

ADULT MICRONESIAN PERCEPTIONS OF COLLEGE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENTS

by

L. ROBERT BARBER, JR.

(Under the Direction of Bradley C. Courtenay)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to understand how culture shapes adult Micronesian college students' perceptions of college classroom/learning environments. The research focused on the experiences of adult Micronesian students attending the University of Guam that identified: social/cultural factors shaping the perceptions of classroom environment, influences within the classroom environment that either promote or inhibit learning, and factors other than culture outside the classroom that influenced perceptions of college classroom learning environments.

This study used a qualitative interview research design. Thirteen adult Micronesian University of Guam students were interviewed using a semi-structured guided interview process. This study utilized a purposeful sampling procedure in order to obtain the broadest possible range of Micronesian cultural perspectives on college classroom environments.

Four areas of Micronesian social/cultural norms were identified by the participants as shaping perceptions in the classroom environment: Communal nature of knowledge transfer, traditional methods of knowledge transfer, social hierarchy based on age, gender and status, and the prominence of group membership and relations (being average or not standing out).

Participants identified four factors in the classroom environment that promote learning: A

supportive instructor, a hospitable learning environment, interactive and experiential instructional approaches, and a relevant curriculum. Three factors in the classroom environment were identified as obstacles to learning: Cultural communication protocols (lead to caution or silence in public gatherings); lecture as the only instructional approach; and incompetent instructors. Money was the only factor outside the classroom environment other than culture identified as influencing their perceptions/behavior.

From the findings four conclusions are evident: a) Micronesian students' cultural heritage encourages behavioral expectations that are incongruent with some underlying assumptions of U.S. college classroom environments. b) A supportive instructor can overcome the self inhibiting pressures students feel from Micronesian cultural communication protocols. c) Assessment of classroom environments should be sensitive to the cultural orientations of collectivist, relationship nurturing, and high power distance societies and the role of experiential learning.

INDEX WORDS: Adult education, College Classroom Environments, Higher Education Classroom, Culture, Micronesian Culture, Qualitative Research, Learning Environments,

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DEDICATION

This dedication is to three women in my life: Mom, my wife Rel, and Aunt Virginia. My mother early in my life noted that I was cursed with wanderlust. A driving force behind my entering the doctoral program at UGA was so that this wayward son could come home and spend time with his mother. This was accomplished and I will treasure those last years with her for the rest of my life.

In my wanderings on a remote and distant island I met a merchant ship captain/gentleman farmer's daughter. Her inner strength, compassion, kindness and exotic beauty caught my eye and heart. My courtship was successful, she gave me her heart and agreed to share her life (to the amazement of all who knew us) and thus was my fate shaped and fortune made, my life since has been truly blessed. Through this process she has been my strongest supporter, and for all the time and resources she has given to this effort I will be eternally grateful. A merchant captain's daughter and a wandering South Georgia boy, what a pair we make, what comes next will be joy to behold. (Especially sweet free from the albatross of an uncompleted doctoral program.)

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

As our world becomes ever more interconnected, individual mobility and communication across national borders increases. A result for educators is a growing diversity of learner cultures, worldviews, and learning contexts. Successful instructional efforts depend on both instructor identification of the multitude of influences contributing to each learning context and instructor flexibility in matching pedagogical methods and techniques to each context. In the face of this diversity of cultures and contexts, where may an instructor find guidance in the creation of optimal conditions for learning?

One approach is through a social-environment perspective that examines the components comprising the classroom context including the teacher and student behaviors and the teacher-student interactions and the student-student interactions. The literature on classroom environments provides a theoretical frame for examining these and other dimensions of the classroom context. This perspective emphasizes the importance of identifying the dimensions that contribute to a learner-environment fit to promote student satisfaction and achievement.

Classroom/learning environments have been studied extensively. Central to the development of this literature is the theoretical model of human environments developed by Moos (1979a) and applied to classroom environments. Moos examined student perceptions of classroom environments for K-12 classes. Researchers have adapted this work to adult and higher education environments (Darkenwald & Valentine, 1986; Davis, 2006; Fraser & Treagust, 1986; Oliva, 2003; Thomas, 2004). Recognizing the potential influence of culture, Fisher and

Waldrup (2002) drew on this literature to develop an instrument designed to assess culturally sensitive dimensions in high school science learning environments.

Classroom Environments

Moos (1979a) identified three domains of influences shaping the learning environment that are key to assessment: the relationship domain (type and intensity of personal relationships, mutual support and involvement), the personal development domain (personal growth and self-enhancement), and the system maintenance and system changes domain (order, clarity of expectations, control and flexibility of environment). One product of his work is the Classroom Environment Scale (CES), which measures students' perceptions of the classroom environment. This instrument has been used to develop courses to match students' learning environment preferences, for course and instructor evaluation, instructor development, program planning, and to assist students in developing adaptive strategies.

Many of the research studies that have built on his original work have examined influences within these three domains by either applying his instrument or through development and application of new assessment instruments using his model as a starting point for new contexts like adult education (Darkenwald & Valentine, 1986). The literature building on Moos's (1979a) work is dominated by quantitative research within western classroom contexts, frequently K-12. This body of research uses language and concepts that have meaning within these contexts.

Moos's CES instrument or similar instruments have been used within K-12 environments to study associations between student outcomes and perceptions of classroom environment (Fisher & Fraser, 1983; Moos & Moos, 1978; Moos & Trickett, 1987); perceived classroom environment variables as criteria for curricular evaluation (Fraser, 1979; Welch & Walberg,

1972); and differences between student and teacher perceptions of classroom environment (Fisher & Fraser, 1981; Moos 1979b). While these are just a few of the studies that make up an enormous body of literature on classroom environments in the K-12 setting, some of their common findings illustrate the importance of this body of research.

The studies on classroom environment as criteria for evaluation provide support for the belief that the classroom environment dimensions do have a strong influence on students' achievement of both cognitive and attitudinal goals (Fraser, 1986). For example, Fisher and Frazer (1983) found that classroom order and organization have a positive influence on student achievement in Australian junior high school science classes. Studies using classroom environment variables in evaluation of educational changes and innovations often reveal changes in the classroom environment even when outcome variables show little change (Fraser, 1986b). Studies examining the difference between student and teacher perceptions of actual and preferred classroom environments consistently supported two findings. One is that both teachers and students prefer a more favorable classroom environment than what they perceive as the actual environment. The second is that teachers consistently view the same classroom environment more favorably than their students do (Fraser, 1986b; Moos 1979). The K-12 research into classroom environments has led to many economical hand-scorable instruments that make practical application possible within the western K-12 classroom context (Aldridge & Fraser, 2000; Fisher & Fraser, 1981; Fraser, 2002; Taylor, Fraser & Fisher, 1997). But what is appropriate for western K-12 contexts may not be appropriate for other contexts.

Moos (1979a) identified the human aggregate as a significant influence on the social climate of classrooms. An assumption that helps explain the human aggregate is that "the character of an environment depends in part on the typical characteristics of its members" (p. 8).

Consequently a guiding principle underlying Moos's work is the assumption of the importance of environment assessment. In operationalizing this assumption he notes that, "the educational setting must first be adequately conceptualized before it's impact on students' attitudes and behavior is evaluated" (p. 20).

When classroom environmental settings undergo substantial change, the dimensions or influences within the new environment may need to be reconceptualized in light of these changes. An example of reconceptualization of the classroom environment to account for how change in the human aggregate influences the context is Darkenwald and Valentine's (1986) development of the Adult Classroom Environment Scale (ACES) for adult classroom contexts. While still based on Moos' three domains, the dimensional scales were modified to reflect the characteristics of adult learners.

Studies have been conducted using the ACES instrument to assess various relationships between environmental dimensions and outcomes of adult education settings. These include: examining the role of gender in shaping adult students' perceptions of the relationship dimension of classroom environments (Beer & Darkenwald, 1989); the relationship of both participant input in planning and classroom environment to student achievement and satisfaction (Courtenay & Arnold, 1988; Courtenay, Arnold & Kim, 1992); a factor analysis of the dimension structure of the ACES model (Langenbach & Aagaard, 1990); and an examination of the roles of educational experience and introversion in shaping preferences in classroom social environments (Kim, 1993). In each of these studies, recommendations were made calling for further research into classroom environments in adult contexts along with possible refinements in Darkenwald and Valentine's (1986) instrument.

Another more recent example for adult classrooms is the Classroom Dynamics Questionnaire (Oliva, 2003; Valentine, Oliva, & Thomas, 2002). This instrument measures four dimensions of student perceptions of the classroom interpersonal dynamics: teacher's respect for students, confidence in teacher's abilities, learner cohesiveness, and learner voice. The instrument is the product of a reconceptualization of the classroom environment to account for characteristics of adult learners. Thomas (2004) utilized the Classroom Dynamics Questionnaire to examine impacts on classroom dynamics of race in graduate classrooms composed of African American and Caucasian American adult learners. Davis (2006) utilized the Classroom Dynamics Questionnaire as part of a composite instrument to examine developmental studies students perceptions of classroom dynamics and why students view classroom environments differently.

The change from K-12 to adult contexts brought changes in the human aggregate, or combined characteristics of the students, great enough to justify development of new classroom environment scales. Another way the human aggregate changes is with the introduction of non-western cultural contexts, or contexts that are blends of western and non-western students. These changes in the cultural context, and resulting change in student characteristics, beg a reexamination of the domains of the learning environment and their component dimensions.

There are potential problems with using an instrument developed within one cultural context to measure dimensions in a very different cultural setting. Several outcomes are possible. One is the investigator may be fortunate and the instrument does contain the significant dimensional variables and these variables possess the same relative meaning within the new culture, resulting in the instrument providing a reliable measure of these variables for the new culture. A second possibility is that the instrument does not capture a variable(s) that holds great

significance for the new culture resulting in an incorrect assessment of the dynamics of the classroom environment. A third possibility is the instrument may identify variables that are significant to the new culture but the meanings these variables have within the new culture are fundamentally different, leading to an incorrect interpretation of the responses to the instrument.

Culture and Education

Pratt (1993) cautions educators to avoid the hegemony of identifying our sets of interests and values as universal ones in educational contexts, since others may hold stances opposite our own. In an article on andragogy's contribution to adult learning, Pratt provides an example where he identified several key underpinning assumptions of andragogy that are a product of middle class U.S. values and world view. Among these are an emphasis on individual self-interest and self-reliance over the interest and relations of the collective. He notes that andragogy developed within a worldview shaped by the values of individualism and entrepreneurial democracy. Therefore, from some perspectives, it provides insights into adult learning but from other perspectives, it may limit or distort understanding of learning, particularly in cultures with a collective orientation. As Pratt notes, in the need for examining the cultural underpinnings for andragogy, it is very likely that there is a similar need to utilize a cultural model or perspective to examine the cultural assumptions that may be embedded in Moos's (1979a) model of classroom environments.

Writers in anthropology, sociology, cultural communications, education and many other fields have identified a number of dimensions along which cultures may vary. Interactions among individuals with different cultural orientations along these dimensions can lead to tension and misunderstanding in educational environments. Dimensions of national cultural variance appear useful, to develop a conceptual framework on the shared influences of culture and context

on communication and behavior in social settings, like learning environments. Hofstede's (1980, 1997a) dimensions in particular appear complementary to Moos's (1979a) model for examining non-western students perceptions of western educational contexts.

Hofstede's (1997a) dimensions of national cultures provide a framework for examining how differences in national cultural values can influence social settings, for example classroom environments. Hofstede identified five dimensions of value distinctions characteristic of, or dominant within, national cultures. These dimensions encompass responses to common problems faced by human societies such as social inequality, relationships between the individual and the collective, social role distribution between the genders, coping with the unknown future, and long-term versus short-term orientation. The dimensions are known as: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity and long-term orientation.

As an example, one of these dimensions, individualism/collectivism, can provide some insight into the difference between western cultural contexts and non-western contexts. Our U.S.-style higher education system carries with it many of the assumptions of our individualistic culture embedded in it. In this system there is a high value placed on separate or autonomous learners. This is expressed in a focus on individual achievement and the need to ask questions to prove the truth or worth of ideas. These concerns find expression in such activities as class debate where ideas are challenged and efforts are made to convince others through public logical dialogs (Mackeracher, 1998).

This is in sharp contrast to the values found in collectivist cultures where there is emphasis on harmony, familial respect, high value on group membership, and equality of reward among peers (McLaren, 1998). As an example Coletta (1975) notes, in Micronesian cultures

“lineage becomes not only a biological construct but also an important educational concept in as much as the family is the central educational institution. Education is consensus rather than conflict oriented. Social harmony and cultural continuity become the overriding themes” (p. 637). More recently Flinn (1992) writes “Pacific Islanders tend to view a person not in the Western sense of a discrete individual but as someone connected with others through a network of relationships” (p. 45). She goes on to note that to Pulapese (people of a small island group in Chuuk) to be a good person is to be a good relative, and that kinship is demonstrated by behavior and it also depends on behavior. These differences in approach to social interactions will carry into the learning environment and may well shape the learners’ perceptions in unanticipated ways. Investigations that map these cultural influences may be needed before one can use instruments to measure the learners’ perceptions of the classroom environment.

The Micronesian region offers one potential cultural context for such an investigation. The Micronesian region of the U.S. affiliated Pacific spans two U.S. territories and three independent nations, from the Marshall Islands in the East to the Republic of Palau in the West with the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), and Guam in between. This area covers a geographic region larger than the continental United States and encompasses a number of cultures and languages.

Meeting the needs of students within the Micronesian region is the primary responsibility of the University of Guam (UOG), the College of Micronesia (COM) and the Northern Marianas College (NMC), which collectively comprise the U.S. Land Grant system for the Micronesian region. Attempts by the U.S. Land Grant system of colleges in this region to deliver higher education are meeting with mixed success. This may well be due to a conflict between Micronesian cultural norms and higher education classroom environments designed for western

learners. The knowledge gained by an investigation into Micronesian learner perceptions of the dimensions of classroom environment would be of great practical use in both higher education and adult education in this region. A significant contribution to the theoretical literature on classroom climates could come from either the discovery of new dimensions or meanings for classroom environments, or the verification of the applicability of existing models for this cultural context.

Higher education in the Micronesian region predominately relies on teaching and evaluation methods developed within the U.S. mainland cultural context, not the cultural contexts of the Micronesian region. Some of these methods create learning environments that are not in harmony with the customs and ideals of Micronesian students. In developing programs and courses for these populations, it is important to understand what dimensions within the classroom environment Micronesian students identify as promoting or inhibiting learning.

Micronesian Culture and Education

Even though educational systems in Micronesia follow a U.S. model, the cultural context exerts a powerful influence. Classroom environments in the Micronesian region are not clones of the U.S. mainland classroom context. The cultures and individuals' traditional learning experiences have a powerful impact on the human aggregate. Moos (1979a) noted the need to fully understand the influence of the human aggregate and contextual setting. This implies a need to re-examine the basic assumptions developed in western settings prior to applying this model or its derivatives in new cultural settings like the Micronesian region. In describing how children respond to the elementary classroom environment in Pohnpei, Colletta (1976) drew attention to the influence of their culture, "while the formal organization and curriculum of the schools reflect American tradition, island children have brought to the schools their own patterns

of behavior which makes the process of schooling a cross-cultural rather than unilateral transaction” (p. 113). Hezel (1989) also notes significant adaptation in Micronesian schools, not in curriculum, but rather in the educational style to produce a fit between the schools and community. Examples include a looser discipline, frequent no-school days and a general, more relaxed attitude toward students.

Common to most of the Micronesian cultures is a high value or regard for the avoidance of confrontation, maintaining personal face and dignity, and use of indirect modes of interaction. Behaviors that disturb the consensus, like directly challenging or demeaning others or putting oneself forward, are looked on negatively (Conklin, 1984.) An implication for learning environments is that students may not offer information or ask a question for fear of violating someone’s social space or domain. Questioning of a teacher can be seen as a break from the traditional pattern of respect for authority.

Ritualized feasting is a central feature of life in Pohnpei, guided by social structures that provide the opportunity to demonstrate respect for the leaders and one’s own worth through one’s contributions (Conklin, 1984.) The ritualized competitive contributions offer an example of culturally appropriate demonstration of one’s worth in a show rather than tell mode of communication and competition, through the exhibition of yams and pit breadfruit at a feast. This nonverbal form of demonstrating achievement is more culturally accepted than to express one’s knowledge through verbal means (Colletta, 1976). Colletta also notes that to verbalize knowledge or achievement is to show off. An implication for classroom environments is that students will be reluctant to individually demonstrate their knowledge verbally in class, but may be more accepting of group displays of the products of the individuals’ efforts.

Differences in cultural nuances like those described above, indicate the need for a reconceptualization of the classroom context in light of the cultural differences found in this context. Numerous articles describing work on classroom environments cite the need for in-depth qualitative studies within non-western cultural contexts to better understand the cultural, social and linguistic nuances embedded in perceptions of the components of classroom environments (Goh, 2002; Lee & Kim, 2002; Margianti 2002). No studies on classroom environments either quantitative or qualitative were found for the Micronesian region.

Problem Statement

There is an enormous body of research and literature on classroom environments primarily in western contexts for K-12 classrooms. This literature has provided insights into many areas of instruction including: criteria variables for course and instructor evaluation, assessment of impact of educational innovations in the classroom, guidance for course development that achieves better person-environment match, and in helping teachers assess impact of methodological changes. In the 1980's there were spin-offs of this research into adult education environments but surprisingly, little work was ever conducted in collegiate classroom environments. In recent years there has been very little work done in adult contexts.

International scholars have also conducted research on K-12 classroom environments in non-western cultures (Aldridge & Fraser, 2000; Fisher & Waldrip, 1999; Fisher & Waldrip, 2002; Waldrip & Fisher, 1997). In most of these instances, the research methodology has been predominately quantitative in nature. However, currently scholars are suggesting that we may not fully understand what is going on in classroom environments in non-western cultures (Goh, 2002; Lee & Kim, 2002; & Margianti, 2002.) This suggestion is possibly because we have not done enough qualitative work to know how people in non-western cultures perceive classroom

environments and what their preferred learning environments are. This study addressed some of these gaps in understanding, by examining the perceptions of college classroom environments of students from a non-western culture.

This study was concerned with understanding how culture shapes adult students' perceptions of classroom/learning environments. The cultural context of Micronesian students in regional U.S. college classrooms provided the setting for exploring these issues. Higher education in the Micronesian region predominately relies on methods developed within the U.S. mainland cultural context, not the cultural context of the Micronesian region. From experiences in this region the researcher felt that some of these methods create learning environments that do not account for the customs and ideals of Micronesian students.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to understand how culture shapes adult Micronesian college students' perceptions of classroom/learning environments. The study's research questions were:

1. What are the social/cultural factors shaping the perceptions of classroom environment?
2. What factors within the classroom environment do Micronesian students identify that promote learning?
3. What factors within the classroom environment do Micronesian students identify that inhibit learning?
4. What other factors influence adult Micronesian students' perceptions of classroom learning environments?

Significance of the Study

This study holds the potential for significant contributions to both the theoretical literature on classroom environments and to practice for collegiate and adult educators in the Pacific islands. The discovery aspect of qualitative inquiry coupled with a cultural context far different from that on which the existing theories are based holds a great potential to uncover new dimensions or new meanings, influences, or relationships surrounding existing dimensions of learning environments. The discovery of either new dimensions or meanings or the verification of the applicability of existing models to this cultural context would represent a significant contribution to the theoretical literature on classroom climates.

If in non-western cultures there are theoretical dimensions of learning environments that can inform new theoretical frames, I believe these are most likely to be discovered through qualitative inquiry. When quantitative researchers develop new models through a theoretical inductive process, they often base their conceptual framework on concepts qualitatively derived by anthropologists, sociologists or other social scientists. Utilizing qualitative methods to investigate the context and phenomena directly is likely to provide a richer information base to draw on in adapting existing or creating new theoretical frames.

This study in a non-western cultural context provides insights into and understanding of the influence of Micronesian culture on learner identified dimensions and their significance. This is essential in conceptualizing the classroom environment within the Micronesian context. The possibility existed that there may be undiscovered dimensions relative to these domains that will only be found through some form of qualitative inquiry. This study may form a base for understanding Micronesian culture's influence on the classroom's human aggregate. From this

base, future research efforts may adapt and expand existing classroom environment scales to the Micronesian context.

Delivery of adult and higher education in the Micronesian region may be improved through a better understanding of the cultural contexts of the region as they relate to classroom environments. This inquiry into adult Micronesian students' perceptions of college classroom environments should provide useful information for regional adult educators. Insights into factors that Micronesian students identify as promoting or inhibiting learning is of immediate practical use in course and program design. By exploring and documenting Micronesian students' perceptions of classroom environment, the study enables their preferences to be used as input into the planning process for future courses and programs.

A third area is the personal significance of the study. For the foreseeable future I will be involved with Micronesian and other Pacific island groups in educational settings. Whatever the results of this study, the rich deep cultural knowledge and understanding that I gained through this qualitative study will enrich my professional and personal life.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Scattered across the tropical Pacific is a system of island U.S. Land Grant colleges and universities. These institutions are U.S. accredited and are funded to carry out the three-part mission of residence instruction, cooperative extension and research. While they are each located in what is considered unique tropical paradises and serve unique cultural groups, they follow U.S. curriculum and methods. The region they serve is commonly known as the American Pacific.

The American Pacific consists of American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Guam, Hawaii, the Marshall Islands and the Republic of Palau. These countries span a geographic region larger than the continental United States, which encompass a number of cultures and languages (see Appendix A. Map of the Federated States of Micronesia). Of particular interest to faculty at the University of Guam is meeting the needs of the Caroline Islands group (Republic of Palau, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, Federated States of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands) due to their close association with and proximity to the University of Guam.

These programs are accredited under the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), as are the islands' K-12 schools. This accreditation is very important to the faculty, students and graduates. But, methods of instruction and evaluation designed for U.S. mainland students (and looked for by WASC) may not be sensitive to the preferences and needs of the cultures of these various Pacific islands.

This study is concerned with understanding how culture shapes adult students' perceptions of classroom/learning environments. The cultural context of Micronesian students in regional U.S. college classrooms will provide the setting for exploring these issues. The purpose of this study is to understand how culture shapes adult Micronesian college students' perceptions of classroom/learning environments. This population's experiences and preferences are important considerations in the design of learning environments and methods of assessment that are sensitive to the population's needs while satisfying U.S. accreditation standards. Models of the cultural context and classroom environments will facilitate this effort.

This chapter reviews three realms of literature relevant to this study: (a) The Micronesian context including a historical overview of educational systems in the region, education systems and the cultural context, and changing Micronesian social context; (b) culture including Micronesian culture and traditional learning, perspective of culture, and a model of dimensions of national cultures; and (c) human social environments, in particular models of dimensions of classroom environments. I utilized the following databases in the GALILEO Website at UGA Libraries: Academic Search Premier (at EBSCOhost), EBSCO Electronic Journals Service, ERIC At First Search, and the Human Relations Area Files. I also utilized the UGA libraries GIL on line catalog system to find books on the topics of interest. Another resource was the Amazon bookstore database searches by keywords, which proved very productive for finding new books on each topic. The bibliography and reference lists from these books proved to be goldmines of current articles. For searches of the web for web documents I utilized the GOOGLE search engine. The following review of the literature will address these issues and their relationships to each other.

Micronesian Context

The influence of a Western educational system operating independent of traditional learning environments, transition to a cash economy, and a government bureaucracy based on a U.S. model have brought significant changes to the region's traditional social structures. A familiarity with the available literature on the history and forms of institutional (colonial/postcolonial) education systems in the region can provide some insight into the influences these systems have had on the culture(s) of the Micronesian region. The following historical overview of the educational systems in this region serves as a starting point in the exploration of literature related to the current Micronesian context.

History of Formal Institutionalized Education in the Micronesian Region

Quite a few writers have written on the history of formal Western education in the Micronesian region. Two complementary essays based on extensive literature reviews are those by Hezel (1984) and Conklin (1984). Hezel discussed the missionary and colonial efforts from the first missionary school established on Guam in 1669 up to the beginning of the American administration following World War II. Conklin (1984) focused on the educational efforts of the various colonial powers up to the early 1980's while also examining the social and cultural background of the region and their relation to classroom interactions.

Hezel (1984) wrote that the missions, both Catholic and Protestant, ran most of the early school systems in the region prior to the Japanese public schools in 1915. These schools faced the dilemma of whether to focus their limited resources on a small amount of education for everyone or to provide more intense education for an elite few. Generally the language of the colonial powers was the central focus of the curriculum. The Protestant missions frequently stressed literacy in the local language so that students could read the bible in their own language.

Also commonly recognized by the different education systems was the interest that singing and vocational arts (especially agriculture and carpentry) held for the Micronesian students. These subjects were frequently incorporated into the curriculum.

From 1914 to 1945 the Japanese put in place an almost universal system of three years of primary education for the Micronesian region, except Guam. This system implemented a centrally controlled, standardized curriculum that emphasized strict discipline, Japanese language, loyalty to the Empire and moral and physical education (Conklin, 1984; Hezel, 1984). Under the Japanese, the mission schools were eclipsed by the three years of public school provided by the colonial government. These mission schools served primarily as supplemental or secondary sources of education to smaller groups of students (Hezel, 1984).

The United States administration of education in the region began in Guam at the turn of the 20th century. The American administration replaced the Catholic Church's Chamorro language elementary education system with an English language system. Following World War II, the United Nations granted the administration of the former Japanese holdings in Micronesia to the U.S. Guam was returned as a separate holding. Initially administration was under the Department of the Navy. In 1952 jurisdiction was transferred to the Department of the Interior (Hezel, 1984).

Under the U.S. administration, primary schools were established on the larger islands and later district secondary schools followed. The Navy supported the development of schools by the local communities with U.S. assistance. If the village constructed a school (small, grass-roofed buildings) and brought a group of pupils to the school; indigenous teachers were recruited and paid out of the central funds for a village. These schools were not universally available; outer islands and small villages were left out. Frequently children moved to live with relatives

near the schools. While these schools were not equivalent by any measure to their U.S. counterparts, it is important to note that they were supported by Micronesians and under their control and so enjoyed great local interest and support (Conklin, 1984).

The Kennedy administration, following recommendations in the secret “Solomon Report” designed to promote “Americanization” of Micronesians, initiated sweeping changes in the Micronesian educational system. These changes were designed to bring the curriculum more in line with U. S. standards (Conklin, 1984). Hezel (1989) wrote that this period involved a dramatic increase in U.S. funding for Micronesia increasing from \$6 million in 1962 to over \$25 million in 1970. The result was the formation of a dependency that would keep Micronesia linked to the U.S. for the foreseeable future.

