

BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN CULTURE AND ACADEMICS

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This project by Patricia K. Pedrus is accepted in its present form.

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## ABSTRACT

This paper examines the possibility of building a bridge between culture and academics in order to fill the gap between them, and the role of traditional culture in an academic setting. It is evident that there is a gap between Micronesian cultural heritage and modern educational concepts taught in the classroom. The gap is that there is no blending of the Micronesian cultural heritage and the modern educational concepts. In other words, the bridge between academic abstractions and lived socio realities does not exist. In order to fill the gap, the blending of Micronesian cultural heritage and modern educational concepts must take place, or the bridge between academic abstractions and lived socio realities must be built. The blending and building of Micronesian cultural heritage and modern educational concepts will allow students to adapt to the constraints of today's modern academic world, and be encouraged to maintain their identities. Furthermore, the blending will allow educators to become culturally responsive and academically effective in their teaching. Through interviews and research, the instructor (or the writer of this paper) has gained a deeper appreciation of her culture and teaching. Thus, it has been worthwhile to explore the gap, and to propose a set of guidelines that will guide educators, including the instructor, in teaching within the classroom setting.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

*There was once a story about two kinds of trees: a coconut tree and a banana tree. The coconut tree was planted in fertile soil and whenever there was a storm, the coconut tree remained intact and standing. On the other hand, the banana tree was planted in sand and whenever there was a storm, the banana tree fell to the ground. Why is it that the coconut tree remained standing while the banana tree fell to the ground at the whim of a strong wind? Culture is the fertile soil that we are planted in. Without it, we will not be grounded.*

Scattered throughout the Pacific Ocean, the newly developed islands of the Federated States of Micronesia, (See Appendix D1) retain a strong traditional cultural heritage despite the changes that have taken place over the years. The four main islands of the Federated States of Micronesia are: Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, and Kosrae. Each island state has its own unique language and culture. The preservation of cultural traditions is important to the people of the various islands, because traditions make them grounded. In all areas of life, Micronesians have included the traditional ways as part of their daily ritual. However, even though there is a strong Micronesian traditional cultural heritage embedded within the educational context, there seems to be a gap between culture and academics. The gap is that there is no blending of the modern educational values with Micronesian cultural heritage. On one side, there are those who believe that students should become educated, but not get tainted by the influences of the western ways to the point where they forget their roots. These people fear that Micronesian cultural heritage will be devalued during the process of acquiring a modern education. On the other side, there are those who believe that Micronesian students should become educated and have the same opportunities as students of the Western world. They believe that change is inevitable, and Micronesian cultural heritage no longer exists. Thus, educators must look at both sides and find ways to create a balance between the two, so that students won't forget where they came from. In fact, when students are only taught the Western way to

do things, then what have they become? Could we look at the “Micronesian way” of life in relation to the Western way of life? Could they be related so that when students are given a Western textbook, they can say, “Yes, I understand because we do that in our culture,” or “Yes, I can analyze the reading, because through the experience of building a canoe with my grandfather, I have acquired analytical skills.” So then the challenge becomes to bridge the gap between the Micronesian culture and academics.

### Classroom Observations

Teaching, like any truly human activity, emerges from one’s inwardness, for better or worse.

(Parker Palmer, The Courage to Teach, pg. 2)

As a cultural being in the classroom, the instructor’s goal is to engage students in an awareness, and understanding of the modern educational concepts they are learning in the classroom in relation to their traditional values. The instructor’s academic lessons are based on the bridging of academic abstractions and lived socio-cultural realities. It is this bridging that allows the instructor to fill in the gap between culture and academics. When students open a textbook, they read and learn about Western concepts. Sometimes, it is difficult for students to grasp such ideas if they are not related to concepts they can identify with from their own culture. Thus, the instructor has incorporated Micronesian traditional values and perspectives into her academic lessons so students are able to grasp the modern concepts. In addition, the instructor recognizes that her role is to be an agent for change. Thus, the instructor is aware that traditional practices can change, but their foundational principles live on. Therefore, academic lessons are prepared in relation to traditional values and principles which are considered important in the society.

