. Pp. 1.

Native American Language Immersion School, Funding Overview	
School	**Funding Sources**
Akwasasne Language Immersion School[85]	Unknown
Brockton Public Schools, Kindergarten and First Grade, Brockton MT	Public School Funding, Planning and Initial 2 Years - Administration for Native Americans (HHS)
Chinle Public Schools, (two-way immersion classrooms)	Public School Funding, Chinle Public Schools, Bilingual Education - U.S. Department of Education
Kotzebu Public School, Alaska	Public School Funding, Bilingual Education – USDE[86]
Lac Courte Oreille Ojibway Language Immersion School, Hayward, WI	Public School Funding, Hayward Public Schools & U.S. Department of Education Charter Schools support
Piegan Institute, Browning MT	Foundation and Corporate support, Tuition from parents[87]
Rock Point School, Rock Point AZ (two-way immersion)	Public School Funding, Bilingual Education - USDE
Rough Rock Community School, Rough Rock AZ (two-way immersion)	Rough Rock Public School Support, Bilingual Education - U.S. Department of Education[88]
Southern Ute Language Immersion Pre-School, Ignacio UT	Southern Ute Tribal Council Grant for 5 Years[89]

The federal sources of support are categorical: the **Bilingual Education for School Aged Children (part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act) and the Native Languages Program of the Administration for Native Americans** (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services). The U.S. Department of Education has bilingual education funding for language minority schools. Since the mid 1970's, this program has provided approximately 35 grants annually to schools serving American Indian children. From inception, the bilingual education projects addressed Native language capacities in children, toward a language minority student population. Program formats and regulations have a bias toward Hispanic serving schools. In recent years, the program supports primarily "transition," project activities. Schools start language minority children in their primary language (Spanish or Native language) and gradually build proficiency in English, the second

[85] Op cit. Hermes. 2001. Pp. 2.

[86] "Inupiaq Immersion School of Kotzebue, Alaska: A Presentation to the National Indian Education Association Conference." Presented at the National Indian Education Association in Billings, Montana in October 2001.

[87] Op cit. Kipp. 2000. Pp. 7.

[88] Howard, Elizabeth R. and Sugarman, Julie. "Two Way Immersion Programs: Features and Statistics." Center for Applied Linguistics. ERIC Clearinghouse for Languages and Linguistics: Washington, D.C. EDO-FL-01-01. March 2001. Pp. 1.

[89] Op cit. Baker-Olguin. 2001. Pp. 1.

language. The full transition to English as a medium of instruction is required to take place by the fifth grade. Bilingual education as a transition program to English creates several dilemmas for tribal language immersion educators and activists. First, most tribal languages are the second languages for the Native school children. Second, the transition model is counter to objectives of tribal language acquisition through language immersion. Third, language immersion uses the Native language as the medium of education, hardly a "fit" for bilingual education.[90]

The Department of Health and Human Services, **Administration for Native Americans**, provides discretionary support for Native language revitalization projects. ANA Projects follow a sequence: an assessment of fluency, selection of language intervention and revitalization methods (a relatively narrow number of methods acceptable), a planning year and two years implementation of revitalization activities.[91] Several ANA projects are Native American language immersion schools and camps. The ANA two-year operational grants are important start-up funds. Sustaining projects beyond that term is a challenge to grantees. The ANA is "in the unenviable position and some would say indefensible position of declining the majority of the increasing number of incoming grant proposals."[92] The agency has important anecdotal information to share about project successes. And, while ANA grants have supported implementation, it can not be counted on for the long-term, sustained support needed by Native American language immersion camps and schools.

Several Native language immersion schools are **public schools**. School boards, administrators, teachers and parents have made a major decision to depart from mainstream instructional methods and strategies, and make a commitment to establish instruction in the tribal language. For these few districts, operational resources are available, but typically, the tax base that contributes funds to the school operations (beyond state foundation support) is slim to none, since a majority of Indian lands are non-taxable. Little or no start-up costs can be found. Continued support rests on student achievement based on mainstream standards established by the respective state and the locally elected school board.

The new **charter school** structure is the format of school organization for the Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibway Language Immersion School. A federal initiative, the charter grant process is competitive. The charter provides a year of support for planning. Start-up support for parent and community interaction, supplies and learning resources is available. But, start-up costs exclude the costs of building remodeling or acquisition. Operational funds are granted for a term of 3 to 5 years. The local school board must accept the concept and may place requirements on the charter school. At LCO Language Immersion School,

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[90] Op cit. LaFortune. 2000. Pp. 18.

[91] Baker-Big Back, Clarice. Three Affiliated Tribes of North Dakota, Language Immersion Camp, Newtown, North Dakota. Interview. August 8, 2001. By Janine Pease-Pretty On Top. Pp. 1.

[92] Op cit. LaFortune. 2000. Pp. 17.

some of these conditions are: the right to non-renewal at strategic points during the five year period and no tax-based district operational funds sharing. Public funds for schools are obligated to the "routine" school operations and few school districts are willing, or, for that matter, able to share their operational resources.[93]

The school **charter is an altogether new educational technology, and** federal charters have become available only in the past few years. Nationally there are 800 charter schools with over 100,000 students, total. While in their inception and creation, they are highly creative and free from many of the mainstream school restrictions, the charter schools have a window of 3 - 5 years to achieve success, or experience charter revocation.[94] The Lac Courte Orielles Ojibway Charter School director learned of the charter process through assisting a colleague who organized a charter magnet school for American Indian cultural learning in Minnesota. 70% of the charter schools are located in six states: Arizona, California, Colorado, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota and North Carolina. Clearly, this new avenue for school funding has potential importance for Native communities and school support.

Private sector funding has been essential in the Piegan Institute of Montana. Several foundations have proven long-term partners through their support for the Blackfeet language immersion concept. Darrell Kipp, Piegan Institute Development Director, cites the generous support of the Lannan Foundation, the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Grotto Foundation. But foundation support is difficult to acquire, and several factors present serious challenges for language immersion schools and projects. The factors surrounding private sector support for Native American language immersion and comprehensive language revitalization are discussed by Richard LaFortune in the Grotto Foundation publication, Native Languages as World Languages: A Vision for Assessing and Sharing Information About Native Languages Across Grant-making Sectors. These are important to enumerate, as private sector support is critical to the lifeline for Native American language immersion schools:

- Definitive information about Native American language immersion and its meaning to American Indian communities is lacking or located outside the reach of foundation decision-makers.
- Native communities have limited access to information about the private sector, and have few able grant-writers to meet the standard of foundation leadership. Native language activists have school commitments that demand time and expertise; leaving little for fund-raising. This is particularly true for activists who may be elders and traditional, and without professional certification and training in fund-raising techniques.

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[93] Op cit. Hermes. 2001. Pp. 2.

[94] Hadderman, Margaret. "Charter Schools." ERIC Digest, Number 118. ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management: Eugene, OR. 1998. Pp. 1.

- Private sector grant making is often short-term, and categorical. Short term funding places the schools in a constant "funding hunt," and makes the quest for more funds an expense that takes precious resources from the actual teaching and learning activities. The categorical nature of private sector funds requires the schools to "fit" the foundation program. Sometimes the "fit" is difficult to achieve. Is Native language immersion a part of education, culture, community or youth programming?
- Native communities have a fiscal balancing act between urgent social, educational and economic issues that press limited tribal resources. The pressure on limited resources often leaves language immersion schools far down the tribal priority lists. Further, required matching funds are hard to identify and earn or obtain, when tribes' resources are severely limited.
- Fifty of the nation's 500 federally recognized tribes have profitable casino enterprises. These 50 have funding agendas of their own, and rarely extend to the remaining 450 tribes. Misperceptions about "casino tribes" cause troubling issues for fund-raising and American Indians generally. One of the Native language immersion schools is funded by "casino" profits for a term period, the Southern Ute Preschool.
- Statistically, American Indians are less than 1% of the population of the United States. These proportionately small numbers often make American Indians invisible to nationally released educational studies. Studies do exist on educational, social and economic indices, they are not as readily available or accessible, as are studies on predominant ethnic and racial groups information.

All of these factors are complex. For the foundations, questions about American Indians, casinos, language immersion, education, culture and tribal priorities must and do arise. For the language immersion educators, questions about proposals, writing, narrowing the field to receptive organizations, and fitting into program priorities all exist. This study is a bridge for potential partners of Native American language immersion schools and projects.

LaFortune suggests that **foundations can take a critical leadership role,** to "fortify the infrastructure of Native language networks" and help create alliances between the tribal communities and interested philanthropies. He encouraged foundations to become appraised of language preservation facts, and be responsive to the Native American language preservation initiatives. But, Native communities must also play a part in the leadership, to strengthen the infrastructure of Native language networks, by communicating "the validity of Indigenous methods of and attitudes toward organizing and transmitting traditional knowledge." Tribal groups must place education and language preservation among the highest tribal priorities.[95]

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[95] Op cit. LaFortune. 2000. Pp. 33.

2. Immersion Camps

Rich Language Learning. Immersion camps are most of the Native American language immersion activities happening now in the United States. The camps represent a broad range of language learning projects that focus on tribal language learning, on a short-term and time concentrated basis. The tribal organizers select learning experiences in collaboration with tribal elders and members fluent in the language.[96] Traditional Native activities are incorporated into the camp learning assignments.[97] While most of the language immersion camps are convened in the summertime, many camps follow a cycle of activities within the seasons, for rich language learning content and context.[98] The immersion camps are especially successful in helping the students acquire "the smallest sounds of the language," as a foundation for "learning the big words."[99]

Encampments Feature Tribal Knowledge. The elders and tribal language instructors utilize the tribal oral literature, history, arts, music and knowledge for learning experiences. Among the Native language immersion camp experiences are the new relationships established between and among the students and their instructors/activists. This relationship replicates the intimate kindred relations within the Native American extended family.[100] Camp participants are all ages. The camps are offered for varied time frames, from three days to four weeks. Camps are traditional encampments, set in tribal lands, a site chosen for rich language learning potential. [101]

Language Immersion Learning Teams. Immersion camps serve American Indian student groups ranging in size from thirty to fifty participants. Student learning teams are formed: five to twelve students team up with one or two educators/language instructors. The team is structured to interact, explore, discuss, discover and experience. Some camps are designed for entire extended family units, for the learning teams.[102] The tribal colleges and universities have held numerous camps for their college students, their families, youth and teacher trainees.

Cultural Leadership. The Salish Kootenai College Cultural Leadership Project, the Chief Dull Knife College Cultural Apprenticeship Program and the Three Affiliated Tribes

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[96] Op cit. Rubin. 1999. Pp. 2.

[97] Op cit. McCarty. 1996. Pp. 5.

[98] Op cit. Rubin. 1999. Pp 5.

[99] Op cit. Littlebear. 2001. Pp. 2.

[100] Op cit. Real Bird. 2000. Pp. 21.

[101] Op cit. Boyer. 2000. Pp. 14.

[102] Op cit. Real Bird 2000. Pp. 2-3.

of North Dakota Tribal Language Mentor Project are designed for cultural leadership development and incorporate the master/apprentice concept.[103] The conduct of these projects often includes language immersion camps for children and youth as one component of a greater agenda for cultural leadership development. Section B –3 of this study is a discussion of the master/apprentice cultural leadership projects.

Maori Model. The immersion camp or retreat is a highly successful language learning approach for the Maori people of New Zealand, for youth and adults. The concept of short intense bursts of language learning in an immersion approach has promoted and developed a whole new generation of Maori speakers.[104] The weekend or whole week language learning seminars entail practical language learning, and teaches total fluency based on ten words or phrases a session. Maori adults achieve remarkable "daily language" fluency in just four weeklong seminars (24 hours a day for 7 days). The Maori call this "accelerated learning," and describe the learning as total brain involvement...movement, dancing, singing and hands-on learning; no paper, no writing. The immersion camp model plays a special role with youth and young parents with the objective of conversational fluency.[105]

An Important Place to Begin. Native American communities, endeavoring in language immersion as a broader concept, will often begin their activities with camps, weeklong or weekend language intensive retreats or seminars. This learning approach is replicable due to the relatively short timeframe, the adaptability of content and context to seasonal traditional activities, and the high rate of language acquisition. Immersion camps are also chosen by Native American language immersion planning groups as awareness and commitment building activities, that are significant in their own right, but are an important stepping stone to a greater commitment to a broader base of learning activities, such as month-long camps or language immersion schools. Further, the camp concept is accessible for reasons of cost. While cost is relative to the elaboration within the camp and number of participants, several sites have begun camps with tribal members and elders who volunteer their time, and interagency camp collaboration and sponsorship. For language acquisition, language immersion camps are viable and significant activities for Native American communities.

Immersion Camps and Native Teachers. Immersion summertime experiences occur among teacher trainees, tribal colleges and universities students and faculty, university faculty and general Native communities. At Bay Mills in Michigan, Ojibway people have convened a language teaching summer institute, for training Native language teachers for Ojibway public schools.[106] University of Minnesota-Duluth faculty and students have a two-week

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[103] Op cit. Boyer. 2000. Pp. 14.

[104] Pease-Pretty On Top, Janine. "Indigenous Higher Education Initiative: Summary of Activities in 2002." (Unpublished) American Indian Higher Education Consortium: Alexandria VA. 2002. Pp. 11.

[105] Ibid. Pp. 13.

[106] Dale, Jennifer. "Rekindling the *Anishnabe* Language Fires at Bay Mills." Tribal College Journal of American Indian Higher Education. Vol. XI, No. 3. Pp. 8-10.

language immersion learning opportunity with the university's Ojibway language faculty member.[107] Fond du Lac Ojibway Tribal and Community College teacher trainees (of Cloquet, MN) attend a two-week summer language institute as part of their requirements for a bachelor's degree in teacher education.[108]

Family and Community. Students and community members at Little Priest Tribal and Community College in Nebraska hold a three-week summertime Omaha language immersion camp for entire family groups. The camp is combined with six-weekends immersion experiences (adults on Saturdays and the whole family with children on Sundays).[109] There are perhaps as many as twenty immersion summer camps and experiences existing in Indian Country today, whose efforts have been sustained for two or more years. The summer camps and experiences often serve multiple purposes: first, for language learning; second, for cultural learning; and third, for the broad-based community understanding of language immersion and its viability for the long-term. Summer sessions require a limited time frame and a fairly finite resource base.

3. Mentoring/Apprenticeships

Masters and Mentors. Three sites are particularly designed for the development of language and cultural leaders. The concept of cultural leadership comes from the Native tradition of the cultural specialist. Many tribes have authorized cultural commissions and tribal colleges and universities have appointed eminent scholars in tribal studies. These designated commissioners and scholars agree to become masters or mentors and arrange apprenticeships. Together, the "mentor" or "master" and apprentices organize their language and cultural learning, over a period of years. Along side the master, the apprentices acquire the tribal language, arts, songs, ceremonies, history and more. The apprentices will become masters following the training period. In turn, in a cascading effect, may take apprentices of their own, in their areas of language and culture. Three tribal colleges have chosen this approach to language learning: The Chief Dull Knife College of the Northern Cheyenne of Montana, the Salish Kootenai College of the Salish Kootenai Confederated Tribes of Montana and the Three Affiliated Tribes (Mandan, Arikara and Hidatsa) of North Dakota.