Colletta (1976) notes, beginning in 1962 the American administration placed increased emphasis on the use of schooling as a part of an overall program of acculturation and development for the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands. The curriculum was almost entirely academic and called for universal education through grade six. In 1965 the Congress of Micronesia established English as the language of instruction, even in the first three grades where previously the local languages were used (Smith, 1969).

Many new schools were built and teachers were brought in from the U.S. By 1966 over one half of the teachers in the Trust Territories were American. Equally significant, these new measures removed control of the schools from local communities and initiated efforts to standardize the curriculum. These new measures, while providing education to a much larger portion of the population, eroded the community support for this educational system by breaking the school community integration (Conklin, 1984).

During the 1960's and 1970's significant U.S. funds were dedicated to programs for teacher education. During the 1960's these had a primary focus on teaching English as a second language; but in the 1970's the focus shifted to providing funds for Micronesian students to enter higher education in Guam, Hawaii and the U.S. mainland (Conklin, 1984). A result was that by the 1980's Micronesians had replaced U.S. mainlanders in teaching and administration positions and this focus on Americanization through curriculum has been moderated (Conklin, 1984).

Education System and Micronesian Culture

A former Peace Corps volunteer in Pohnpei, Nat Colletta (1975, 1976, 1980) investigated the interactions of culture and education in Ponape (Pohnpei) following a qualitative research model utilizing interviewing, participant observation and journaling. Colletta (1976) noted that Ponapean schools were not clones of the American schools of this period, because the Ponapean cultural context alone was too powerful of an influence. Colletta placed an emphasis on the importance of the Ponapean culture as represented by the children in their response to the classroom environment. He noted, "While the formal organization and curriculum of the schools reflect American tradition, island children have brought to the schools their own patterns of behavior which makes the process of schooling a cross-cultural rather than unilateral transaction" (Colletta, 1976, p. 113).

Colletta's (1976) work provides a snapshot of the schools in Micronesia during the latter days of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands' mandate. His observations on the interaction between the formal education system and the Ponapean culture provide some insights into the cultural changes that have taken place in the ensuing twenty-five years. Echoing Colletta's observations on the influence of the islands' cultures on the formal education systems, Hezel (1989) writes, "Micronesia's foreign-born education system has been modified many times over

since the early 1960's and is increasingly developing a character of its own" (para 19). He notes that the most significant modifications revolve around the educational style and community fit and offers the following examples:

A village crisis, for example, almost always leads to the closing of the school for a more or less extended duration, and absenteeism on the part of both students and teachers is rampant. Discipline tends to be loose and a rather easy-going attitude towards studies generally prevails, to the despair of American supervisors and educational consultants. (para 19)

During the late 1970's and early 1980's, the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands in the Micronesian region developed individual political identities. The Northern Mariana islands are now a U.S. commonwealth, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). Belau has become an independent nation, the Republic of Palau, and entered into a compact of free association with the U.S. The Marshall Islands also have become an independent nation and signed a compact of free association with the U.S. The island groups of Yap, Pohnpei (Ponape), Kosrae and Chuuk (Truk) formed the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and also entered into a compact of free association with the U.S. (Conklin, 1984).

Anticipating current issues, Conklin (1984) wrote that these new nations, formed from the former Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands, would be forced to integrate the traditional and cash economies and the village and federal political systems. These needs and the rise in number of Micronesian teachers coupled with the significance of education's direct impact on the local economies would help shape the "Micronesianization" of the education systems. Hezel (1989) wrote on how formal education in Micronesia throughout its history has served to indoctrinate the young into totally different value systems from those embodied in the traditional culture.

The American education system was based on values like: the existence of basic rights inherent in each individual, the value of democracy and the expression of one's opinion, the importance of economic development" (para 6) which were alien to these island communities. But, the education systems were not the only outside, colonial or global force reshaping cultural values and social systems throughout these islands. Over the past 30 years many structural aspects of these island cultures have seen significant change.

Changing Micronesian Social Context

Regional social scientists have written on changes and conflict occurring in key social structures for subsistence and exchange (Hezel, 1993; Hezel, Edwin, Petteys & Chang, 1997), family and conflict resolution (Hezel, 1992, 2002; Hezel, Edwin, Petteys & Chang, 1997; Oneison, 1994) and traditional and institutional education (Colletta, 1975, 1976, 1980; Hezel 1989; Hezel, Edwin, Petteys & Chang, 1997) all of which have resulted in societal change.

Hezel (1993) notes the impact of the cash economy and "its sharp contrast with the traditional land-based system that was once the foundation of every society in the Pacific" (p. 1). The extended family was tied to the clan land as the primary economic resource. This extended family social network evolved to provide for the islanders' subsistence needs from this land. As people found cash jobs, their reliance on the land-owning, extended family and all of concomitant clan duties and benefits decreased. With the rise of the cash economy there was also a diminishing of the authority and support of the extended family as more couples began preparing their own food. This has increased the responsibilities of the parents and increased the conflicts since the traditional role of extended family members is diminished.

Hezel (1993) writes that this has had serious impact on women's roles and rights. Prior to the rise of a cash economy, they had a strong voice in how lineage land was apportioned and

who could use what areas of land. With the tight extended family, they had enormous support in raising the children and were protected by the close involvement of their clan members. With the increased reliance on the nuclear family, much of this is lost.

Traditional means of conflict resolution are weakening because of the clan chief's loss of control due to this decline in the importance of the extended family. The maternal uncle who would have resolved many clan disputes no longer has the same degree of authority. But, Hezel (2002) also notes the rise in importance of a U.S.-style court system. This system is easily accessible for civil conflicts. Many are turning to the courts to solve disputes that traditionally would have been handled by local leaders. There are several reasons the courts are highly visible and now have the power to enforce their decisions. With the availability of free legal aid, the courts are a relatively easy solution; one party wins, the other loses. Unlike traditional conflict resolution, going to court doesn't require extensive unpleasant negotiations with the opponent. The traditional dispute resolution process is meant to satisfy both parties and thus maintain harmony within the community. To do so requires involved negotiations in order to reach a compromise which both parties can live with. This rise in the use of the courts is further eroding traditional community linkages. All of these forces combined with U.S. style education system are shifting the islands into a more individualist orientation in many social interactions. Hezel (1989) notes these tensions between the traditional and the new developing society will not be solved in the near future. The old values remain strong but the social infrastructure is in conflict with these values. An important step is to understand the root causes.

Culture

Micronesia describes a vast geographical region, but as a concept for describing culture it is of limited utility when one examines the actual diversity of linguistic and cultural groups

within this region. These different groups do share many common values and traditions, but each group also has its own exceptions to these commonalities. In many ways the cultures follow a continuum across the region, with each island group most similar to its immediate neighbors (Matson, 1968).

This continuum spreads from the western end of the islands where the peoples of the Marianas (including Guam) and Palau represent distinct branches of the Austronesian linguistic family to the southern atolls of Pohnpei state showing strong cultural links with the Polynesian cultures like the Samoans. Other groups of Micronesians occupying a band of islands from Chuck, through Pohnpei to Kosrae to the Marshall and Gilbert islands share descent from a single ethnic group that occupied the islands over 2000 years ago and so are linguistically and culturally related. Then there is Yap, seemingly unique to itself among all the Pacific islands (Conklin, 1984; Mason, 1968).

Micronesian Cultures and Traditional Learning

All of these traditional cultures have methods by which knowledge has been passed from one generation to the next. While each group possesses unique traditional learning structures, some common characteristics of traditional Micronesian education can be identified, as long as one remains aware that exceptions abound. Baker (1991) notes several common aspects of traditional Micronesian education, which include oral and visual learning involving highly developed mnemonic devices and diligent observation, learning by doing and the existence of both common and secret knowledge.

Knowledge and skills are transmitted through oral and visual means. In the transmission through oral means, the use of memory is very highly developed. Many mnemonic devices are used like chants, stories and navigational charts (Baker, 1991). In his discussion of the

indigenous educational process in Ponapean culture, Colletta (1975) describes the mode of transmission as “surrounded by a deeply internalized respect for the wisdom of the aged, favors rote memorization and direct imitation over free thought and creative initiative” (Colletta, 1975, p. 635).

Many skills are obtained through working side by side with elders. Learning through visual observation requires patient, detailed observation for the learner to grasp the relationship of activities/actions to each other, in such varied endeavors as the techniques of woodworking or the interplay of weather and tides. In many of the cultures the learner would observe and then practice in private. It is expected that the learner will politely refuse to attempt a task publicly until he/she is sure that the attempt will not fail (Baker, 1991; Colletta, 1975). A traditional learning pattern involved quiet observation followed by private practice and then successful public demonstration of the skill (Conklin, 1984).

Many of the traditional skills like farming, fishing, and construction are taught in a practical manner; the learner learns by doing. Some types of knowledge are common and widely available, such as fishing and farming. Other specialized knowledge is exclusive property of key individuals. This knowledge is only available through selection, inheritance, purchase or other means (Baker, 1991). In many areas this leads to a perspective of knowledge as private, not to be publicly shared. Colletta (1976) notes that in some cases students may be unwilling to share knowledge they have been taught with others because it is their specialized knowledge. Frequently elders who possess specific knowledge will only reveal it in a piecemeal manner, commonly not revealing all to their student until they are near death. This is particularly true with knowledge of magic, medicine, ritual and legends (Coletta, 1975).

Colletta (1975) examined these traditional learning structures across various life stages and various modes of social control, thought processes and methods of persuasion. He noted the role of traditional education for preservation and transmission of culture:

Ponapean indigenous education is tradition bound, conservative, and authoritarian in nature. It educates to reproduce itself. Lineage becomes not only a biological construct but also an important educational concept inasmuch as the family is the central educational institution. Education is consensus rather than conflict oriented. Social harmony and cultural continuity become the overriding themes. (p. 637)

In Ponapean childhood the play-group is the primary educational institution or mode for learning traditional life skills. This group has an age-determined hierarchical order of mixed gender, with a membership coming from the same clan. Through play they are able to practice adult roles and develop their observation and imitation skills. The group members guide each other's behavior; it is at this early point in life that a social sensitivity is developed and shame utilized as a method of social control (Colletta, 1975). Ritualized competitive feasting is an important mechanism for social reproduction. Colletta (1975) discusses the importance of the feast as a comprehensive educational experience where one learns rituals, songs, dance and shares food and kava in a social environment recognizing rank, status and prestige.

Perspectives on Culture

Many changes are arising from the interactions between the indigenous island cultures and the cultural values embodied in the national education, political infrastructure, global capitalism, and international media. These changes influenced by outside (of the islands' communities) forces are shared by all the islands to one degree or another, and are shaping the formation of a national culture within Micronesia. Several perspectives on culture provide

insight into how these changes may manifest at both the individual level and the group level. These concepts merit a brief review.

Change in the behavioral infrastructures and social structures due to contact with global forces are of concern to social scientists following the political economy perspective. A central assumption of the political economy perspective in anthropology is that the pristine isolated self-contained community of earlier ethnographic research is nothing more than a figment of ethnographer's imagination. Instead they view these communities as dependant on and strongly influenced by global capitalism, militarism and more recently educational systems and media's global popular culture. They further believe that, as a discipline, anthropologists were unwitting accomplices in the colonial efforts to profit from these communities (Erickson and Murphy, 1998).

For anthropologists within the political economy perspective, two key research questions are: to what degree have these cultures been penetrated by outside forces, and what are the impacts of this penetration? Darnell (1997) notes, "we cannot escape the consequences of past actions of our forebears... acknowledgement of power relations and effort to structure conversations across their barriers is a legitimate goal either across or within cultures" (p. 53). Underlying this is the assumption that local knowledge persists despite the forces of colonization and globalization, and the promotion and celebration of this local knowledge is a valid goal. Research guided by this approach has highlighted the changeable nature of culture (Erickson & Murphy, 1998). So, when we look at this changeable entity called culture, of what do we speak?

Boas wrote that, "cultures were integrated wholes produced by specific historical processes rather than reflections of universal evolutionary stages" (Moore, 1997, p. 48). Boas argued that each culture can only be understood in terms of its unique past and particular

historical and environmental influences, hence the name for this approach historical particularism (Erickson & Murphy, 1998). Boas stressed the need for understanding how the members of a culture perceived the world (McGee & Warms, 1996). A second concept promoted by Boas and his followers was cultural relativism. Cultural relativism cautioned against judging cultural patterns by some absolute or global standard. Instead, any judgments must be made using criteria developed within the culture.

Cognitive anthropologists arising from the Boasian tradition of cultural relativism, and influenced by linguistics, share a view of culture as a learned system of standards or rules guiding thought and behavior (Erickson & Murphy, 1998). For many, this view allots culture the role of a mental model. So, many cognitive anthropologists focus on the rules and categories, or taxonomies upon which a given cultural model is built (McGee & Warms, 1996). Important to educators is Goodenough's (1971) distinction that the term culture should be reserved for "what is learned, for the things one needs to know in order to meet the standards of others" (p. 19). Goodenough distinguishes culture from cultural artifacts or material products of individuals or society. These cultural artifacts are not learned; rather, they are material manifestations of individuals' or groups' efforts and once made, become a part of the environment. What is learned is how these environmental features are perceived which include what is believed about them, their value, their use or the overall idea of the artifact.

Goodenough (1971) provided an articulation of how a person may internalize more than one culture, or aspects of other cultures. The explanation lies in Goodenough's description of an individual's propriospect and the group's cultural pool. This concept is relevant as we look at the multiple influences of the individual Micronesian's birth culture and the cultural perspectives embodied in the schools, government infrastructure and cash economy.

An individual's propriospect is the individual's own unique self-outlook or worldview. The word comes from two Latin terms *proprio* - peculiar to the self and *spectus* - view or outlook. The propriospect encompasses both an individual's cognitive and emotional orderings of experience. Included in a person's propriospect are "the various standards for perceiving, evaluating, believing, and doing that he attributes to other persons as a result of his experience of their actions and admonitions" (p. 36). An individual makes sense of other in-group members' behavior by assuming that these standards are operative for them.

These standards also serve as guides to an individual's purposeful behavior so that the behavior is understood by others and elicits the desired responses. These sets of standards that an individual attributes to a group are for him or her, the culture of that group. An individual's multicultural competence reflects the degree to which the individual recognizes the context where these cultural sets of standards apply and the facility or proficiency of the individual in their use, basically how well they are integrated into the individual's propriospect.

Individuals within a society may contain within their individual propriospect standards from other cultures with which they have contact, even though they are not used as part of their daily operating culture when dealing with members of their own culture. These standards become part of the society's cultural pool or potential adaptive responses to changing physical or social environments (Goodenough, 1971).

These discussed perspectives of culture have influenced my own views. The following definition of culture provides a focus for this research effort. It serves to address most of my concerns surrounding this highly contested concept. *Cultures are learned, shared, evolving networks of meaning held in the minds of individual group members, which form templates of standards that contribute to individual and public understanding and action.* Individuals guided

by their cultures' influence on their individual perceptions and behavior, interact with environmental contexts, including products of their cultures. As they receive new information from the environment they adapt their behavior and evaluate the result, thus promoting adaptive change. Individual adaptive changes combine into a cumulative influence on cultural change.

Goodenough (1971) notes that one form of cultural change is through cultural drift. Cultural drift occurs as members of a generation mature and progressively confirm their cultural competence by self-referencing with their generational peers rather than to their elders. One generation may utilize (or not utilize) standards within the cultural pool among themselves that were not utilized (or utilized) by previous generations. In this way over time cultures may change, sometimes dramatically, without the change being noticed. This has profound implications when a generational peer group comes under a common outside influence.

Cultural change is an evolutionary process. As a result of individuals' experiences and actions new standards or symbols emerge into the public realm. Individuals incorporate the new standards or symbols into their propriospects, which prove more effective in interactions with physical or social environments. Change may be through a slow process of diffusion, through cultural drift, or it may be more rapid through an overwhelming contact with other cultures' members and behavioral infrastructures. An extreme example of this latter context for change occurs when a whole generation is brought under another culture's education, judicial and economic systems, as is the case in Micronesia.

With increasing globalization and interaction between different cultural networks what one observes as a familiar symbol or patterned behavior may actually represent something very different to others. As educators encountering members of other cultural groups, we must try to understand the underlying meanings and templates of standards that guide others. It is important

to note that an individual's propriospect may have templates from more than one culture, which the individual draws on in different contexts. Influences from multiple cultures may work together to shape an individual's expectations and behavior in unanticipated ways.

Models serve as simplified conceptual proxies for complex realities. As heuristic tools they can help adult educators rapidly develop strategies for mediating interactions within the classroom environment. An effective model can help instructors to assess, organize and balance an otherwise overwhelming time bound stream of uncategorized cultural influences. Hofstede's (1980, 1997a), model is a tool for assessing cultural influences on social contexts and provides insights into the forces shaping individuals' responses to various social environments. This model may serve to identify, categorize and contrast the Micronesian cultural values of previous generations and those present today, which are interacting with the new social structures.

Hofstede's Dimensions of National Cultures

Hofstede's (1997a) dimensions of national cultures provide a framework for examining how differences in national cultural values can influence social settings, for example classroom environments. Hofstede identified five dimensions of value distinctions characteristic of, or dominant within, national cultures. These dimensions encompass responses to common problems faced by human societies such as social inequality, relationships between the individual and the collective, social role distribution between the genders, coping with the unknown future, and long-term/short-term orientation. The dimensions are known as: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity (assertive/nurturing) and long-term/short-term orientation.

Power distance addresses the issue of human inequality. Power distance is defined as "the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country

expect and accept that power is distributed unequally” (Hofstede, 1997a, p. 28). Large power distance represents societies where members accept and expect power imbalances. In large power distance cultural contexts teachers are treated with respect, and the environment is a strict and orderly one. The educational process is teacher centered in that the teachers direct the appropriate intellectual pathways and what is transferred is not seen as impersonal facts, but rather as the personal wisdom of the teacher.

In a quantitative study Goudreau (1997) examined the learning modality preferences of Micronesian nursing students attending the Northern Marianas College. This study utilized the Productivity Environmental Preference Survey (PEPS) developed by Dunn, Dunn and Price (1986) with a small convenience sample to determine these learning modality preferences. They found, “ very strong preferences for auditory learning in a structured environment with peers and an authority figure present” (Goudreau, 1997, p3). In this study auditory learning referred to information being transferred vocally rather than through reading. The ratings these areas received were auditory (76.9%), having an authority figure present (69.2%), and learning with peers (53.9%.) Both the preference for an authority figure present and for a structured environment are indicative of preferences Hofstede (1997a) notes likely to occur with students from high power distance cultures. The students’ preference for learning with peers indicates an orientation on the collectivism end of the spectrum of Hofstede’s Individualism/Collectivism dimension.

Individualism/Collectivism focuses on the issues relating to the cohesiveness of society or the role of the individual versus the role of the group. Hofstede (1997a) defined this dimension as follows:

Individualism pertains to societies in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after himself or herself and his or her immediate family.

Collectivism as its opposite pertains to societies in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups. (p. 51)

In collectivist cultures the interest of the group is more important than the interest of the individual. In classroom contexts students from collectivist cultures will be reluctant to speak up in class, especially if the other students are out-group members or the group is large. This reluctance is reduced if the group size is small. Teachers deal with students as in-group members not as individuals (Hofstede, 1997a).

Masculine/Feminine is about ego enhancement versus relationship enhancement. Given the sensitivity within western masculine cultures to this dimension's name, Hofstede (1998) noted that, "They might call it 'Ego/Social' or 'Assertive/Nurturant' for example" (p. 13). The label assertive/nurturing more closely matches the dimension as defined by the participants in this research effort. In order to not confuse this dimensional spectrum with unrelated meanings associated with the terms masculine and feminine, this dimension, identified by Hofstede and labeled as masculine/feminine, will be referred to as assertive/nurturing from this point forward.

In both assertive (masculine) and nurturing (feminine) cultures there are male and female differences in roles and behavior. In assertive cultures these differences are more pronounced. But, Hofstede (1998) notes that in assertive cultures there is an orientation more toward ego enhancing or assertive behavior among both men and women. In nurturing cultures both men and women are more concerned with development of supportive relationships, are modest, and exhibit caring behavior.

Hofstede (1997a) notes how orientation along this dimension will influence a student's behavior in terms of participation and affiliation in the classroom. He writes that students from assertive societies, "try to make themselves visible in class and compete openly with each other" (p. 90). While students from nurturing societies, "do not want to appear too eager and mutual solidarity, although not always practiced, is seen as a goal" (pp. 90-91). Hofstede observed that in nurturing cultures there are strong social pressures for everyone to be modest and to not compete for recognition. Colletta (1976) noted that in Ponapean classes students may be reluctant to provide constructive criticism of each other's work. The students will place a higher value on maintaining the correct relation among the people in the environment than on their relation to the school structure or course content, demonstrating a social and relationship nurturing orientation.

Uncertainty avoidance focuses on the degree of cultural aversion for ambiguity. Hofstede (1997a) defines the essence of this dimension as "*the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situation*" (p. 113). Members of strong uncertainty avoidance cultures desire structure and rules to make experiences easily understood and predictable. In educational contexts members of strong uncertainty avoidance cultures "favor structured learning situations with precise objectives, detailed assignments, and strict timetables. They like situations in which there is one correct answer, which they can find" (Hofstede, 1997a, p. 119).

Goudreau (1997) noted that Micronesian nursing students show a strong preference for structured learning environments with the teacher taking a directive role. This is in line with what Hofstede describes as expected preferences for students from high uncertainty avoidance cultures. Hofstede notes that individuals from cultures with weak uncertainty avoidance express

a dislike for too much structure and a desire for “open-ended learning situations with vague objectives, broad assignments, and no timetables at all. The suggestion that there could be only one correct answer is taboo” (Hofstede, 1997a, p. 119).

Hofstede’s fifth dimension has been referred to as Confucian dynamism (1988) and also as short-term versus long-term orientation (1997a). This dimension is represented by two clusters of values, prominent in the ethical teachings of Confucius one dynamic and future oriented, the other static and oriented towards maintaining the current status. The values representing a future orientation are persistence, ordering relationships by status and observing this order, thrift, and having a sense of shame (sensitivity to social situations). The values that promote the past and present status, or short-term orientation, are personal stability, protecting one’s face, respect for tradition, and reciprocity in gifts and favors (Hofstede and Bond, 1988).

In educational contexts learners on the long-term or future oriented end of the dimension will accept various forms of class structure and different hierarchies of roles in the classroom context, but these roles and expectations should be clearly articulated. Learners on the other (short-term) end of the dimensional spectrum may expect a more teacher oriented environment with a one-way transmission of information.

Dimensions of national cultures can provide a mental scaffold for organizing and appraising the influence culture may have on learners and teachers in multicultural social settings. It is important to know the cultural orientation of, and the cultural influences operating on, both the teacher as well as the learner. Teachers and learners each come to adult education settings with their own cultural heritages. These invisible cultural standards for perception, evaluation and behavior, shape how the world is experienced and meaning is made.

With the global increase in communications and mobility across national borders, it is quite likely that the cultural heritage of some participants will be quite different from that of others. Meeting this growing cultural diversity with understanding and acceptance is a significant challenge for adult educators. Models to appraise perceptions of classroom environments have been in use for decades.

Human Social Environments

Rudolf Moos examined a diversity of human social environments. Moos was influenced by the works of two psychologists studying the area of personality theory, Kurt Lewin and Henry Murray. In different ways they each recognized the importance of the interrelation of the environmental variables and personality in determining human behavior. Lewin (1951/1997) described the interdependent and reciprocal influences of the individual, group and other environmental factors on each other. Murray (1938) articulated the interaction of the individual and environment in terms of individual needs and environmental press.

Roots of Classroom Social Environment in Psychology

Lewin (1935) developed the concept of an environmental field containing forces of both positive and negative valence, which influence and interact with behavior. He articulated the concepts of the life-space for the individual and field for the group.

This life space consists of the person and the psychological environment as it exists for him . . . one may speak of the field in which a group or institution exists with precisely the same meaning as one speaks of the individual life space in individual psychology.

The life space of a group, therefore, consists of the group and its environment as it exists for the group. (p. 162)

Lewin (1951/1997) notes the role of the group the individual belongs to as the source for his perceptions, feeling and actions. He examined concepts like the group and social setting and strove to develop empirical models to describe their interrelations. He described his field theory as “best characterized as a method: namely, a method of analyzing causal relations and of building scientific constructs” (p. 201).

In describing the process of conceptualizing a phenomena, Lewin (1951/1997) stressed the importance of first developing an understanding of the total situation. Once the subtle and complex interplay of influences were identified, an empirical description or model of the phenomena could be developed. Lewin’s approach to building constructs has influenced research on social environments. Moos (1979a) echoed this approach when he stressed the need to develop an adequate conceptualization of the complete educational setting, not just those aspects related to key outcomes. In operationalizing this idea he notes that, “the educational setting must first be adequately conceptualized before it’s impact on students’ attitudes and behavior is evaluated” (p. 20).

Murray (1938), like Lewin, recognized that to explain behavior the influence of the surrounding environment (physical and social) must be considered. He developed the concept of a needs press model where behavior is shaped by the interaction between an individual’s internal needs and environmental influences, which he called press. He defined need as a hypothetical concept that represents a force within the brain that organizes behavior to change an existing unsatisfying situation. Press is a concept representing environmental stimuli that holds the threat of harm, or the promise of benefit to the individual. He noted “one can profitably analyse an environment, a social group or an institution from the point of view of what press it applies or offers to the individuals that live within or belong to it” (Murray, 1938, p. 120). He identified

two types of press: alpha press which includes the objective influences recorded by outside observers, and beta press which are the influences as the individual subjectively perceives them. Beta press are the influences the actor perceives arising from the environment that his behavior is in response to.

Moos's Work in Social Environments

Moos (1979a) notes that his efforts to evaluate social environments of educational settings were influenced by three areas of evidence. The first was that individual differences only account for a portion of the variance in behavior. The second was that stable long-term settings (his example child-care, but cultural settings would fit) have a powerful impact on human characteristics. The third was indications, from case studies, of the impacts of educational settings, in particular the social-ecological setting's influence on student behavior, self-concept and sense of well-being.

Moos (1979a) identified four domains within the environmental system: the physical setting, organizational factors, the human aggregate, and social climate. Of these domains he focuses on the social climate and "the extent to which the social climate is determined by and mediates the influence of the other three domains" (p. 6). Use of these domains represented a social-ecological approach in that they placed emphasis on both social and physical environmental variables that should be considered.