The instructor’s classroom is best described as a sea of learning. When a person dives into the sea, he/she will find a whole new world of interesting sea life that includes the colorful, deep, clear water with different kinds of colorful species. The instructor’s students come in various colors: different backgrounds, talents and cultural roots. From all parts of the Federated States of Micronesia, they attend the College of Micronesia-FSM to learn the English language for academic purposes; sometimes it seems for

survival purposes. Each student represents an island state which has its own distinct set of customs, traditions, and belief systems.

A typical teaching day for the instructor usually begins with a greeting, followed by the writing of the goal and objectives on the board, and then a brief lecture or an activity. Normally, the instructor teaches every other day; three days a week. During the first day of the week, the instructor engages the students in lecture discussions, which can take up the 55-minute period. The first day of the week is crucial for the instructor. It is the day when the instructor introduces a new topic of a chapter from the required textbook. In the middle of the week, the instructor engages students in group related simulations, based on that chapter. At the end of the week, the instructor engages students in a group activity where they are expected to apply the principles of what they have learned. This is always followed by an assignment that requires students to respond to a set of questions, relating the concepts learned in class to how things were done in the past. For example, if the concept learned in class is about learning styles, the question posed will be, "What were some learning styles applied by people of long ago?" Students are expected to conduct research at the library or pose the question to their elders. There are times, though, when students are resistant to the idea of responding to these questions, because some of them feel that the past activities have no bearing on what is being taught in the classroom. In fact, some students believe that there is no connection between the past and the present. The truth is that there are those who are not knowledgeable about their history; therefore, they feel uncomfortable about it. Others are ashamed to discuss their ancestors running around in loin cloth trying to make ends meet, by using locally made tools. In fact, when they look at old pictures of people long ago dressed in leaves, half-naked, and working on the land, they laugh as if these people were uncivilized.

During the spring semester of 2004 from the months of January to May, the instructor began to engage students in activities that required them to take note of the fact that their culture is changing. They needed to reflect on the choices they make in everyday living, and try to maintain their traditional values and relate them to their understanding of the world around them. In addition, the instructor drew the students' attention to the rich history of their islands, so that they can think about living a life in

accordance with their traditional ways and integrating them into everyday situations. This was crucial for the instructor at a time when it was felt that teaching students had to have a meaningful purpose—there had to be some connections made between modern educational concepts and Micronesian cultural heritage. Most of the instructor's classes over the years have consisted of reserved students. In Micronesia, the young are taught to be reserved, so this was expected. Micronesian students do not ask questions---they only speak when they are spoken to. Students would enter the classroom, take their seats, and wait for directions. There is respect among males and females. For example, when a female walks by a male, she has to bow. Likewise, males know their space and avoid entering female space. This is evident sometimes in a classroom when females as a group sit on one side, and males as a group sit on the other side. These attitudes or behaviors are part of Micronesian cultural heritage. However, as times have changed, students are becoming more outspoken, participating in discussions, sitting next to the opposite sex, and walking by others without respectfully saying, "tirou" or "iehng," -- the equivalent Chuukese and Pohnpeian words for "excuse me" or "pardon me." These are examples of changes in behaviors that have been encouraged through modern education. In fact, one student noted the changes occurring among today's generation,

The attitudes of today compared to past attitudes are different. Young people in the past really respected their parents, but today's young people do not. (student, course evaluation, September 2004)

Another student wrote,

People of long time ago were more respectful and skillful. Now, the young people are copying what they experience from watching movies or from the school they last attended. (student, course evaluation, September 2004)

In fact, many of the students interviewed believe that modern educational concepts ought to be taught in relation to their traditional values. They feel that their traditional principles ought to be recognized and applied.