The **Salish Kootenai Confederated Tribes** have selected an approach to language learning that combines a master of Salish language and culture, a cultural commissioner, with five apprentices. The apprentices are all outstanding students in the tribal colleges Salish Kootenai Studies program, and are pursuing language teaching expertise. The master and apprentices convene during the seasons of the year, and concentrate on summer learning opportunities. Over the past four years, the apprentices acquire expertise that is situated

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[107]Op cit. Hermes. 2001. Pp. 2

[108]Op cit. Stornberger. 2001. Pp. 1.

[109]News Section. Tribal College Journal of American Indian Higher Education. Vol. XI, No. 3. Pp 8-10.

within the families and tribal communities, to "cascade" their knowledge, expertise and leadership in the language and culture into and among the people, in the present and future.

The **Three Affiliated Tribes of North Dakota** have initiated a mentor/mentee project that addresses the three languages of the TAT Reservation, the Hidatsa, Mandan and Arikara languages. Each language has a **master and five apprentices**; all apprentices are enrolled half time year-round at the Fort Berthold Community College in language and culture classes. All the apprentices are achieving formal language certification through the tribal council's legislated certification process. This is a complex project, with many levels of language and cultural learning, with a cascading impact into the greater public, the schools and the tribal communities. [110]

> *"Many of the participants, facilitators, or teachers of the Native languages are elders, who bring a wealth of knowledge not just limited to the languages. Their experience provides interaction with cultural practices or experiences, values, protocol, and holistic awareness that includes spiritual and traditional teachings."*
> *-Dr. Lanny Realbird, Learning Lodge Institute Director*

Cultural Relationships. These relationships are significant and follow culturally viable and appropriate master/apprentice relationships from traditional Native ways of knowing and learning. Both projects illustrate the creative and unique Native approaches to language and culture revitalization, and their community-based principles for sustainability of tribal knowledge and expertise. Where there was one teacher or master, fully knowledgeable in the language and culture, now, with the master/apprenticeship projects, there are five specialists...eventually new masters. The potential is that each apprentice becomes a master and will arrange apprenticeships among the members of a new generation of Native people.

4. Tribal Elder's Role and Perspectives on Native Language Immersion

Elders Essential to Language Immersion. Tribal elders are essential to the life of Native language immersion schools, camps and activities. In fact, the capacity of educators and activists to offer learning environments that are rich in language and culture literally rests on the involvement, cooperation and leadership of tribal elders. Darrell Kipp of the Piegan Institute says it this way: "We use the analogy that the language is our grandparents."[111] Tribal elders play a heavy role in the development, planning and implementation of language immersion schools, camps and activities.

> *"Schools and their participants can support and safeguard the integrity of that (Native) socio-cultural environment...by fostering the sharing of language experiences between young and old, is indeed a powerful tool."*
> *-Dr. Teresa McCarty, Diné scholar, Northern Arizona University*

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[110] Op cit. Baker-Big Back. 2001. Pp. 2.

[111] Op cit. Kipp. Pp. 67.

Native American Grandparents. Navajo elders at Rough Rock Community School have tangible demonstrations of the way their lives can become the basis for school-based language and literacy learning. McCarty explains that the parents and grandparents want their children to learn the Navajo way of life, and therefore have developed a consciousness about the value of the Navajo language and culture.[112] From traditional times to the present, Native elders have always held the most critical role in Native education, as teachers, role models and mentors. Many of today's elders were directly taught by their grandparents, and had an optimal opportunity to learn first hand, the Native ways of knowing and learning as well as acquire the language and culture of their people. In this way, today's elders have direct ties, knowledge and experience that spans multiple generations: elders, their parents, their grandparents, and beyond. The elders of the 1930's and 1940's raised today's elders; they were children during the last decade of the buffalo days! Native communities have an extraordinary learning opportunity to involve elders in teaching and learning. Rich teaching methods of the traditional Native extended family engender children and learners of all ages in the language, and culturally based knowledge. This traditional Native method connects the generations.[113]

Intergenerational Learning. Native language immersion classrooms, camps and activities have structured intergenerational learning that promotes language learning, cultural participation AND builds new and life-long human relationships. Diné school Teresa McCarty recounts the value of this relationship, "schools and their participants can support and safeguard the integrity of that (Native) socio-cultural environment...by fostering the sharing of language experiences between young and old, is indeed a powerful tool."[114] Educators created the Brockton Public School kindergarten and first grade, a Nakoda language immersion school, and utilize the Montessori method of instruction, because, "it is an approach that has been around for centuries in Native culture."[115] Tribal elders provide the learning content and context for Native language learning environments, as a "living experience," they directly provide a wealth of information as well as "understanding values."[116] Elder involvement in Native language immersion camps, classrooms and activities is multi-dimensional and integral to the language learning in tribal communities.

Challenge of Native Elders Roles. The vitality of the Native language immersion effort rests heavily on the vitality of the language speakers, and most of the speakers are tribal elders. Several issues arise from this reliance on elders; these issues pose complex challenges for Native language immersion projects. First, tribal elders may have extensive

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[112] Op cit. McCarty. 2000. Pp. 5.

[113] Op cit. Pease-Pretty On Top. 2000. Pp. 1.

[114] Op cit. McCarty. 2000. Pp. 6.

[115] Op cit. Real Bird. 2001. Pp. 21.

[116] Op cit. Mistaken Chief. 1999. Pp. 26.

language and cultural knowledge, but have mixed or limited interests to share knowledge outside the confines of their own extended family or immediate community. Second, the personal circumstance of the elder may not lead to teaching, especially if the elder has already become retired. Third, many elders have health issues that limit their activity or stamina in general; camps and classrooms are often physically demanding. Finally, elders may harbor attitudes that limit positive involvement in the learning and teaching, like teasing or making fun of new language learners, or modeling resentment, sadness or anger, related to the loss of tribal language.[117] These issues occur in the language immersion planning and advisory committees, and must be addressed as they arise.

Instruction Options. What happens when there are no elders for language immersion teaching? For some of the Native language immersion schools, it has been necessary to search nationally or internationally for elders or teachers. Many of the Native tribes reside on multiple reservations and have membership living in nearby cities. For example, the Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibway Pre-School conducted a successful search for Ojibway language immersion teachers by searching into Manitoba Reserves.[118] On the northern plains, Lakota people reside in six states on over ten reservations and many urban locations. While educators note the possible dialetical differences, they say there may be no choice. The project may successfully search outside the immediate community for the essential component, the tribal elders or language speakers, although not an easy task. For smaller tribes, alternatives may be narrow. In North Dakota, the Arikara tribal educators have opted for technology applications of language learning (as described in Section 7 - Immersion Schools, Technology). Where the language loss rate needs "life support" technology may be the only answer for Native language immersion experiences.

Native Community Building. As a means of building community vitality, Native language immersion is an enormous source of intergenerational relationships. New and focal attention is given to the tribal elders, their knowledge in language and culture and abilities in Native ways of knowing and learning. The children of the Piegan Institute have forged a new and durable relationship with the Blackfeet elders, typified by activist Darrell Kipp, "Many things transferred in our religion and our tribal ways come to us because of our knowledge of the language. ...There is much to be said about immersion --- more than what goes on in the schoolroom."[119]

5. Native American Language Immersion Teachers

The Current Teachers. Who are the Native language immersion teachers? The teachers in practice right now are primary speakers of their tribal language. The speaking

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[117] Littlebear, Richard. "To Save Our Languages, We Must Change Our Teaching Methods." Tribal College Journal of American Indian Higher Education. Vol. XI, No. 3. 1999. Pp. 20.

[118] Op cit. Williams, W. 2001. Pp. 1.

[119] Op cit. Kipp. 2000. Pp. 14.

ability is their sole common characteristic. By profession and vocation, they represent varied levels of education and training. In immersion schools, teachers are retired administrators, teacher aids, facilities managers, ranchers and grandparents. Kipp of the Piegan Institute notes that some of their best teachers were classified employees of the public schools.[120] Littlebear of the Northern Cheyenne Language Immersion Camp advises about finding teachers, "You have to start with what you've got. It never gets any better than today; tomorrow is worse."[121] The Native language immersion committees and advisory boards carefully identify from among the community qualified fluent speakers, and begin from there. The teachers (educators or activists) are all ages, although elders predominate among them.

The Native Language Immersion Teacher. The language immersion teaching demands a high level of physical stamina, knowledge of the tribal language and culture and the capacity to help advance students to meet educational objectives.[122] The Native language immersion schools now operating rely heavily on the tribal culture for the content and context of learning in the classroom. The Native language immersion teacher must have a comprehensive understanding of the tribal culture, as well as informed about community members who can serve as language and culture resources for supplementing their own expertise. The Native language immersion teacher facilitates guest speaker presentations and field experiences to visit tribal elders, role models. The Total Physical Response method utilizes movement, motion and gesture in the early stages of language learning, and demands general physical fitness of the teachers. Native language immersion teachers must have a grasp of learner-centered approaches, interactive strategies, cultural immersion activities, home study materials, and supplemental parent learning activities.[123]

Discovery Learning. Field, discovery and experiential learning activities are integral to language immersion learning. Teachers must be informed and knowledgeable of sacred, historic and natural tribal sites. Connecting students to these significant sites demands complex skills of the teacher. The teacher must have the where-with-all to transport the children safely, make provision for appropriate food, materials and sanitation, and create learning activities that build the full appreciation of the site for subject information, as well as language acquisition.[124] School and camp directors have addressed this complex challenge by using a teaching team strategy. Some schools have a "logistics" coordinator, assigned to

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[120] Ibid. Pp. 21.

[121] Op cit. Littlebear. 2001. Pp. 2.

[122] Howard, Elizabeth R. and Loeb, Michael I. Center for Applied Linguistics. "In Their Own Words: Two-Way Immersion Teachers Talk About Their Professional Experiences." ERIC Clearinghouse for Languages and Linguistics: Washington, D.C. EDO-FL-98014. December 1998. Pp. 1.

[123] Op cit. Rubin. 1999. Pp. 7-11.

[124] Op cit. Littlebear. 2001. Pp. 3.

the multitude of important details for this type of learning activity effectiveness.[125] The approach to experiential learning is also addressed by keeping the student to teacher ratio relatively low: fewer than ten students to one teacher. Holistic learning activities, rich in field and experiential aspects, are complex and challenging to the teacher's coordination and teamwork talents.

Interpersonal Skills. Additional qualities that language immersion teachers must have include strong interpersonal skills and sensitivity to new language learners (who make frequent mistakes). Parents and grandparents are incorporated into the learning activities; this requires both coordination and sensitivity. Schools require parental involvement and learning, and the teachers must make their involvement meaningful and facilitate language experiences that advance the parents and support the language learning of their students.

Native Language Immersion Teacher Training. Native language immersion projects have jointly sponsored training in Total Physical Response, through experts Dr. Richard Littlebear and Darrell Kipp. The Piegan Institute convened practitioners of language immersion twice, in 2000 and 2001, for technical assistance and training. Most projects have sent coordinators and teachers to other existing sites for weeklong observations and direct interaction with practicing teachers. The conduct of Native language immersion schools and camps requires intricate planning and careful implementation on site, among teachers and project/school advisors. In addition, many schools have held summer seminars to create "lesson plans."[126]

Tribal Language Teacher Certification and Tribal Colleges. Most tribal colleges and universities have tribal language courses within their tribal studies curriculum, and half have tribal studies degrees with language as an emphasis. Many of the tribes with TCU's have established the tribal language as the "official language of the nation."[127] In North Dakota, Montana and Arizona, state legislatures established a process for the "certification of tribal language teachers." The certification of tribal language teachers (within the system) typically includes tribal language courses, letters of reference from tribal language speakers, recognition by the tribal culture commission, and a satisfactory test of competence in the language. The combination of tribal colleges' courses and degrees, tribal official language status and state/school recognition of a certification process for language teachers has contributed to the development of language immersion teachers, in several locations.

The Three Affiliated Tribes of North Dakota are an example of this combination of factors. Fort Berthold Community College students enroll in language courses and major in tribal studies. They complete requirements for language teacher certification as established by the tribes. As apprentices to tribal language masters they assist in ceremonies and events

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[125] Op cit. Baker-Big Back. Pp. 3.

[126] Op cit. Dale. 2000. Pp. 22-23.

[127] Op cit. Rubin. 1999. Pp. 5.

and serve as tribal language teachers in the schools.[128] The tribal language initiatives are multi-faceted in most of the Native language immersion project locations, and indicate the level of grass roots effort from tribal language activists and educators to "grow your own" teachers.[129]

6. Spiritual Connotations and Transformative Impacts of Native Language Immersion

Native language immersion schools, camps and activities have dimensions that are both spiritual and transformative. Native language immersion activist Kipp notes the spiritual dimension of language and culture learning, for the children at Piegan Institute and the eldest women's society. "Many things transferred in our religion and our tribal ways come to us because of our knowledge of the language."[130]

> *"Many things transferred in our religion and our tribal ways come to us because of our knowledge of the language. One day, members of the oldest women's society visited, ...the two youngest children received the two oldest names in the tribe. They transferred to the young boys everything they could and conducted the ceremony. There is much to be said about immersion --- more than what goes on in the schoolroom."*
> *-Darrell Kipp, Blackfeet scholar, activist, Piegan Institute of Browning, Montana*

Crow Indian scholar Lanny Real Bird describes how the language teachers and elders provide cultural practices and experiences that convey "values, protocol, and holistic awareness that include spiritual and traditional philosophical teachings."[131] Language learning, in the whole cultural context, is "communicative, natural, interactive, creative, subtle, powerful and metaphoric."[132] Indigenous educator Kalena Silva sees the critical connection between land, lineage, language and culture for Native peoples, and states about this connection, "a bond born out of respect, the bond links to ancestors as well as to future generations."[133] Silva further analogizes, "language and culture provide physical, spiritual and emotional sustenance, the strength of which depends on the riches of the soil where it grows." Native scholars note the nature and influence of language immersion learning within the tribal cultural context, and confirm learning opportunities that are spiritual and transformative.

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[128] Op cit. Baker-Big Back. Pp. 2.

[129] Op cit. McCarty. 2000. Pp. 4.

[130] Op cit. Kipp. 2000. Pp. 15.

[131] Op cit. Real Bird. 2001. Pp. 12.

[132] Op cit. Rubin. 1999. Pp. 2.

[133] Op cit. Silva. 2000. Pp. 71-73.

Native language immersion teachers (educators and activists) are often cultural leaders in the Native community. The value of their role in language teaching is in essence, "medicine...of traditional education, for the wellbeing and health of the community."[134] Tribal language fluency is held in such high regard, and the teachers are regarded as "keepers of medicine." This concept is shared among tribes, as Blackfeet educator and activist Betty Bastien says, "the viewpoint in the language has the power to heal ourselves."[135]

C. THE BIG PICTURE IN NATIVE EDUCATION AND NATIVE LANGUAGE PRESERVATION

1. Comprehensive Native Language Revitalization in Native America

Language Immersion and Native Language Preservation. Native language immersion is part of a broader and more comprehensive effort to preserve Native American languages. Native language preservation efforts include dictionary and lexicon projects, modern language and bilingual education classes in school settings, curriculum development projects, technology based presentations of tribal language, images and linguistic studies of the Native languages. Language immersion contrasts with these, in that the use of the Native language is the medium of communication and instruction about the tribal and mainstream knowledge. The essential purpose of immersion is to build fluency in the tribal language among the participants. Tribal groups across the nation are involved in many language preservation efforts. These are reviewed in the LaFortune study, a publication of the Grotto Foundation of St. Paul, Minnesota.