A learning environment's social climate, or the environment's personality, is composed of the aggregate group perceptions or consensus of the environmental characteristics. It is these characteristics that identify the normative climate, and this normative climate has a strong influence on the members' attitudes and behavior (Moos, 1979a). He drew on then current work

in the fields of developmental, clinical and community psychology, gerontology and health psychology to identify the categories of social climate dimensions to measure.

Through his work in ten different social environments, Moos (1979b) identified three categories of social environmental dimensions that can be used to describe very different social/environmental settings. These are: relationship dimensions, personal growth or goal orientation dimensions, and system maintenance and change dimensions. The relationship dimensions “assess the extent to which people are involved in the environment, the extent to which they support and help one another and the extent of spontaneity and free and open expression among them” (p. 82). The second category, the personal growth or goal orientation dimensions “assess the basic directions along which personal development and self-enhancement tend to move in an environment” (p. 83). The third category, the system maintenance and change dimensions “assess the extent to which the environment is orderly, clear in its expectations, maintains control, and is responsive to change” (p. 84).

Moos's Classroom Environment Scale (CES)

Moos (1979b) notes the three categories of dimensions are relevant to each of the eight environments he studied. In each of the studies the scales were derived empirically from data provided by the respondents in each environment. For junior high and high school environments Trickett and Moos (1987) developed the Classroom Environment Scale (CES) to measure the shared perceptions in the environment.

Moos (1979b) described how Trickett and Moos were guided in the selections of dimensions of classroom climate by the three-domain conceptual framework described above. They used several methods to obtain a “naturalistic” understanding of classroom social environments. These included semi-structured interviews of teachers and students, observations

of different types of classes, and a literature review on research describing classroom milieus. Moos's (1979a) interviews with students focused on "their perceptions of the important aspects of classroom settings and on how their classes differed from one another" (pp. 140-141). Their interviews with teachers focused on the type of classroom environments they tried to create and their teaching styles.

These data were utilized to identify dimensions that were most important to the students and teachers and were also conceptually meaningful. Test items that they believed would indicate these dimensions were developed. These items were reassigned to dimensions by naïve raters and resulted in an initial pool of 242 items representing 13 dimensions (Moos, 1979b). Data from 64 junior and senior high schools in a variety of settings were used in several revisions of the CES. These items in each scale were tested for both internal consistency and discriminate validity.

Fraser (1986a) described internal consistency of a scale as where each item in the scale measures the same construct as the rest of the items in the scale. This is generally recognized as the item being fairly highly correlated with the total score for its scale. Frequently in developing scales, items that do not have a high item-scale correlation are removed from the scale to improve its internal consistency.

In addition to testing for internal consistency, Moos (1979b) tested each scale for discriminant validity. Fraser (1986a) notes that for an instrument to have discriminant validity each scale should measure a unique dimension. The method commonly used to improve discriminate validity is to identify and remove from the instrument any item whose correlation with its own scale is not appreciably larger than its correlation with that of any other scale in the instrument.

Two other criteria were used in selecting items for inclusion in the final form of the CES. Each item had to discriminate among different classrooms and “items that correlated with the *Crowne-Marlowe Social Desirability Scale* were deleted” (Moos, 1979b, p. 27). Utilizing these criteria, through a series of trials and analysis, resulted in an instrument with 9 scales of 10 items, each in a true-false format. Brief summaries of the CES scales and the scale of two subsequent instruments used in adult environments are provided in Appendix B for ease of comparison.

The CES is made up of three parallel forms: the Real Form (Form R) which measures student and teacher perceptions of the actual classroom environment; the Ideal Form (Form I) which measures the learners’ views on what comprises an ideal classroom environment; and the Expectations Form (Form E) which measures the expectations of potential class members on the environment they are about to enter (Moos, 1979b). These forms are widely used in elementary and secondary classrooms, but only two studies were found using the CES in adult and higher education environments.

Use of Moos’s CES in Adult and Higher Education

One study, DeYoung (1977), used the CES in a higher education environment. The researcher used Forms R and Form I to see if modifying the classroom environment closer to students’ ideal would increase student appreciation, attendance and involvement. A social psychology and education course was offered over two semesters and the two forms were administered to students taking each class.

In the second class the delivery of the course was modified based on the results of the analysis of first semester student responses to the CES. This included efforts to change the dimensions of affiliation, support, order and organization, and innovation. The two classes had similar results on the ideal form, but the second class ranked the class climate higher on all the

scales where efforts were made to change the environment. The authors used class attendance as an indicator of interest in the class. Attendance in the second class was 13 % higher than attendance in the first. The author notes that using social climate methodology may enable instructors to “untangle and clearly analyze the multiple dimensions of classroom functioning which exist” (DeYoung, 1977, p. 256). This would allow them to consider many elements of the classroom environment in more logical manner.

A study by Darkenwald and Gavin (1987) tested the hypothesis “that adult dropouts, compared to persisters, would exhibit a greater degree of discrepancy between initial expectations and actual experiences of classroom environment” (p. 152). This study utilized Form E and Form A to measure expectations and actual classroom in 77 adults in GED preparation classes.

Darkenwald and Gavin’s (1987) results were not conclusive. They found significant discrepancy on the rule clarity dimension for persisters. They note the possibility that for certain scales discrepancies are evaluated positively for adults. Dropouts indicated that the affiliation dimension of the actual class to be greater than expected. This would indicate that the dropouts found themselves in a class where they did not expect or want a climate high in mutual support and friendly relations.

One of Darkenwald and Gavin’s (1987) conclusions was that there may be underlying difficulties with Moos’s Expectations form especially for use with adults. For adult educators they note that the CES was developed for high school classrooms. This effort to use it in an adult context led them to believe that “for adults, many of the subscales, such as Teacher Control, Rule Clarity, and Competition [*sic*], are of dubious validity or appropriateness.” (Darkenwald & Gavin, 1987, p. 162). Their first priority for future research was the

development of a revised CES or new instrument that “keys its conceptual dimensions and scale items to the characteristics of adult students and adult-oriented teaching-learning environments” (p. 162).

Adult Classroom Environment Instruments

Darkenwald and Valentine (1986) utilized Moos’s (1979a) conceptual and methodological approach to examine social environments as the starting point in their development of the Adult Classroom Environment Scale (ACES). The initial pool of items for the instrument came from three sources: semi-structured interviews with 28 adult educators and 35 adult students; review of environmental measures for related purposes and populations; and brainstorming where each of the 11 members of the team wrote 25 items, followed by group review. These several hundred items were reduced to 159 by eliminating situation-specific items and redundancies. These 159 items were then reduced to 89 through rating by a panel of nine doctoral students in adult education and two faculty members. These 89 items were inductively classified into seven dimensions (Darkenwald & Valentine, 1986). Appendix B contains these seven categories and their relationship to Moos’s three domains as well as an abbreviated description. In summary they are: affiliation, teacher support, task orientation, personal goal attainment, organization and clarity, student influence and involvement.

This initial version containing 89 items was pilot tested with 220 adult students from several settings. Item analysis and participant feedback further reduced the scale to 49 items, with seven items for each of the seven dimensions. The survey was produced in three forms: the Student Ideal, the Student Real and the Teacher Real. The three forms are the same except for changes in tense and directions to the respondents (Darkenwald & Valentine, 1986).

Darkenwald notes “subscale reliabilities range from barely satisfactory (.58) to very high (.89)”

(p. 130) and that discriminant validity showed low to moderate intercorrelations among the seven subscales “indicating that they do not measure the same thing. The range of the intercorrelations was .23 to .70, with a mode between .45 and .55.” (p. 131). These intercorrelations, particularly the higher ones, indicate that there is probably some overlap in the phenomena being measured. Since its development, the ACES has been used in a number of studies in adult education environments including some in higher education settings.

A more recent example for adult classrooms is the Classroom Dynamics Questionnaire (CDQ) (Oliva, 2003; Valentine, Oliva, & Thomas, 2002). This instrument was developed for adult classroom environments based on Moos’s (1979a) relationship domain of dimensions. This instrument has been utilized in several adult and college settings (Davis, 2006; Oliva 2003; Thomas 2004). The CDQ measures four dimensions of relationships within the classroom environment: teacher respect for learners, confidence in teacher ability, learner cohesiveness (affiliation), and learner voice (open and free communication).

The College and University Classroom Environment Inventory (CUCEI) was developed for higher education classroom environments by Fraser and Treagust. They developed the instrument in hopes that a suitable instrument would stimulate research in classroom environments in higher education (Fraser, 1986a). Fraser (1986a) describes how the development of the CUCEI started with an examination of the scales in three high-school classroom environment instruments. These instruments were the Learning Environment Inventory (LEI), Classroom Environment Scale (CES) and the Individualized Classroom Environment Questionnaire (ICEQ). The dimensions in each of these instruments can be categorized using Moos’s (1979a) three domains. These instruments provided a basis for dimension selection and a ready pool of items, which were selected and rewritten for relevance

to small classes (under 30 students) in higher education. This initial set was subjected to an editing and deletion process by professors in higher education with close attention paid to item suitability for measuring actual and preferred classroom environment. A trial version of the CUCEI was field tested in 10 classes or seminars.

After analysis the final form of the CUCEI contains seven scales with seven items per scale. The internal consistency is reported by the item scale correlations which range from .61 to .89 for students and .53 to .83 for instructors. The discriminant validity is indicated by scale mean correlation to other six scales, these mean correlations range from .15 to .48 (Fraser, 1986a). Despite its potential, no recent studies could be found utilizing this instrument. Appendix B presents the scales, brief description and their relation to Moos's three domains.

Why Moos's Theory is Appropriate for My Study

Caffarella and Merriam (1999) discuss how in recent decades much of the literature on adult learning has been centered in one of two perspectives on adult learning. The first examines adult learning from the view of the learners as individuals. The second is to examine learning within the context and web of relationships in which it occurs and examines both the interactions and social context in which these interactions occur.

Initially as I delved into the adult education literature I was attracted to bodies of literature from each perspective, particularly the literature on learning styles from the first perspective and from the second perspective the literature on situated cognition and writings from a socio-cultural view of learning seemed relevant. As I reviewed these bodies of literature, I came to realize that each perspective addresses aspects of the issues I am concerned with. In looking at how to best meet the needs of both the learning group and individuals within the

group in a non-western cultural context, it appears that an integrated model that looks at the social context through the perceptions of its members may provide some guidance.

Moos's (1979a) social-ecological approach with its view of the human aggregate's role in shaping the social climate and its focus on the individual learners' actual perceptions and preferences in the learning environment is very close to a learner-centered, integrated perspective. I feel it would best address issues of concern to me. This model of the learning environment seems to provide a link between the individual and contextual perspectives grounded as it is in the psychology of personality and environmental interaction. This concept of classroom climate also captures my interest because in addition to examining the learner-teacher interactions, it also examines the learner-to-learner interactions that I feel are so important within the Micronesian context. I believe that based as this model is on the student perceptions it will provide relevant insights into the social context since it is the members' perceptions that shape their behavior.

Subjectively speaking, I think that Moos's (1979a) three domains probably encompass most issues or dimensions that may arise within the Micronesian context. But I do believe that there are undiscovered dimensions relative to these domains that will only be found through some form of qualitative inquiry. I also feel, just as Darkenwald and Gavin (1987) found, that several of Moos's CES scales were inappropriate for adult populations and required removal and replacement with scales more appropriate for adult populations. Qualitative inquiry into Micronesian perceptions of classroom environment identified new issues in a similar manner. Moos's model, and the instruments derived from it, has been very productive in elementary and secondary education research in the western context and with adaptations show great promise for application in adult education.

A danger Pratt (1999) points out when we cross cultural boundaries is that conceptions commonly accepted in our culture are not common in other cultures. Pratt (1998) states, "perspectives on teaching are cultural views of teaching, powerful but largely invisible frames of reference through which all of us make meaning of our worlds" (p. 37). In the same way, culture has a powerful influence on the learners' expectations and perceptions of the learning environment. These invisible frames of reference or cultural standards are of immense concern to adult educators in meeting the needs of learners from cultures different from their own. Hofstede's (1997a) model provides insights into how learners' perceptions, expectations and behaviors may vary across cultures.

The Classroom Environment Scale has been used in developing courses to fit the students' ideals, course and instructor evaluation and development, program planning, and in assisting students in developing adaptive strategies. Many of the research studies that have built on Moos's (1979a) original work have examined influences within these three domains by either applying his instrument or through the development and application of new assessment instruments.

Teachers and learners each come to education settings with their own cultural heritages. These invisible cultural standards for perception, evaluation and behavior, shape how the world is experienced and meaning is made. It is important to understand the cultural orientation of, and the cultural influences operating on, both the teacher and the learners. In the same way that models of the dimensions of classroom environments help understand complex dynamics in this social setting, so might models that describe dimension of cultural variance in social settings help conceptualize how culture may influence behavior in the classroom context.

In suggesting future directions in international learning environments research, Fraser (2002) wrote, “there is scope for Asian researchers to adopt, adapt or create new theoretical frames to guide the next generation of learning environment studies”(p. 19). Recently, several Asian researchers (Goh, 2002; Lee & Kim, 2002; & Margianti, 2002) noted that qualitative interviews conducted in non-western contexts might provide new insights into the cultural nuances embedded in the student perceptions of the component dimensions of classroom environments. Khine (2002) pointed out the need for in-depth interviews to illuminate how students arrived at their responses and as a counter check to the validity of the questionnaire responses. Recognizing the potential influence of culture, Fisher and Waldrup (2002) drew on both Moos’s (1979) and Hofstede’s (1984) writings to develop an instrument designed to assess culturally sensitive dimensions in high school science learning environments.

All of the above call for a better understanding of how various cultures may interact with these classroom environment models. I believe the Micronesian region provides an excellent context for such examining the perceptions of adult students, from a non-western culture, of the dimensions of classroom environments. Qualitative inquiry on classroom environments in a non-western cultural context can provide insights to and understanding of the influence of culture on learner identified dimensions and their significance. This is essential in conceptualizing the social environment and may expand the model’s applicability to this new context with all the associated benefits.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

As individual mobility and communication across national borders increases, educators face a growing diversity of learner cultures and worldviews. This study was concerned with understanding culture's role in shaping adult students' perceptions of classroom/learning environments. The cultural context of U.S. college classrooms in the Micronesian region provided the setting for exploring these issues.

The purpose of this study was to understand how culture shapes adult Micronesian college students' perceptions of classroom/learning environments. Through interviews the study explored four research questions: (a) What are the social/cultural factors shaping the perceptions of classroom environment, (b) What factors within the classroom environment do Micronesian students identify that promote learning, (c) What factors within the classroom environment do Micronesian students identify that inhibit learning, and (d) What other factors influence adult Micronesian students' perceptions of classroom learning environments? An exploration of these concepts within the Micronesian cultural context will provide insights into a non-western culture's meanings associated with the various dimensions of the classroom environments.

This chapter articulates how I conducted this study in order to best discover these perceptions and influences. I describe the study design, sample selection, data collection, data analysis, strategies to increase validity and reliability, and my personal subjective biases and assumptions.

Study Design

This was a qualitative interview study. A primary underlying assumption on which qualitative methods are based is that humans construct their own reality, and realities are as varied as all of humankind. In the beginning of her book on qualitative research in practice Merriam (2002) writes:

The key to understanding qualitative research lies with the idea that meaning is socially constructed by individuals in interaction with their world. The world, or reality, is not the fixed, single, agreed upon, or measurable phenomenon that it is assumed to be in positivist, quantitative research. Instead, there are multiple constructions and interpretations of reality that are in flux and that change over time. (pp. 3-4)

In addition to recognizing that each individual constructs unique meanings, a research goal is to understand the meanings people construct and modify as they try to make sense of the world and their experiences within it. A focus is placed on understanding these meanings from the participant's point of view.

Understanding Individuals' Meanings

Qualitative research seeks to understand the interpretations or meanings people develop from their experiences. This understanding of individuals' perspectives is the goal of qualitative research, not a predictive model or a model that can be generalized to a larger population. Examining the meanings individuals derive from their experiences and the contextual setting may lead to new insights that can serve as foundations for new theories. Qualitative research arrives at these insights by exploring individuals' meanings through their own words, not by hypothesis formation and testing.

This aspect of qualitative inquiry seemed well suited to this study's objective of developing an understanding of the role of culture, educational experiences and other influences in shaping Micronesian students' perceptions of college classroom/learning environments. I sought understanding of the meanings they develop from the influences and experiences within learning contexts. I believe that this form of inquiry has the greatest chance of uncovering influences that are important to Micronesian students, which are not identified in the classroom environments literature with its built-in western cultural biases of individualism and egalitarianism.

Nature of Qualitative Interview Data

The data developed through qualitative inquiry, with its rich descriptive and documentary nature, was useful in developing new insights into influences on classroom environments. In describing qualitative data one encounters the term "thick description." This goes beyond a description of just what is heard or observed but links the observation to all the complexities of relationships and meanings embedded in the contextual setting. Geertz (2000/1973) described this as a process of sorting the data from words, events and contexts through multiple layers of significance to arrive at meanings closely representing the perspectives of the interviewee. This seemed well suited to an inquiry exploring complex social interactions that occur in a different cultural context.

It is also important to recognize that these are third order interpretations and so a text of the researcher's creation. To balance this, individual students' perceptions and meanings will be given voice through quotations capturing the meanings from their individual perspective. These perceptions of adult Micronesian students can best be articulated through their own words and

narratives. So, the results of this research contain many direct quotes as it is the words of these participants on which the findings are based.

Researcher as The Instrument

In a qualitative interview study, the researcher is the instrument of both data collection and analysis. As Patton (1990) points out, the skill, competence, sensitivity, integrity and rigor of the researcher are, to a great extent, what determines the validity of the work. A positive implication is the degree of flexibility this brings to the interview process. Merriam (2002) writes that in the search for understanding, the human instrument may instantly adapt and respond to opportunities and utilize a multitude of cognitive and behavioral responses to probe and obtain a deeper understanding of the phenomena under investigation. These include the use of “nonverbal as well as verbal communication, process information (data) immediately, clarify and summarize material, check with respondents for accuracy of interpretation, and explore unusual or unanticipated responses” (p. 5). In the end the researcher is the filter or lens through which the data is expressed.

Inductive Nature of Analysis

Another important characteristic of qualitative interview inquiries relative to this study is the inductive nature of the analysis process. The researcher becomes immersed in examining the data, the details and impressions contained therein, and then begins to explore the relationships, meanings, categories or domains identifying themes in an open manner. In addition to this open approach to interpreting the meanings within the data, these methods allow for adapting and changing the direction of the questions or even the study as the researcher’s understanding of the phenomena changes. The ability to explore and follow up on new concepts or ideas that develop in the interviewing process seemed particularly appropriate for this study.

Because of qualitative research's inductive nature, it is often used when little is known or for some reason existing models are believed to incompletely describe the phenomena of interest. This inductive qualitative approach allows the researcher to identify new, unexpected relationships or concepts that emerge from the data. This approach holds the potential for opening windows on the world which quantitative research might miss with its inherent constraint in the researcher's imagination that must form a question or hypothesis. Patton (1990) said it well, "qualitative methods are particularly oriented toward exploration, discovery, and inductive logic" (p. 44). To be true to this spirit of qualitative research the researcher must be open to the meanings of the situation without imposing pre-existing beliefs on the interpretation of the data, this is what is meant by the inductive nature of qualitative research.

Why Qualitative Interviews Were Appropriate for this Study

One of the most important considerations is qualitative inquiry's role in discovery of new concepts. If in non-western cultures there are theoretical dimensions of learning environments that can inform new theoretical frames, I believe that these are most likely to be discovered through qualitative interviews. Often when quantitative researchers develop new models through a theoretical inductive process, they frequently base their conceptual framework on concepts qualitatively derived by anthropologists, sociologist or other social scientists. Utilizing qualitative interviews to investigate the context and phenomena directly is likely to provide a richer information base to draw on in adapting existing, or creating new theoretical frames.

In articles surveying international classroom environment research several researchers (Goh, 2002; Lee & Kim, 2002; & Margianti, 2002) noted in their conclusions the need for qualitative studies to more thoroughly explore the potential cultural nuances surrounding learning environments within their respective cultures. One is left to wonder if these statements

just represent lip service to the importance of qualitative research, or if these statements reflect the researchers' deep insider beliefs that these models, developed in western contexts, are not capturing the complexity of their cultural milieus. I believe it to be the latter and take this as a clear signal from the learning environment's literature of the importance and need for qualitative interview investigations of culture's influence on learning environments.

Sample Selection

This study utilized purposeful sampling procedures in order to obtain the broadest possible range of Micronesian cultural perspectives on college classroom environments. Faculty, staff and students at the University of Guam identified the initial participants. As Patton (1990) wrote, one of the strengths of purposeful sampling is that it allows the researcher to select information rich cases. These are cases (individuals) that one can learn the most from relevant to the purpose(s) of the study. Patton (1990) discusses many strategies for purposefully selecting these participants. This study made use of three of these strategies: criterion, maximum variation and then snowballing to identify participants.

Criterion sampling was used as a set of filters to ensure that the participants met basic requirements for this study. Maximum variation sampling was used to obtain participants who offered the largest variety of insights. Within the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) there are cultural variations among island groups. Weiss (1994) notes that in order to maximize range the researcher attempts to obtain instances of the major dissimilar forms within the larger population. This sampling strategy identified common shared patterns or themes across the groups. A snowballing sampling strategy was utilized to find participants beyond the initial group suggested by faculty.

The study is concerned with adult education, therefore the participants needed to be adults. This posed a dilemma as the term adult is a contested one both within and across cultures. For this project an age criteria was used to identify if potential participants were adults. Traditional college students are between 18 to 22 years old. Merriam and Caffarella (1999) noted that one study by Johnson and Rivera (1965) defined adults as “anyone either age twenty-one or over, married, or the head of a household.” They also noted in another study adults by Aslanian and Brickell (1980) that selected for adults over the age of twenty-five. For this study participants were selected who were 24 years old or older, this criterion was selected to identify students who had time in their lives to transition to full time adulthood.

Since the purpose of the study is to understand Micronesian students’ perceptions, another criterion was that participants must have lived in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) most of their lives prior to attending college. The study examined students’ perceptions of U.S. college classroom environments. So, another criterion was that the participants must have completed eighteen hours of college course work, in order to have a range of class experiences to draw on. Efforts were also made to interview a balance of both male and female participants. Successful efforts were made to obtain participants from each college within the University of Guam.

There is a continuum of cultural variation and degree of colonial influence across the spread of islands that make up the FSM so, a maximum variation strategy was used. Efforts were made to interview two to four individuals from each of the four states: Kosrae, Pohnpei, Chuuk, and Yap. Also, since there is a spectrum of colonial influence from high to low as one moves out from the central islands of the FSM states, efforts were made to interview outer islanders as well as those from the central island of each state. This effort was made to include

perspectives from the areas of the FSM least influenced by the cultures of the former colonial powers.

Number of participants is an issue that was addressed in the sampling strategy. While it was difficult to say exactly how many interviews would be necessary, it was anticipated that the researcher would interview between ten to fifteen participants. Interviews on the questions were conducted until a point of information saturation was reached. In the end the number of interviewees was the number needed to develop an understanding of the meanings participants developed around the issues raised by the research questions. This study utilized 13 interviews.

In summary, participants were utilized who were University of Guam students with at least eighteen hours of credit, 24 years old or older, who lived in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) prior to coming to Guam. Participants were found from each FSM state, and participants were found who came from the central islands and from the outer islands. A balance of male and female participants was found and students from each college in UOG were also found.

Data Collection

Qualitative interview data are direct quotations from people obtained through an interview process. There are several types of interviews ranging from very structured to unstructured conversations. For this study I used semi-structured interviews or what Patton (1990) calls the general interview guide approach. In this type of interview an interview guide or list of questions is prepared before the interviews begin to make sure that the most important issues are covered in each interview.

While the questions served as a guide or an outline of topics to be covered, the interviewees and interviewer did branch off of these topics. In a semi-structured interview there

is freedom to follow the stories and experiences of the interviewees as they reshape the content of the interview. Patton (1990) notes that the guide questions serve to ensure that the interviewer decides in advance how to best use the limited time in the interview and to make sure that the same material is covered with a number of people. He states that the interviewer is free to build a conversation, spontaneously explore new avenues that open up and reword the questions and their sequence as seems appropriate to the conversational flow. But, the interview should always maintain a focus on the predetermined subject areas represented by the interview guide.

This study's research questions were: (a) What are the social/cultural factors shaping the perceptions of classroom environment, (b) What factors within the classroom environment do Micronesian students identify that promote learning, (c) What factors within the classroom environment do Micronesian students identify that inhibit learning, and (d) What other factors influence adult Micronesian students' perceptions of classroom learning environments? The initial interview questions for exploring these issues and the interview guide as it was modified after the first seven interviews are attached in Appendix C. In the course of the study the wording and sequence of the questions were changed in order to better explore the research questions.

After the first seven interviews, the interview guide was modified in consultation with the major professor. The question on how a traditional skill was learned was reworded to stress how the skill was learned, over what was learned. It became the first question in the new sequence. The question asking for a negative college experience was changed to inquiring about what things or activities you do not like in a college class. This change was because the earlier version was too strongly worded and generated a reluctance to answer. The question on a

teacher who stood out and the question on a time when the student really learned a lot were collapsed into potential probes for the question, on learning experiences that stands out. This was because there was a lot of overlap in the answers between these three original questions. A question was added to ask the students to describe their ideal college class. Finally, a question on outside influences was added.

Each interview lasted for approximately one to one and one half hours. Within the Micronesian cultural context it is very important to start a conversation and develop a rapport with the interviewee before the study questions are asked. In addition, prior to the interview a pre-interview meeting was often necessary to discuss the project goals and to introduce the interviewee to the researcher, his background and interests.

The interviews were conducted in empty classrooms and offices on the University of Guam campus, in the dorm and in one case the interviewee's home. These were neutral and convenient locations for the interviewees. The times of the interviews were selected by the interviewees. The interviews were recorded on two cassette tapes (to ensure data was not lost), and the tapes were then transcribed.

Data Analysis

Writers on inductive analysis and grounded theory stress the need for unearthing the concepts buried within the text through an initial or open coding process (Charmaz, 2002; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Some qualitative researchers suggest starting with a set of predetermined codes pulled from the literature or previous experience (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Miles & Huberman, 1984). Others note the strength of allowing the data to speak through an in vivo coding process (Charmaz, 2002; Miles & Huberman, 1984). This analysis followed the second and began by coding data using in vivo codes.