## The Gap

*“Teacher,” said a student. The instructor faced the student and replied, “Yes.” The student asked, “Why is there so much emphasis on the American perspective?” Is there something wrong with the Micronesian perspective?” The instructor was speechless, but then said the following: “There is nothing wrong with any way of life; this is part of your learning experience as a young Micronesian student adapting to the times” (personal communication, April, 2004).*

The idea of blending Micronesian cultural heritage and modern educational concepts is crucial at a time when change is rapid. In fact, today, students spend so much time at school learning about modern concepts that they become less interested in traditional knowledge and skills. It’s either culture or academics. There is no middle ground. The instructor has called this “The Split Coconut Theory,” (See Appendix D2 ) to show the gap between culture and academics. The theory suggests that with the blending of modern educational concepts and the Micronesian cultural heritage, today’s Micronesian student will maintain his/her identity and at the same time adapt to the constraints of the modern world. Culturally responsive and academically effective educators have the enormous responsibility of bridging the gap between traditional culture and the world of academics, to ensure that students are academically prepared and culturally sensitive at the same time. As educators, being culturally responsive means we are aware of the students’ cultural heritages, and incorporate them in the lesson. In fact, some characteristics of culturally responsive teaching as expressed in Geneva Gay’s book entitled, Culturally Responsive Teaching are as follows:

- a) It acknowledges the legitimacy of the cultural heritages of different ethnic groups, both as legacies that affect students’ dispositions, attitudes, and approaches to learning and as worthy content to be taught in the formal curriculum;
- b) It builds bridges of meaningfulness between home and school experiences as well as between academic abstractions and lived socio-cultural realities;

- c) It uses a wide variety of instructional strategies that are connected to different learning styles;
- d) It teaches students to know and praise their own and each others' cultural heritages;
- e) It incorporates multicultural information, resources, and materials in all subjects and skills routinely taught in schools (29).

In other words, when educators are culturally responsive, students do well in their studies. When they are culturally deprived, students are confused.

Globally, the idea of bridging the gap between culture and academics is not an issue, because worldwide cultures seem to accept the fact that change is inevitable (Moran interview). It is believed that there is no gap to deal with other than to accept it. Furthermore, there is a strong belief that the role of education in the classroom is to deliver modern educational concepts, while the role of the family is to instill traditional cultural practices. But today that is not happening. Students are spending more time learning about modern educational concepts.

At the grassroots level, there are those who believe that an evolving culture must maintain its identity despite changes. They believe there must be efforts to encourage people to realize the fact that education begins at the home, and needs to be supported by the school curriculum. In countries like the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) where the culture is a vital subject among many and affects the identity of the diverse cultures of people, the gap between culture and academics is a challenge. In fact, the maintenance of traditional culture is a concern to the people of Micronesia, specifically Pohnpeians, as prominent leaders have expressed. Since the inception of modern culture in the islands during the early 1400's, the way of life of the people has changed dramatically. In the past ten years, the arrival of television, cars, modern technology, processed food, and western ideals, have affected these islands. They have replaced many of the traditional ways of doing things. For instance, Micronesians today live in societies based on a cash economy. In other words, people buy food more often than they plant it. In the past, people did not have to buy anything. They relied on the land, sea, and air for acquiring food and materials. Today, the younger generation is materialistic, thus avoiding

traditional responsibilities. With the rapid change, people don't have time to think about what is important. What seems to be acceptable is progress; encourage progress and do less with tradition. But, when a society rejects tradition and demands modernity, then problems will arise in all areas of concern.