2. Policy Environment for Native Language Immersion, Public and Private Sector

Tribal Nations Policy. The policy of the tribal nations is most significant in the preservation of tribal languages. "Tribal initiative and control are essential to the success of renewal efforts...it is crucial for Native speakers to see the value of doing so (saving the language) and get actively involved in the process."[136] The official affirmation of the language and culture are "key decisions regarding the preservation and teaching" of the tribal language.[137] The official acts, the policies, establish the authority to train and certify language teachers, build unity and commitment to language revitalization, and provide guidance for planning, development, implementation and evaluation of new language programs.[138] The

[134] Op cit. Real Bird. 2001. Pp. 15

[135] Op cit. Mistaken Chief. 1999. Pp. 27.

[136] Op cit. Crawford. 1994. Pp. 5.

[137] Op cit. Rubin. 1999. Pp. 1.

Administration for Native Americans, Language Preservation projects are contingent on tribal policy.[139] Tribal policy is significant to the language immersion projects for support, commitment and official guidelines and intent.

Federal policy. The U.S. Secretary of Education, Cavazos, appointed the Indian Nations at Risk Task Force in 1989. The Indian Nations At Risk, INAR, report published in 1991, mandated that "Native children must have equal schooling early in the educational process for learning their Native languages as well as for learning English and other languages." About teachers, the report stated, "Indian students must have early access to teachers that are proficient Native American language speakers, who are capable of expanding the dimensions of tribal languages into content areas such as math, science, social studies, arts and vocational applications."[140] Tribal language learning was Goal 2 of the INAR Report, for the improvement of Native educational performance.

The Native Languages Act of 1990, P.L. 101-447, declares "Native Americans have the right to use their languages and it is a U.S. government policy to preserve, protect, promote the development of Native American languages."[141] Amendments to the Native Languages Law in 1992 established grant programs to tribes and organizations to support a wide range of activities aimed at ensuring Native language survival. Competitive grants were made available through the executive department, Health and Human Services - Administration for Native Americans. Additional grant funds were made available through the National Park Service, **Keepers of the Treasures** Program and the National Endowment for the Humanities.[142] The Department of Education administers the Bilingual Education Act, Title VII of Improving America's Schools Act of 1994. Bilingual Education funds have contributed support to the general tribal language preservation projects in public schools nation-wide. A discussion of this policy occurs earlier in this work, in the section on Immersion Schools - Funding.

State policies. Several states have made certification provisions for Native language teaching and for the acceptance of tribal language learning as a modern language credit. North Dakota, Montana and Arizona Public Instruction Officers have arranged, through joint organization, processes for tribal language competency and literacy levels and respective level testing procedures.[143] Tribes have established course and experience requirements, and taken the major responsibility to train and assess language teachers. The

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[138] Ibid. Pp. 5.

[139] Op cit. Demmert. 1996. Pp. 2.

[140] Ibid. Pp. 2.

[141] Ibid. Pp 1.

[142] Ibid. Pp. 2.

[143] Op cit. Boyer. Pp. 12.

policy for language teacher certification comes from decades of tribal language promotion by tribal leaders and educators with state legislators and state offices of public instruction.

3. Public Schools and Mainstream Teaching/Learning

Native American language immersion is rare within the public school structure. The Diné (Navajo) two-way language immersion schools at Round Rock, Rough Rock and Chinle Schools in Arizona are supported via the state schools foundation funds, and locally generated categorical funding.[144] The charter school organized for Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibway language immersion is a part of the Hayward School District of Hayward, Wisconsin. Most of the language immersion schools are privately supported. Because public school structure is highly regulated and relatively inflexible, the majority of language immersion school organizers have chosen a private school structure.

The public schools in the United States are English language based with prescribed curricula and certified teachers. In contrast, Native American language immersion schools are Native language based with Native American and mainstream curricula and tribally qualified/certified teachers, primarily tribal scholars. The three Diné communities and the Ojibway people of Hayward achieved a unity of purpose about language immersion among the school board members, educational leaders, teachers and staff, parents and students. A completely new approach and methodology replaced the traditional mainstream one. At Hayward, the school board agreed to allocate classroom space to the language immersion school, but withheld the state foundation support.[145] The charter school support is primarily federal. The public schools are in fact English language based, although, in theory, the American public school could be "Native language based." These Native American communities have established valuable precedents for public school potential.

The Native Hawaiian language immersion schools demonstrate the full realm of possibility. The *Ke Kula Kaiapuni* schools are organized within the public school structures among numerous public school districts. Language immersion organizers acquired their schools or streams within the larger schools one step at a time, one grade at a time. Over a twenty-five year period, the Native Hawaiian people orchestrated the development of Native Hawaiian curriculum, certified teachers and school structures. Still, in each new language nest and language immersion school, parents and community members have demonstrated profound commitment, organization and sacrifice for language immersion on behalf of their children. Combined, state regulations, local school control, published and prescribed curricula and standard teacher certification form a formidable recalcitrance to change. Native Hawaiian people have made remarkable language immersion inroads into the public school system (on a trail of blood, sweat and tears), and established a remarkably effective model for Native Americans and Indigenous people.

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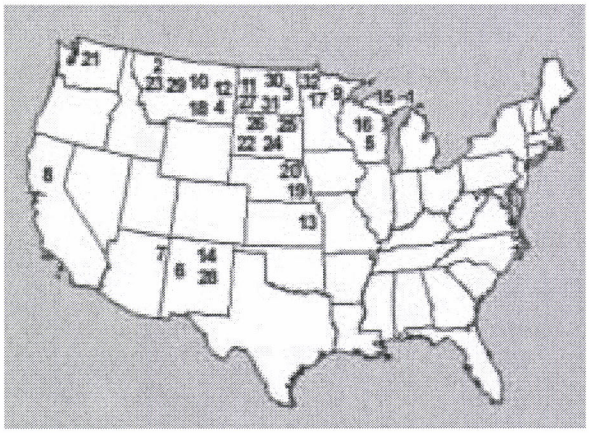
[144] Op cit. Howard and Sugarman. 2001. Pp. 1.

[145] Op cit. Hermes. 2001. Pp. 2.

4. Tribal Colleges and Universities, Tribal Schools and Pre-Schools, Head Start Programs

Tribal Colleges and Universities. The tribal colleges' mission has at its heart the preservation of tribal languages, cultures and histories. Over half of the nation's tribally controlled colleges and universities sponsor language immersion pre-schools, camps, schools and/or teacher training programs. Several of these are featured in this study. Tribal colleges are chartered by their respective nations. Thirty-two colleges are located in 12 states. The eldest tribal college is #7 on the map, Diné College, chartered by the Navajo Nation of Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado and Utah, in 1968.

The Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities of the United States
Source: American Indian College Fund of Denver, Colorado.



Tribal colleges sponsor language immersion camps and schools. Those named here are keyed to the map for reference:

- #1, Bay Mills Community College, serving the Ojibwa of Michigan
- #4, Chief Dull Knife College, serving the Northern Cheyenne of Montana
- #9, Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College serving the Chippewa Minnesota
- #10, Fort Belknap College, serving the Assiniboine and Gros Ventre Tribes of Montana
- #11, Fort Berthold Community College, serving the Hidatsa, Mandan and Arikara Tribes of North Dakota
- #12, Fort Peck Community College serving the Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes of Montana
- #16, Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Tribal and Community College serving the Ojibwa of

Wisconsin

- #18, Little Big Horn College, serving the Crow Tribe of Montana
- #22, Oglala Lakota College, serving the Oglala Lakota of South Dakota
- #23, Salish Kootenai College, serving the Salish Kootenai Confederated Tribes of Montana
- #30, Turtle Mountain Community College, serving the Chippewa Indian Reservation

A complete list of the tribal colleges and universities is an appendix of this study. (Since this research was conducted, two additional tribal colleges have become affiliated with the American Indian College Fund, bringing the total to 34 institutions in 12 states.)

Tribal colleges and universities serve more than **26,000 full- and part-time American Indian students** from over **250 tribes**. All of these institutions are **fully accredited** or working toward accreditation through the regional accreditation process. Degrees and certificates are offered in fields of study that are reflective of the tribal nations' economy and society. All **32 colleges** offer associate's degrees (two-year); half offer bachelor's degrees and four offer graduate-level studies and degrees. Tribal college students are typically older and family responsible. Both pubic and private resources support the tribal colleges. The tribal colleges are especially **community based and have programs in community, youth and parent development**. The fields of education, human services, health, business and the sciences are a several curriculum areas offered by the tribal colleges. Many sponsor pre-schools or daycare centers and are deeply involved in programming for school-aged American Indian children.[146]

The tribal colleges consortium for federal relations and development is the **American Indian Higher Education Consortium**. Since 1972, the consortium has provided essential and united leadership for tribal college development. AIHEC has partnered with congressional leaders to develop the Tribally Controlled Community College Assistance Act of 1978 (operational support for the colleges), the Land Grant Status Act of 1994 (USDA-related programs development) and the White House Initiative on Tribal Colleges and Universities – an Executive Order of the United States President (partnerships with executive branch agencies). The tribal colleges' consortium for private sector relations and development is the **American Indian College Fund**. Since 1989, the Fund's purpose is to raise private sector awareness and resources for tribal college student scholarships, cultural and language programs and an endowment. Extensive tribal colleges information is provided at AIHEC and the Fund's websites. Links to the tribal colleges are also available.

Head Start Programs. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services administers the Head Start Programs. An initiative for pre-school education from the 1960's War on Poverty, Head Start is an integral part of education for many American Indian tribes. The Administration for Native Americans manages the Indian Head Start Programs.

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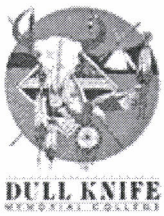
[146] Gipp, Gerald. "Forward." Benham and Stein (Ed.). The Renaissance of American Indian Higher Education: Capturing the Dream. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates: London. 2003. Pp. xiii.

Language immersion initiatives and bilingual approaches exist among the Indian Head Start Programs, to a limited extent.

Tribal Schools. As a part of the Indian Self-Determination Act of 1975, tribal nations may contract Bureau of Indian Affairs schools serving their reservations. Contracts may also support previously parochial schools on the reservations. Approximately forty tribes have contracted schools under this authority, and provide community based and local control principles of school management and direction. Tribal schools successfully recruit and retain American Indian teachers and incorporate language and culture as a major component of school curriculum. These schools have demonstrated academic successes with their students. Two Eagle River School is a contracted tribal school of the Salish Kootenai Confederated Tribes of Montana. Saint Frances Indian School is another tribal school, formerly a Catholic School, of the Rosebud Sioux Nation of South Dakota. Saint Frances Indian School provides a Lakota language immersion stream for grades K-6 (academic year 2002 to the present).[147] The community and parental control aspects of tribal and contract schools may provide a place for Native American language immersion schools or streams within schools.

D. NATIVE LANGUAGE IMMERSION PROJECTS

Native language immersion projects serve Native adults and children, in fifty tribal locations. For the purposes of this research, interviews and observations (where feasible) have been conducted. The interviews and observations became a research priority from its initial stages, due primarily to the unique and distinguishing qualities of each language immersion project. These qualities are a function of the project leadership, leadership from coordinators and advisory group members, from the students and the support of the greater Native community. Each project is in fact a composite whole, both by design and as it operates daily, in a most practical sense. Language immersion is inextricably tied to the tribal language speakers, most often elders.



Chief Dull Knife College, Northern Cheyenne Language Immersion Camp

The summer language immersion camp for the Northern Cheyenne of southeastern Montana was held in the Wolf Teeth Mountains. The students range in age from seven to

[147] Whitehat, Albert. Lakota Studies Faculty Member at Sinte Gleska University. Interview. February 11, 2003. By Janine Pease-Pretty On Top. Pp. 1.

twenty years of age. Linguist and educator Richard Littlebear, president of Chief Dull Knife College, says, "language learning is organic and holistic, and therefore, we work with a broad range of ages." The student teacher ratio is 5:1; a standard set after several years of experience trying other ratios and learning arrangements. In the fifth year of the immersion camp, "the language immersion is coming together, with a set of methods and practices that fit the camp setting and the instructors." Dr. Littlebear explains that, "they had the freedom to move into language immersion methods by trial and error...to be creative and innovative." The students stay for two weeks, with their instructors. They live in tents and teepees, pitched in a scenic mountain site encircled with pines, on a huge twenty-acre grassy valley.

Learning the Northern Cheyenne language rests on the learning team, the team of Cheyenne language educators. The team has a planning session for two-weeks prior to the camp. The educators study the Total Physical Response method of language teaching. As scholars of the language and culture, the language immersion team members are recognized in the Northern Cheyenne tribe of Montana. Little Bear recounts, "staff and instructors must take the time for team building," and the planning sessions keep that as a focus as well. "The program design is a function of these two things: the degree of assimilation and the degree of language loss. The DKMC staff and instructors are relatively young, and their stamina can be relied upon for many years. The younger speakers' youth and health give the program intensity and allow activity oriented programming." Staff members are assigned the logistics of meals and snacks, transportation, tents and teepee construction, materials and equipment ordering and management.

The project advisors meet year round, with the Chief Dull Knife College Vice-President for Culture, Conrad Fisher. The Northern Cheyenne Culture Commission is the project advisory group. The commission members are the elders who keep the language and tradition for the Northern Cheyenne Nation. Little Bear narrates, "the advisory group, especially elders and district representatives, provide their ideas on the camp and on language certification. The advisors group is a means of political buy-in as well as general community support."

In the immersion camp, each language immersion educator and five or six children form a learning group. These learning groups maintain consistent membership throughout the camp period. The groups meet concurrently, and implement learning activities chosen by the educators. The educators are various ages and both men and women. One group hikes around the camp periphery and learns the flora and fauna near the camp. A second group makes miniature rawhide shields and discusses family relationships. Yet another makes intricate beaded jewelry and listens to an educator's childhood experiences. From a central vantage point, the observer viewed five additional learning groups studying, interacting and learning. Northern Cheyenne language is the medium of discussion. Students listen intently, and repeat phrases during the discussions. Between four and seven hours are spent in the small group learning each day.

Camp learning takes place in activities for the whole group, as well as in the learning groups. Presentations by Cheyenne scholars instruct on tribal history and culture. For example, all the campers participated in the buffalo butchering. The camp received a gift of a buffalo. Camp directors chose to make this gift a learning experience. Together, educators

and students learned buffalo anatomy, cut and dried buffalo meat, constructed drying scaffolds, planned, prepared and served a traditional feast to elders and guests.

The Crazy Head Springs encampment is a camping facility owned by the Mennonite Church, used for youth and family camps. The Chief Dull Knife College, primary sponsor of the language immersion camp, leases the camp. Here, a pine grove rims a huge meadow. The trees and adjoining acreage provide shade and are ideal for outdoor classroom locations, for hiking and exploration. The central gathering area for assemblies and food service are under an enormous awning stretched over a metal framework. This central gathering area is the stage for history and literature telling, by elder guests. Walking trails lead around and through the camp area; one trail leads to a nearby spring.