All interviews were transcribed. The first three interviews I transcribed, but after transcribing these initial interviews, I hired a student worker to transcribe the rest of the interviews. My approach to coding was to first listen to the taped recording of the interview with the transcript to correct any transcription errors. Then I listened to each interview recording several times to become familiar with its general flow while driving or at home. Next as I read the transcript I underlined words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs that stood out noting words or phrases that captured the essence of the passage, in the right margin, as I read. The defined unit of analysis was sentences and paragraphs that conveyed the concept the students were expressing.

I followed this first reading with a second reading where I made notes on preliminary categories of code phrases. In this process, I began what Charmaz (2002) refers to as selective or focused coding to identify categories of codes. This initial gathering of codes into categories is what Coffey and Atkinson (1996) describe as "pools of meaning" (p. 31).

Whenever an in vivo coding approach is used as a first step, an important second step is to categorize the codes that arise (Charmaz, 2002). This fits well with Coffey and Atkinson's (1996) discussion of the works of Tesch (1990) and Marton (1986) on the two contexts each quotation or chunk of meaning has. One context is that which it holds by its position in the text, the other context is that which it shares with others in the "pool of meaning to which it belongs" (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996 p. 31). They describe a process of decontextualization and recontextualization of the data through the coding process.

The coding process reduces or segments data to chunks of meaning that can "stand alone"; these segments through codes, then receive new contexts within categories or "pools of meaning" (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). In reorganizing segments of meaning within categories, it

is important to keep track of the data segment's location within the text. In the initial interviews (first four) Atlas.TI qualitative analysis software was used in this analysis to facilitate the coding and development of categories. The codes and the categories they were clustered into were displayed using dendrograms. Dendrograms are visual representations of the hierarchical thematic structures of codes clustered into more abstract categories. As one moves out on the visual treelike displays, one moves along the branches from more abstract levels (categories) to the more specific codes at the end of the branching structures (Miles & Huberman, 1984), all the while maintaining links to the original text. In later interviews, at the suggestion of the major professor, line numbers were added to each transcript and word files were set up where quotes were copied (with interview and line number designation) and grouped into new files for each of these "pools of meaning."

Once all of these chunks of meaning are marked with codes, the second stage of the clustering process is to organize the codes into categories. To facilitate this process I printed a table of codes and their accompanying quotes into groupings of similar meanings or issues. This made it easier to visually see what fits together, what is different, and to identify relationships and properties. Examination of these clusters lead to the identification of more abstract and inclusive categories.

This reconceptualization of the data through the coding process fit very well with the clustering technique described by Miles and Huberman (1984). They describe clustering as "a general name given to the process of using and/or forming categories, and the iterative sorting of things--events, actors, processes, settings, sites--into those categories" (p. 219). Using dendrograms, tree-like visual representations of the hierarchical clustering of quotes to codes to categories, offered a structured visual approach to moving from the specific to the abstract in the

coding process while maintaining links to the underlying quotes. This approach addressed the need, noted by both Miles and Huberman (1984) and Coffey and Atkinson (1996), to allow for ease of reading and manipulation in exploration of the data.

Examination of the dendrograms made up of these codes and categories identified some commonalities and relationships among the categories. Multiple passes over the code tables generated new coding categories and collapsed others into a single category. Following this, new dendrograms were created for each major code category, providing a visual tool for analysis and presentation.

In this coding process memo writing was important for several reasons. Often the participant only partially stated a concept or a word was used in a context that gives it a meaning different from what native English speakers might understand it to mean. During this first reading of the transcript, it may become necessary to write memos to clarify my understanding of meanings derived from the transcript. A second reason for memos is that the memos served to identify and articulate researcher subjectivities that are based on personal experience. Familiarity with the Western Pacific region brings a whole set of understandings that might not be clear to someone unfamiliar with the region, memos served to identify or clarify these instances in the transcript.

As new interview transcripts were brought into the analysis, the transcript was coded using both the codes developed in the first interview, and new codes that arose from each additional transcript. After the coding of each transcript the quotes under these category families were compared across the interviews. From these comparisons some of the code names and categories were renamed or in some cases collapsed into each other. Then transcripts were

reexamined utilizing the new code list. This iterative process of coding each additional transcript and adding and modifying codes and code categories was repeated until saturation was reached.

Once this initial analysis process was completed and the initial findings were written up, the dendrograms were utilized to derive a model. This model identifies the relationship between cultural factors/experiences and factors which Micronesian students identify as promoting and inhibiting learning in the college classroom environment.

Validity and Reliability

Internal validity refers to the question, do our findings reflect reality? Of course an assumption of qualitative inquiry is that realities are multiple and constructed. Another way of looking at it is to answer the question, are we accurately investigating and describing the perceptions or phenomena we think we are describing (Merriam, 2002). It is important that our descriptions and conclusions capture the perspectives of our participants. In order to increase the internal validity of this study I utilized the strategy of member checks. Additionally since this study is a doctoral dissertation, the doctoral committee effectively serves as external auditors.

Initially, I used an insider peer review of my interview questions. This involved discussions with two Micronesian faculty members on the interview guide to seek culturally appropriate approaches to the topics of the interviews. Member checks involve presenting the findings to several of the interviewees (after interview analysis and write up of the findings) to see if my interpretations of their words and experience are accurate. My descriptions of the participants' words and experiences must be recognizable to them. This process allowed them the opportunity to correct and fine tune my description of their experiences and views. Member

checks were conducted after the completion of analysis, write up and submission to the committee, on my return to Guam, but prior to the oral defense.

Emails were sent to those participants who I had contact information for, that were still on Guam. Emails were sent to five participants requesting a session to present the findings and obtain participant responses. Three participants replied and were willing to meet. Two sessions were held, one with two male participants who knew each other and one session with a single female participant. Each participant was paid an additional \$30 for their attendance. Both sessions were recorded and took approximately one hour and fifteen minutes.

First, the factors that students identified as promoting learning were presented and discussed. This was followed by the factors that inhibit learning. Then the social/cultural factors that shape the participants perceptions of these factors were presented and discussed. In all the groups of factors the participants agreed with my findings, often offering additional supporting comments.

Then I showed them the illustration of the model (see Figure 2 in Chapter 4) and we discussed the relationships between the cultural/social factors and the factors that promote and inhibit learning. Again the relationships that I identified were supported by the participants. In one case they noted an additional relationship. They pointed out that there is link between the view that it is impolite to talk too much and the students' distaste for long lectures. When a professor just lectures (talks too much) without engaging the students in a dialog or experiential activity it creates a perception of rudeness or lack of respect for the students. Both sessions were very positive with many encouraging comments by the participants. There were no points that the participants disagreed with, and on several topics, they offered additional examples supporting my findings.

Reliability, which is concerned with the degree to which the results are supported by the data collected, will be increased by the strategies of an audit trail and by providing a statement of researcher biases and assumptions. The audit trail is the prior description of data collection, code and category development and interpretations made in the data collection and analysis process. I also include a statement of personal experiences and beliefs relative to the topics of the study, in the Researcher Subjectivity, Bias and Assumptions section of this chapter so that readers may better understand where personal biases may influence my interpretations.

This study represents an attempt to study in-depth perceptions of adult Micronesian college students surrounding college classroom environments and other learning experiences. This study provides new information and perspectives on classroom environments that may be considered in other contexts. But generalizing the results found in a Micronesian context to other contexts should only be done with careful consideration of the similarities and differences between the two contexts. In order to facilitate the readers' determination of the applicability of this study's result to other contexts, I endeavored to provide enough thick, rich description of both the participants' words and the context surrounding their experiences.

Researcher Subjectivity, Bias and Assumptions

My past experiences carry with them a load of philosophical and cultural baggage. My academic/philosophical foundations were built in the biological (agriculture/ecology/applied biology) and later economic academic arenas. So, in the past I approached many questions from an initial positivist framework. However, that has evolved into a post positivist framework, largely due to training. While I feel the human experience comprises an incredibly small portion of "reality," it is the part that is of enormous concern to humans. Social constructionism appeals

strongly to me for examining human interaction with “reality” or “the world” to achieve a degree of understanding of how we derive or generate meaning as a social and cognitive process.

Much of our behavior is guided by the meanings and symbols we take on from our “culture(s)” and these serve to guide our interactions and perceptions of “the world.” I believe that each of us view and interact with the world through lenses bestowed on us by our culture(s) and from these interactions we develop meaning. Central to the constructionist view is a belief that what is important is the meaning individuals make of reality and its objects. Social constructionism further develops this view by incorporating the important social dimension to this perspective. For the human sphere of reality this perspective fits very comfortably with my mindset.

In this study’s inductive analysis, I wanted to try as much as possible to allow the data to speak for itself. One conflict I have with this is to harness and control the influence of my own experiences, and knowledge gained from reviewing the literature. In addressing this conflict, I find LeCompte's (2000) discussion of the influence of tacit and formative theories useful for identifying these influences.

My experience in the tropics, in Micronesia and Guam's classrooms, and the subjectivities that arise from these experiences have led to a series of tacit theories that filter or color my interpretation of the words I hear and read. Keeping this realization in mind helped me to catch, in second and later readings, occasions where I may have misinterpreted the actual statements.

Exposure to the literature surrounding classroom environments has left its mark on me also, especially the work of Moos (1979) and those who have followed in developing on his work. It was important to keep my own mind open to new lines of thought and to be especially

careful not to force potential new concepts to fit the mold that Moos's work has developed. In a similar manner I have also been influenced by the work of Hofstede (1997) on dimensions of national cultures. Through the interviews I strove to keep my mind open to potential new concept and be ready to follow up on them when they appear.

I find that my tacit assumptions are insidious and difficult to identify and control. I detect constructivist leanings in my orientation, as I find a strong resonance in Charmaz's (2002) observation that constructivist theorists recognize that they define what is happening in the data, in contrast to objectivist who believe that they discover what is happening. In either case, the trick is to remain true to the data.

The exposure to insights and meanings that I received in the interviewing process has influenced my personal development as teacher. From this personal perspective I found the following quote by Weiss (1994), in regard to the productivity of the intensive amount of researcher's time involved in qualitative interview studies, of great interest.

Most of it goes into an effort to understand the issues of the research. It is entirely possible for investigators who do quantitative work to end a study knowing more about the statistical packages they have used for computer analysis than about the topic of their study. By contrast, those who do qualitative interview studies invariably wind up knowing a lot about the topic of their study. (p. 11)

For the foreseeable future I will be involved with Micronesian and other Pacific island groups in educational settings. Beyond the results of this study, the rich deep cultural knowledge and understanding that I gained will continue to enrich my professional and personal life.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to understand how culture shapes adult Micronesian college students' perceptions of classroom/learning environments. The research questions guiding the study were:

1. What are the social/cultural factors shaping the perceptions of classroom environment?
2. What factors within the classroom environment do Micronesian students identify that promote learning?
3. What factors within the classroom environment do Micronesian students identify that inhibit learning?
4. What other factors influence adult Micronesian students' perceptions of classroom learning environments?

This study was a qualitative interview study. I interviewed 13 adult Micronesian University of Guam students using a semi-structured guided interview process. This study utilized a purposeful sampling procedure in order to obtain the broadest possible range of Micronesian cultural perspectives on college classroom environments. The criteria were: English speaking ability, 24 years of age or older, resided in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) most of their lives prior to attending college, and completed eighteen hours of college course work, in order to have a range of class experiences to draw on. The interviews were

transcribed and analyzed using a constant comparison process to identify common experiences and themes. The interviews were the sole source of data for this study.

Following this introduction the chapter includes an introduction to the participants, then the research findings that are supported by the participants' own words. The chapter concludes with a model that provides an explanation of how the findings relate to each other.

Participants

The consent form signed by all participants and the researcher promised confidentiality, forming the basic contract between the participants and the interviewer. The Micronesian student body at the University of Guam is a very small, interconnected community. Few programs within the University have more than one or two Micronesian students. Provision of more than one or two informational facts on any one of the participants would effectively identify the participant, even under the cover of a pseudonym, thus violating the promised confidentiality. So, only five common personal facts for each participant are provided with the pseudonym in Table 1. These are: Federated States of Micronesia state of origin, gender, age, year in school, and college.

Faculty and students at the University of Guam identified the initial participants. The study made use of two strategies to expand the sample. Maximum variation, and then snowballing, under the constraints of the selection criteria were used to select participants. Efforts were made to interview two to four individuals from each of the four states: Kosrae, Pohnpei, Chuuk, and Yap. Unfortunately, only three students were identified from Kosrae and only one agreed to be interviewed. Efforts were also made to interview at least one participant from an outer island of each state. Table 1 lists the participants' demographic information.

Table 1. *Participant Demographics*

Name	FSM State	Gender	Age Range	Year	College
Angel	Chuuk	Female	30-35	Senior	Education
Brandy	Kosrae	Female	24-29	Junior	Education
Gwen	Chuuk	Female	24-29	Junior	Business & Public Admin.
Honu	Pohnpei	Male	24-29	Graduate	Natural & Applied Sciences
Jackson	Pohnpei	Male	24-29	Junior	Business & Public Admin.
Joe	Pohnpei	Male	24-29	Junior	Business & Public Admin.
Jose	Yap	Female	24-29	Senior	Business & Public Admin.
May	Pohnpei	Female	24-29	Senior	Business & Public Admin.
Mina	Chuuk	Female	24-29	Senior	Education
Peter	Pohnpei	Male	25-29	Junior	Natural & Applied Sciences
Sal	Pohnpei	Male	30-35	Senior	Liberal Arts & Social Sciences
Sally	Pohnpei	Female	Over 55	Senior	Education
Sandai	Yap	Male	Over 55	Senior	Education

College of Micronesia

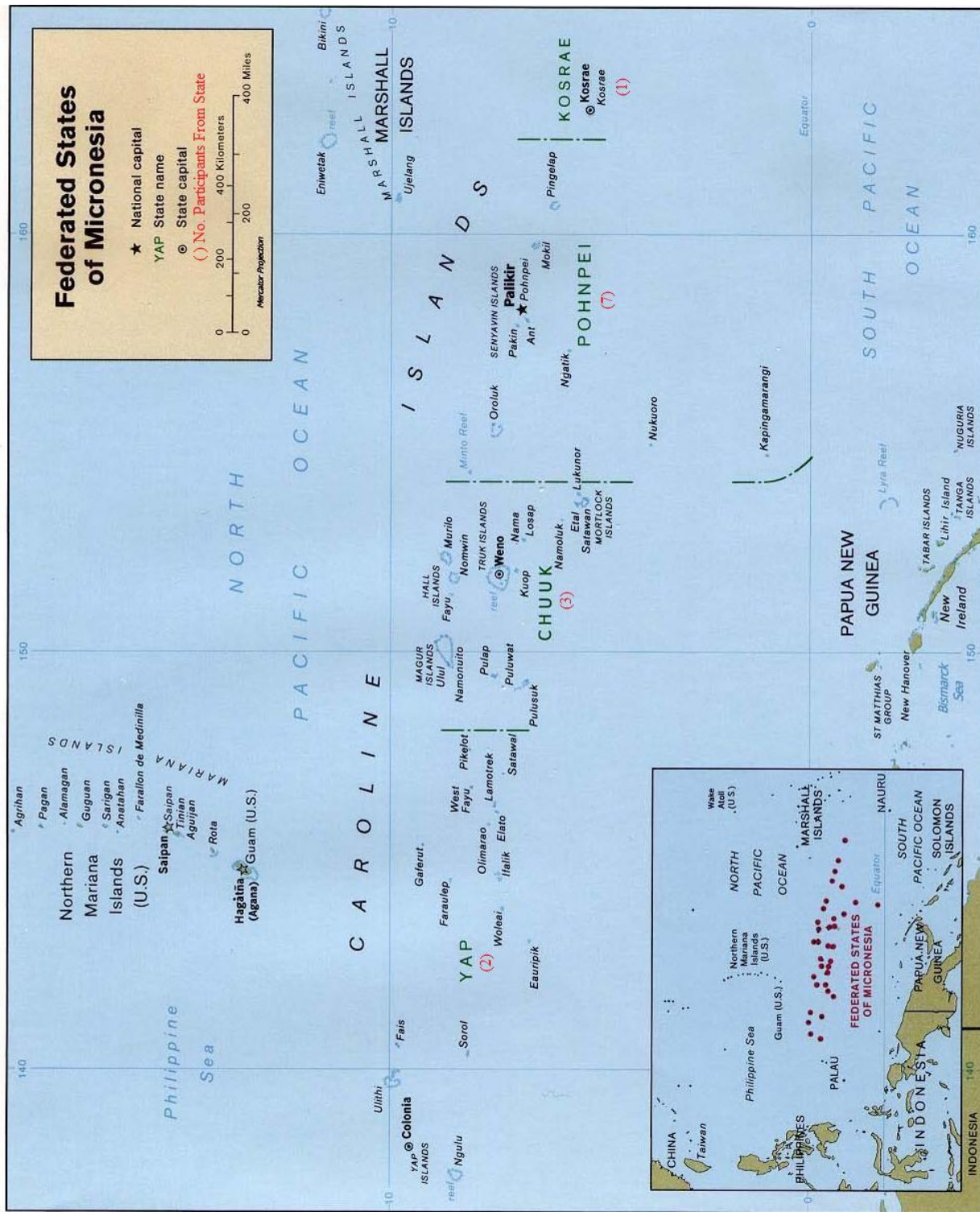
Prior to attending the University of Guam many of the participants attended one of the campuses of the U.S. Land Grant Institution the College of Micronesia. The College of Micronesia (COM) comprises six campuses. The national campus is on Pohnpei, and three junior college campuses are in the states of Yap, Chuuk and Kosrae. The remaining two campuses are in two other nations: one in The Republic of Palau the Palau Community College, and one in the Marshall Islands the College of the Marshall Islands. The College of Micronesia

is a U.S. established institute of higher education, accredited under the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). It is also one of four U.S. Land Grant Institution in the Pacific. The U.S. influence is most strongly seen in the main campus on Pohnpei and its influence decreases as one moves out to the smaller island campuses.

For most participants this institution was their first exposure to college classes. For many islanders coming to the College of Micronesia's campus is their first experience of moving from a subsistence economy to a cash economy. They are faced with a new realm of issues that surround acquiring, managing and using money to ensure their basic needs. Money often represents adjusting to a whole different paradigm on food, shelter and other aspects of survival, all while adjusting to a new academic environment. For many, the COM provides the opportunity to transition to a U.S. style college and a lifestyle away from home before moving to the national campus or other U.S. colleges, University of Guam (UOG) and the Northern Marianas College (NMC), being the most accessible. In order to understand the geographic spread of this college and the island states that make up the Federate States of Micronesia a map of the region is provided in Figure 1.

Angel

Angel's father was a teacher so she was able to observe him teaching at a young age. As a teacher her father was assigned to a different community from the one her mother was from so she grew up in two households, her father's and her mother's. Her father's household was less bound by the culture; for example, she was allowed more freedom to speak her mind. While in her mother's household, her primary home, the culture was very strong and she really "felt the pressure of the culture." For example, even when she had comments to contribute to a discussion, she would remain silent, showing respect in the presence of elders.



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Figure 1. *Federated States of Micronesia* from http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/islands_oceans_poles/micronesia_pol99.jpg

Brandy

Brandy was raised in a household composed of her mother and her aunt; they were both in their early thirties when she was a teenager. There were no elders (people from her grandparents' generation) in her home during her pre-teen and teen age years; her mother and aunt maintained a household separate from their parents' home. Her grandparents also passed away before she was in her teens. She noted that this might be an influence on her not learning traditional skills and behaviors. She indicated that her family was not traditional, and she was allowed freedom to be even more so. She learned the common Kosrean language from her mother. She learned traditional skills like weaving and the formal language in school. The schools would bring in elders to teach traditional skills one day a week. Brandy also noted that insecurity about their command of English is a problem for many students coming from Kosrae.

Gwen

Gwen is from Chuuk, and she learned traditional skills like cooking, sewing and respect from her mother. Her grandmother taught her farming skills. Now as an adult she wishes that she had learned more of these and other traditional skills like fishing. Her first semester of college was at the Community College campus in Chuuk. Then she transferred to the College of Micronesia main campus in Pohnpei. She came to Guam to attend UOG in her junior year. For her, developing her command of English has been a significant challenge in college.

Honu

Honu is from Pohnpei, his father was in the Merchant Marine. In sixth grade he was selected by the "Talent Search" program to prepare for college. My understanding of the Talent Search program is that, promising students are selected early in their academic career for special classes and tutoring to better prepare them for college. He spent several years at the College of

Micronesia before coming to Guam. When I interviewed him, he had just graduated and was planning on getting his Masters degree before returning home. He is an only son and so bears many responsibilities. He believes his endeavors represent his family, and so his success in school is for his family as much as for himself. He maintains an awareness of his family's hopes for and pride in his achievements, and this is a driving force in his success.

Jackson

Jackson grew up on a small outer island of Pohnpei. In addition to learning fishing and other skills from his family he also learned traditional skills like dancing and chants in elementary school. Elders were brought in to teach the students. In many of the islands of the FSM there is a strong desire for the schools to support and promote local culture, yet many of the teachers are not experts in traditional skills. So, the schools hire and bring in elders who are masters of the different skills to teach the students, often one day out of each week. A challenge for him in college is balancing work, to support his family, with his schoolwork.

Joe

Joe attended the College of Micronesia prior to coming to the University of Guam. He noted that when he grew up there was no electricity, no phone, no cars; so they walked. In other words, the outside world had less influence than in more urbanized islands, so community and community activities were central to life. He learned traditional skills from his parents, the community and other families in the community. These skills included weaving baskets, or how to speak the proper language when people come together for ceremonies or respect. His father was chief for the village and therefore spoke on behalf of everyone. He is married, so balancing money/work and school is an issue for him. He noted that a significant difficulty in coming to a place away from one's family to attend school is the loss of the extended family basic support.

On his home island the extended family would provide for subsistence needs, like housing, bananas, fish, taro breadfruit, while he focused on the endeavor important to the family (like school.) But when away from the home island, these resources are lost and money becomes a key factor in life.

Jose

Jose is from Yap and noted that she was raised in a family setting that was more a nuclear family setting than an extended family. By this she probably meant that she grew up in a household with her parents as the primary adults, instead of an extended family that includes grandparents, aunts and uncles in the household. She learned many of her traditional skills like raising taro, gardening, cooking, household duties and respect from her grandmother. Another traditional skill she valued, dancing, was learned from her family for community competitions.

May

May came to the interview with her sister who greeted me, sat and listened. No reason was offered for the sister's presence, and I did not ask. I assumed the sister came as a chaperone. That is not surprising since she, like the other participants, is a family treasure. She is from Pohnpei but went to high school in Chuuk. She did not say, but I suspect from her speech and manner that she attended the Jesuits' high school in Chuuk. There Chuukese was taught. She now understands Chuukese but can't speak it. Elders were brought into her elementary school to teach traditional skills like the language used in gatherings with elders and respect and knitting. In high school peers taught her how to weave coconut leaves to make huts. She learned cooking from her mother and grandmother.

Mina

Mina is from an outer island of Chuuk. She learned traditional skills like dancing from adults in her community and cooking from her family. She started college at the College of Micronesia's community college campus on Chuuk. Then she came to University of Guam in her junior year.

Peter

Peter is from Pingelap, an outer island of Pohnpei, but was raised on Pohnpei. He noted that since he was not raised on his family's home island many links with the elder generations were broken. He felt that because of this he didn't learn many of the traditional skills. But even so he learned such skills as how to speak to older people, raising pigs and planting yam by following the example of elders in his life. It wasn't clear if these elders were uncles or neighbors. He also learned how to fish from his uncle.

Sal

Sal is also from Pingelap. At the time of the interview he was in his final semester at the University of Guam (UOG). He graduated only a few weeks after the interview. His dad was a skilled canoe builder. From his parents he learned traditional skills like building canoes, fishing and other methods of gathering food from the land and sea, proper respect and the language for speaking to elders. Sal, more than most, noted the cultural changes he sees happening in Micronesia due to education and technology. For example he sees how aircraft are now daily bringing in consumer items that were unheard of in past generations. A big concern of his were feelings that schools in Micronesia could do a better job of preparing the students for college. He felt that his preparation in mathematics was inadequate, and this caused him difficulty in his first year in college.

Sally

Sally was the first student I interviewed. She is the oldest of the participants in the study. She is from an outer island in Pohnpei but went to elementary and high school on Pohnpei and went home for the summers. In her family she is the youngest daughter; and so she noted that she learned many traditional skills like making sleeping mats, weaving baskets, and marmars from her mother and older sisters as part of family activities. Marmars are ceremonial head bands used much like Hawaiian leis; they are made of woven shells and flowers. Back when she was young elementary schools didn't teach traditional skills. She taught elementary school for many years on her home island after high school. Then she started college at the College of Micronesia (COM) in Pohnpei. Her college work at COM was spread over many years as she was only able to attend during summer sessions. She also raised six children. She came to University of Guam between her junior to senior years of college.

Sandai

Sandai is from Yap, and he is the only participant I knew prior to starting the study. He was the oldest male in the study. He was in his senior year at the time of the interview. He described learning many of the traditional skills related to gathering food from the sea. He learned from an older man in his clan who was strongly influenced by the stoicism of the Japanese. These skills were passed on in a gradual manner, that is, as one was mastered new skills were taught. He has a home on Guam and has lived on Guam for many years. He taught elementary school on an outer island in Yap for many years. His first college classes were at the College of Micronesia. He also noted the struggle of financing one's own college away from home.

Findings

The four research questions provide an organizational structure for the findings identified in the analysis process. The first research question sought factors within the home islands social/cultural context which shaped the participants views on learning. The second question sought factors within classroom environments that the participants experienced as promoting learning. The third question sought factors within classroom environment that the participants experienced as inhibiting learning. The fourth question sought factors outside the classroom environment that were not part of the home islands cultural context, which the participants experienced as influencing their performance and perceptions of the classroom environment. Table 2 lists a summary of the findings by research question. As can be seen in Table 2, the participants provided four social/cultural factors shaping Micronesian student perceptions of learning environments, four classroom factors that promote learning, three classroom factors that inhibit learning, and one factor outside the classroom and culture influencing their perceptions of the classroom. What follows is a discussion of each finding supported by the participants' quotes.