Thus, how did the instructor arrive at the idea of being culturally responsive and academically effective? Throughout her teaching years, the instructor has grappled with the challenge of integrating culture and academics. The instructor's main concern was to ensure students gain a better understanding about themselves as cultural beings in relation to western academics in the classroom. Students were learning the English language through the four skills because English is the language of instruction at the College of Micronesia, and the official language of the Federated States of Micronesia. They were taught to speak, write, read, and pay attention through the English language. Most lessons that were prepared and presented did not include the Micronesian perspective. Students were expected to read, think, speak, and pay attention to the Western way without any consideration for how that related to their Micronesian ways. In fact, when they opened a foreign textbook, they did not read about the Micronesian perspective or values. As a result, they did not fully comprehend what was being taught in the classroom. Specifically, they could not really identify with the modern educational concepts. In order for students of a second language to become fully aware of the "foreign texts," the educator must find ways to make them identify with the text and make it more meaningful. The educator has the responsibility to teach students about the relationship between their traditional ways and the modern concepts they are learning about in the classroom. In addition, to learn only about modern educational concepts when they are not blended with Micronesian cultural heritage leads Micronesian students to become more westernized. When we, as educators in Micronesia concentrate heavily on delivering Western concepts, we are encouraging them to become what they are not. A Micronesian scholar noted that since the educational system is patterned after the Western world, western education is considered "a powerful cultural force in the socialization of the young to foreign ways as well as indelible imprints of colonialism and that U.S. education is a disaster in the making" (Sachuo 32). Apparently what this means is that although education is a positive tool for change, it is also a weapon to

destroy what seems to be important to a society. Therefore, as Micronesian educators within a diverse culture teaching a dominant language curriculum, it is imperative for us to continue to ask the question, “Am I culturally responsive and academically effective?” When we ask this question, we recognize the importance of our role as Micronesian educators in an ever-changing society.

Thus, as educators, if we are called to respond culturally and be academically effective in our teaching, then we must consider the many different elements in the culture, *both new and old*. What follows after we have considered the many elements is a well-prepared lesson that includes both the western and local perspectives vital to the growth of young Micronesians making transitions into an unknown future.

### Research Data

#### Purpose of study:

The purpose of this research study stemmed from the instructor’s experiences as a teacher at the College of Micronesia-FSM, trying to integrate modern educational concepts with Micronesian cultural heritage. It is of importance to the instructor that the integration is considered for effective teaching at the college. Micronesian cultural heritage is a significant part of the daily living of Micronesians that must be constantly practiced and preserved. This study attempts to answer two key questions relating to the role of culture, and the integration of culture and academics.

#### Research questions:

The main research questions for this study were: “What role do you think culture should play in the classroom?” and “How can we bridge the gap between culture and academics?” These questions were posed to both traditional leaders and remedial and advanced level students at the College of Micronesia-FSM.

#### Method:

Several methods were employed for this study. They included participation observation through videotaping of Micronesian student debates, oral individual

interviews with Micronesian freshmen students, reflective writing by Micronesian students about the role and importance of culture, and taped interviews with respected traditional leaders of Pohnpei state.

#### Respondents:

The respondents for this study included a Peace Corp administrator, a Finance official and the Governor from the state of Pohnpei, who are also prominent traditional leaders; a local senator, and a local anthropologist. They were interviewed during the months of September and November of the year 2004. A total of ten questions relating to the importance and role of culture, including the integration of culture and academics were asked ( See Appendix B1). They were informed about the interviews through letters sent to them from the instructor (See Appendix C1 and C2).

In addition, during the months of April through May of the year 2004, a total of fifty three (out of 90 students) who took the instructor's Expository Writing I course, Reading V course, and Study Skills course participated in an end of the semester writing reflection activity, and an oral interview. Four questions were asked about the definition, description, role, and changes of culture. During the interview, students responded to four questions about their learning progress in the Study Skills course. Furthermore, students who took the instructor's Expository Writing I course, (a total of 36 students) engaged in a debate where they were expected to argue for or against the question posed: "Should Micronesians of today live like their ancestors once lived long ago?" Finally, during the month of October of the year 2004, the instructor's Study Skills students (a total of 32 students out of 80) participated in a reflective writing activity. They were expected to respond to ten questions relating to their birthplace, the kinds of stories told to them by their parents, their knowledge about culture, and description of themselves as Micronesians (See Appendix B2). It is important to note that students taking Expository Writing I level course are considered college level students.