The camp setting, the prepared and intense language instruction, the learning group experiences, the relationships among the children with the educators, the camp assemblies and field experiences, all contribute to a rich language immersion environment. The camp demonstrates conversations and interactions with and among the students---in the Cheyenne language about Cheyenne knowledge.[148]

Fond du Lac Community College Teacher Training Project

Fond du Lac Community and Tribal College of Cloquet, Minnesota sponsors a teacher-training project. The project is based on best practices from Indian education and enrolls twenty-five tribal members in teacher training. A year-round cohort of trainees combines standard professional teacher training for Minnesota teachers and college students with Ojibway culture, language and history. The Ojibway language is required in the professional training. Each season, "the trainees have a camp or retreat pertaining to the season-specific cultural knowledge of the Ojibway people."

Tribal member and project director Amy Bergstrom describes the annual summer language immersion camp, "the pre-service teachers take a one-week long language immersion camp and learn a remarkable amount of Ojibway...their minds are like sponges." The camp was held in a remote location in Ojibway country. Through music and art activities, the teacher trainees acquired a rich Ojibway cultural context for language learning. Although many of the students had enrolled in high school Ojibway language courses, their fluency was limited to "vocabulary lists, numbers and names of things." The language immersion camp was located in the mountains. For a whole week, the trainees camped together, 24 hours per day for 7 days, and all their communications were in Ojibway. From Ms. Bergstrom, "In the morning, we have an informal time with the instructor. In the

[148] Op cit. Littlebear. 2001. Pp. 1-5.

afternoon, we have traditional activities...bread making, berry picking. In the evening, we hike and visit tribal resource people. We want to have language use at all times."[149]

During the academic year, the trainees enroll in a more standard Ojibway language class at the community college, with the same instructor (as the immersion camp). Wintertime learning activities include tribal history, a snowshoe field trip, and tribal elder presentations. Together, the trainees prepared Ojibway learning cards on common verbs and conversational vocabulary. The trainees authored and illustrated a children's book, "called the Sugar Bush Kids, with artwork, activities and a story about Ojibway children." This wintertime learning will prepare them for next summer's camp.

Reflecting on the initial two project years, Ms. Bergstrom said, "each camp and retreat we have, there is less and less English, and more Ojibway language. I attribute this language capacity of the trainees to an Ojibway rich environment." She cites the improved confidence levels of the students, making presentations in Ojibway, and noted the intensity and enthusiasm of the trainees.

Fort Berthold Community College, Tribal Language Mentor Program

The Three Affiliated Tribes of North Dakota have initiated a mentor/mentee project that addresses the three languages of the Three Affiliated Tribes of North Dakota, the Hidatsa, Mandan and Arikara languages. Each of the languages has a master with five apprentices. All the apprentices (fifteen) are enrolled halftime and year round at the Fort Berthold Community College. They are majors in the tribal language and culture coursework, tribal studies program at the associate of arts level. All the apprentices aim to achieve formal language certification through the Tribes' certification process for tribal language instruction. There are many levels of language and culture learning in this project. All these have an impact on language learning. It can best be described as a "cascading" language immersion project, for concurrently with the mentoring from the masters of language and culture, the apprentices are language teachers in the schools serving the tribal children and youth. This project has several positive advantages for language learning:

- The apprentices become cultural and language specialists over time, and serve the communities in this capacity for the rest of their lives. Since most of them are 30 years old, many years of service can be anticipated.

- The apprentices are involved first hand on a daily basis with the Mandan, Arikara and Hidatsa children enrolled in the schools. As their instructors and

[149] Op cit. Bergstrom. 2001. Pp. 1-3.

cultural advisors, they are well known by the new generation of tribal members. Their influence in language learning and cultural knowledge is well established.

- The schools have made a commitment to provide a significant position for language teaching and learning in the public school curriculum and among the faculty.

- The master has the opportunity to train several successors in cultural and language leadership. The masters have assistants in carrying out their demanding family, community and cultural role. [150]

This approach is similar to a cultural apprenticeship project at Chief Dull Knife College of the Northern Cheyenne of Montana and the cultural leadership project of Salish Kootenai College of the Salish Kootenai Confederated Tribes of Montana.

Inupiaq Immersion School of Kotzebue, Alaska

The Inupiaq Immersion School, Nikaitchuat Ilisagviat, is a private school for children ages 3-7 years old. Four teachers manage the learning in the school, and the learning is exclusively in the Inupiaq language and has a "culture-based curriculum." The school hours are from 7:30 am to 3:30 pm daily. The school is not associated with the public school, and funds for the school (in part) are acquired through tuition ($350/month).

Nikaitchuat was started by a "Vital Team...consisted of 30 parents, grandparents and community members who were concerned about the state of our Inupiaq language and culture." For years, the Team met, but in the spring of 1998, the group leaders Tarruq and Agnik Schemer and 10 Team members accepted tasks that led to the start of the school. "The school opened in the fall of 1998, with a building, teachers, parents and group of children---ready to learn; and $100 for materials and supplies." In the spring of 2000, Nikaitchuat received a grant from the U.S. Department of Education for staff, office equipment and materials development. This grant added to an initial budget comprised of funds from BIA-Johnson O'Malley, Alaskan Native Corporation support, parent tuition, and a health initiative grant.

Parental involvement begins with the payment of monthly tuition. Parents provide a daily snack once a month, and "volunteer for four hours per month...help in the classroom, attend parent meetings, participate in sewing nights and attend Eskimo Dance practice." A seven member Parent Governance Committee helps in the direction of the school. "The school curriculum calendar was produced with the guidance of local elders and other community members. In three parts: 1-the daycare 'Big Book', filled with western topics such as letters, colors, numbers and shapes; 2-traditional activities based on the Inupiaq lifestyle, including hunting, fishing, berrypicking, gathering plants, dancing, drumming and transportation; and 3-Inupiaq Values." The calendar is seasonal, having a specific cultural

[150] Op cit. Baker-Big Back. Pp. 1-2.

content each month of the school year. For example, in March, the topics are "transportation, Cars and trucks, airplanes, snow machines and dog sleds." Elders and community members are instructors and host field experiences for the students.[151]

The school focuses on the Inupiat Illitqusiat, the values. These are comprehensive and reflect the Inupiaq way of life:

Inupiat Ilitqusiat. *Every Inupiaq is responsible to all other Inupiat for the survival of our cultural spirit, and the values and traditions through which it survives. Through our extended family, we retain, teach, and live our Inupiat way. With guidance and support from Elders, we must teach our children Inupiaq values:*

Respect for Nature	*Knowledge of Language*	*Humility*
Spirituality	*Sharing*	*Hard Work*
Humor	*Respect for Others*	*Responsibility to Tribe*
Family Roles	*Cooperation*	*Family Tree Knowledge*
Hunter Success	*Respect for Elders*	*Avoidance of Conflict*
Domestic Skills	*Love for Children*	

**Kotzebue, Alaska is 550 miles northwest of Anchorage, and 26 miles from the Arctic Circle.*

Lac Courte Orielles Ojibwa Community College Immersion Pre-School

In 1998, Lac Courte Orielles Ojibwa Community College opened a pre-school for tribal children, an Ojibwa language immersion school. Six to ten children attended the school designed to replicate "an Ojibwa grandma's house." Instructor William Wilson describes the instructional method, "we talk to and with the children, in intensive interaction. For example we take the children for a walk in the woods near the school, and talk with them in Ojibwa (no English), about everything we see." Wilson cites the quick learning he has

[151] Op cit. Inupiaq Immersion School. Pp. 1-10.

experienced among the youngest students, "the younger students understand Ojibwa right away, you can see it." The children are three to five years old.

Lac Courte Orielles Ojibwa Community College sought fluent Ojibwa instructors, and met with frustration locally. The search turned up few applicants. The Ojibwa people live far and wide in the Great Lakes region of the U.S. and Canada. The college eventually retained two Ojibwa people from Manitoba, who agreed to move to Hayward, Wisconsin for two years for the project. The premium of fully fluent instructors was accomplished, and promoted the language learning.

Instructor Wilson narrated the assistance they received from elders in the community, "elders in the community, they do help us with our classes, they come to the school and talk with the children." [152]

Lac Courte Orielles Ojibwa Language Immersion Charter School

The Lac Courte Orielles Ojibwa Language Immersion Charter School is located in Hayward, Wisconsin. The school is in its second year of operation. The school director, Dr. Mary Fong Hermes, described the school's beginning, "We pursued the K-12 Charter last spring, 2001. This charter school would continue the work of the LCO Language Immersion Pre-School, a 3-year program of the LCO Tribal and Community College. Our aim is to provide a K-12 Ojibwa language immersion school." Dr. Hermes was a full-time teacher in the Hayward Public Schools, and then, became involved in the language immersion pre-school initiative. Now, she serves as the part-time school director.

The LCO Ojibwa Language Immersion Charter School currently serves children in the kindergarten through third grade. A coordinating and advisory committee carried out a planning year, and Dr. Hermes says, "We are beginning the first year of the school with these grades, with two full-time teachers who came over from the public school and one full-time Ojibwa language teacher. The teachers know the standard school curriculum." Most of the twenty students in the school were enrolled in the immersion pre-school during the past several years.

The LCO Language Immersion School is situated within the Hayward Public Schools. The school board has provided approval for the immersion school, and as a condition for the charter, lent fiscal support from the state allocations for foundation school funding to the fledgling school. Parents of the children made written commitments to their children's enrollment, and have subsequently enrolled their children in the school. The board discussion entailed concerns, for example, "board members expressed a concern that language teaching would be done at the expense of another required subject." For the LCO Language Immersion School, Board support was acquired in a 5:1 favorable vote.

The charter is a federal designation, and provides a stream of federal support from the Department of Education. For a five-year period, start up and operational financial

[152] Op cit. Wilson, W. 2001. Pp. 2.

sustenance combined with the state foundation funds. Dr. Hermes cited limitations, "the funding acquired excludes a building and/or renovation of a second-hand building." This limitation made it necessary to borrow a classroom from the public school. Other services, like lunch and health services, will be shared with the public school. The charter gives organizers, instructors and students a period of grace from state testing routines, while the curriculum with students has a chance for establishment and elaboration. Tests will be taken in the third year...and continuation is contingent on successful educational outcomes.

LITTLE BIG HORN COLLEGE

Little Big Horn College Crow Land and Water Migration Camp

The Crow Indian people, the *Apsaalooke*, reside on a reservation nearly as large as Connecticut. An historic leader and visionary, *Arapooish*, led the *Apsaalooke* on a forty year migration from Minnesota through Oklahoma and then Canada through the Great Salt Lake Region to the Big Horn Mountains of present day Wyoming and Montana. Here, the visionary saw the stars fall on a sacred plant, tobacco. The migration trail and the Crow land and water serve as the primary cultural and historic context and content for the Crow Language Immersion Camp, the Crow Land and Water Migration Camp.

Purposes
Crow Land and Water Migration Camp

1. To heighten awareness of Crow land and water among Crow students in the fourth to eighth grade.
2. To use a total language immersion approach during the camp for Crow language learning.
3. To develop lesson plans for teachers that could be replicated in the classroom.

-Scott Russell, Crow Tribal Member and Camp Coordinator

The camp, built of teepees and tents, was located near the "star falling place" in the southern part of the Crow Indian Reservation near the border between Wyoming and Montana. The camp moved twice, to other Crow Country locations in the Pryor Mountains, the range just west of the Big Horn Mountains.

Crow language expert, Dr. Lanny Real Bird, and a team of fluent Crow language speakers, Roy Stewart, Scott Russell, Jennifer Flat Lip and Mandy Moccasin, and Crow Indian science teacher Shane Doyle, designed the Crow language immersion camp experience for thirty Crow Indian youth. Guest presenters were brought into the camp each day. The purpose of the Land and Water Migration Camp was threefold, and includes building the land and water knowledge in Crow Indian students in the fourth to eighth grades. In a total language immersion environment for Crow language learning, these activities are developed into lesson plans for classroom teachers. The coordinating team partnered with the Montana State University Indian Teacher Training Project, Billings MT. The teacher trainees participated as camp counselors and learning activity assistants.

Students, counselors and instructors were encouraged to utilize the Crow language at all times throughout the camp. Students fluent in the Crow language were paired up with non-Crow language speaking students, to form learning partnerships. For the instructors, the science teacher teamed with a translator, for presentations on the land and water. The curriculum provided learning activities: lectures on land and water topics (English, then Crow), demonstrations of teepee construction, presentations on tribal history and culture in the Crow language, guest and elder presenters, site visits to historic and traditional sites, and water testing in mountain springs and streams.

The summer of 2001 was the initial language immersion camp. The Crow Land and Water Migration Camp was experimental, and successfully involved several groups. These groups were the teacher trainees, the students, the advisors and elders and the instructors and counselors.[153]

Piegan Institute of Browning, Montana

The Piegan Institute was organized by Darrell Kipp and a small group of fellow Blackfeet tribal members. Together, "they longed to go home again, to reconnect with their culture and relearn the language they'd spoken as children." The Piegan Institute is a nonprofit organization on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation, dedicated to restoring and preserving Native American languages.[154]

In 1995, the Institute opened the privately funded *Niziputhwahsin* (or Real Speak) Center, which immerses students in the Blackfeet language from kindergarten through eighth grade. The school's graduates are the first young fluent speakers of the Blackfeet language in a generation. *Niziputhwahsin* teacher Shirlee Crow Shoe says the school is not only resuscitating the language, but also helping to preserve Blackfeet culture.

The Institute has three kindergarten through eighth grade language immersion schools: Cuts Wood, Moccasin Flat and Lost Child. The first eighth grade class is scheduled to graduate is 2003. The schools have a students/teachers ratio of 7:1, which Kipp commends, "individual attention from specially trained staff helps push them ahead of their peers in achievement tests."[155]

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[153] Old Elk, Carlene. Observation. Crow Land and Water Migration and Language Immersion Camp. Big Horn Mountains of the Crow Indian Reservation, Montana. July 2001.

[154] Nijhuis, Michelle. "Tribal Immersion Schools Rescue Language and Culture." The Christian Science Monitor. 2002.

[154] Selden, Ron. "Immersion programs ensure cultural survival." Indian Country Today. June 28, 2000. Pp 1.

Shirlee Crow Shoe, a *Nizipuhwahsin* teacher, says about her students, "they will put their hands out and introduce themselves to you in Blackfeet. Learning the language has clarified their identity."

Today, the *Nizipuhwahsin* Center has 36 students and more applicants than it can accept. The immersion models from the Maoris in New Zealand and Native Hawaiians instructed the Center organizers. They were especially influenced by the "language nests," systems that have since been extended through the 12th grade. The immersion-school model from the Akwesasne Freedom School in upstate New York, also demonstrated success. From these models, Kipp and the rest of the staff at the Piegan Institute thought immersion could bring back the Blackfeet language.

The Piegan Institute has played a leading role in providing three gatherings of language immersion scholars from Indian country. Director Darrell Kipp has stepped forward with a narrative for language immersion organizers and activists. The model of the Piegan Institute's Immersion Schools, demonstrates to Native people, especially in the United States, that language immersion can be accomplished. Kipp and his colleagues are adamant that private sector funding is the exclusive resource for the schools' support, along with tuition paid by parents and family.