Social/Cultural Factors Shaping the Perceptions of the Classroom Environment

Under the research question, what are the social/cultural factors shaping the perceptions of the classroom environment, four areas of Micronesian social/cultural norms were identified by the participants: communal nature of knowledge transfer, traditional methods of knowledge transfer, social hierarchy based on age, gender and status, and the prominence of group membership and relations.

Table 2. *Culture and Micronesian Students' Perceptions of Classroom Environments*

Social/Cultural Factors That Shape Perceptions of Classroom Environments
Communal nature of knowledge transfer
Traditional methods of knowledge transfer
Social hierarchy based on age, gender and status
Prominence of group membership and relations
Factors Within the Classroom Environment That Promote Learning
A supportive instructor
A hospitable learning environment
Interactive and experiential instructional approaches
A relevant curriculum
Factors Within the Classroom Environment That Inhibit Learning
Cultural communication protocols
Lecture as the only instructional approach
Incompetent instructor
Other Factors Influencing Perceptions of Classroom Environments
Money

One aspect of traditional knowledge transfer is the communal nature of the process. The responsibility for teaching and learning is shared by a distributed community network that goes beyond the nuclear family boundaries. Some skills are often gained in a community setting arising from the needs surrounding social events like festivals or house building or in peer group play. The second area involves the methodologies of traditional knowledge transfer, usually

consisting of demonstration/observation followed by practice with immediate feedback and correction. The traditional social hierarchy based on age, gender, and status exerts a pervasive influence on Micronesian behavior in learning environments, as well as other social contexts, influencing students' expectations of classroom protocols and behavior. The prominence of group membership and relations represents a desire to blend in with the group and not stand out, manifesting as a social consensus that it is impolite to talk too much or draw too much attention to oneself. There is a social pressure to be an average member of society, not the exceptional member.

Communal Nature of Knowledge Transfer

There are many aspects of learning that are shared within these Micronesian island communities. In telling their stories of learning traditional skills, it is apparent that learning these skills is both expected as a member of the community, and often taught as part of community activities by both family and community members outside the family. These island communities have interwoven social networks where many adults share in the responsibility of teaching the next generation. Many skills are gained as part of the community social life, like weaving palm leaves for shelter and cooking or dancing for a festival where the community members teach younger members as the group performs the activities. Learning key skills also occur as part of normal social activities like helping a friend, cousin, aunt or uncle in construction, farming, and cooking. A great deal is also learned from peers in play/practice activities like fishing. Learning can be a continuous part of the subsistence life of these islanders.

In discussing how he learned many traditional skills, Sal commented on this learning as an integral part of daily life such as, learning construction skills while helping a friend build a home addition:

Yeah, but learning takes place, uh, you know, every time, everywhere you go. Uh, because in that – in a society or in an – an island like that, uh, people are like family. And they said if you called me and said, “Hey, can you help me today, you know, with my extension there?” Then when I go over there and help you, I learn from you as well.

Both May and Jackson describe how they learned from their age peers within the community. Jackson describes how he learned fishing skills from his dad and peers, “Yeah my dad taught me most of it, but when I go with my friends I-I-I also learn something from them.”

May describes learning to weave palm thatch shingles for shelters:

Well the boys would go out and cut the fronds and then bring them over and then, um, us girls will just sit on the grass and then somebody knows how to do it and then she’ll teach everybody then everybody will just sit to their own, on their own and then fix a lot. ...and then they’ll put it together, the boys will put it together.

Several participants noted how the interconnected social network provides easy access to teachers/community member mentors for learning needed skills and knowledge, and how this is not just limited to the nuclear family. In discussing his learning of proper communication protocols Joe described this aspect of the communal network.

I learn it not from just my parents but how how people are so connected to each other and have that easy accessibility in – in just learning from each other is how I learned um the proper ways of speaking, and also the weaving..., it takes, you know steps, and the process take a little while because you have to, uh, see yourself from others and how they

do those things so, basically that's how it, you know, it affects you because these traditions they all, um, interrelate with other, uh, community residents, and if somebody, or if—if something is wrong in what you're doing, people will know why because we all share, you know, same concept or same principle of the tradition or the culture.

Joe further articulates the community expectation of a person being able to demonstrate the basic/appropriate skills, and the shared shame if one does not learn the expected skills:

But for us, um, basically we grow up and then we see people do it and from that you have to learn it because if you don't then people will say you're not a man or you're not a woman because you don't know all these skills especially the weaving and it's, it feels bad because during the gatherings when somebody asks you to weave something and you said you don't know then it's shameful for not just you but also the family that you come from.

Jose talks about learning traditional dance skills (an area of community competition at feasts or events). She describes practicing and learning basic skills as a community group, but also learning from family members' special knowledge/skills for use in competition at community events.

It's done as a community. The whole village but then to get the skills it is given to you by your family. We-we'll just be practicing in a, a whole community but then when you get home your parents or your grandparents will say, "Oh, you were doing this in the wrong way you have to do it this way, this is the right way." And usually in the community—cause it's like dancing in Yap is like a competition among every individual participating, so whatever—if my family has dancing skills I wouldn't want to share it to you. But then

you can be better than, than me. And we don't really show it that way, but to me when I think of it, it's that way.

Sally describes the good feelings she has when she is learning to make marmars (flower lei's for the head) with her family as a group where everyone is teaching and helping and how comfortable it makes her feel in contrast to learning a traditional skill in the classroom:

Uh, when I learn from the family, I really learn because they are my family and I enjoy, but in the classroom I say I was not – I didn't learn from this. They have it when I was already in Pohnpei teaching there, so – but they learn. That's when they start, uh, teaching them, so, uh, we feel those things are (unintelligible) Yeah. (B: You said when – when you're with the family you really enjoyed it.) Yeah, I – (B: Tell me about that. Can – it sounds like – you're smiling really big now.) It's good to be with the family and you learn. And everybody is trying to, uh, teach advice to learn, so it's – we – it's kind of what you feel comfortable like this.

May describes how in the public schools some of the same communal/group activities/methods are used in the classroom by bringing in elders skilled in traditional skills to teach the children. In this case she is describing girls learning to knit and boys to make threads/string from coconut husk fiber.

She taught the girls how to knit like we just watched her and that's how she taught us how to do that..., each of us will follow her along as she do it. (B: Okay, so she shows you, but you do it at the same time?) Yeah, we watch and we do it at the same time. (B: Was that the same for the boys learning coconuts?) Yeah, the, she taught the boys the same way.

This communal aspect to traditional learning has several key elements: very connected social networks with easy access to people to help learn, shared peer responsibility for members' learning, social pressure shared by clan for individual learning with shared loss of face if knowledge is not acquired, learning all the time and as part of community activities, and learning together in groups often as part of social events.

Traditional Methodologies of Knowledge Transfer

Several common aspects in the teaching methods of traditional skills were identified by the participants. The first was a sequence of demonstration/observation followed by practice and correction. The second was the importance of individual hands-on practice, often unsupervised. The third aspect is that mastery is often indicated by a product, fish from fishing for example, so one knows one is successful in the learning task.

In discussing how he was taught fishing, Honu describes the process of observation, practice and correction.

How he teach us to fish is just, you know just take us to the sea and, you know, start like, you know start diving and everything and we just, we just see him like how he, how he does and we just follow his, his ways and, and if we, if we, if we don't know then he correct us by like showing us the proper way.

Sandai also describes the process of demonstration and practice in learning to fish but he had a strict teacher who generally only demonstrated a process once, who expected close observation followed by practice (he described this teacher as a macho man of the Japanese tradition). Sandai stressed the importance of individual practice in developing mastery.

Uh, pretty much, uh, most of it is like, uh, they – they show you only one time. Uh, but then they don't really stick around with you and – because you have to do it your --

yourself...., Yeah. They don't really – really give you enough – I mean they don't really stay with you until you really master the thing – you know, because then it's could be – I believe it's – it's – it could be very boring for you. They sort of left a space for you to think. Use your own common senses. When – they don't really give you the whole – the whole concept like, uh, just dumped to you. “Now here is the answer.” No. Something like that. There are other things that, uh – no, I think that's pretty much how it is.

In talking about learning to farm on Pohnpei, Peter noted a series of skills gained like raising pigs, yam and sakau (kava). Sakau is a medicinal plant of great cultural importance in Pohnpei for its calming and euphoric influence in dispute settlements and gatherings. First, he described watching the elders take care of pigs and prepare feed. When probed, he further described learning to care for yams as like learning to care for pigs by watching the elders doing a task and then helping them (practice). This comes through in farming and cooking and other life skills:

Yeah, yeah, I think it's the same as the pig cause first, uh, first time you did, you go and watch after what they did yeah, and help them. Help the elders do, uh, plant the yam in. When you grow older you know how to plant it your own.

Honu describes this process as watching the elders and following what they do. He and others noted it is easier when something is demonstrated (they show, were the words often used) while the learner observes then practices:

I mean we just, as a kid, we just look at our parents and how they do and we just follow what how they do and then, I think that's, that's the general, like we're just follow what they're doing and it's easier for us and it's faster.

Brandy describes how the school system in Kosrae also brings in elders to teach traditional skills and the methods they use in these classes which consisted of demonstration then practice:

Grade seven and they have to get people not in the school, in the community, like from the senior citizens program. We get people from there to come teach us how to weave things and you know..., They demonstrate first and then later we have hands-on. And she, she, you know, makes time and goes around see, and go around and see how we're doing.

Jose describes this process in terms of learning by doing as she learned both farming and cooking:

We harvest it, we plant it, we cook it, so all three I learn it from her cause I will go with her to the taro patch while we're harvesting; we're also planting taking out the weeds from the taro patch and then come back home, we'll prepare the taro like clean it, wash it and then cook it.

Another aspect of traditional learning is the outcome or result of the learning process. Specifically, some participants talked about when a skill is correctly practiced, often a tangible product is the result of the effort. Obtaining this product often gives a sense of accomplishment. Sandai noted, on several occasions, how you know you have learned when you have a visible product from your practice. In the following case, learning to fish, successful learning is demonstrated by having fish and he describes the satisfaction gained from catching fish.

And then they'll show another spot, you know? And then after that, when you're through – you know, this they will show you and then – then, uh, the next – next time around, they don't show you that, they don't tell you anymore. So you – you find it. And if you

don't find it, tough luck..., You have no fish then..., So it is a big – there is a big happiness in there that is the reward. Is – you know, when you find it, you know you find it because you're beginning to catch a lot of fish.

Earlier in the interview he initially discussed this concept of a product from learning also using the example of fishing.

Uh, the thing is, uh, we – he – he keep me and they – they teach me in wording. But, uh, then there is an application after that. That is when I go out with them and they show me. (Bob: Oh, so you watched them.) Yeah. Then that – that is – and then I – I get – when I pick – when I -- when I'm able to catch a fish, okay, that means my application is, I pass. It's good.

In all of these above examples the training is in a life skill where the teacher shows or demonstrates while the learner observes and follows with practice. Often there is immediate correction and or feedback from the teacher and in many cases the practice results in a product that is a visible proof of successful learning.

Social Hierarchies Based on Age, Gender, and Status

The traditional body of knowledge most frequently cited by participants, when asked to tell how they learned a traditional skill, was respect. Within Micronesian cultures there exist hierarchies based on age, gender and status; and critical to observing these hierarchies is the concept of respect and how it is shown. There are special languages used in the presence of people of higher status and knowledge of the appropriate language is an important cultural skill. Caution in speaking or silence in the presence of higher ranked individuals is also very important. These traditional teachings govern behavior in social contexts, and are an important part of the students' own unique self-outlook or worldview (propriospect). So, as shown below,

these traditional teachings have a powerful influence on the participants' behavior and expectations in classroom environments as social settings.

Jose describes learning respect as a traditional skill in Yap and the importance of silence as a demonstration of respect. Respect for age would involve remaining quiet in the presence of elders and not talking back:

I also learn a lot of traditional ways, like the respecting people which type of people should I be showing more respect on and, um, what else?... Well, uh, in Yap respect is one of the very most important thing. So sometimes as kids we don't know...we don't really know much about, uh, respecting and those stuff so sometimes I might talk back to somebody who's older than me, she'll tell me, "You're not supposed to do that." And even sometimes I talk back to my parents, she will like tell me that I'm not supposed to do that, even though I know I'm wrong I'm not supposed to talk back. Or even though I know I'm correct I'm not supposed to talk back. (B: Wow. How-how do they, h-well say, how do they teach you that? Is it something that they correct you or do they, I mean, how do, how do you learn what to s...?) I guess it's, uh, somehow some kind of a correction they scold me, sometimes I get spanked for it but I learn from what I did and I won't do it again and I guess that's how it is since, un-until now.

Gwen also describes similar training in silence as a daughter or niece even when she knew she was right and what was being said was wrong:

My family they all, they just what to teach me is, I have to respect, uh, I have to handle myself, listen to the older ones, I'm not, uh, I, I, I'm not gonna talk to them if they talk to me even though it's not good, it's not right as a daughter or niece or I have to just be quiet.

Joe links the learning of the high language for use with higher ranked individuals to the concept of respect and knowing one's rank or context within gatherings.

The traditional language that is speak, that we speak, is very different from the common language that we speak um, to the common people or to each other here in Guam um, that's why these, or that's why the language is so important because it teaches us on the respect, or how we – or it teaches us how to respect um, other people on the proper context of our – um of you know of coming together or interacting with each other.

Later in the interview Joe elaborated on his difficulty in opening up in class because his relatively low rank trained him in silence rather than public expression:

I have to be like open up myself and be, you know, speak to myself, you know, about, you know, for like reading essays and, you know, doing presentations, um, I, I don't normally do that, or I never do that back home because, um, I'm, I'm just somebody who is, you know, just low in the family uh, family chain and I, I never have the opportunity, you know, to speak so, that never gave me an experience of, you know, you know somebody speaking in front of people..., I think that's the main, that's the hardest part of it because your kinds of concerns is in somebody else you don't have the power to, you know, just speak to everyone in the community. If we all have a ranking of, you know, individuals that can, you know, talk about, you know, everybody in the family it's not everybody open up, you know, to any discussions.

Sal also notes the importance of the traditional language and the importance of caution in speaking to elders or traditional leaders:

And when it comes to, uh, you know, uh, approach – approachment, let's say, when you deal with people, they also teach us how to respect our elders. Uh, when we talk to them,

uh, our language has to be very, uh, decent. Unlike when you talk to your own friends, you can, you know, laugh around, you know, joke around, but when you talk to people that are older than you or, let's say, the old traditional leaders, you have to be very cautious of what you're saying.

Angel describes this in terms of hierarchies based on gender in Chuuk. She notes the differences between the pressure of the culture in her mother's traditional family and her father's less traditional family. She also notes how she carries this pressure of the culture into her later life off island, and its influence on her in class:

Also that's part of my culture is, it's mostly the men are the one doing the talking so the women they listen a lot and then they will do what, what he says for them to do. So, (clears throat), because my dad and my mom are from different island in Chuuk, so like on my m—on my dad side, like we, we talk, not that much, but at least for me like we're able to, to, to say what we—what we think, he doesn't really press like the culture on us but in my mom's place on her side the culture is very strong so, like I grew up, because I grew up most of my years with her, is like, I was feeling like the pressure of the culture that, you know, you're not supposed to say that, you're not supposed to so... Like we carry that in the classroom so mostly the teacher is the one doing the talking. For everyday and you just listen and follow, more or less it was like, it's like that so, because I'm not used to like to ask questions or even though I can't understand I say, "OK"

These hierarchies are pervasive in the societies of Micronesia, and many of the participants noted that the protocols they were trained to observe must be overcome to fully participate in western college settings. But, within these contexts a culturally competent

instructor must recognize these cultural influences and adapt to facilitate students' participation, Joe was very perceptive in noting this:

The professors they have to understand that not everybody in the classroom they have that ability, you know, to open up and just, you know, to say it out, you know, anything they want because we all come, come from different, um, cultures and it's not to say that the, the students they don't like to talk about, you know, certain things but it's just the culture, what you learn inside you that, hinder, you know a lot of, uh, things for you to, you know, openly discuss about.

Prominence of Group Membership and Relations

Blending with the group is an important motivating social factor as students articulated a cultural value for not standing out from the group and being considered average. Joe noted the desire to be average and not stand out as exceptional or being thought of as smart, "the average, we always want to be on the average side. We, we it makes me like feel weird if people talk about 'oh that guy is smart.'" Jose also noted the desire to not want to be the center of attention, and so she waits until after class to ask her questions of the instructor:

I rarely ask question in class. Even though I don't know the answer, I don't, I don't know I'm embarrassed to ask or, or we could say that I don't want to be center of attention. So, if I ask one question all the student will be listening to me. So usually after class I'll go ask the instructor.... In Yap it's not good to, um, like be center of attention if you know what I mean...., so this has affect me in the class presentations. I get very nervous and I wouldn't wanna stand up in front of the whole class and might be the only one talking and those stuff, I think it's because of the way I was raised. I wasn't raised to be like other students where they'll just, they don't have any problem just standing up and doing

the presentation, they're used to it. But for us I think, Yapese you'll find it that they would rather sit and look than stand up and be the center of attention..., when somebody's doing—stand—it's stand, standout then the people will be gossiping saying, "This person is this, and this, and this," and you don't want that.

May notes while constrained under the cultural norm for being quiet in class, she wants to participate, and notes that it would be appropriate for her to speak if the teacher calls on her directly. This indicates that talking is acceptable when permission is granted first by the authority figure (teacher):

For people like me. I sometimes do hope that the teacher will call on me so, you know it forces me to say things in class. And then some people are just taking up the whole class, talking, talking more and others don't get to put in their input but maybe if the teacher like calls on different people then everybody will have their... (B: Formalize a turn-taking?) Yeah.

The above discussion explored the participants' learning experiences in their home culture and identified four factors influencing their perceptions of learning environments. The first is the communal nature of these experiences where they noted a shared responsibility for teaching and learning distributed across the community beyond the nuclear family boundaries. The second, methods of traditional knowledge transfer, often consisting of demonstration/observation followed by practice with immediate feedback or correction. Third is the presence of a traditional social hierarchy based on age, gender, and status that influences Micronesian behavior and expectation in learning environments, as well as other social contexts. Fourth is the importance of group membership and a desire to blend in with the group and not stand out, manifesting as a social consensus that it is impolite to talk too much or draw too much

attention to oneself. These early experiences set the stage for understanding the participants views on what promotes and inhibits learning in the classroom.

Factors Within the Classroom Environment That Promote Learning.

Under the research question, what influences within the classroom environment do Micronesian students identify that promote learning, four aspects of the classroom environment were identified by the participants: a supportive instructor, a hospitable learning environment, interactive and experiential instructional approaches, and a relevant curriculum. A supportive instructor is one who motivates students through encouragement, feedback on progress and is “there for” the students. A hospitable classroom environment is one where students “feel like they are at home” and where peer support and friendship are facilitated. The participants identified a preference for classrooms with high degree of interaction and experiential activities. Relevant curriculum has two aspects; one is relevance to the participants’ future plans and interest and the second is relevance to their island context.

A Supportive Instructor

The participants identified a supportive instructor as a primary source of motivation. They identified attributes of a supportive instructor as one who is encouraging, one who provides feedback, and one who is always “there for you.”

One who is encouraging. The participants identified encouragement from an instructor as taking many forms ranging from: sharing personal experiences in overcoming current difficulties the student is facing, to encouraging words on the students’ efforts, to linking current efforts to the students’ long-term goals, to encouragement in pursuing long-term educational goals. Gwen related an experience of instructor encouragement in overcoming inhibitions in speaking up in class through sharing of personal experiences.

Even in class we have to discuss, I cannot. So she told me, “I’m just like you. Before I’m a shy person I don’t really talk in class.” So I’m learning, now I can talk. So I know you can do it if you trying your best. So after that I can, I come to class I start talking. When she ask me question I answer her.

An encouraging instructor was identified as one who recognizes when students are facing difficulties in mastering a topic and serves as cheerleader to provide the extra motivation to move past this point. Angel describes her frustration in learning to conduct online research and master computer skills and how this type of encouragement made one instructor stand out:

How many years after I was in school the—I really struggle with that but the good thing is the professor was also good you know it was like for me like, she really walk me through those things even though I struggle with it and she encourages me again, “you’re doing fine.” I said, “I’m doing fine? I don’t even see the--.” “But like she gave me hope to, to learn.

In describing what he would do if he was a teacher, Honu explained how he would provide a similar type of encouragement to students having difficulties: “I can see that he’s really trying his best and he’s and I can tell him that, ‘If you keep doing this, you know, you can pass my class.’”

Teachers who encouraged students in their current efforts and linked success in those efforts to the students’ long term goals were also identified as encouraging. In discussing an accounting professor who provided encouragement to continue even though she failed his class the first time, Gwen noted that he stood out as one she remembered and appreciated:

He’s teaching those business and accounting courses and he’s one of the, one of my, one of my teacher, teachers always encourage me. He told me that I’m not gonna give up if

that's my goal then I have to uh work hard cause if I if uh I quit then it's no use. It's just waste my time away from home I spend a lot of money to finish or finish my goal but I give up, so I was lucky. I thank him because even though I fail his class he told me come back and then took the class again. So when I took the test again I pass the class and he's really happy he said "continue on." So he's the one who helped me doing everything that I don't really understand requiring the accounting or the program until I graduate.

One who provides feedback. A second attribute of a supportive teacher is one who monitors a student's performance and provides regular feedback. In describing what can make a learning experience meaningful, Sally noted that she wants to know what the instructor expects the student to learn. She then described the importance of feedback, so that she knows she is on track in encouraging her to continue her efforts:

If I see that what you're trying to give me, I will understand not – I just – I cannot understand then it's – I won't yeah, but if it's – I see that what I'm doing, I understand it, get it it's easy for me to, uh, get what you are trying to teach me. (Bob: So knowing – or getting feedback that you are grasping the material or you're on the right track is important?) Yeah. Cause sometimes I – I will thought, oh, maybe I – hey, I'm on – I won't get what – what I need to, but if you, "Oh, you're on" – that will really encourage me to....

When asked to describe teachers who really stood out in his life and why, Jackson described one who monitored students' progress and sought them out to provide feedback as one he considered a "cool" instructor:

His feedback, like he always, like even though you didn't come to his office, he like goes, he goes to you and then he like what are you doing good, and bad and...(B: Oh so you

like that, you like the teacher to pay attention to where you are and talk to you about it.)
 Yeah Like if he give me feedback. (B: So feedback's important from the teacher. Okay,
 and this guy did that, he, he sought you out. Okay, um, what other things make a teacher
 good? Or whatever made that teacher good, what else did he do?) Uh, I think basically
 feedback and he's open.

In discussing the kinds of activities used by one instructor in class Peter notes how
 helpful he found verbal feedback on essays:

Yeah wri--, like writing essays cause I, uh, when we turn in our papers and, I—our
 teacher may come and say, "Yeah I see where the errors are," and I find out that, yeah, the
 right way to do it

One who is "there for you." In describing teachers, participants found supportive a
 phrase "there for you" was used repeatedly across interviews. Characteristics of such an
 instructor include being helpful and one who makes time for the students outside of class, but it
 implies far more. A teacher who is there for them is concerned with students' well being and
 aggressively tries to insure student success; this includes monitoring and seeking out students
 who are having problems and setting up time to help them address these problems.

In describing teachers who have stood out in their lives, both Angel and Peter describe a
 teacher who was helpful and always makes time outside of class for students. Angel notes how
 when she feels a teacher is "there for you" she feels motivated to learn:

So it was like they were also giving that time to, to help. So those kind I, I, I—for me, it
 helps me to, you know, to want to learn because I find people that they're there for you.
 Like, you know, you don't know this, try that way they will make time for you to come

and explain more or they are free for you to go and ask question like, “Okay, you go and (laugh) in, you know” But that’s what makes me to—to continue to want to learn

Peter describes a teacher that he felt was really helpful, again it is one who makes time for the students:

I see that he’s really helpful yeah. He really help me a lot and like he always stand up for us like if we really need help we go and like, he’s always there yeah..., Like he always wait for us to, like, help us out. (B: Outside of class as well as inside?) Yeah, outside and inside yeah..., And when you there, tell that you really need it he always say, “Oh, anytime you want you can come over.” Yeah.

In describing what techniques a teacher can use to help students perform better, Sally emphasized the importance of the instructor not waiting for students to come for help but to actively identify those having difficulties and trying to help them:

Yeah, you cannot say everybody gonna be – sometimes will be hard, but at least talk to -- yeah, them so they see you care –and you want to help them, they will – if you ignore them, I think – (Bob: They think you don’t care.) Yeah. But ask – and some you have to how many times, that’s when they learn. Some only one time you talk. (Bob: So it’s important to keep coming back.) Yeah. And show them that you care, want to – to help them.

Along similar lines Honu, in describing how he would create the ideal class and the teaching methods that increase student motivation, noted the importance of an instructor taking extra steps to help students not fail and the kind of things he would do if he were an instructor. These included providing extra credit work and aggressively using office hours to help students:

Motivated? Uh, uh, show them that you're gonna do your best to help them and, you know you, no, nobody's gonna fail if they do their work and give them like extra, extra, extra, extra work if they really needs it.... Uh, like providing my help outside the class my, my office hours I'm gonna be, you know, if they need my help, they, I'm gonna have my office hours to come and I can have them sit down with me we talk about their problems and solve and I can, we can work things out from there. Because some student, you know, they're shy and they just finish the cl—I mean just once the class is just, you know, ends they just leave. I know they have problems, but they don't just go to the instructor but at the end of the semester or the year they just go, but it's already too late. So I have to warn them like the first day, or, you know, that it's not right or it's better for them to see me first.

Continuing her description of teachers who stood out in her life and what makes a good instructor, Angel describes how important it was to her to utilize teachers' office hours when she has had problems in class. Also important to her was receiving assurance from the teacher that it was all right for her to do so frequently:

So then I started Ok, because most of my teachers like they encourage me, "It's for you, we are there for you so you have to make yourself that time." I said, "Okay." Because sometimes I feel like, They are going to get tired of me (laugh) going and going. That's what I, I feel about it I, I'm in my own. I was kind of, They are going to get tired of me. Every like single day or whatever I'm there to ask question. But then one of them say, "Well that's what we are here for to help you so please don't..." I said, "Ok" So I started and it really helps because sometimes like you know when I'm learning new things I say,

What, wha—?, when I go back and I say, “Can you explain I don’t know about this, how can I believe?” So, he makes it clear.

Joe notes that it is important students can count on an instructor to help them whatever their problems:

It’s like they understand each feeling or each feeling of a student and for the way it easy to, or that way the student see it as like a very important thing because no matter what a student, you know, ever experiencing that, like a breakdown, you know, they can always relate or they can, they can, expect expect that, um, the teacher will help them.

Angel also notes the importance of an instructor being willing to help with any problems. She further notes that it is important to establish as early as the first day of class the instructor’s intent to help the students be the best they can be, and the instructor’s willingness to be there for them in their efforts:

Well, I mean, for that I think it would be the first day of class, to show that you are interested in the student, that you are there for them, I don’t know but like for me like the way you, you approach the from the first day of school. Like you have to make the students to feel that, “Okay I am here for you. Whatever you need I’ll try my best to, to help you.” I mean, for me, that’s kind of added to that I will feel like ok..., But over here it’s, it’s different you know like, “Who am I going to go to.” So, like when I, like I go somewhere with kind of, you know like anxiety or like fear of “okay, what—what is going to happen?” I don’t know. So the first person that I encounter that, you know, is open and ready to help you, for me like it’s just right away “Okay, I can come to you.” I trust that, you know, you’re going to help me.

Establishing in the students' minds in the beginning of a class the instructor's intent to be supportive of their learning efforts is probably the first step in creating a sense of a hospitable classroom environment for the students. Characteristics of a supportive instructor, which lay the foundation for a hospitable learning environment, include one who shares personal experiences and is "there for" the students, meaning one who is concerned with the students' well being and makes time for them.

A Hospitable Learning Environment

One aspect of a hospitable learning environment is that it has a welcoming atmosphere because the instructor projects a welcoming demeanor by being open and sharing aspects of his/her personal life with the students. A second aspect is the instructor sets a class tone where student peer support and familiarity is fostered. Creating such an environment involves both maintaining an open, family-like atmosphere and using instructional techniques that promote peer familiarity. Several participants noted that the end result is that the classroom feels like they are with their family.

Establishing a welcoming atmosphere. In describing what qualities he found in the professors that he thought of as "good ones," Joe notes this welcoming ambience the professor maintains even in the first day of class:

And for me the first day of class is, is what really impressed me for, you know, thinking that the professor is a good one is, um, you know, like smiling in, you know, like welcoming you, those things and like, um, open-hearted welcome us, like you know, you visit somebody, you know in his or her home.

Brandy told how an instructor made her feel like she was in a class taught by her mother. This course was one she was not interested in initially, but took because it was the only one she

could enroll in. Because the instructor made her feel like she was with her family, she developed a great deal of interest in the course:

She allows, uh, extra time for each of us to come and see her so she can sit down and, “Okay your problem today was, this, and this.” And I learned very fast in that class. It’s not because I’m interested in music, I wasn’t interested at all (Bob laugh). She was the only class that was open for humanities..., But music, I don’t like those things, the notes, and the music and what. So I went without interest. Now I’m doing, very much interested in that class. So it was her teaching strategy that, she’s, she’s, uh, she’s, she treats us like we are child. She would, I love the way she treats us, like she would come and say, “Brandy” you know, and that makes me really wanna come to class. I never missed any of her class. Like I feel, like, yeah, yeah I’m going to my mother’s class because she talk to us like we’re kids and... (B: Oh, like you’re part of the family?) Yeah that’s makes us really listen and feel free to talk to her, feel free to ask questions and feel free ask if we can, “Can I try your piano?” And said, “Oh yes!” So, that, although she’s a professor she’s like a mother.

The importance of setting students at ease through increasing student familiarity with the instructor was identified in several interviews. Instructors who are effective in this include those who: are relaxed, share their personal experiences with the students, are honest and open in discussions with students, and let the students get to know them as individuals. May and described how she felt an instructor could make her feel more comfortable.

I know in teaching should be really serious but maybe if the teacher is kind of loose and makes the students feel comfortable, maybe tell a little funny story or, I kind of like it when teachers tell their personal —like their stories that can relate to uh, class stuff.

Jackson describes how an open and honest instructor, who is easy to talk to made him feel at ease:

Yeah, I (laugh), he's just open like when we sit down and talk yeah he's cool, he's like he don't, and he's honest he just tell you like you doing that he's gonna tell you. But some, some teachers like they don't do that, they just, when you go and just ask question, and that's it. But that guy is, uh, is like he, uh, we talk about a lot of things, like, uh, not in, not just school, but like the family.

In talking about her experiences in large classes, Jose described her feelings, when an instructor holds himself apart or aloof from the students, of resentment and loss of interest and motivation in the class. She links the degree of familiarity with the professor to the amount of material learned:

And I think the more you know the instructor the better you'll be able to learn.., Or even if it's big but the instructor sometimes not really put himself in the same position as the students but not really put himself as, "I'm the professor, you're the student". Sometimes in that way, some student I don't know, kind of think that, "Oh, you're just, because you're the professor you talk to us like this, I'm not gonna [to do] those work and those stuff." That's what I think. Or sometimes when the, to me, sometime when the professors are like that I don't feel like attending his class or, I rather we be in a friendly environment than a professional environment.

Sal notes the importance of the student-teacher relationship in creating an environment where the students can feel more at home:

I think your relationship with students and, uh, your, uh, what's that, uh, your professor is very, uh, you know, important. It's very central in learning because, uh, you know, this

place is not our place. And when you come to a place like this, uh, of course, your feeling is not really as if you were back home. And, uh, uh, you really expect that your surroundings, uh, you know, will be something, uh, very, uh, good for you, therefore, uh, bolster your morale, uh, willing to continue to learn... But, uh, it's true, uh, uh, you know, uh, uh, if you're from a different culture, and not – not only because the – the teaching – the teaching methodology is different, but also the environment – your environment within the classroom is something, uh, you know, I think important for us as well.

Promoting peer familiarity and support. The other key aspect to creating a hospitable classroom environment is the development of peer familiarity. In describing his positive experiences in working with groups, Honu noted one class where he was able to overcome his shyness in public presentations because by the end of the class all the students knew each other like a family:

It builds up like, uh, like family thing cause I, I like this one class, that I had last, I think intercession. I really like this class. The first time we got in, the first day it's like, like totally like nobody knows each other like really scared everyone like doing like keep be quiet and, but when the class finish everybody knows each other..., so like I don't have the feeling of like scared or like shy or because at the end of semester we have, I mean, the class we have to have a presentation like demonstrative like we have to act out and it's pretty, you know everybody like feels comfortable cause everybody knows each other.

May also notes the importance of knowing her classmates before feeling comfortable with class participation:

I think if I know the—my classmates then I'll participate but usually if they're new or if the semester just started I'll just listen in. But if a teacher calls on me I will say something, but to voluntarily I don't usually.

This feeling of a hospitable classroom environment is one where the students feel welcome and accepted and are familiar with and supported by both the instructor and their student peers. When this occurs, the participants are more likely to feel like they are with their family. This appears to be an ideal setting to strive for.

Interactive and Experiential Instructional Approaches

As the participants noted the importance of peer familiarity and support, they also note a distinct preference for instructional methods that foster student-to-student and student-to-instructor interaction. In discussing instructional methods that promote learning, they also noted the importance of hands on or experiential learning experiences in promoting learning. The term “doing” as opposed to sitting and listening appeared in many of the interviews.

Interactive instructional approaches. Instructional methods that encourage interaction are an important supplement and extension of a hospitable classroom environment. Issues discussed surrounding classroom interaction included: instructor role, class discussions, learning from peers, and group work.

In discussing what makes a class interesting, Sal stressed that an important role of the instructor is to provide a structure that increases student-to-student, and student-to-instructor interactions in the class. He went on to include that this interaction increases the students' interest in the class:

Yeah. I think, uh – I think, uh, the – the professor in, uh, uh, the classroom should reinforce a kind of, uh, uh, structure where student always have input into, uh, you know,

discussion of a topic in the classroom, to make sure that student always, uh, uh, get involved with any – any activity in the classroom.., But if you really, uh, interact with students and get students to talk together also, share, you know, what they feel about the topic, and, you know, things like that, and then, you know, of course the professor continue with what he's doing and of course he will also ask students questions to see if they're – they understand what the topic's all about. So I think interaction is one of the thing that will – will, uh, increase interest in – in the classroom.., Yeah, any type of interaction that will provoke interest are really the – you know, the factor improving the life of the – the students within the classroom.

In describing a teacher who stood out in her mind, Sally described one who used techniques to encourage student participation. Sally found a class to be more interesting when the students participate in the class:

She know the techniques that will make us to participate, learn, in – in everything she, she try to give us. She knows the techniques that, and she understand us, our living. That's the most thing, I really.., Oh, she have us introduce ourself, talk to each other like this, and she almost know everybody, so yeah, she introduce and she make her teaching like interesting for us to be participate. She – she just, uh, make, uh, the plan and we always participate in everything.

Jose described a small class where she learned a lot due to it being mostly discussions between the teacher and the students. She attributed the ease of communication to the small class size:

We had one class only an instructor and three students. I really learn a lot from that class because, uh, what we mostly were doing were discussions. We go sit in class and if

somebody walks in they will, they have to stay inside the room for a while to know who is the instructor. Cause we were just like, um, discussing like he'll tell us something new, cause it was an economics class. He'll tell us something about the economies and then ask us what we think, and there was only three of us, so it was easier for us to communicate with him. So I would say that having few student in a class will make it easier and it will have, I think it will help the student learn more because they will, then they will like to participate in the discussion. And I did learn a lot from that class compared to my other classes

Peter told how, even though initially shy to speak in class, a class where students were expected to speak each day was both fun and helped to get over inhibitions to speaking in class:

Her teaching method is really fun yeah, every time we wh—go in the class we like, you have to talk every time — yeah tell a joke or uh, sometimes we tell, uh, ---- like quotes and yeah it's really help me a lot cause the first time I came here I really, I cannot talk cause I'm really shy (laugh)... and then that's really helped me from talking. Everyday we went in the class we talk.

Jose also notes how through class discussion she learned from her peers, “And class discussion, yes there are some professors who include class discussion into their [class], and I've learned a lot from other students.” Sally also noted that she learned from her peers through class discussions, “And – uh, like we discuss – we – we share our experience, all this. And we also learn from each other.” Many of the participants noted the importance of learning from their peers through class interactions. Mina described some of the ways she learns from her peers.

Yes, sometimes I, I gather from my if I don't understand the way the, our instructor lecture I can sometimes, I understand from my classmates..., When we have to think of

ideas and we can share our ideas and we can choose which one is more interesting
(laugh.)

In describing techniques used by a teacher she learned a lot from, May told how the teacher utilized peer learning in her class. She broke the class into groups where the more knowledgeable students were divided among the groups to help other students:

But I know that she, one thing she did was um, there were students who were really good at it and then she divided us into groups and she put those students who are really good at it in one group and then those students were able to help us also..., Yeah, she mixed them, I guess with those like me who doesn't really, who didn't really get it so I had one guy in my group who was really and then the other group had one person who's really good. (B: Oh so it's back like it matches how like when you're weaving your thatch hut. Where you have one person who knows how shows the others.) Yeah.

Both Sally and Jose noted that when students have the opportunity to work together in groups they can draw on other students' experiences and cultures. They both describe how this learning is useful for both the task at hand and for more general insights or approaches to learning and life. Sally describes how she learns from others experiences:

Because I learn a lot more when we share what we – especially real experience and we can see what, what our, that everybody have their own experience. And we learn from it, especially when we're wrong, we see that experiences we try to – try to find a way to, uh, learn from it, change our – like behavior or learning ability so that we can learn.

Jose talked of how she learns from other cultures when working with other students:

Uh, cause, uh we can learn a lot cause we will be working together, we will be sharing our ideas. One of my group members might know something I don't know, they will

share the idea and then...you, you get to learn a lot from them regarding culture, cause, you know, group members you don't really only talk about the topic or whatever you guys are working on. Sometimes you'll say something, "Oh is that how you do it in your culture? Oh yes my culture is this and this," and then we'll be talking about a lot things so basically I learn a lot from what we're going to do in the group, the, our project and for outside from our project.

Sally spoke of how much she and her peers enjoyed using group work in class. "Yeah. Everybody in the class always work together, yeah, and enjoy it. That's how I observe it." In a similar vein when asked what makes a class interesting, Peter's answer was group work to involve the whole class, "Yeah. And do something interesting (laugh). Yeah, like, uh, group work uh, something like that. Something that the class will really, uh, involved, like the whole—whole class, yeah."

Brandy also notes how she likes working in groups that foster peer-to-peer learning. She likes group work because of the interaction instead of lecture, that she is less shy in smaller groups and that sometimes her peers can explain things in simpler terms:

So I learn from them they're learning. We learn from each other. If we're shy to ask in class or we..., And the way I look at it, this girl from Guam is bright. I, we can ask her, she can explain it better than the teacher. The teacher is monotonic (laugh). I just...she's boring (laugh)..., The, the student, uh, uh, makes it more understandable to me than my instructor. Because another reason is that, my instructor is using so high terms like we, I have to look up, look up the dictionary. While I, uh, grou—my group-mates can explain it in easier.

Jose provides a note on the importance of not depending on just lecture, but utilizing other instructional techniques like class discussion, group work and the opportunity to learn by doing to promote student learning.

I don't, I would say that when I, when I learn a lot in class is, it's when the teacher is not doing lecture like for the whole period. It's like he's doing lecture and then, uh, allowing the student to participate in the lecture. Or in a group activity or something that we will do that is, like, the same with his lecture so we can learn same way. By doing it and then also listen too.

Experiential instructional approaches. Experiential instructional approaches mentioned in the interviews included hands-on activities and learning by doing, explanation or demonstration followed by application or practice, and outside class experiential activities. May describes the ideal class activity as that is hands on with teacher guidance, and peer collaboration in a real-world setting in order to learn from experience, not just books:

I think the perfect, um, would be hands, something that provides a hands-on learning and, um with the teacher there guiding the students and the students working with each other. In a real world type of setting. So we know not just through books, but we know..., (B: what makes a learning experience fun for you?) Hand-on work (B: Hands-on?) Yeah kind of learning.

Jose also describes a preference for classes that have hands-on activities, doing what is observed or learned in the lectures:

I think for me it, learning is gonna be fun it's more I would prefer like taking part in the learning like what I said before the group work projects. I think I'm more of a hands-on learner than a visual and auditory learner so if, for example I really enjoyed chemistry

cause we were doing a lot of mixing chemicals to see what will happen and this stuff.

Uh, I like agriculture cause we went out looking at the plants the and planting things. I like, I took a walking class I liked it cause we don't spend most of the time in class, we usually go out and apply what we learned in the class. I also like math cause we get to do a lot of solving and accounting too, so I to me, I think that's how I will learn a lot.

Mina also stated a preference for classes with activities that allow experiencing what they are learning by doing it.

The professor, it's really makes us do the work, like the activities that they always, uh, let us, the students to do it, so we experience it, we learn how to do it. But to me it's good if we learn, we learn by doing it, but not just listening to it the lecture, and then just right now study, memorize it, I think it doesn't help us. Yeah. It's good if we do it so we experience it.

Sal, Jackson and Angel all noted the importance of after lecturing on or demonstrating a concept or skill following this right away with work that applies or practices the knowledge or technique. When Sal was asked, what things make a learning experience especially relevant or meaningful to you? He answered, "Well, uh, when you learn something and you apply it, that's what I think should be very meaningful." Jackson and Angel both elaborated on this theme.

Jackson described how he learns by doing:

Um, uh, (laugh) a lot of class, one class that I learned the most um, I would say it's, um, Agriculture, I took it last, I think two semesters ago. Cause I think I'm good at like just by like saying like they demonstrate it something to us and I think I learned that, like I learned in that the most cause they, like they show it to us and we have to [do it]. Like, um, air-layering the plants and stuff..., Yeah, I-I like project I think the most. I like to do

stuff, just by doing it I learn, I learn stuff, yeah. I think that's the best way for me to learn by doing things.

Angel described how it is important to her to have time to practice applying new material and to have time to ask questions on the material before moving to a new topic. This period of practice is important for her to know how to use the knowledge not just be aware of it.

Then like right after that [the lecture], like ask questions, sometimes give them like things to work following like for example if he was teaching math and then he will explain the problems and then like the steps and then give the students work right there to, you know to follow and then allows them to ask questions.., also at the same time like, like to be able to use it, like the information that you, you get..., I mean to be able to, you know to connect with what I learn and to practice it. For me like to practice it, it's the best way to learn what, like the new information you, you get. Because if its just up there I don't know if I really want to use it for But to you know, to apply it on a daily basis, it will make, for me it will make meaning through me and it will also stay. Something that you use it. If you don't use it then, I don't know, yeah.

Sandai noted how much he enjoyed, and was strongly impressed by, an outside-of-class experiential activity.

She introduce ice – I mean snow to me, to us, but it was very difficult for me – I – to really understand because I never – I never – I know – I – when she talks about a place where it has snow and people – blood coming from your nose and you're shivering and it's very cold and, uh, you know, and it took me – took her a hard time for me to – to let me – for – for me to understand what it is, you know, because I could just – I – how can people live like that, you know? And, you know, I want to see this place, you know.

But, uh, this – this lady is a very smart lady. Uh, she took me to Colonia. She invited me, talked to my parents, to take me during the weekend to Colonia with her, and then, uh, uh, she will return me back, uh, Monday, the following day, I mean after the weekend, because she's gonna show me what is snow. And, you know, and, uh, I was really looking for this very, uh, uh, thing to -- what is snow, you know. But she took me to one of her, uh – went to Colonia, Yap, where they have huge icebox. She put me in icebox. And when I think of that, there is no such a thing as good as that, you know? She is a very good teacher, you know. She's a very – she was a very – I mean she was a very good teacher. She put me in the icebox, you know, and – but, of course, about five minutes she opened the icebox, “Are you still okay?” I say, “Yeah, but, please, leave – leave me be for a little bit,” you know. I spend close to about thirty minutes inside that icebox. Then she told me, “Now that's how snow is” – “when a” – “a place where it has good snows.”

A Relevant Curriculum

The participants noted how a relevant curriculum increases their interest and motivation to learn the material. For the participants relevance can be related to several aspects of their life. Examples of a relevant curriculum included such items as linkages to students' existing knowledge or experience, students' understanding of the familiar, current events or contexts of their islands or region, and recognition of the island cultures' relation to the material presented.

Sally noted how she found the material easier to learn when it linked to a topic she understands in contrast to just memorizing new information, “those course, uh, that need to memorize, it's very hard for me... but to learn from what happen to you it's easier.” She goes on to provide an example, her familiarity with K-12 classrooms, “I know already what's happen

during the classroom so the education easier than those like uh, it's not, I have to memorize... But those, uh, education course, it's not that it's easy, but I have experience in so it's, it's help me.”

This concept of the importance of the familiar is expanded on in the words of Joe in describing learning about mangrove swamps in college and how the material enlightened and deepened his knowledge of something local or familiar from where he grew up:

The other thing I think I, uh, was very interesting because I know how the mangroves are I, I many times we went out there and got crabs and, you know, got, uh, lumber for some, uh, for building a house but I, I never really realize how those, you know, thing, the real importance of why the mangroves were existed in the first place and I guess that's one of the things that I, I, uh, I took away from that class..., I was really interested was because we sort of.., learn what we have there on the islands, for example the mangrove, the, um, how the mangroves are so important for the people and also for, um, for the island of Pohnpei and we, that's really interesting because we, we, we study some of the, some of the, some of the importance of, you know the mangroves that make Pohnpei so special on the different mangrove, um, how you say? How the mangroves are the life of the, um, the local people for example they, they make houses, they can, they can get food, it also, um, we were also taught of how the mangroves were, uh, the main, or the first, uh, filtering.

Jose noted the importance of the professor linking the text through lectures to what is happening in the local regional/island context. Again the material deepens the student's understanding of the familiar, in this case the local government impact on business.

I think, uh, when the, the instructor is like basing his lecture on the textbook and what is happening today in the world, in our society. For example.., She will talk about the book

and then she will also talk about something that happened in the U.S., uh, in the FSM, Micronesia the government and all those stuffs..., when they compare things from the book and what is really happening today it makes me, it makes it easier to understand.

In courses touching on the political/historical contexts of the islands others note the importance for the course material to have links to their island homes or cultures. Angel notes an example of this where the material links to political/historical context of the island.

For me, it's just really interesting and I, I don't know I just learned a lot from there. And it also it makes me to, you know because I feel like I study history of other places and I don't even know my, my own. So when I took that class I was you know I even look, they talk about the government that is, I don't even understand, why are those things (laugh). It's like it creates that, uh, feeling of, you know, desire to learn this is my culture, this is my island, I need to find out what is happening not just to hear from, you know, other people but to be able to do it myself to look for the information myself.

Honu is even more applied in his focus within the same local political context when he describes motivations for learning, "Maybe that's why we going to school cause we wanna learn how, how to keep our government, you know in a good way our society, our family church and as a, as also, as a community." He sees a future use for the knowledge, as he says "I wanna learn so I can help the government."

As these two noted the importance of linking the material to the political context of their islands, others commented on the importance of the material recognizing or linking to their home culture. Joe describes how a sociology course discussed cultural issues important to him, the dominance of one culture by another and how it related to his own home.

I think what's really important if, it, it reflects on, you know, on, on, you know, my past, you know what I do back home and for example when, wh—like, like coming here or like when, when I was taking Intro to, uh, Sociology it's very interesting because it talks about, you know, different cultures, um, coming to, you know, be dominated with other cultures and I think that's one important thing because it really, uh, you know, gives you an idea of how other people, you know to dominated other culture, you know how they perceive, you know other cultures that, you know are here.

May also notes the motivation that comes from knowing the material can be applied in the home context, “Oh, um, knowing that I'll be using it um, later in the future, and if it's, if I can, if it relates to something going on back home then I'll think, ‘Okay.’”

Peter observed that when a teacher learns about or shows appreciation for her culture and links it to the class material she is happy and interest in the class is generated.

I think if, uh, if my teacher learns about our island is really, when I like, when I came here and one of my teacher told me something like, uh, our, our culture something about our culture and it make me really happy (laugh) like, oh yeah. Really I got interested in his, yeah, class.

A supportive instructor and a hospitable learning environment were important factors in creating a comfort level within the students that is a necessary prerequisite to their full engagement in the class activities and learning process. Interactive and experiential instructional approaches and a relevant curriculum were identified by Micronesian students as important in promoting learning because they stimulate student interest and motivation within the classroom.

Factors Within the Classroom Environment That Inhibit Learning.

Under the research question, what factors within the classroom environment do Micronesian students identify that inhibit learning, three influences in the classroom environment were identified as obstacles to learning: cultural communication protocols, lecture as the only instructional approach, and incompetent instructor.

Cultural communication protocols influence the willingness and manner in which students participate in the class. Students identified classes where the instructor uses lecture as the only instructional approach as failing to capture student interest or inspire motivation. The instructor is a primary factor in inspiring student interest and motivation in class. Several forms of instructor incompetence were identified by many as a reason for lack of interest, retention of material, or successful performance in class.

Cultural Communication Protocols

The participants noted two cultural communication protocols that influenced student willingness to speak or participate in class: expectation of quiet, silence, or caution in speech at public gatherings or when with elders or leaders, and belief that it is impolite to talk too much; and the social stigma or shame attached to publically being wrong.

Silence in public gatherings. A cultural expectation of silence or caution in speech at public gatherings, carries its influence into the classroom context. This silence emanates from the showing of respect in the presence of elders or higher ranked individuals and the cultural norm that it is impolite to talk too much. Sal described the influence of this cultural factor on class participation:

Because in classroom it's difficult if, uh, you know, if, uh – especially because I'm in a – a group, uh, session a lot of times in classroom, like they assign us something and they

form us into group. And, uh, I can imagine some of our Micronesian students where they come in and they just don't talk most of the time because – it's not because they don't – cannot understand, but it's – it's, uh, something like, uh – like I said, maybe cultural thing. It's like, uh, they don't want to talk – talk a lot because it's not good, you know, when you talk a lot in – you know, in -- in a crowd – in a, you know, stuff like that. And I don't know. But it happens. Even myself, sometimes I – you know, it happen to me. I join the crowd. I join the crowd, join the group, and somehow, uh, you know, very restrict to myself right then, exposing my feelings to others, and I think it's, uh – it's a cultural thing, yeah.

May noted that for Micronesians being quiet in class is cultural and not a reflection of lack of understanding the material:

And I guess since we're quiet in class that also makes them think that, you know I don't blame them, but maybe because we're quiet in class they probably think that we don't really, we don't really know how we would get our thoughts out... Yeah..., Yeah I think, I also think it's because of our culture. (B: So that's an important awareness to get among all the professors here?) Yeah. We may be quiet, but we're not, it's not because we don't understand what you're saying.

Joe describes the difficulty first-time Micronesian students experience in coming to a western influenced island like Guam with expectations of open class discussions.

Here in Micronesia..., its hard for some people I guess or first timers, you know, for like visiting, you know, such island that is so influenced by the western world where everybody is so open up and you know discussion. So, I would say that the students in – or my fellow um, Micronesian islands students um they – sometimes it's very difficult to

just open up uh, to talk about the uh whole aspect of other people which is sort of um, um, not a good um, motive to talk about other people.

Sal notes how it is considered impolite to talk too much or to publically express your feelings:

One attitude in Micronesia and that's happening to, I think I can say most, most of us that comes to, uh, uh – uh, sometimes it's not – it's not, uh, polite to talk too much or to express all the feelings you have because we grown up in a society where you don't talk when other people are talking or you don't talk when older people are, you know..., but I see a lot of us nowadays is – a lot of us are just part of the group but sometimes they don't wanna express their feeling because of, uh, related, uh, you know, problems, like, “Oh, I don't want to talk because, uh, they might think I'm a very talkative guy or I'm a bad guy or I'm a smart guy.” That's why.

Fear of being wrong in public. Another aspect of cultural communication protocols is the social stigma attached to being wrong in public forums. This shame is beyond the embarrassment that is felt in more individualistic cultures, and it is shared by the family members of the individual. May notes how this inhibits her participating in class discussions.

I'm bad at group discu—I mean don't usually, um participate, I'll listen but I don't talk too much in class. (B: when you have these large group, whole class discussions and you don't participate why do think you don't participate?) Cause I don't wanna say something stupid. (both laugh) Yeah. I don't wanna ask a question that will make my classmates think, “What she didn't read the book?” or , “Where has she been all day?”

Sal notes that many Micronesian students may not be confident in their knowledge and so won't participate for fear that other students will think less of them:

I also think that, uh, uh, some students sometimes don't wanna express their feelings because it might be funny or it might be insulting or something like that because they – they don't have, uh, you know, good faith of their – you know, their knowledge about – knowledge about what they're gonna said. Because still, because of the education they come from, they feel that, "Maybe I'm not too, that smart like these people." That's why if I talk, maybe they will laugh because what I'm saying is not right as what the other student can say.