Salish Kootenai College, Cultural Leadership Project

The Salish Kootenai Confederated Tribes of Montana have selected an approach to language immersion learning that combines a master of Salish language and cultures and tribally designated cultural commissioners, with five apprentices. The apprentices are tribal members, and younger than the masters. The apprentices are all outstanding students in the Salish Kootenai College tribal studies associate of arts degree program. The master and apprentices convene throughout the seasons of the year, and concentrate on summer learning opportunities. Over the past four years, the apprentices have acquired expertise that is situated within the families and tribal communities. This approach provides a way to "cascade" their knowledge, expertise and leadership in the Salish language and culture into and among the people, in the present and future. The summertime camp approach is used in this project, to add in learning experiences for children and youth. On a broad basis, language learning extends to the many tribal gatherings, ceremonies and events each year, throughout the seasons.[156]

[156] Op cit. Real Bird. 2001. Pp. 2.

Southern Ute Language Immersion Pre-School

> *"The Montessori method meshed well with the Native American thought and philosophy regarding teaching and learning methods."*
>
> *-Carol Baker-Olguin, Southern Ute Private School Director*

The Southern Ute Language Immersion School is located in Ignacio, Utah. The school serves children from infancy to third grade. It is a Ute language immersion school, and utilizes the Anna Montessori teaching/learning methods. School director Carol Baker-Olguin describes the decision to adopt the Montessori method and language immersion, "The decision to design the Montessori school to serve children from infancy was to facilitate the language/culture component and eventually revival of the Ute language." Olguin is a professional Montessori teacher, and was instrumental in convincing the community of the merits of the Montessori methods. According to Olguin, the Ute community advisors thought the Montessori method "meshed well with the Native American thought and philosophy regarding teaching and learning methods. The self-paced learning and exploratory aspects were especially appealing."

The Southern Ute School is private, supported by the tribal council through casino earned appropriations. They have chosen not to seek federal funding, private sector or state funds. Olguin explains, "the decision was based on the tribe's desire to serve only Southern Ute tribal members or direct descendants of tribal members. The tribe did not want to be encumbered by federal regulations." Moreover, the tribe designed a five-year plan, and made a commitment to the school support. The school advisors have discussed the need for an endowment, to be developed, "to continue the operations of the school unencumbered by tribal politics." Olguin noted that the school future is at the whim of the tribal council, and council priorities may change from year to year; "the commitment (to the school) is dependent on the politics of the council and its leadership." The tribal council commitment entailed the building of a school facility, as well as the school operational funds.[157]

The five-year plan encompasses training Montessori/Ute language teachers, as well. The school partners with a nearby university for the Montessori teacher certification. The university mentors provide methods training, and this combines with the Ute language fluency of the teacher trainees. The school director described the Montessori courses required of the trainees as "rigorous." The teacher training coursework compounds with the weight of daily teaching responsibility with the children. During the initial year, eighteen tribal members began the training, and, five completed. The rigors of this training and teaching proved to be daunting. Carol Olguin attributed trainee attrition to the lack of academic preparation, a limited number of Ute speakers, and too few applicants for the project trainee positions. The school's greatest challenge is finding potential teachers among a small number of Ute speakers. The school director stated, "This is seen as a major problem at present in obtaining the goal of language revival in an immersion setting."

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[157] Op cit. Baker-Olguin. Pp. 1-3.

E. INDIGENOUS MODELS OF LANGUAGE IMMERSION

1. Maori Language Immersion Initiatives

Overview. The author interviewed Maori educators and observed pre-schools, schools and the tertiary institutions in March of 2002. The tribal colleges' presidents visited the *Te Wananga*, primarily hosted by the Chief Executive Officer Rongo Wetere of the *Te Wananga o Aotearoa* of Hamilton, New Zealand. The Maori people generously shared information on their revolutionary educational advances through language immersion methods. This series of visits included extensive observations, as well.

***Kohanga Reo,* Maori Preschool Language Nests.** The international indigenous education community recognizes the Maori achievements in building Maori language fluency through language immersion methods. At all levels of education, language immersion has vastly improved the Maori overall education achievement. First organized in 1982, the *Kohanga Reo* or language nest is the language immersion preschool designed for the smallest children. Now, there are 704 *Kohanga Reo* serving 13,000 Maori pre-school children (see their website <www.kohanga.ac.nz>). The *Kohanga Reo* program is based on the principle that Maori children should be totally immersed in the Maori language and values from birth. The principles of the Maori language nest are:

- Total immersion in Maori language and pedagogy
- Management and decision-making by *whanau,* the Tribe
- Accountability to the Creator and the *mokopuna,* the children
- Commitment to the health and well-being of the *mokopuna,* the children, and the *whanau,* the family

The Ministry of Education licenses the *Kohanga Reo* language nests, under regulations established in 1990, for early education centers.

The training of teachers for the *Kohanga Reo* is a professional development endeavor supported in part by the *Te Kohanga Reo* National Trust. The Trust was chartered as a charitable trust by the Ministry of Education in 1983. The training provides assistance in implementation activities, especially focussed on the licensing process. The licensing process addresses readiness to provide appropriate teaching, fluency in the Maori language and on specific Maori pedagogy competencies. The New Zealand Qualifications Authority has approved a one-year certificate course, *Te Ara Tuatahi,* for the trainees non-fluent in Maori, called *kohanga whanau,* the preschool language nest teachers. The next level of training is a one-year course, *Te Ara Tuarua,* for trainees who are semi-

> *"The ultimate objective of Te Kohanga Reo is nothing less than the rebirth of the Maori nation as an equal but separate element contributing to the common good of New Zealand society."*
> *-Koro Wetere, 1987*

fluent in Maori. This course includes child development and management, as well as Maori language skills development. Together, all training levels total three years. Teachers are prepared to "work alongside young children, the parents, other *whanau* members, and the community."[158]

> "The policy of the *Te Kohanga Reo* is comprehensive: it is education for life. It covers cultural, spiritual, social, economic, and educational aspects. *Te Kohanga Reo* aims to reaffirm Maori culture through *whanau* development, thus restoring Maori self-determination. In particular, it aims to achieve this goal through the organization of local Kohanga Reo on a *whanau* model."
>
> -http://www.kohanga.ac.nz.

These 700 preschool language immersion nests bridge into the *wharekura,* the K-6 and K-13 schools that utilize the Maori language as the medium of education for the delivery of public education.

***Te Wharekura,* Maori K-13 Schools.** The *Te Wharekura o Rakamanga* of Huntly, New Zealand, is a Maori language immersion K-13 school (equivalent to the K-12 school in the U.S.). The author observed this school, and visited faculty and educational leaders about Maori educational experiences. The Maori secondary students take exit exams to complete their secondary education. The record of Maori young people is one of dismal achievement, up until the advent of the *Wharekura.* Up until 1980, the percentage of satisfactory completion by Maori students was stalemated between 5% and 15% pass rate. Now, with the Maori language immersion schools, the students exam pass rate has rocketed to an astounding 75%![159] This remarkable success of Maori language immersion schools and their students has come about in spite of insurmountable socio-economic factors of poverty, alcoholism, high unemployment and under-education, all of which correlate with poor academic performance.

***Te Wananga,* Maori Tertiary (Higher Education) Institutions.** At the post-secondary level, the Maori people have established colleges serving the Maori people throughout the North Island of New Zealand. The colleges are called *Te Wananga.* This is the name of the traditional Maori adult teaching traditions from ancient Maori times. The *Te Wananga* institutions were organized in 1982, following a national court decision on educational equity. The New Zealand Supreme Court awarded educational support equal to the nation's public schools and tertiary (university) system. This right was based on treaty conditions from the Treaty of Waikato. From this settlement, three independent Maori

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[158] Maori *Kohanga Reo* Web site. <http://www.kohanga.ac.nz>. 2003.

[159] Op cit. Pease-Pretty On Top. Pp. 14. 2003.

colleges were organized: *Te Wananga o Aotearoa, Te Wananga o Raukawa and Te Whare Wananga o Awanuirangi.* Each *Te Wananga* was chartered by a Maori *whanau.* The campuses serve Maori people throughout the North Island where 90% of the Maori people reside.

The *Te Wananga* each has a unique curriculum. They offer two-year, four-year and graduate degrees. Generally, the degrees have three parts: the study of the Maori language -- - *Te Reo,* the study of the Maori tribes and family traditions, and the student's specialized field of study (e.g. education, sociology, business, or natural resources management). The Maori have designed their fields of study to prepare their graduates for jobs available in their respective regions of the country. The college studies are all instructed in the Maori language; the colleges are models of language immersion.

At the *Te Whare Wananga o Awanuirangi* campus, located in Whakatane, New Zealand, Tuakere Hond, a faculty member in Maori language described the language learning: "students take a sequence of language immersion classes meeting for three-hour blocks, for entire weekends, or for whole weeks at a time. The students thoroughly learn 50 words or phrases, not a vocabulary list, but practical words that can be used to talk about life. Then they add the next sequence of words until they become totally fluent in the Maori language."[160] At the *Te Wananga o Aotearoa*, students may study Te Reo Maori (language), Multimedia and Television, Teaching and Early Childhood Education, or Traditional and Contemporary Maori Arts. Maori language and computing are a part of all programs of study in the *Te Wananga.*

The *Te Wananga* of New Zealand are leaders in this Maori Indigenous educational movement. The principles of language immersion are applied to all levels of post-secondary education, or tertiary education. In eighteen years, the enrollment in the *Te Wananga* has risen to a level that currently exceeds the enrollment in their counterpart tertiary New Zealand higher education system. The movement has tremendous momentum, articulated by the national association of *Wananga.* CEO of *Te Wananga o Aotearoa,* Rongo Wetere narrated, "The Maori enrollment in the *Te Wananga* is exploding, because the Maori people want to learn, and learn in the Maori language."[161]

Adult Immersion for Language Learning. The immersion camp or retreat is a highly successful language learning approach for the Maori people of New Zealand, for youth and adults. The concept of short intense bursts of language learning in an immersion approach has promoted and developed a whole new generation of Maori speakers.[162] The weekend or whole week language learning seminars entail practical language learning, and teaches total fluency based on ten words or phrases a session. Maori adults achieve remarkable "daily

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[160] Op cit. Pease-Pretty On Top. Pp. 14. 2003.

[161] Wetere, Rongo. CEO of the *Te Wananga o Aotearoa of Huntly, New Zealand.* Interview. Santa Fe, New Mexico. By Janine Pease-Pretty On Top. January 29, 2003.

[162] Pease-Pretty On Top, Janine. "Indigenous Higher Education Initiative: Summary of Activities in 2002." (Unpublished) American Indian Higher Education Consortium: Alexandria VA. 2002. Pp. 11.

language" fluency in just four weeklong seminars (24 hours a day for 7 days). The Maori call this "accelerated learning," and describe the learning as total brain involvement…movement, dancing, singing and hands-on learning; no paper, no writing. The immersion camp model plays a special role with youth and young parents with the objective of conversational fluency.[163]

2. Native Hawaiian Language Immersion

Overview.

The Native Hawaiian language immersion began twenty years ago, and is the preeminent model for language immersion among Native and Indigenous groups worldwide. In the year 2002-2003, 1,750 school-aged students attend kindergarten through twelfth grade in 22 *Ke Kula Kaiapuni* language immersion schools, where Hawaiian is the medium of instruction. The thirteen *Aha Punana Leo* pre-schools or language nests, serve 250 three and four year old children.

The Hawaiian language immersion movement has had a dramatic impact on the Hawaiian language fluency of young Native Hawaiians. There were just 35 speakers of Hawaiian under the age of 35 in 1980. Also, in 1980 there was 2000 Hawaiian speaking elders. The language fluency gain since the inception of the *Aha Punana Leo* and *Ke Kula Kaiapuni* schools has rocketed from 35 to over 2,400 youthful Hawaiian speakers. Native Hawaiian language immersion language nests and schools have significantly and positively impacted the vitality of the Hawaiian language. The *Aha Punana Leo* and *Ke Kula Kaiapuni* education is truly remarkable; for it combines traditional Native Hawaiian and mainstream knowledge, via Native Hawaiian ways of knowing and learning. Native Hawaiian language immersion is a comprehensive family and community based education system. It is an integrated effort from pre-school through graduate school, all taught entirely in Hawaiian. In the "P-20" model, the levels of Native Hawaiian and Hawaiian language medium education include:

- The *Aha Punana Leo*, pre-school language nests serve children, ages three and four
- The *Ke Kula Kaiapuni*, K-12 language immersion schools serve school aged children
- The *Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elikolani*, College of Hawaiian Language, University of Hawaii-Hilo, serves the undergraduate students in the *Hale Kuaamo'o*, the Hawaiian Language Center, and graduate students in the Hawaiian language and literature master of arts program,

[163] Ibid. Pp. 13.

- The *Kahuawaaiola*, the Hawaiian Medium Teacher Education Program of the university serves graduate students --- language immersion teacher trainees.

The comprehensive model is a masterpiece of Indigenous education and language learning.

A core group of seven Native Hawaiian parents and university lecturers began the first language nest, with a commitment to make their homes and children Hawaiian speaking. This was a monumental commitment to the Hawaiian language, in 1983. Since then, many elders, teachers, university students and scholars have joined in this commitment. The movement has grown from each language nest, adding one grade at a time, into a movement of major scale, among many Native Hawaiian parent and community groups. The Native Hawaiian language immersion sites studied for this report included:

- *Aha Punana Leo* Center in Hilo
- *Aha Punana Leo*, Inc. in Hilo
- Center for Hawaiian Studies, Brigham Young University – Hawaii in Laie
- *Ke Kula 'O Nawahiokalani 'opu'u* of Hilo (a university lab school)
- *Ke Kula Kaiapuni 'O Anuenue*, Honolulu Public Schools, Hawaii Department of Education
- Native Hawaiian Education Council in Honolulu and Hilo
- University of Hawaii – Hilo, College of Hawaiian Language and Literature in Hilo

Peter Hano Hano, Executive Director of the Native Hawaiian Education Council coordinated the interviews and observations in January 2003, and made this report section possible. Observations of classrooms, grounds and facilities, and interviews with language immersion parents, students, teachers and scholar/educators are the primary sources of this report section. Naturalistic interview methods were used to acquire the data. The data was transcribed and analyzed, utilizing categories parallel to those in the main body of this study: the language as the medium of education, language immersion teachers, methods, culture and curriculum, technology, Native ways of knowing and learning, literacy, parents and elders, funding and policy, and educational achievement, and Indigenous people's language immersion. The Native Hawaiian voices directly convey this significant narrative on language immersion. Their words are powerful and narrate the remarkable story of Native Hawaiian language immersion.

Native Hawaiian Language, the Medium of Education.

The Native Hawaiian language is the educational medium of language immersion language nests and schools, not the subject of a class within the school curriculum. All

subjects in all grades are instructed in the Native Hawaiian language. The "No English Rule" is adhered to with devotion and commitment. On campus at *Aha Punana Leo* – Hilo, Hawaiian is the means of welcome, singing, learning shapes and colors, having meals and staff meetings. Music and action enliven Native language immersion the full language experience. "We place the highest value on speaking to one another in Hawaiian…this is perseverance as a key," described Namaka Rawlins, Chief Executive Officer of the *Aha Punana Leo*, Inc.[164] The pre-school children are non-Hawaiian speakers, first. The *Aha Punana Leo* students are chosen for their Hawaiian heritage from among the many applicants.[165] Parents must enroll in Hawaiian language courses at the University for their role in language learning, to bring the language home.[166]

Founder and linguist Larry Kimura discussed the language learning at the *Aha Punana Leo* and *Ke Kula Kaiapuni* schools, "The children were learning fast---and the grandparents were amazed." [167] The language immersion design is comprehensive and effective in building language fluency. A *Ke Kula Kaiapuni O Anuenue* mother attested that her two-year-old child, not yet in the language nest, acquired the language from her two school-aged children.[168] Professor Kaumealani Walk at Brigham Young University – Hawaii, described an attribute about the third grade students she taught at *Anuenue*: "new learners have a special gift from within the language, *kuleana*, the spirit of the language. Right from this time, the children have a connection to the Hawaiian elders."[169] Clearly, language learning is taking place, and special attributes accompany that ability for the students and their families.

The Hawaiian language has a dynamic quality, and is evolving. Hawaiian language scholar Kimura assessed the Hawaiian language, "The language is actually incorporating the essence of Hawaiian heritage. It is restored as a living language. We have made steps toward keeping the language from dying."[170] The return from a dying language to a living one is a tremendous accomplishment, given the pressure world wide on Indigenous languages. The Lexicon Committee has added new terms to the language. While some terms are derived from current Hawaiian terms, others are borrowed from other Polynesian languages, and yet others are descriptive. The publication of the Lexicon is anticipated this year. Kimura serves at the Secretary General of the Secretariat of the Polynesian Languages Forum. The

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[164] Rawlins, Namaka. Interview. Hilo, Hawaii. NHLI Transcript, Pp. 11. 05 January 2003.

[165] Wilson, Pila. Interview. Hilo, Hawaii. NHLI Transcript, Pp. 14. 08 January 2003.

[166] Donnagy, Kaola. Interview. Hilo, Hawaii. NHLI Transcript, Pp. 21. 05 January 2003.

[167] Kimura, Larry. Interview. Hilo, Hawaii. NHLI Transcript, Pp. 8. 05 January 2003.

[168] Medina, Stephanie. Interview. Honolulu, Hawaii. NHLI Transcript, Pp. 23. 09 January 2003.

[169] Walk, Kaumealani. Interview. Laie, Hawaii. NHLI Transcript. Pp. 7. 10 January 2003.

[170] Op cit. Kimura. Pp. 28. 05 January 2003.

Hawaiian lexicon is a focus of the Secretariat.[171] Kimura holds one of the first two master's degrees awarded in 2002 by the University of Hawaii – Hilo, in Hawaiian Language and Literature.

The language immersion effort has been arduous, and possible due to the Native Hawaiian people who were willing to work hard and endlessly on the Hawaiian language immersion.[172] The language immersion activists, educators, parents and scholars demonstrate a depth of commitment, immense sense of purpose and pronounced *kuleana*, strength of spirit for the Hawaiian language, the educational achievement of their children, and the health and well-being of their families and communities.

Native Hawaiian Language Immersion Teachers.

The *Kumu*, or Source/Teacher, is the essential language learning resource for the Native Hawaiian language immersion schools. In the 1980's, Hawaiian elders and university students instructed in language immersion classrooms.[173] Wherever possible, the *Aha Punana Leo* centers retained elders, in highly respected and special positions, for speakers of the language. The elders' advancing age limits their language immersion involvement. Many *Aha Punana Leo* parents have become language immersion teachers. The University of Hawaii language classes have attracted students into the language immersion teaching.[174]

The language immersion teacher is responsible for the subject content, for speaking Hawaiian and for instruction in the Hawaiian cultural knowledge.[175] Conversational fluency in the language is a primary *Kumu* qualification.[176] Naiilima Gaison, senior instructor at the *Aha Punana Leo*, recalled, "being a language immersion *Kumu* is a position of constant challenge. I can work for hours learning a song, and then the children in the language nest learn the song in just a few short minutes."[177]

The College of Hawaiian Language, at the University of Hawaii – Hilo has established a language immersion teacher preparation program, the *Kahuawaaiola*, "to develop multi-licensure. Trainees enter a three semester post-baccalaureate program. Among

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[171] Ibid. Pp. 5. 05 January 2003.

[172] *Aha Punana Leo* Public Relations Officer. Interview. Hilo, Hawaii. NHLI Transcript, Pp. 3. 07 January 2003.

[173] Hano Hano, Peter. Interview. Honolulu, Hawaii. NHLI Transcript, Pp. 11. 09 January 2003.

[174] Kawaiaea, Keiki. Interview. Hilo, Hawaii. NHLI Transcript, Pp. 18. 05 January 2003.

[175] Ibid. Pp. 10. 05 January 2003.

[176] Ibid. Pp. 18. 05 January 2003.

[177] Gaison, Naiilima. Interview. Hilo, Hawaii. NHLI Transcript, Pp. 9. 06 January 2003.

requirements are a five week intensive training course, a seminar series over two semesters and two semesters of practice teaching."[178] The trainees have student teaching placements in the university lab school. Preferred placements are in their home communities. The trainees must demonstrate proficiencies during this placement. The license must be acquired within three years following graduation.[179] The teacher training programs develop approximately twenty new teachers annually.

Native Hawaiian Language Immersion and Methods.

Several methods combine to make language immersion effective. The Native Hawaiian ways of knowing and learning are the foundation of language immersion methods. The Montessori pre-school method (described earlier in this report) organizes classrooms and learning resources in islands of interest. The Native Hawaiian language is pervasive and as the medium of the education, provides a framework, worldview and values.[180] The language nest is intentionally situated among parents and family, as parent Kaola Donnagy described:

> "*Aha Punana Leo* is a Family Based Education model---where for 8 hours per month, the parents provide in-kind time and expertise in trade for the tuition of their children; this has a value in that it creates ownership by the parents. The fund-raising and volunteer time solidifies the parents' commitment to language immersion. It also has the effect of full understanding of the purpose, for every single parent has taken a Hawaiian language class. All this creates a family attribute---using the Hawaiian language."[181]

The immersion experience is rich in music and action, for a full interaction by the children with Native Hawaiian artistic expression. Aspects of the language immersion methods are attributed to the French Canadian immersion tradition, as adapted by Dorothy Lazore of the Mohawk Survival School.[182]

The *Ke Kula Kaiapuni* methods follow a sixteen-part guideline that is comprehensive, for all subjects and grade levels. The guidelines cover the best practices, instructed from the traditional Hawaiian ways.[183] A *Ke Kula Kaiapuni Nawahi* teacher, Kehau Kalilii, described the

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[178] Op cit. Kawaiaea. Pp. 10-11. 07 and 09 January 2003.

[179] Hughes, Mililani. Interview. Hilo, Hawaii. NHLI Transcript, Pp. 9. 06 January 2003.

[180] Op cit. Hano Hano. Pp. 14. 09 January 2003.

[181] Op cit. Donnagy. Pp. 12. 05 January 2003.

[182] Op cit. Wilson, P. Pp. 12. 08 January 2003.

[183] Kamana, Kauanoe. *Ke Kula Kaiapuni Nawahi* Fourth and Fifth Grade Classroom Teacher and University of Hawaii Faculty Member. Hilo, Hawaii. NHLI Transcript, Pp. 17. 05 January 2003.

use of a classroom approach by Dr. Bernice McCarthy. "Format addresses the student learning styles and is a curriculum that must be made into your own. It must be adjusted to meet the needs of your school."[184] Fridays are devoted to experiential learning. All grade levels are assigned tasks in the school's gardens and groves, farm and aquaculture project. Field trips are taken into the Native Hawaiian community, as well.[185]

The children are from homes where Hawaiian or Pidgin is spoken, are half or more Hawaiian, and reside in the Hawaiian Homes (Native Hawaiian homes project).[186] From this background, the students bring with them many community connections. With this Hawaiian knowledge and language histories, the students are prone toward Hawaiian language learning.

The language immersion methods extend beyond the standard school boundaries. Parents enroll in Hawaiian language classes at the University.[187] Parents provide monthly service to the school. Also, parents commit to speaking Hawaiian at home with their children.[188] Community members take the leadership for Friday field experiences, both in the field locations and at school in the aquaculture installation, farm and garden project sites. Both the on-site and field based projects provide hands-on learning, and relationships with master farmers, aquaculture specialists and gardeners. Students gain a sense of community and responsibility for the care of land and water.[189]

The Native Hawaiian respect, hospitality and greeting traditions are incorporated into the school entry and into the classrooms. Each morning and afternoon, everyone congregates at the *Piko*, to acknowledge the significance of hospitality, reflect on and confirm daily understandings of the past and present.[190] The *Nawahi* fourth and fifth grade students enter a classroom, stepping up onto a large wooden platform, covering 75% of the floor. "The children enter the classroom as they would a traditional Hawaiian home; when they are ready, with respect, they sing a request and enter. Upon entering, the children find their own comfortable place. Learning can then begin."[191] The *kupuna* and family are

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[184] Kalili, Kehau. *Ke Kula Kaiapuni Nawahi* Science Teacher. Interview. Hilo, Hawaii. NHLI Transcript, Pp. 14. 07 January 2003.

[185] *Ke Kula Kaiapuni Nawahi* Student Guide. Interview. Hilo, Hawaii. NHLI Transcript, Pp. 12. 07 January 2003.

[186] Op cit. Wilson, P. Pp. 14. 08 January 2003.

[187] Op cit. Donnagy. Pp. 12. 05 January 2003.

[188] Ibid. Pp. 10.

[189] Op cit. *Ke Kula Kaiapuni Nawahi* Student Guide. Pp. 12. 06 January 2003.

[190] *Ke Kula 'O Nawahiokalani 'opu'u. Puki Alaka'I: Makahiki Kula* 2002-2003. *Ke Kula 'O Nawahiokalani 'opu'u*: Hilo, Hawaii. 2002. Pp. 11.

[191] Op cit. Kamana. Pp. 12. 06 January 2003.

acknowledged in the *Lumi Amui*, a special meeting room. Photos of students' *kupuna* and families, portraits of the Hawaiian royalty, and significant 19th Century Native Hawaiians are displayed in this room. Here is "a sense of spirituality, a nurtured and organic perspective of traditional knowledge, and evolving mature behavior; all culminate as the essence of being Hawaiian."[192]

The parents are effective learning partners in the schools and at home. The masters of special knowledge areas from the community mentor the children. The Friday experiences promote responsibility, relationships and hands-on learning. And, the Native Hawaiian structures promote respect, readiness and knowing.

Native Hawaiian Culture and Curriculum.

The Native Hawaiian culture is embedded into the curriculum in the language immersion pre-schools and schools. By far the richest language resource is the *Kumu*, the source or teacher. Certified and licensed, the language immersion teachers have impressive credentials. Formally and informally built capacities uniquely qualify them for this difficult assignment.[193] The parents are a second and rich resource of Hawaiian language and culture and enrich community and field based learning.[194] At the *Ke Kula Kaiapuni* Nawahi, family pictures and *kupuna*, grandparents are featured in the ancestor room. Teachers and students have times of dialogue, discussion and discipline here in the presence of their families' and ancestors' images.[195]

The school names illustrate Native Hawaiian history. For example, *Ke Kula 'O Nawahiokalani opu'u* is the name given the *Ke Kula Kaiapuni* school near Hilo. This name honors a politician and educator who lived in Hilo and influenced life in the Kingdom of Hawaii in the 19th Century. Students study the school's namesake, the issues in which he was involved and profile his era and leadership.[196] The Hawaiian Kingdom produced Hawaiian language materials for a comprehensive school system, during the 19th Century. These materials are available on-line, and are used each day by the *Ke Kula Kaiapuni* students. The *Aha Punana Leo*, Inc. is a statewide center for curriculum resource development for all grade levels. The center specializes in Hawaiian culture and the language immersion curriculum.

School buildings, grounds and rooms provide traditional Hawaiian values and knowledge. For example, the *Nawahi* school entryway is called the *piko* or umbilical cord,

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[192]Op cit. *Ke Kula 'O Nawahiokalani 'opu'u.* Pp. 15.

[193] Op cit. Kawaiaea. Pp. 11. 09 January 2003.

[194] Leiman, Verlie Ann. Interview. Honolulu, Hawaii. NHLI Transcript, Pp. 37. 09 January 2003.

[195] Op cit. Hughes. Pp. 16. 06 January 2003.

[196] Op cit. Kawaiaea. Pp. 16. 06 January 2003.

and symbolizes the beginning or birthplace. Over the *piko* archway, the teachers place an arrangement of plants to symbolize and communicate critical values to the students. Among the plants are: the candlenut---for enlightenment, the *iee* whose name is "yes!"--- For the "can do attitude," and the *oheeawahuna,* the flower of the Island of Hawaii --- for their island home. Each year, the plant arrangement is burned to ashes and used in the dyes that color the *Nawahi* graduates' sashes. [197]

The Native Hawaiian connection to land and water is uniquely situated in the Native Hawaiian identity and in the language immersion curriculum. The Native Hawaiian Education Council supports the land and water projects on the campuses. These are illustrated in the *Nawahi* farm, traditional gardens and groves, and aquaculture installations, and the students' interactive learning activities.[198] The *Ke Kula Kaiapuni Nawahi* student guide talked about his learning in the land and water project..

> *Ke Kula Kaiapuni Nawahi* instills in their students the responsibility of caring for the island, its land and water. As a student, I feel good about the "tomorrow" because the children of *Nawahi* know how to take care of this place and take care of the island.[199]

School faculty members and university students drew the entire math and science curriculum from Hawaiian cultural content and context.[200] Hawaiian art, dances and songs are integrated into the academic experience and in skills development.[201]

Language Teaching and Technology.

The *Ke Kula Kaiapuni* network has created on-line access to 25,000 pages of historic materials written in the Hawaiian language. From the 19th Century, these materials apply to many disciplines and grade levels. The *Ke Kula Kaiapuni Nawahi* student guide demonstrated the virtual library, via *Leoki.* The human anatomy charts in Hawaiian were in use in the tech lab, and the Hawaiian language based email system. A team of parents, students and a faculty member are constructing the virtual library site.[202] Hawaiian language courses are also available on-line, through the University of Hawaii – Hilo, College of Hawaiian Language. The makers of Apple Computers partnered with the *Aha Punana Leo* Center, and designed a Hawaiian translation capacity, a computer program that is simultaneously

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[197] Op cit. *Ke Kula Kaiapuni Nawahi* Student Guide. Pp. 17. 06 January 2003.

[198] Op cit. Kawaiaea. Pp. 15. 05 January 2003.

[199] Op cit. *Ke Kula Kaiapuni Nawahi* Student Guide. Pp. 16. 06 January 2003.

[200] Op cit. Kamana. Pp. 16. 06 January 2003.

[201] Op cit. Hughes. Pp. 16, 06 January 2003.

[202] Op cit. *Ke Kula Kaiapuni Nawahi* Student Guide. Pp. 16. 06 January 2003.

bilingual, in English and Hawaiian.[203] The university center produces CD-ROM based audio/video and plain print curriculum resources, plans to publish the Hawaiian "Lexicon Book" and will display information on Native Hawaiian astronomy.[204]

Native Ways of Knowing and Learning.