Jose notes that Micronesians, unlike Chamorro (the indigenous inhabitants of Guam) or American students, will not answer questions even when they know the answer because of fear of the possibility of being wrong. For them the stigma of being wrong far outweighs the benefits of participating and being right. So they remain silent.

Uh, I think because some student they know the answer but they're scared to answer and it's not the correct answer. And, I don't know, I think us Micronesians you want to stand out and you're correct. You don't wanna stand out and then you're wrong.., Compared to the other places like, I've seen here like, the Chamorro and some Americans, they'll just blurt out their answers even though if it's correct or not they'll just say it, and when they say it's not correct, they say, "Shoot man, I thought it was the correct answer." They'll just make a joke out of it. But I think, I don't know other places plus—but us in Yap it's usually if you say something incorrect then somebody said, "You're not correct," you wouldn't like it. It will really affect your feelings cause, I don't know, that's how I am. So sometimes I really have to make sure that my answer is correct before.

However Jose goes on to note that if the class size is smaller with only a few students, then the situation is perceived differently. In this case she is comfortable speaking up and taking a chance:

If we're in a big class... but the class where there was three of us, I'll just blurt out my answer and then if it's not correct the instructor will correct me and say, "Oh it's not really like that, it's this and this." (B: Interesting. So it's okay when it's a small, a small group of people but..., a larger group will silence you cause you, you fear of maybe having a wrong answer.) Yeah, and, I don't know how to really explain.

Along the same line when asked directly, does group size make a difference, would you feel different in smaller groups of just two or three students? Sal noted, "That's a good one. (Laughs) Good question. I think some of us like that too..., Where if it's only, let's say, two or three, maybe they can openly express their ideas or maybe it comes to, let's say, 20 or 30, maybe it's kind of difficult." In her interview, Brandy noted her reluctance to ask questions in class due to embarrassment that others would see that she doesn't understand. When asked if she would be more willing in a smaller group she responded, "Yeah. Fewer, the fewer people know that I don't know this, it's not as embarrassing as the whole class."

Joe notes how this stigma that comes from being wrong or making mistakes causes him to feel a preference for private work instead of presentations or larger group work. In private work he can make mistakes and only he and the teacher are aware of it, unlike class and group activities where others see the mistakes making him feel ashamed:

Doing private work is much easier than doing presentations and reading because first we rather make mistakes on ourselves than uh, uh working with the other, you know,

students in in you know making those mistakes its makes us you know feel bad about, you know, ourselves that we don't wanna make, you know, be wrong

Lecture as the Only Instructional Approach

Most of the participants identified long lectures, or instructors who just lecture, as inhibiting learning. In discussing the classroom methods used by a professor he really liked Jackson noted, "He don't talk too much." He continued by describing professors he doesn't like, "Like there are a lot of professors that just, uh, use the powerpoint. That's the, just pull up the stuff and they start talking..., Yeah that's all they do is just talk, talk." Several of the participants described this teaching style, of just lecturing, negatively with the term "just talk, talk, talk." Sal is one these, and he noted that this causes students to drop the class when they encounter this style of teaching, "You know, if you are gonna come in and then you just sit up there all day talk, talk, talk, talk, and the time comes and we leave, maybe every week you will see student leaving your classroom."

Two different times in the interview Jose described how she doesn't listen when the instructor just lectures. She finds it boring and so she daydreams during these classes.

But when it comes to other classes where I just sit and listen to the instructor lecture for the whole period and then the next class meeting he lectures again, most of the time I'm daydreaming in class. Cause it gets too boring and then I don't want to pay attention anymore..., But then if the instructor just keeps on talking for an hour I'll also bored and then probably listen on only half of the lecture and then other half is keep on checking my watch. If it's almost time to go.

When asked to describe negative or uncomfortable classroom experiences, Honu identified long lectures; he commented, "Uh, not comfortable? Uh, like long lecture..., Make

student feel, you know like tired.” Gwen also described how she found instructors who just lectured boring and her feeling that for learning to take place there must be some application of the lecture material.

I don't like when teacher are just talking. For me, I said, it's boring (laugh). I like the one that talk and he also give us something., so instead of just listening we have to do it, so we can really understand and know how we do that the lesson.

She then continued on to explain that when the instructor just lectures, without any form of application or practice, she doesn't retain the material even if she does pass the course.

So in college I have, uh, one, uh, instructor that he just sit and talk and sometimes we fell asleep because he's jus- he just talking from the beginning until.., All of us we pass the class but I, I, for me I think, I said I don't really learn. Cause he taught us something but we didn't, we just learn and then we, after we finish we go out, we don't remember cause we don't really, only some, uh, he gave us, but most of the time it is lecture.

May described a rather extreme example of this practice of just lecturing. She told of an instructor who didn't just lecture from her own knowledge but spent the lecture reading to the students from the book.

The business law instructor, she never stood up or wrote on the board. She just sat in the chair and just talked about this and stuff and that was my first time to ever take a business law class and she just read from the book and I could've read the book on my own (both laugh). She, she, she never wrote anything on the board and she never stood up and she never gave us any work besides the exam so.... (B: So basically you had her sit at the table, talk to you, read from the book, and give you exams and that was the whole class?) Mm-hmm. That was the whole class. And then I failed it (both laugh.)

While May was far too polite to comment on this instructor's competence, she did note that when she took the class again she selected a different instructor who had a different classroom management style and got a good grade.

Incompetent Instructor

A little over one half of the participants at some point in the interview described instructor behaviors that would not normally be expected from a competent instructor. The described behaviors included instructor setting a predetermined pace and ignoring students' lack of comprehension or input, instructors not engaged with the class or content material, instructors not prepared for class, and inappropriate manner or decorum.

Joe described how he has had instructors who maintained a preset pace for the course and disregarded the students' comprehension/capabilities in the delivery of this material. He noted, "sometimes for me, teachers they, they don't care about..., what, uh, the capabilities of, you know, the students as long as they complete and knowing or when she finish the instruction." Peter also described how in mathematics class the professor would move to a new problem before checking to see if the students understood the first problem.

Oh, yeah. When the professors run, I mean talking fast, like making things move fast when you get. Especially in math classes teachers do that a lot of time when you still don't know how to solve one problem but he, he's going to another, yeah, that next step. Yeah.

May described how one professor who was very intense in his work assignments and ignored and discounted student input.

The teacher was new and he had told us that he was teaching masters level at another school before he came here and when he was giving us our work everybody did complain

and did say to him there was too much work and it's too hard but still he just, he didn't say, "Okay we'll narrow it down or cut it down." He just said, "Well you guys have to do it," and a lot of people dropped out of the class, um. His teaching man—behavior was just too inten—too much for all of us. I think sometimes cause we all took teachers who maybe were more lenient or gave us less work compared to what he gave us. Like just too much. Even though we mentioned that we would like, like it if he cut it down just a little bit he, he didn't.

When May was asked to compare this professor's style to a different professor who is also very demanding of the students performance, but who earlier she used as an example of an outstanding professor she offered, "Well Dr. C., if we, um, ask him things he'll usually do something about it. Maybe not really give us exactly what we want, but he'll just, you know, do something and we see that he actually does something about our request." This indicates that it was the professor's giving the student the feeling that their input was irrelevant, that was as much a problem for May as was the professor's assigned workload intensity.

Several participants told of classes where they felt they didn't get what they deserved from the teachers who did not teach the materials that the students expected to learn. Gwen described an example of teacher who didn't use class time to teach. Instead he just gave the students in-class assignments and did not really guide or keep the students on track; she notes he just sat and waited for them to finish them in class.

I think he-yeah, philosophy-he just also lecture, he just print out all the different poems and all that and then he give us to just, uh, we have to paraphrase them and then he'll just sit on his, uh, the chair and wait for us until we finish. Even though we will not finish, we slept, he don't mind. So I, for me I don't like that, I don't like because I didn't learn. So I

think that's one of the, that, uh, that's the, that's the kind of teaching it's bad for me cause I want to learn something from the teacher didn't really do his job to teach me how to learn or improve my learning.

May told of a class where the teacher openly didn't cover the material, carried on unrelated conversations and let classes out early.

Well, there's this other teacher who's just totally the opposite, she, she doesn't really teach us anything. We go into class, and then there were times that she said, "I'm tired let's just make this quick," ..., and she doesn't really give us any work at all but still I feel like I'm not getting my money's worth, I'm not learning..., she's just grading us based on one assignment with, which is our final it's due in like during finals week, in business plan. And when we come into class every day, she, I would rather if she would go over maybe how to do a, make a mission statement, or come up with a you know show us how to do our financial, you know, step-by-step to go, so we'll know how to do our business plan..., She told us, she just told us to follow the book.

Angel described how she felt when teachers were not prepared for class then instead of lecturing or doing activities they gave questions from the book to answer in class.

I don't know, maybe I will say that like when the teacher is not prepare like that., That's my, my opinion so when I'm in the classroom and I see that, you know, the teacher is not prepare, is not ready! So I says, "Okay, this is this objective of this lesson today, this and this and this, and you can do this, open your book to page this and answer these questions." What? (Both laugh). I hate them do that.

When a teacher does not maintain an expected level of decorum, professionalism, or does not follow university protocols, the students found these behaviors to have a negative influence

on student learning. Joe described how he lost faith or respect in the teacher when the teacher lost control and started swearing.

The one I really hate is when, when the teachers overreacted, you know, like, you know, they speak negative things about like, you know, you know what I'm saying like—you can just say "Fuck!" you know the—like just started cussing around and... (B: Oh wow) yeah, so that's what not really make me feel good about, you know, like first time I say that's are taking away the reputation of, you know for me to, that uh professor.

May described her discouragement by a professor who appeared mean or angry in his evaluative comments. She noted that many students withdrew from his class (earlier in the interview she also noted that he disregarded student input).

Yeah. A lot of people withdrew from his class.., The way he grades papers is just so mean... (B: Mean?) Yeah, like, even the way he writes on your paper—the, his comments and stuff, it's just like I can tell that he was mad or something while he was making the comments. A-a-Oh, like not really encouraging kind of comments but, kind of... (B: Mean (laughs)) Yeah, mean comments.

In summary the participants identified three factors in the classroom environment that can inhibit learning. The first is the presence of communication standards from their cultural heritage that inhibit their participation in class and thus inhibit learning. The second is when an instructor utilized lectures as the sole instructional approach. Third the participants identified instructor behaviors that cause them to lose respect for the instructor and interest in the course, that reflect on the instructor's competence.

Other Factors Influencing Micronesian Student Perception of Classroom Learning Environment

Many factors, other than culture, outside the classroom environment (limited English and computer abilities, homesickness, prejudice, and lack of money) were mentioned in the interviews as influencing student performance in the classroom environment. But only one could be said to be noteworthy, based on a preponderance of the data. That factor is money.

For Micronesian students to leave the interwoven social/subsistence networks of their home island to go somewhere else is to be without key subsistence items (food, shelter) that are normally directly provided by the extended family. In the place of these items, they must learn to navigate an economy where their very subsistence requires: the possession of, the ability to generate, and an understanding of the care and use of money.

Joe described the impact of this loss of island support system when he first came to Guam and the difficulties it posed for his academic performance:

I think for me now is what's, what's really hard for me, you know to really concentrate is, you know, when you or when I came to Guam I realized that, you know, money is the biggest thing, you know, that you have to have and, and for that reason I, I started looking for a job and, because I was married, or I am married. (B: Married, right) Yeah, and for that reason I have, I cannot just go out there and fish, I cannot just walk to a family there and ask, you know, for some food and that really made a lot of, uh, you know, challenges to, you know really concentrate on school and not thinking about your family. So, I started working and I have to come back, you know, late at night and have to study and, and that's really a big challenge for me because if I'm back home I'll probably be asking my uncles or my parents or other families, "Please, um, can you give me something," or most of it we eat local stuff, you know, uh, what I find out here on

Guam, here's it's, you—you buy, or you go to the supermarkets, you know, to buy food and in Pohnpei you can just, you know, eat bananas and taros, and breadfruits and everything that grows around there...

Many students noted the difficulty in coming up with funding for tuition if not on government award. Sandia describes how this often interrupted his progression to completion of his course of study.

But my main, another thing is what really my my my, problem for my courses was, uh, mainly, uh, the money. It is everything, is the money... But, for me, I had to stop because not enough money, and, uh, I couldn't, I had to work to get, to save some money to go back.

Sally notes the limited availability of government support and so the need for many to come up with their own funds in order to complete a program.

Yeah, that's when I got my A.S. So it's hard for, especially Micronesia, because, uh, we we need to take care of our family too and then, then go to you have to work. And then summertime, that's when we go to..., like they pay, no, only summertime so if you have family, you have to go and do it summertime. (B: Only in summer) So you can get paid...., and then after that, two years or one years. Then I apply to come here and pay. Only one year they give me for education leave. (B: Oh. So all this time you've been here on your own then?) Yeah. They say you, if you want to continue, but you're gonna pay it.

Culture's Role in Shaping Micronesian Students' Perceptions: A Proposed Model of College Classroom Environments.

The factors previously described identified Micronesian culture's influence in shaping students perceptions of, and behaviors in, college classroom environments, as well as factors that promote or inhibit learning. For many of the factors that the students perceive as promoting or inhibiting learning, a direct cultural origin can be identified as shaping this perception. Figure 2 depicts social/cultural influences and their relationship to identified factors that promote or inhibit learning in the college classroom environments. Figure 2 connects the learning environment factors that the students perceive as promoting or inhibiting learning to the traditional mores and learning experiences that shaped the students' outlooks on these factors.

Four areas of Micronesian social/cultural norms were identified by the participants as shaping their perceptions and behaviors in the college classroom environment: Communal nature of knowledge transfer, traditional methods of knowledge transfer, social hierarchy based on age, gender and status, and the prominence of group membership and relations. Traditional knowledge transfer frequently occurs as a part of communal and subsistence activities. The responsibility for teaching and learning is shared by a distributed community network that goes beyond the nuclear family boundaries. Many skills are gained in social settings like during feasts or festivals or learned from an extended family network in subsistence activities. A common method of traditional knowledge transfer identified by the participants consists of demonstration/observation followed by practice with immediate feedback or correction, often with a visible product as a result. A traditional social hierarchy based on age, gender, and status was identified by participants as shaping their behaviors in social contexts, thus influencing students' expectations of classroom protocols and behavior. The prominence of group

membership and relations recognizes that there is a cultural press to blend with the group and not stand out; one aspect of this is that it is considered impolite to talk too much.

These four areas of Micronesian social/cultural norms are listed down the center of Figure 2. The factors that students perceived as promoting learning are on the left side of the diagram, in Figure 2. The factors the students perceived as inhibiting learning are on the right side of the diagram. Links are drawn between the social/cultural norm and the perception that was developed in whole or in part by its influence.

Four factors in the classroom environment were perceived by the participants as promoting learning; a supportive instructor, a hospitable learning environment, interactive and experiential instructional approaches, and a relevant curriculum. The first three of these factors have attributes that can be linked to the cultural context in which the participants grew up. Attributes of a supportive instructor are: one who is "there for you", one who is encouraging, and one who provides feedback. In learning traditional skills on the home islands students benefited from very connected social networks where they had easy access to extended family members and neighbors as knowledge sources. These knowledge resources were generally readily available. So, when these students come to college, they bring with them a desire for teachers who are "there for them" when they need mentoring or help much like they received from their traditional mentors. Often learning traditional skills occurs in groups as part of social events where the learning is as much social recreation as work. In this context the students receive encouragement from the other family and community members as they learn the skills. It is only natural that students would seek out instructors in college who offer similar encouragement as part of the collegiate learning environment.

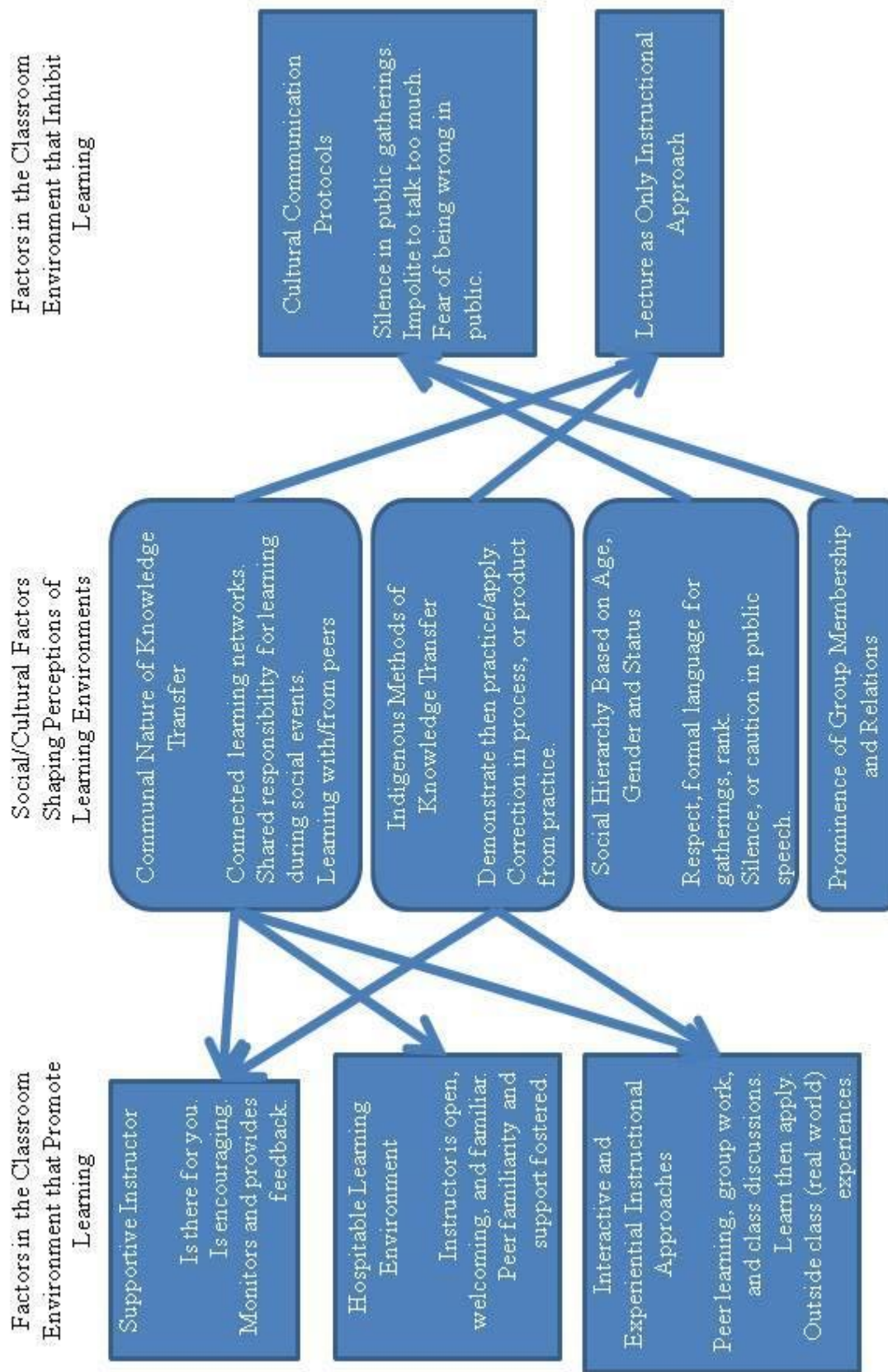


Figure 2. Culture's Role in Shaping Micronesians Students' Perceptions of College Classroom Environments.

In learning many traditional skills the learner often knows if the lesson has been learned correctly because if the skill is being performed correctly, there will be a product from the practice. Often these skills are practiced in a community group setting; and if the task is not being done correctly, the learner receives correction from community members. So learners generally know if they are on the right track. This appears to engender a desire/need to know that one is on the right track in the college classroom expressed as a desire for individual monitoring by the instructor and feedback.

A hospitable classroom refers to a classroom where students feel they are with their family. One attribute that contributes to this setting is an instructor who projects a welcoming and familiar demeanor by being open and sharing aspects of his/her personal life with the students. A second attribute is that the environment fosters peer support and familiarity. In the traditional learning environment most of the teachers/knowledge sources are a familiar person, an extended family member or known neighbor. It is an extension of this situation that they look for in their college professors. When an instructor can make them feel this way, this contributes to an environment that “feels like with family.” The findings indicate that instructors who facilitate the students’ feelings that they know or are familiar with the instructor and that they are welcome to seek assistance are the ones successful in generating these feelings.

Another attribute of a hospitable environment is that it promotes peer familiarity and support. As noted above, learning often takes place with peers in community settings or in family settings; in both cases the learner knows and is supported by his peers. The desire to have a college classroom feel like they are with family translates into their knowing/being familiar with and supported by the peers in the classroom.

The participants identified a preference for classrooms with a high degree of interaction and experiential activities. Types of classroom interaction discussed included class discussions, learning from peers, and group work. This preference for a high degree of interaction can be directly related to the communal nature of the participants' traditional learning experiences where skills were often learned as part of social gatherings or with their peer group members. Both of these contexts involved a great deal of interaction in the learning process.

The participants also noted that experiential instructional approaches increased their ability to learn the material. They mentioned several favored approaches, such as explanation or demonstration followed by application or practice, hands-on activities and learning by doing, and outside class experiential (real world) activities. Many of these approaches are used to teach traditional skills. The traditional skills are often taught through a demonstration/observation session on how to do the skill then immediately followed by a period of learner practice. Often these skills are learned in the context of their subsistence existence and so are very immediate or "real world" and hands-on.

From their cultural perspectives the participants identified two influences in the classroom environment as obstacles to learning: Micronesian cultural communication protocols and lecture as the only instructional approach. The students' perceptions of both of these influences are shaped by Micronesian cultural/social factors. Cultural communication protocols influence the willingness and manner in which students participate in the class and are often in direct conflict with western expectations of open class participation. Three traditional factors can be seen to have shaped the students' responses to classroom (public) participation. Training in respect in the presence of higher ranked or elder community members (instructor) that involve silence unless directly addressed suppresses the student willingness to openly speak up in class.

Also the traditionally conditioned caution in public speech in order to ensure accuracy makes the students very risk adverse in terms of volunteering to answer questions. And finally their cultural orientation to place group membership and group relations over personal recognition results in standards like it is impolite to draw attention to oneself or talk too much in public. These standards limit their speaking up and participating in open class activities.

Students identified classes where the instructor uses lecture as the only instructional approach as failing to capture student interest or inspire motivation. On examining both the communal nature of traditional learning and the methods used, long lectures are not part of their traditional learning experiences. So, it is not surprising that the students do not like this instructional approach. It can be seen as opposing their desire for interactive and experiential instructional approaches.

The model proposed in Figure 2 examines the findings that relate to how Micronesian culture shaped students' perceptions and expectations of the college classroom environment. Some factors discussed in the findings are not covered in the model since they do not appear to derive directly from Micronesian cultural factors. These are: a relevant curriculum which promotes learning; incompetent instructor which inhibits learning; and money which is outside the classroom environment but influences their whole life and so can have an impact on their academic performance.

CHAPTER 5
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS,
AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESEARCH

Summary

The purpose of this study was to understand how culture shapes adult Micronesian college students' perceptions of classroom/learning environments. Exploring these concepts within the Micronesian cultural context provided insights into a non-western culture's meanings associated with the various dimensions of the college classroom environment. Specifically, this study identified Micronesian cultural/social factors that shaped participants' perceptions and behaviors in college classroom environments. The study also identified influences within the classroom environment that participants identified as promoting or inhibiting learning. The study also developed a model that links these cultural factors to the participants' perceptions of the influences that promote or inhibit learning

This was a qualitative interview study. Thirteen adult Micronesian University of Guam students were interviewed using a semi-structured guided interview process. The interviews were the sole source of data for this study. Criteria for the selection of participants included English speaking ability, 24 years of age or older, resided in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) most of their lives prior to attending college, and completed 18 hours of college course work. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed using a constant comparison process to identify common experiences and themes.

The previous chapters include a discussion of the research topic, the literature review that helped frame the study, the study's research design, and the findings with a model that illustrates cultural factors' influence on Micronesian students' perceptions and expectations in the classroom environment. This chapter presents conclusions based on analysis of the data, discusses some practical implications for practice, and offers some suggestions for further study.

Conclusions and Discussion

From the findings I can draw three conclusions. Two conclusions address the conflicting communication assumptions underlying Micronesian culture and U.S college classroom environments. The third conclusion addresses assessment of classroom environments in relation to aspects of the Micronesian students' cultural heritage as representatives of a nonwestern culture. These three conclusions are: (a) Micronesian students' cultural heritage encourages behavioral expectations that are incongruent with some underlying assumptions of U.S. college classroom environments. (b) A supportive instructor can overcome the self-inhibiting pressures students feel from Micronesian cultural communication protocols. (c) Assessment of classroom environments should be sensitive to the cultural orientations of collectivist, relationship nurturing, and high power distance societies and the role of experiential learning. In this section I will discuss each of these and their relation to the findings and the literature reviewed.

Conclusion One: Micronesian Students' Cultural Heritage Encourages Behavioral Expectations That Are Incongruent with Some Underlying Assumptions of U.S. College Classroom Environments.

Many of the behavioral expectations described by the students arise from two factors they identified in Micronesian culture. The first is the existence of social hierarchies based on age, gender and status and the two communication formats (public & familiar) these hierarchies

engender. The second is from a cultural orientation that places a priority on blending with the group, not standing out, where being average is the norm. Both of these influences contribute to inhibiting Micronesian students participating fully in U.S. college classroom environments.

U.S. college classrooms are a product of U.S. national culture. Hofstede (1997a) found that the U.S. scores highest of all countries on the individualism index, which measures the individualism/collectivism dimension, with a ranking of 1 (1 highest in individualism to 53 highest in collectivism). On the masculinity index, which measures the masculine/feminine (assertive/nurturing) dimension, he found the U.S. to rank moderately assertive at 15 (1 most assertive, 53 most nurturing). He found the U.S. to rank relatively low on the power distance scale at 38 (1 largest, 53 smallest in power distance).