The Native Hawaiian language immersion schools rely on Native Hawaiian ways of knowing and learning. Master/apprentice relationships are built through the land and water projects, where masters of farming, gardening and aquaculture interact with students on Fridays.[205] Students have the chance to learn by doing and by observing. "The students visit the immediate community, along the coast of the island. The fish from the aquaculture tanks will be taken to the (traditional) fishponds for restocking. Nets are used along with the Hawaiian traditional protocol. This way, the children learn ways to gather the fish, take fish to the fish ponds, and keep the conditions prime."[206] Teacher Kauanoe Kamana described their responsibilities as language immersion faculty, regarding Native ways of knowing and learning:

> ...to determine those things that make us especially Hawaiian. *Mauli* is the spiritual, intuitive, behavior, actions, traditions, knowledge and language. The consideration is based on old understandings to today's experiences, to the best practices. *Homua* pertains to the family and community. To be alive---is the purpose of knowing Hawaiian.[207]

The Native Hawaiian parents and extended family members, especially grandparents, are designed into the ways of knowing and learning, for parents provide 8 hours of service to the schools each month.[208] *Aha Punana Leo* teacher Naiilima Gaison pointed to "the music of the Native Hawaiian families of past generations, it conveys meaning at numerous levels, and is a key aspect of Hawaiian culture. Our Hawaiian music helps you acquire the thoughts of the music writer, and ...we have many old songs." [209] The Native Hawaiian oral history and literature are brought into the weekly field experiences.

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[203] Op cit. Donnagy. Pp. 17. 05 January 2003.

[204] Op cit. Kimura. Pp. 18. 05 January 2003.

[205] Op cit. *Ke Kula Kaiapuni Nawahi* Student Guide. Pp. 18. 06 January 2003.

[206] Ibid. Pp. 18.

[207] Op cit. Kamana. Pp. 18. 06 January 2003.

[208] Op cit. Walk, Kaumealani. Pp. 19. 10 January 2003

[209] Op cit. Gaison. Pp. 22. 07 January 2003.

The community based language immersion project of the Brigham Young University – Hawaii integrates the design, carving, construction and sailing of a traditional *wa'a*. Kavika Eskaran is the artist and carver of the BYU – Hawaii double hulled sailing *wa'a*, canoe. Eskaran described the students and community role in the *wa'a*, canoe, building:

> I put out the call for help into Center for Hawaiian Studies and the local community, and hundreds of people answered the call. They learned to use the adzes shaped like the stone adzes of the old times. There is a spiritual part to the *wa'a* carving…at every level there is *kuleana*. This is the spirit part.[210]

The quest to sail the *wa'a*, canoe, has been carried out at Brigham Young University – Hawaii. The Center for Hawaiian Studies formed a partnership between the students and members of the faculty with the Laie, Hawaii community. Together, they sailed this 57 foot long double hulled ocean going *wa'a*. In November of 2002, the sailing crew successfully took the vessel out into the ocean. Their preparation was complex, and entailed extensive oral history and literature exploration, mentoring by elders, team building, physical training, safety procedures, traditional fishing and ocean protocols, studies of the ocean currents, and Native Hawaiian navigational astronomy.[211]

Similarly, the *Nawahi* high school boys constructed a men's lodge on the school grounds under a master builder, a local Native Hawaiian elder. The *Nawahi* student guide said:

> We worked together on the first development at the *Nawahi* grounds, on a men's lodge. Our mentor told us to gather "*aa aa*" lava, the roughest lava. So we did that. After we gathered it and laid it in the ground, he directed us to go out once again and find the roughest lava. He gave us directions to the place. He was selective. The roughest lava, laid in as the foundation, will endure earthquakes, he told us. That was several years ago. This year's sophomores are building a men's lodge. They have a lot of work ahead of them." [212]

The Native Hawaiian language immersion schools have successfully embedded Native ways of knowing and learning.

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[210] Eskaran, Kavika. Interview. BYU Hawaii, Carver with the Center for Hawaiian Studies. Laie, Hawaii. NHLI Transcript, Pp. 20. 10 January 2003.

[211] Walk, Kamoa. Interview. BYU Hawaii, Professor of Hawaiian Language with the Center for Hawaiian Studies. Laie, Hawaii. NHLI Transcript, Pp. 20. 10 January 2003.

[212] Op cit. *Ke Kula Kaiapuni Nawahi* Student Guide. Pp. 18. 06 January 2003.

Literacy and Native Hawaiian Language Immersion.

The development of literacy is a focus for the Native Hawaiian language immersion schools. Literacy is developed in the Hawaiian language, utilizing the broadly adopted Hawaiian language orthography. Hawaiian literacy goes back to the 19th Century, when Hawaii was an independent nation and education in the Hawaiian language was the complete schooling system. Then, Hawaii was among the most literate nations of the world. [213] The literacy development among language immersion students is documented in student success in their transfers from K-8 to mainstream high schools and from high school graduation into the universities. [214]

In addition to literacy, the language immersion schools build academic English knowledge in their students. English instruction is started in the 5th grade, and is a daily class thereafter. This learning combines with their daily English speaking experience in Hawaii.[215] The *Nawahi* principal reflected on student English achievement, "there is an exceptional writing ability I have seen, among *Nawahi* students, a great facility for metaphor and poetry." [216] Moreover, the assistant principal at *Ke Kula Kaiapuni* 'o *Anuenue* discussed their goal for the students there, "*Anuenue* has the goal of having students pursue a college education; the parents want a pre-college curriculum." [217]

Language Immersion Empowered by Parents.

Native Hawaiian parents were the activists, organizers and initial teachers for the language immersion pre-schools, the language nests.[218] The language nest – *Aha Punana Leo*, is a name chosen to describe the baby birds, in the nest, being fed by the mother bird. The *Aha Punana Leo* centers are essentially parent-initiated. The *Aha Punana Leo* CEO Namaka Rawlins reflected, "parents learned to put together curriculum, they struggled to have a language nest, to utilize resources, so precious, resources…we never had enough."[219]

By design, parents serve the *Aha Punana Leo* where their child is enrolled, and take Hawaiian language courses Kaola Donnagy, recounted his experience, "the parents provide in-kind (time and effort) in trade for the tuition for their children---it's called family based education; and for me, the more I was there, the more I wanted to be there, involved with the children."[220]

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[213] Op cit. *Aha Punana Leo* Public Relations Officer. Pp. 20. 07 January 2003.

[214] Op cit. Hano Hano. Pp. 14. 09 January 2003.

[215] Op cit. *Aha Punana Leo* Public Relations Officer. Pp 20. 07 January 2003.

[216] Op cit. Hughes. Pp. 29. 06 January 2003.

[217] Op cit. Leiman. Pp. 15. 06 January 2003.

[218] Op cit. Kamana. Pp. 21. 05 January 2003.

[219] Op cit. Rawlins. Pp. 21. 05 January 2003.

[220] Op cit. Donnagy. Pp. 21. 05 January 2003.

And parents agree to speak the language in their homes with their children, so the language learning is a holistic experience. The parent's role is integral to the language immersion design, because parents serve in the school, take language classes, transport the children to school, make and create curriculum materials, and maintain language continuity for their children at home.

The Native Hawaiian family is an extended one, and is a larger network of aunties, uncles and grandparents, *kupuna*. As a result of the extended family, the family support network takes in a broad part of the community. Extended family members "help with bringing students to school, they work with the *Kumu* in the classroom, they paint walls and doors at the school, plant taro root in the gardens, and they are a great source of encouragement."[221] For the students, this interactive learning with extended family members and the greater community enriches learning. The Hawaii Guidelines for Culturally Healthy and Responsive Learning Environment sets forth the elements of Hawaiian language immersion education. Among the sixteen guidelines, the eighth relates to the learner and the community:

> (Guideline) Engage in activities independently or collaboratively with community members to perpetuate traditional ways of knowing, learning, teaching and leading to sustain cultural knowledge and resources within the learning community. (Four outcomes of thirteen are provided here).

1) Learners are able to participate in subsistence activities with family and other community members and learn stories and lessons associated with those activities (farming, gathering, fishing, hunting).
2) Learners are able too participate in apprenticeships with cultural experts in the community.
3) Learners are able to honor and respect traditional conflict resolution skills.
4) Learners are able to acquire in-depth cultural knowledge through active participation and meaningful interaction with *kupuna*, *kumu*, and *loea* (elders, teachers and skilled persons).[222]

The guidelines are laid out for the "five groupings in the entire learning community: the *haumana* (learners), *kumu* (educators), *kula* (school/institutions), *ohauna* (families) and *kaiaulu* (communities)." The guidelines can be viewed in their enitrety on the web at <http://www.olelo.hawaii.edu/dual/nhmo>.

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[221] Op cit. Leiman. Pp. 23. 09 January 2003.

[222] Native Hawaiian Education Council and *Ka Haka Ula O Ke elikolani*, UH-Hilo. Produced by Kawaiaea, Keiki. Na Honua Mauli Ola: Hawaii Guidelines for Culturally Healthy and Responsive Learning Environments. 2002. Pp. 21.

The Native Hawaiian family bonds are strengthened through the language immersion school model, the family based education model. An *Aha Punana Leo* parent reflected on this impact, "My involvement with the school solidified my commitment to language immersion. It has the effect of full understanding of purpose. It creates a family attribute, of Hawaiian language speaking and education."[223] Peter Hano Hano commented on his experience with his daughters, who were students at *Aha Punana Leo* and *Ke Kula Kaiapuni* o *Anuenue*. He said, "there is bonding with family that happens and there is a flexibility built into the language immersion students, an ability for them to go anywhere."[224] The unity of experience in this family based model creates family belonging and attributes of responsibility and respect. Namaka Rawlins commented on the language nest experience, "our centers are owned by the parents and community and there has never been any graffiti at our schools, none."[225] These statements bear witness to the power of family based education in Native Hawaiian *Aha Punana Leo and Ke Kula Kaiapuni.*

Kupuna, The Elders Role in Language Immersion.

Native Hawaiian elders were an essential aspect of language immersion, particularly in the earliest years of the movement. In 1980, there were 2000 Hawaiian-speaking elders.[226] The *kupuna* contributed many hours of service to the *Aha Punana Leo* centers. They made audio and videotapes, conveyed oral literature and history, and told their own narratives, all in the Hawaiian language.[227] The works of the *kupuna* are a wealth of resources for the language nests and schools. Still, today, the *Aha Punana Leo* centers retain an elder, for advice and direction in the language usage.[228] *Aha Punana Leo* teacher Naiilima Gaison expressed the respect he has about the *kupuna*, "Here at our Punana Leo we have an elder Hawaiian woman; she was raised speaking Hawaiian and she is the pearl of the people, a woman of the word."[229] Hawaiian elders have provided immeasurable service to the language immersion centers and schools.

The children make new and special connections to the Hawaiian-speaking elders. Kamauliani Walk, professor of Hawaiian language at BYU – Hawaii, former parent and *Kumu* at *Anuenue* described her experience: "My mother speaks to my children in Hawaiian;

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[223] Op cit. Donnagy. Pp. 21. 05 January 2003.

[224] Op cit. Hano Hano. Pp. 20. 09 January 2003.

[225] Op cit. Rawlins. Pp. 20. 05 January 2003.

[226] Op cit. Kamana. Pp. 7. 05 January 2003.

[227] Op cit. Donnagy. Pp. 20. 05 January 2003.

[228] Op cit. Kamana. Pp. 20. 06 January 2003.

[229] Op cit. Gaison. Pp. 22. 06 January 2003.

this is a reunion between my mother and my children and it is something to behold."[230] Language immersion founder Larry Kimura expressed inordinate respect for the *kupuna*, "We cannot ask grandparents and elders to raise children again. They have already raised their children."[231] The *kupuna* were not involved in the centers as teachers or aids, but as honored sources of knowledge and advice on the Hawaiian language. The language immersion experts built a depth of fluency in the Hawaii language through learning the language from the elders.

Language Immersion Funding and Policy Development.

Funding for the language immersion language nests and schools has been tenuous right from the start. The funding for the *Aha Punana Leo* is "through tuition and grants, primarily under the Native Hawaiian Education Act (federal funds). In 1986, following parental and community pressure, the state opened one year k/1 trial classrooms in two English medium schools, in a partnership with the *Aha Punana Leo*."[232] In the first decade, *Aha Punana Leo* concentrated on assuring that a new grade would be added each year in the first two Hawaiian streams in English medium sites and with opening new Punana Leo preschools.

Early curriculum development was a product of *kumu* and parent creativity, cutting and pasting, bringing family pictures and community collaboration for learning experiences. In the late 1980's, the state funded *Aha Punana Leo*, Inc. to prepare fix classrooms, recruit teachers and children, and provide curriculum materials. Recently, major new developments have included technology applications, videos, and specialized printing.[233]

The biggest hurdle was obtaining total immersion sites, rather than Hawaiian streams in English medium schools, and from grades 7-12. In the 1990's, pressure from parents and supporters brought about the creation of *Ke Kula Kaiapuni o Anuenue* School in Honolulu.[234] This is the only total Hawaiian immersion school run entirely by the State as a public school. Students are brought from all over the Island of Oahu to attend *Anuenue*. The *Anuenue* assistant principal recalled, "parents have come to hang new doors, paint walls, plant the gardens and develop the grounds around the stream that flows through the school grounds." *Anuenue* converted school district shop and storage areas into a functional educational facility; a community-based effort.

The *Ke Kula Kaiapuni* schools' funding is mixed among public, charter and university lab support. Among the 22 schools, seven are charter schools under a federal charter

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[230] Op cit. Walk, Kamauliani. Pp. 20. 10 January 2003.

[231] Op cit. Kimura. Pp. 11. 05 January 2003.

[232] Op cit. Wilson, P. Pp. 27. 08 January 2003.

[233] Ibid. Pp. 2. September 2002.

[234] Ibid. Pp. 3. September 2002.

designation, with shared federal and state support.[235] The *Ke Kula Kaiapuni Nawahi* is a K-6 charter school and the grades 7-12 are a section of the Hilo Public School (middle and high school). The entire school, K-12, is a lab school of the University of Hawaii – Hilo, College of Hawaiian Language.[236] The federal act, "The Hawaiian Education Act" supported the purchase of the land and property for *Nawahi* and the subsequent land and water projects, and the curriculum and materials center. The *Nawahi* funding profile illustrates the complexity of partnerships necessitated for Hawaiian language immersion school operations.

Funding shortfalls were noted by Pila Wilson, "there are shortcomings in funding. resources are needed to train teachers, support teachers' salaries, expand teaching faculty numbers, develop curriculum and learning resources, train parents, publish and communicate language issues to the Native Hawaiian community, purchase books and materials acquisition and upgrade and expand school facilities."[237] Annually, the *Aha Punana Leo* and *Ke Kula Kaiapuni* leaders present these needs to the Hawaiian State Legislature, to the State Department of Education and to the U.S. Congress.[238] Congressional initiatives, since the 1980's, have included the Hawaiian Education Act, the Native Languages Act and the Bilingual Education Act. Among these, the Hawaiian Education Act has provided key resources to support statewide projects for curriculum resources development and the land and water project.[239] The Native Languages Act provided legal strength to Native language rights, but for Hawaiian, no monies. Bilingual Education of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act helped to develop curriculum and learning resources. But while these funds are significant in sum, divided by 22 schools and 13 language nests, the dollar amounts are far less significant. Areas of serious need are evident.