Hofstede's (1997a) work identifies U.S. national cultural orientations. Knowledge of these orientations can be applied to developing an understanding of the influences and expectations that shape U.S. college classroom environments. So the researcher infers, in terms of Hofstede's dimensions of national cultures, underlying assumptions and behavioral expectations of U.S. college classrooms developed within an individualistic and assertive cultural orientation. Additionally, assumptions from a low power distance orientation shape expectations of an egalitarian classroom environment. These orientations assume that students are competitive, want to demonstrate their knowledge and be the best. It is expected that students speak up openly, engage in debate, and ask and answer questions. Mackeracher (1998) notes that an individualistic culture's focus on individual achievement and questioning to prove the truth or worth of ideas, often finds expression in class debate and public dialog to convince others.

Hofstede did not study Micronesian cultures, nor has any literature been found that identifies Micronesian cultural orientation on Hofstede's (1997a) dimensions of national cultures. But from the data collected in the interviews and comparison to Hofstede's descriptions of characteristics of three of his four dimensions, relative placement on the scales of individualism/collectivism, assertive/nurturing, and power distance is possible. The data collected in this study indicates that the Federated States of Micronesia national culture would place in the collectivism end of the spectrum on the individualist/collectivism dimension, in the nurturant end of the spectrum on the assertive/nurturing dimension, and high on the power distance spectrum. Each of these three dimensional orientations of Micronesian culture are opposite to the U.S. national cultural orientation on each dimension.

The literature on education in Micronesia offers several examples revealing the opposing cultural orientations' impact on the educational context. Colletta (1976) observed that among Microneians to verbalize achievement or knowledge is to show off. Expanding on this thought Conklin (1984) noted that in Micronesian culture a high value is placed on avoidance of confrontation, and a negative view is held of people who put themselves forward or draw attention to their accomplishments. Falgout (1992) notes that. "public question, comparison, or testing of knowledge would be regarded as challenges to the person who transmitted the knowledge" (pp. 37-38).

Initial entry to these U.S. college environments, with large numbers of strangers and out-group members, and also hierarchical difference between the instructor and students, triggers the public communication format behaviors in Micronesian students. The result is student observation, silence, and caution in speech, which limits oral participation and questioning when topics or material are not clear. This is compounded by a desire to not draw attention to oneself

and to be seen as average; this is in contrast to the competitive/achievement college classroom environmental orientation. The impact is a classroom environmental press for Micronesian students to inhibit their participation.

Despite perceiving the context as one calling for silence or caution in speech, the students overwhelmingly indicated the desire for high levels of interaction. On the surface this would appear a contradiction, but within this high power distance society there is the familiar communication format that takes place among peers and immediate family. As noted by Colletta (1975) a great deal of early learning takes place in the play group and from the interviews we see that learning also occurs with close family and neighbors. These experiences occur in settings where there is a high degree of interaction and the familiar communication format is the norm. So, a key question for instructors is, what factors in the college classroom environment can trigger, for Micronesian students, their perceptions of the environment as one in which the familiar communication format is acceptable? This leads to my second conclusion.

Conclusion Two: A Supportive Instructor Can Overcome the Self Inhibiting Pressures Students Feel From Micronesian Cultural Communication Protocols.

The participants told how a large amount of traditional learning occurs with family and close peers where all are familiar to the learner. In U.S. college settings, initial entry into the class exposes them to many strangers and out-group members; in this context their guiding cultural protocols encourage silence and observation. But the students want high levels of interaction. For them to feel comfortable participating in class, a hospitable classroom environment is needed. They described the feeling they desire as one where the classroom feels like they are with family. The students noted that for them to feel this way the instructor needs

to be welcoming, supportive and familiar and create opportunities in the classroom for them to develop high levels of peer familiarity.

Their experiences where these feelings were created in the college classroom provide insight into the key factors that need to be present in the classroom environment for this to occur. They note that the instructors engender two feelings within the students. First, the instructor makes the students feel welcome and that they can always depend on the instructor's support for their learning efforts. Second the instructor shares aspects (examples or stories) from his/her personal life in relation to the class in order to increase the students' familiarity with him/her as a person. They also note that peer familiarity and support are promoted by small group activities within the class that involve a lot of interaction. These factors taken together enable them to feel that the classroom has a family-like atmosphere (hospitable environment). Several noted that it is the instructor's role to see that this type of an environment is created through small-group activities, an open welcoming demeanor of the instructor and by the instructor sharing his/her time and personal experiences with the students.

Hofstede's (1997a) discussion on how the national orientation on the power distance dimension influences underlying assumptions of educational systems, provides some insight into why the instructor is the critical element in generating these feeling among the Micronesian students. In discussing power distance at schools, he notes the following:

In the large power distance situation the parent-child inequality is perpetuated by a teacher-student inequality which caters to the need for dependence well established in the student's mind.., The educational process is teacher-centered; teachers outline the intellectual paths to be followed. In the classroom there is supposed to be a strict order with the teacher initiating all communication. Students in class speak up only when

invited to.., what is transferred is not seen as an impersonal ‘truth’, but as the personal wisdom of the teacher..., In such a system the quality of one’s learning is virtually exclusively dependent on the excellence of one’s teachers. (p. 34)

When the influence of coming from a high power distance cultural orientation is considered, it provides insight into several points made by students in this study. It provides some insight into why the students feel the instructor is the key to setting the communication format in the classroom. This teacher centered orientation also places the responsibility for creating an environment where the students “feel like they are with family” primarily on the instructor. In an earlier study of Micronesian nursing students at the Northern Marianas College (NMC), Goudreau (1997) noted the students’ preference for learning environments where the teacher takes a directive role, again placing responsibility for the learning environment with the instructor. This modeling of the teacher-student role on the parent-child role noted by Hofstede (1997a) may explain the pleasure expressed, by students in this study, when the instructor made them feel like they were with their parents. The students noted that key to this was that the instructor be supportive and familiar.

The second criteria that the students noted was needed in creating this hospitable learning environment are peer support and familiarity. When they enter the classroom, they feel like they are with strangers and out-group members. Hofstede’s (1997a) discussion on how national orientation on the individual/collective dimension influences underlying assumptions of educational systems provides some insight. In discussing the influence of a collectivist orientation, he noted the following:

Students do not speak up in class, not even when the teacher puts a question to the class.

For the student who conceives of him/herself as part of a group, it is illogical to speak up

without being sanctioned by the group to do so... Collectivist culture students will also hesitate to speak up in larger groups without a teacher present, especially if these are partly composed of relative strangers: outgroup members. This hesitation decreases in smaller groups. (pp. 61-62)

In the interviews several of the students noted their willingness to participate in various ways in small groups within a class where they would be unwilling to participate in the larger class. This perspective also supports the finding that the instructor needs to utilize small group activities to increase peer familiarity in the class to promote this feeling of “like I’m with family” in the classroom.

There are fundamental differences in cultural orientations on these two dimensions of national cultures between Micronesian students and U.S. college classroom environments. But, supportive, open instructors who share their personal experiences can overcome inhibiting influences of the students’ cultural heritage by increasing peer familiarity and support through small group activities early in the course, and by projecting a supportive and welcoming demeanor.

Conclusion Three: Assessment of Classroom Environments Should be Sensitive to the Cultural Orientations of Collectivist, Relationship Nurturing, and High Power Distance Societies and the Role of Experiential Learning.

The findings of this study of adult Micronesian students, as representatives of a nonwestern society/culture, found three dimensions of culture where the students identified orientations on opposite ends of the dimensional spectrum from U.S. national culture. These three cultural dimensions are individualism/collectivism, assertive/nurturing, and power distance. The study also identified a prominent role of experiential learning in creating successful learning

environments for Micronesian students. An assumption the researcher makes is that U.S. national culture influences expectations in U.S. college classrooms. Educator expectations in the classroom environment often shape assessment instruments. Given this study's findings that indicate opposing (Micronesian/U.S.) underlying expectations and perceptions there is a need to account for the influence of different orientations on these three dimensional spectrums of cultural variation, and levels of experiential learning in assessing the classroom environment.

In the findings two of the identified cultural factors, communal nature of knowledge transfer and prominence of group membership, relate to the collectivist and nurturing orientations of Hofstede's individualism/collectivism and assertive/nurturing (masculine/feminine) dimensions of national cultures. When assessing the relationship domain of classroom environment, instruments need to reflect expectations of students from collective and nurturing cultures. In particular, scales for dimensions like teacher support, familiarity (both student to student and teacher to student), peer interaction, participation and involvement should reflect the cultural orientation of collectivist and nurturant (relationship nurturing) cultures. This is in contrast to scales (student competition for grades and recognition) reflecting individualistic and assertive (ego enhancing) cultural orientations which are present in some classroom environment instruments within these cultures.

Hofstede's (1997a) work notes opposing perspectives on open communications in the classroom depending on the cultural orientation on the power distance spectrum of the participant. One end (low power distance) supports the assumptions of Moos's work while the perspectives high power distance cultures differs from those Moos (1979a) described. Moos stresses, within the affiliation cluster, the importance of free and open communications as "extent to which they express themselves freely and openly" (p. 14). In Hofstede's (1997a)

power distance dimension, small power distance cultures' characteristics support Moos's positive view of open communications. For example Hofstede states, "Effective learning in such a system depends very much on whether the supposed two-way communication between students and teacher is, indeed, established" (p. 34).

This is not the case in large power distance cultures. In these cultures there are strong social expectations and pressures to remain silent unless directly addressed and to never contradict or argue with teachers. "Students in class speak up only when invited to; teachers are never publicly contradicted or criticized" (Hofstede, 1997a p. 34). The data from the interviews indicates that Micronesian culture is on the large power distance end of this spectrum. Assessment of classroom learning environments that are based on low power distance culture's assumptions may not accurately capture the classroom environment dynamics for students from high power distance cultures.

Hofstede (1997a) notes competition for grades, participation in class discussions and open debate as measures of participation are only appropriate for some cultures. In cultures on the individualist end of the individual/collective spectrum, Hofstede notes "Confrontations and open discussion of conflicts is often considered salutary" (p. 63). He also notes that for cultures on the collectivist end of the spectrum this type of behavior is not expected and other forms of participation are more accepted. In a similar manner he notes the contrast in classroom expectations and behaviors between cultures on different ends of the assertive (masculine)/nurturing (feminine) dimension as follows, "in masculine cultures students try to make themselves visible in class and compete openly with each other... In feminine cultures they do not want to appear too eager and mutual solidarity, although not always practised, is seen as a goal" (pp. 90-91).

This duality identified by Hofstede (1997a) serves to highlight how measures of participation and expressions of interest or enthusiasm may be culturally sensitive or moderated. These dimensions of cultural variance may predispose the students and teachers to views either in agreement with or opposite to that of Moos, depending on their culture's orientation on the dimensional spectrums. Within this study the participants identified cultural expectations in the classroom different from those of U.S. national cultural orientation on three of Hofstede's dimensions, individual/collective, assertive/nurturing and power distance. This leads me to conclude that existing scales in classroom environment instruments could be enhanced by incorporation of measures that reflect these cultural variances.

One of the findings of the study is a distinct preference for experiential instructional methods in the classroom among the adult Micronesian participants. From the stories they tell of their experiences in learning traditional skills, it appears that the process most often involves observation and significant practice. Many of these skills are learned in the context of the daily or seasonal life and so have immediate or "real-world" implications. The researcher believes that these learning experiences have contributed to shaping the participants' desires in classroom activities.

Hofstede's (1997a) discussed how orientation along the individual/collective dimensional spectrum influences the underlying goal of learning:

The *purpose* of education is perceived differently between the individualist and the collectivist society. In the former it aims at preparing the *individual* for a place in a society of other individuals..., The purpose of learning is less to know how to do, as to know *how to learn*. The assumption is that learning in life never ends; even after school and university it will continue..., In the collectivist society there is a stress on adaptation

to the skills and virtues necessary to be an acceptable group member.... Learning is more often seen as a one-time process, reserved for the young only, who have to learn *how to do* things in order to participate in society. (p. 53)

In the individualist cultures the emphasis is on how to learn in order to achieve, in collectivist cultures the focus is on how to do in order to gain acceptance and recognition. This suggests that within collectivist cultures an important influence within the personal development and goal orientation domain of the classroom environment is an orientation to “how to do” or to “learn by doing.” In this orientation doing is integral to learning; to only learn on the mental level without actual application does not satisfy the perceived underlying goal. Both Baker (1991) and Conklin (1984) noted that diligent observation and learning by doing are common aspects of traditional Micronesian education. This may explain the participants’ noted distaste for classes that relied on lecture as the only instructional method and the desire for “hands-on learning” expressed by the participants.

Moos (1979, a) identified in academic settings a number of scales for use in measuring the classroom environmental dimensions under the personal development and goal orientation domain: independence, competition, academic achievement, intellectuality, and task orientation. These reflect an orientation from the individualist end of the individual/collective spectrum. Measures for levels of experiential or hands-on learning could capture desired dynamics in the classroom environment more in line with the underlying educational goals of collectivist cultures. In the beginning of this research effort one of the potential rewards sought was to identify undiscovered dimension(s) of classroom environments. Development of measures or scales for levels of experiential or hands-on learning would address one such dimension for the personal development and goal orientation domain of dimensions.

Implications for Practice

For educators in college and adult classroom settings in the western Pacific region, this study has several implications for practice. These can be grouped into instructor behavior and instructional methods. This study found that a supportive instructor who creates a hospitable learning environment is important for Micronesian student satisfaction/enjoyment of the learning environment. The study also found that interactive and experiential instructional methods in contrast to just lecturing are also factors promoting learning for Micronesian students.

A supportive instructor is a source of motivation for Micronesian students. They identified three attributes of a supportive instructor: one who is encouraging, one who provides feedback and one who is always “there for you.” In addition to these characteristics of being supportive they also want the instructor to be welcoming and familiar to them as a person.

There are several suggestions the participants made in this study that an instructor can incorporate into his/her classroom demeanor and practice. For these students an encouraging manner went beyond just offering words of encouragement. For them it means a teacher who monitors their performance and recognizes when a student is facing difficulty, seeks them out and makes time outside of class for them. This includes the suggestion to make aggressive use of office hours to help students stay on track. This active monitoring and follow-up goes beyond just being willing to help when the student comes to them. There is a desire/expectation for the instructor to know when they need help and not wait for the student to seek help but to approach the student with the offer of help.

Throughout the interviews a variation of the term “there for you” arose in the context of a supportive and welcoming teacher. This again means that the teacher makes time out of class to address the student’s academic problems and also personal ones. This attitude of being there for

the students is something that is desirable to convey early in the course. Also, early in the class students desire that the instructor be welcoming and make the students feel that he welcomes them to his classroom much as one welcomes a guest to your home.

A final aspect of a supportive instructor is one who feels familiar to the students. They described a desire to know who the instructor is as a person. Telling jokes and short personal stories in part contributes to this. But they also want to hear of the instructor's personal experiences in relation to the material that is being taught. The more familiar and welcoming the instructor is, the more at ease they feel.

The ideal classroom described by many of the students is one where they felt as they do when they are "with their family," what this study termed a hospitable learning environment. Meeting these students' criteria of a supportive instructor is a first step in creating this environment. But, key to this is also increasing peer familiarity within the class. When Micronesian students are in a multicultural classroom environment, they see many strangers and out-group members. In order for them to feel comfortable fully participating, these strangers need to become familiar. This is the second aspect of creating a hospitable classroom environment.

The students in this study identified that this is best accomplished by small group activities early in the course to increase peer familiarity. The students noted that these small group activities allow them to get to know strangers and increase peer familiarity. The students in this study place the responsibility of creating the structure that allows this growth of familiarity on the instructor. But when peer friendship and familiarity is combined with a welcoming and supportive instructor, a hospitable learning environment results. Adult Micronesian students identify this type of an environment as one which promotes learning.

A second area of implications for practice has to do with instructional methods. First the participants identified that relying on lecture as the sole instructional approach inhibits learning. They suggest the utilization of interactive and experiential instructional approaches as alternatives.

The students suggest that lecture be broken up with periods of class discussion, group work, and experiential learning activities. They expressed a desire to learn from their peers and to work in small groups that facilitate peer-to-peer interaction. Again they noted that it is the instructor's role to develop such activities that support the learning of the content material. One important observation that came from the interviews is that when an instructor engages in open class discussion the instructor should not just rely on the students who volunteer to speak up. A pattern of turn-taking or guiding the discussions to include participation by all the class members is important. In the Micronesian culture it is not polite to speak up, and if the instructor does not request their participation, cultural inhibitions may limit the participation to those from cultures that encourage speaking up.

Experiential learning is an area of instructional methods suggested as promoting learning. Developing these experiences for their classes may be challenging to some instructors. The students noted that they find the material more relevant and are better able to retain the material if hands-on activities are included in the class time. Experiential or applied practice time with new material, is very important to them in the learning process. This is something that each instructor may want to incorporate into future curriculum development. Combining experiential learning with small group work should offer interesting alternatives to just lecturing, and while the development of these experiences may be challenging for some instructors, the experiences should provoke increased participation among our Micronesian students.

Recommendations for Future Research

An interesting effort in applied research would be to conduct a study to identify where the Micronesian cultural groups place on each of Hofstede's (1997a) dimensions of national culture. This quantitative effort should provide a useful assessment of the strength of some of the influences identified in this study. It will also set a baseline so that in future years a replication can identify areas of cultural drift. Such cultural drift is possibly due to the national institutions shaped by former colonial powers. It would be a valuable addition to Hofstede's work since the only Pacific Island nation covered is the Philippines.

Within the field of classroom environment research, there is a need for development and use of scales for college/adult learning environment instruments that measure the level of experiential activity within the classroom. This was identified as a factor promoting learning in the college classroom environment in this study. Additionally, Hofstede's (1997a) work indicates that this is at the heart of the goal of education for collectivist cultures. Such measures would be appropriate for the Micronesian Region. Once such measures are developed, research to see how applicable these measures are in other cultural contexts would be the next logical step. A study examining these measures first, within other collectivist cultural contexts, and then in a broader cultural context like U.S. college classrooms or adult learning contexts in the U.S., may well provide new insights.

This study suggests a need for research to examine the duality of expectations in educational environments contained in three of Hofstede's (1997a) four dimensions of national cultures; individual/collective, assertive/nurturing, and power distance. A systematic assessment of the cultural influences from each end of these three dimensional spectrums in terms of

expectations and behaviors in the college classroom environment would enhance understanding of the dynamics of multicultural educational contexts.

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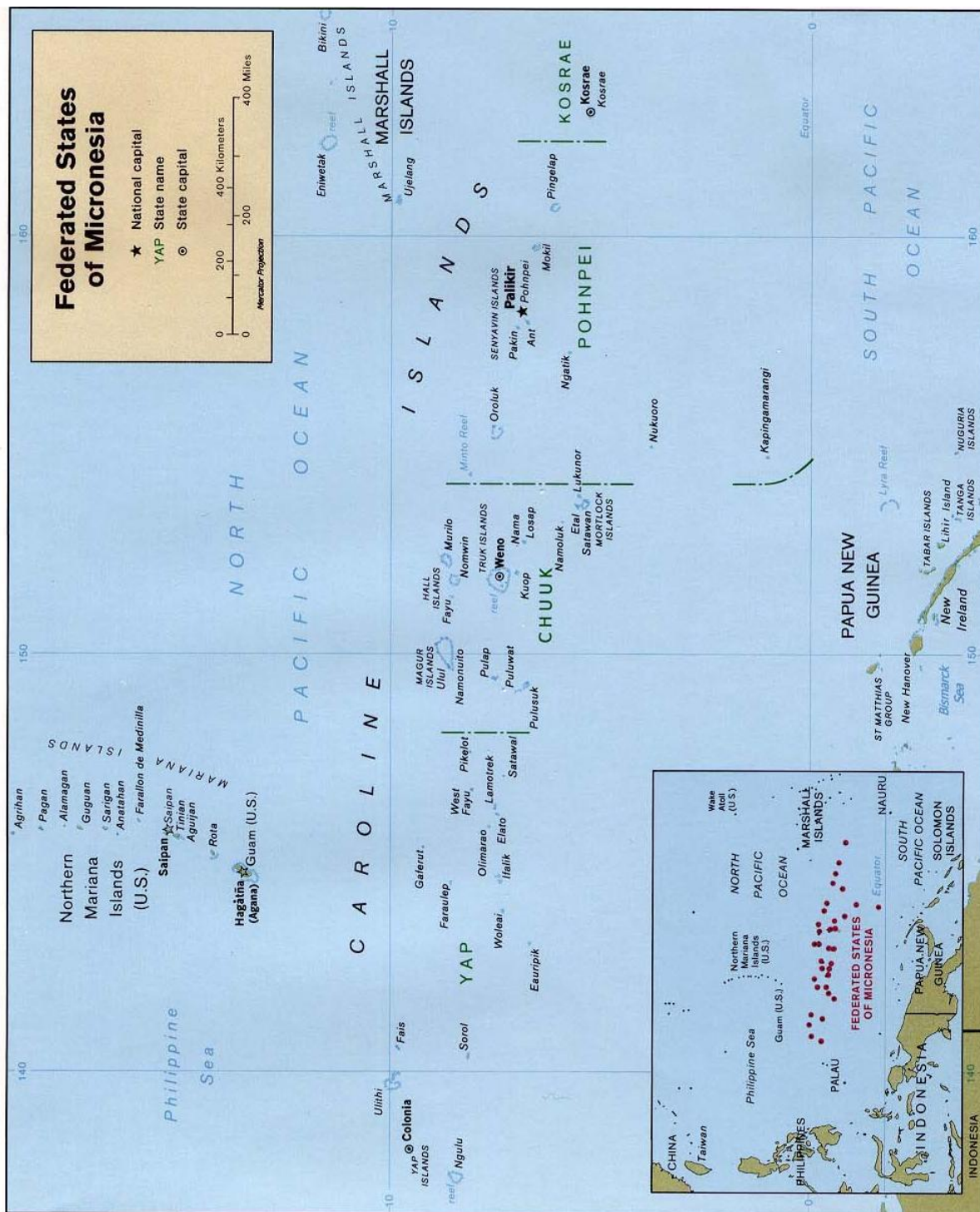
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

MAP OF THE FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA



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Figure 3. Map of the Federated States of Micronesia

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APPENDIX B

DIMENSIONS OF FOUR CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT SCALES AND THEIR
RELATION TO MOOS'S DOMAINS OF DIMENSIONS

Table 3. *Dimensions of Four Classroom Environment Scales and Their Relation to Moos's Three Domains of Dimensions*

Dimension	Moos Domain	ACES (Darkenwald and Valentine, 1986)	CDQ (Valentine, Oliva, & Thomas, 2002)	CUCEI (Frazer, 1986)
Involvement	R	Student attentiveness, interest and participation	Student attentiveness, participation, and satisfaction	Degree students participate actively and attentively in discussions and activities
Student voice			Learner voice (open and free communication)	
Affiliation	R	Student friendship, mutual help, and enjoy working together	Student interaction and cohesion	
Student cohesiveness	R			Degree students know, help and are friendly to each other
Teacher support	R	Teacher help, interest.	Sensitivity and support	
Teacher competence	R			Learner cohesiveness
Teacher respect	R			Student confidence in teacher ability
Personalisation	R			Teacher respect for learners
Satisfaction	R			Opportunity for individual interaction with instructor, concern for student's personal Degree of enjoyment of classes
Task orientation	P	Completion of activities and focus on subject	Focus and accomplishment	Degree activities are clear and well organized
Personal goal attainment	P		Relevance and flexibility	

Table 3. *Dimensions of Four Classroom Environment Scales and Their Relation to Moos's Three Domains of Dimensions*

Dimension	Moos Domain	CES (Moos, 1979)	ACES (Darkenwald and Valentine, 1986)	CDQ (Valentine, Oliva, & Thomas, 2002)	CUCEI (Frazer, 1986)
Order and organization	S	Orderly student behavior and organization of assignments and activities			
Rule clarity	S	Clear rules and consequences for not following			
Organization and clarity	S		Organization and clarity		
Teacher control	S	How strict enforcement of rules and severe punishment for infractions			
Innovation	S	Student contribution to planning, number of unusual and varying activities			Degree of new unusual class activities, teaching techniques and assignments
Student influence	S		Collaborative planning and non-authoritarian teacher		
Individualisation	S				Student decision making, degree treated differently based on ability, interest and working speed.
Forms		Actual, Expectations and Ideal	Student Real, Ideal, Instructor Real	Student Real, Student Ideal	Student Actual, Student Preferred, Teacher Actual, Teacher Preferred

R = Relationship domain; P = Personal growth or goal orientation domain; S = System maintenance and change domain

APPENDIX C
INTERVIEW GUIDES

Interview Guide

Adult Micronesian Perceptions of Higher Education Classroom Environments (The Original)

The interviewer will set the stage by explaining:

From this research we hope to learn what Micronesian students feel are important considerations in creating learning environments that encourage them to explore and master new material. We also hope to find out what activities, technologies, media or other issues frustrate or impede their learning efforts. Finally we would like to understand what previous experiences and other influences have played a role in shaping these preferences.

Do you have any questions before we start?

Guide Questions:

- Can you think of teachers in your life who stand out and tell me about one of them?
- Tell me about a time when you learned a traditional skill on your home island that was important to you.
- Think of a classroom learning experience that stands out in your mind and tell me about it.
- Think of a time that stands out where you had a negative experience in a college classroom setting and tell me about it.
- Can you tell me about a time in college when you feel you really learned a lot about something.
- In your opinion what are some things that make a learning experience especially relevant or meaningful to you?

Interview Guide

Adult Micronesian Perceptions of Higher Education Classes (The Second Version)

The interviewer will set the stage by explaining:

From this research we hope to learn what Micronesian students feel are important considerations in creating learning environments that encourage them to explore and master new material. We also hope to find out what activities, technologies, media or other issues frustrate or impede their learning efforts. Finally we would like to understand what previous experiences and other influences have played a role in shaping these preferences.

Do you have any questions before we start?

Guide Questions:

- Tell me about how you learned a traditional skill on your home island that was important to you. Something you learned before school or outside of school. I need to understand how you were taught this skill.
 - How did you learn _____? (Probe until you get an answer)
- Think of a classroom learning experience that stands out in your mind and tell me about it. OR
 - Can you tell me about a time in college when you feel you really learned a lot about something.
 - Can you think of teachers in your life who stand out and tell me about one of them?
- Can you tell me about things or activities that you do not like in a college class?
 - Probe - Or about times you have felt uncomfortable.

- Think about things outside of college classes that have an influence on how you do in your classes and tell me about them.
- Tell me what the ideal college class would be like to you,
 - or if you could teach a college class, what would you do to help students learn
 - Teacher, students, evaluation
- In your opinion what are some things that make a learning experience especially relevant or meaningful to you?