The Lannan Foundation of Santa Fe, New Mexico, the Ford Foundation of New York City, and the W. K. Kellogg Foundation of Battlecreek, Michigan are among the few private sector institutions that have supported Hawaiian language immersion. A few local foundations have assisted the network. The Kamehameha Trust, a trust comprised of the 19th Century Hawaiian Royalty lands, has supported *Ke Kula Kaiapuni* summer sessions at *Nawahi and Anuenue* and small-scale projects at other schools.[240]

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[235] Op cit. Kawaiaea. Pp. 10. 05 January 2003.

[236] Op cit. Hughes. Pp. 13. 06 January 2003.

[237] Op cit. Kamana. Pp. 27. 07 January 2003.

[238] Op cit. Wilson, P. Pp. 33. 07 January 2003.

[239] Ibid. Pp. 39. 09 January 2003.

[240] Ibid. Pp. 39. 09 January 2003.

Language Immersion and Educational Achievement.

The twenty-year history of language immersion *Aha Punana Leo* and *Ke Kula Kaiapuni* has built an impressive record of educational achievement. Student achievements are a tribute to the comprehensive and extraordinary work of the educators, students and their families. Language immersion 8th grade students and high school graduates have a distinguished academic record. The first *Ke Kula Kaiapuni* graduating class in 1999 had several members who met university admissions requirements. One member completed a bachelor's degree in Hawaiian language and a teaching license![241] *Ke Kula Kaiapuni* eighth grade students have been admitted to the Kamehameha School, a private school that admits only the top 12% of the applicants, based on test scores.[242]

The language immersion network relies on measures appropriate to the Native Hawaiian knowledge and within the language tradition. The administration of standardized tests has been prohibited, due to the English language and mainstream culture basis of these tests. While the testing companies have offered test translation into Hawaiian, the absence of Native Hawaiian content and context is a glaring shortcoming in these tests.[243] The testing prohibition has drawn criticism from state education officials and is a source of controversy for the network. Still, the case for language immersion student's achievement is formidable, through tracking, and attests to the educational effectiveness of language immersion and the comprehensive Native Hawaiian design.

3. Indigenous People's Language Immersion

Polynesian Indigenous groups have both contributed to and allied with the Hawaiian language immersion movement. Two Maori scholars, Amati Reedy and Kimoki, were associated with the activists, parents and educators at the university and with the *Aha Punana Leo* during the 1980's. Reedy studied Hawaiian language at the UH Manoa; and following his graduation, returned home to be appointed Head of Maori Affairs in New Zealand. Upon a visit back to Hawaii, he challenged the university Hawaiian language lecturers to "do something about the vitality of the Native Hawaiian language."[244] Kimoki, a Maori scientist, came to the university volcano institute. Kimoki had connections to the international Polynesian groups working on language preservation issues. Now, formally organized, the Secretariat for Polynesian Languages has an international role in Polynesian language lexicon development. Kimoki, a professor at Waikato University in New Zealand, assisted in making

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[241] Op cit. Kawaiaea. Pp. 39. 05 January 2003.

[242] Op cit. Walk, Kamauliani. Pp. 41. 10 January 2003.

[243] Op cit. Wilson, P. Pp. 34. 08 January 2003.

[244] Op cit. Wilson. Pp. 34. 08 January 2003.

contacts for faculty and student exchanges.[245] Today, professor Kimura of the UH – Hilo serves as the Secretary General of the Secretariat.[246]

Relationships with North American Native groups have developed over the past decade. The Native Hawaiians have collaborated with the Native American Languages Institute, the National Association of Bilingual Education and the Piegan Institute of Browning, Montana.[247] The University of Hawaii – Hilo, College of Hawaiian Language and Western Washington University, School of Education are cooperating in the publication of an Indigenous language immersion manual.[248] Many Indigenous visitors and observers visit the *Aha Punana Leo* and *Ke Kula Kaiapuni*, from the Maori of New Zealand, the Sami of Norway, Aboriginal People of Australia, and the Ojibway of Minnesota and Wisconsin – USA. A long-term relationship exists with the Mohawk people of Canada and their language immersion leader Dorothy Lazore. Joint curriculum projects are displayed in the Center at the UH-Hilo, illustrate international Indigenous partnerships.[232] Without a doubt, Native Hawaiian language immersion is an effective model for all Indigenous people and a center for instruction in methods, teacher training, curriculum development and family based education.

During the past three years, based on the W. K. Kellogg Native American Higher Education Initiative, international Indigenous higher educators became associated. From this acquaintance, a consortium of Indigenous and tribally controlled colleges and universities has been created. The consortium joins together the thirty two tribally controlled colleges and universities of the United States, the three *Te Wananga* of New Zealand, the fifty-eight First Nations Cultural Colleges of Canada, Indigenous colleges of the Sami of Norway and Aboriginal serving institution of Australia. The consortium headquarters has been opened in New Zealand, at Otaki on the *Te Whare Wananga o Awanuirangi*. The consortium is called the **World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium**. Issues of common concern and priority include quality and accreditation issues, expansion of Indigenous educational rights worldwide, and the development of educational opportunities for Indigenous and Native communities. Information on the WINHEC organization is posted on-line at <http://www.twoa.ac.nz>.[249]

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[245] Ibid. Pp. 31. 08 January 2003.

[246] Op cit. Kimura. Pp. 9. 05 January 2003.

[247] Op cit. Wilson, P. Pp. 30. 08 January 2003.

[248] Ibid. Pp. 27. 08 January 2003.

[249] World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium. Web Site at http://www.twoa.ac.nz. 2002.

F. CONCLUSIONS

Native American Language Immersion, Recent Development. Native American Language Immersion is a recent phenomenon in Indigenous, Native and tribal communities in the United States. Fifty Native American groups are currently engaged in language immersion; planning and operation. These Native language teaching and learning efforts include year-round schools, summer and seasonal camps, and weekend retreats and seminars. The schools, camps and programs rely exclusively on the tribal language as the teaching and learning medium.

- The Navajo community school of Rough Rock, Arizona, has successfully provided their children language immersion for over twenty years.

- Native family groups and elders have organized Native American language immersion schools among the Blackfeet, Ojibway and the Assiniboine/Sioux people.

- Summer and seasonal camps and training seminars have built language understanding for participants of all ages for Northern Cheyenne, Ojibway and Crow children.

- Language immersion pre-schools currently serve several hundred children from the Ojibway, Cree, Assiniboine and Ute nations.

- Tribal language commissions and cultural authorities have mandated cultural and language learning, that includes leadership training, language teaching and certification.

- Master/apprenticeship relationships have developed for culture and language learning among the Salish Kootenai of Montana, the Northern Cheyenne of Montana, and the Three Affiliated Tribes of North Dakota, the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara.

For indigenous people, these Native American language immersion activities hold great promise in the development of children, youth, family and community.

Compelling Reasons for Language Immersion. Native language educators and activists have taken up the difficult and urgent work of Native language preservation with devotion and commitment.

- **First**, there are those who recognize the serious rate of language loss and have made a lifetime commitment to tribal language restoration, for the vitality of the tribal nation and its future.
- **Second**, Native American children and youth have exhibited stagnant educational achievement (among the poorest achievement of all American ethnic groups).

Native language immersion has demonstrated remarkable promise in participants' educational achievement.

- A **third** source of motivation to Native language immersion is the greater cultural and language preservation or revitalization effort that strengthens and rebuilds the Native community.
- **Fourth**, culture and language teaching and participation positively correlate with Native student retention rates.
- **Fifth**, Native leaders foresee a world in urgent need of Native perspectives or world-view in areas including child-rearing, natural resources management and family and community development.
- **Finally,** there are a few activists who are motivated to this work by its political potential to allay the centuries old history of injury and subjugation of Native people.

This study has analyzed these factors, and delineated, from the voices of Native language immersion teachers, parents and students, the attributes of Native American and Indigenous language immersion schools, camps and projects.

Native Language Characteristics. Native language immersion is a practice or methodology of language learning that concentrates on communication, exclusively in the Native language. Total Physical Response, TPR, is the primary methodology for the Native language immersion classrooms, camps and projects. Virtually all of the Native language immersion activities are carried out in the context of the tribal or indigenous culture. Many immersion schools are built and furnished after "gramma's home" and pattern their methods from Native grand-parents ways of knowing and learning. The teachers, educators and activists have diverse backgrounds; by profession/vocation, they are teachers, bus drivers, retired BIA administrators, Head Start teachers, ranchers and more. These educators and activists have a driving, even compelling commitment to language learning and a well-spring of enthusiasm for their students' and participants' potential for speaking.... just speaking ...communicating in the tribal language. The students are toddlers and children, middle and high school students, young adults, parents of young children, adults and elders. Where immersion is happening, all ages of Native people are pursuing the goal of speaking their Native language.

Tribal Colleges and Universities. The tribal colleges and universities of this country play a leading role in Native language immersion. They are engaging their entire communities, through college student development, community-based projects, school-aged educational services and early childhood education opportunities. The language immersion approaches are experiential, and place tribal elders, scholars, at the center of the language immersion activities. Children, youth and college students hold a strategic place among the generations of Native people, and with language knowledge, they are positively influential as siblings, parents of young children, children of elder parents and grandparents. The tribal colleges recognize the language and culture as central to the education of the people, for their health and well-being.

Language Immersion, A Challenge. The Native language immersion activities have become a significant part of Native life in over **fifty locations across the nation**. For these communities, educators and activists have designed and implemented language learning experiences that are unprecedented in their positive impact on education, individual and family strengthening, intergenerational partnerships and tribal health and wellbeing. As a relatively new educational phenomenon, it is not yet a movement. The educators and activists have developed unique and custom designed strategies to deliver Native language immersion. While activists collaborate locally and occasionally between projects, the commitment, creativity, expertise, courage and fortitude that must be present in the schools and camps preclude a "get on the band wagon" potential. Native language immersion is difficult work; work fit only for those few whose devotion to the tribal language (for whatever reason) is unstoppable. This work requires knowing the tribal language and perseverance beyond all measure.

Funding Issues. The **support** for language immersion is problematic. Language immersion costs money, money that most tribal groups can hardly spare in the face of demanding issues in education, health, housing and natural resources management. Federal funds support language preservation, but is seriously insufficient, short term, and only incidentally supportive of language immersion. Public schools regulations and requirements pose difficult hurdles, although Native Hawaiian language immersion has acquired a place in the public school structure, both directly and through the charter school structure. The Diné and Ojibway people have set this example, through tribal and community based initiatives and the new federal charter school structure.

Private sector support has been instrumental in the development of language immersion; some language immersion schools accept private funding only. Native groups who seek private funding for language immersion face formidable challenges:

- Native American language immersion and its meaning to American Indian communities is relatively unknown to foundation decision-makers. Native language immersion is making a difference in education, quality of life, student retention and family and community strength. All these factors are meaningful.

- Native communities must have contacts with the private sector. Foundation program officers must somehow make effective connections with language immersion educators. This is a special challenge since many are tribal elders and traditionalists.

- Language immersion schools and camps need long-term and less categorical support. Language immersion education takes time to develop, perhaps five to seven years, just to get started. Broad guidelines that respect and appreciate the Native methods, and interdisciplinary nature of language immersion will be needed for a "fit" into the foundation programs. Native language immersion is education, culture, language, community, family, leadership children and youth programming.

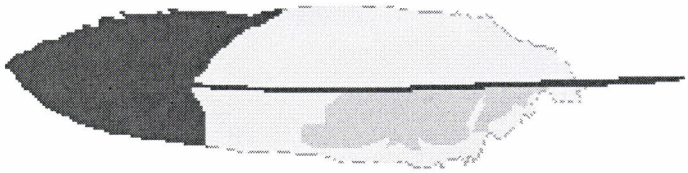
- Native communities have urgent social, educational and economic issues and can not rely on tribal resources. Matching fund requirements are difficult to make.

- Only fifty of the nation's 500 federally recognized tribes have profitable casino enterprises. Language immersion school are unlikely to come from "casino tribes." Misperceptions exist about "casino wealth," that causes trouble for fund-raisers and American Indians, generally. Some Indian tribes are wealthy, but the grand majority are remarkable impoverished.

- American Indians are less than 1% of the American population, a proportionately small number. Still, 1.8 million American Indian people should not suffer invisibility. Studies do exist, data is available, and informed decision making is possible.

Successful Native and Indigenous Models. Native American language immersion schools, camps and activities have benefited from the language resurgence and immersion models of the **Native Hawaiians and the Maori of New Zealand**. During the past two decades, both Hawaiian and Maori communities have created and implemented language immersion pre-schools, schools and colleges. Indigenous language immersion has made astounding records of educational achievement among the children, youth and adult participants in language immersion education schools. Language immersion clearly has a critical role in educational Indigenous and Native American development.

Most intriguing about the Native and Indigenous language immersion models is the clear and positive connection between Native and Indigenous language and culture with educational achievement.[250] Native and tribal communities ascribe to this principle, through the language immersion schools, camps, and community/family based projects. Now, Native and Indigenous peoples can strengthen the practice and validate this language immersion model, for the essentiality of culture and language as a function of knowing and learning. Knowing and learning are recognized as the foundation of health and well-being for all human communities, around the world. **Native American Language Immersion is a source of hope for Native America; it is innovative education for Native children and families.**



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Crow Indian Educator of Lodge Grass, Montana

Dr. Janine Pease-Pretty On Top is an Indian educator from Crow Country. Janine is Crow and Hidatsa Indian, enrolled in the Crow Tribe of Indians. Over the past 30 years, she has served in adult and higher education leadership positions in Indian Country, in a four-state area of the Northwest, primarily in Montana. For 18 years, she served as president of Little Big Horn College in Crow Agency, Montana. In 2001, she established her own educational consulting firm, specializing in American Indian higher education. Janine resides in Lodge Grass with her niece, BethYana, and two grandchildren, Tillie and J'Ree.

She holds two bachelor's degrees in the fields of sociology and anthropology from Central Washington University, and master's and doctorate degrees in adult and higher education from Montana State University, Bozeman. She has been awarded six honorary doctorates, and is a featured speaker among tribal colleges and universities and other universities in the Northern Plains and Upper Midwest.

Among awards she has won are the National Indian Educator of the Year in 1990, the MacArthur Fellowship (better known as the "Genius Award"), and the ACLU Jeanette Rankin Award for work in American Indian voting rights. She currently holds an appointment to the National Advisory Council on Indian Education for the United States and serves as presiding officer for the Districting and Apportionment Commission of the State of Montana. She served for two years on the Indian Nations At Risk Task Force from 1989 to 1991, a position she was appointed to by the U.S. Secretary of Education.

During her term as president of Little Big Horn College, the institution achieved its initial accreditation. Additionally, she has served three terms as the American Indian Higher Education Consortium's board president and six terms as board treasurer. Janine is a founding board member of the American Indian College Fund, and in on the White House Initiative on Tribal Colleges and Universities' Board of Advisors, a position to which she was appointed by President Bill Clinton in 1996.

As a Crow Indian woman, Janine participates in the Nighthawk Dance Society of the Lodge Grass District on the Crow Indian Reservation. She is a member and child of the Big Lodge/New Lodge Clan and has the traditional name *Uk Cheewahgeeday Eeshitchash* (Loves to Pray). Janine cares for her grandchildren and enjoys family – her parents, Margery and Benjamin Pease of Billings, and her two children, also of Billings – Roses Windy Boy and Vernon Windy Boy. Among her favorite things to do are camping at Crow Fair and preparing/preserving traditional foods and herbs.

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