#### Data Collection

After interviewing, tape-recording, observing, and reading reflective writing responses, the instructor compiled data from the various methods applied and sorted through them to find out about the nature of the responses. The instructor separated

information collected from the traditional leaders and the students; read, analyzed them and took note of their responses. The compilation of data was made based on several key questions that interested the instructor. The instructor was interested in finding about how today's traditional and government leaders define and perceive culture (See Appendix B1 for questions 1-5). Furthermore, the instructor was interested to know about her students' awareness of the changes taking place around them, and whether they felt that traditional values should be integrated in the academic lesson (See Appendix B2 for questions 6-10). Based on their responses, the instructor synthesized the information.

### Data Analysis

The nature of the data collected revealed interesting information to the instructor. Based on the data collected from the three traditional leaders, senator, and anthropologist, the instructor learned that although they strongly advocated for the preservation of culture, they did not offer specific recommendations on how to integrate culture and academics in the classroom. However, they strongly felt that the integration of culture and academics must be made. In fact, they encouraged the instructor to consult with them on an on-going basis, and use them as resources when planning a lesson based on traditional principles. Their main focus was on the description of the many changes taking place today, and how they are affecting the people. One theme that emerged over and over again was the theme of preserving "*wahu*." Pronounced as w-o-w, "*WAHU*" is the act of respect in Pohnpeian society. They believe that WAHU is an important element that must be preserved because it is the key to harmony and peace in a society. In fact, the Governor of the state of Pohnpei noted that, "without WAHU, Pohnpei would not be as peaceful and friendly as it should be" (David interview). In addition, they acknowledged the effects of rapid change, and how they are causing people to devalue some important elements of culture.

Moreover, after listening, reading, viewing and analyzing student responses, the instructor expected the students to be less responsive to traditional practices. However, it turned out that the majority of them recognized the changes that are taking place. What surprised the instructor was that the majority of the 32 student respondents noted the fact

that today's younger generation does not practice respect like their predecessors. One student wrote,

Although young people nowadays are more intellectual than those in the past, they are ignoring their culture, custom, and adapting to foreign ways. (student, course evaluation, September 2004)

In fact, many of them responded the same way in so many words. Observing the many changes taking place among the younger generation, the instructor had expected that students would respond differently. However, many of the students participating in this research study are conscientious about the changes taking place, and feel that traditional culture should be a part of the educational curriculum. A student wrote,

The young people today need to know who they are and what they are. They need to keep in mind that they do have a culture and that they should be proud of it, by making it alive. Even though following the life of today seems easier in many ways, they still have to respect their culture. (student, course evaluation, 2004)

### Limitations of the study

Sparked by the instructor's experiences, perceptions and burning questions from seven years as a college instructor, this study was conducted to determine college students' awareness of their own cultural experiences, and also to consult traditional leaders on Pohnpei about their position on integrating elements of culture in the classroom. A total of seventy-two (72) students were interviewed, videotaped, or audio-taped. The group of students that were selected may not represent the entire student population of the Federated States of Micronesia, but they represent the average and typical FSM student living in today's modern world, who is aware of the changes taking place. While five leaders were interviewed on Pohnpei, it is recognized that there are traditional and government leaders on nearby islands of Chuuk, Yap, and Kosrae who may have different ideas about the roles of culture and academics (See Appendix A). However, it is widely recognized that many traditional leaders across the Pacific oceans share the same responses as those on Pohnpei. Regardless of geographical and political separation, traditional leaders from the various island entities continue to meet and discuss ways to keep traditions alive.

### Definition of terms

*Culture* is defined throughout this paper as “a way of life of a people;” a general definition that suggests it is an umbrella of many components. The definition the instructor has settled upon has been defined by traditional leaders. The definition includes the customs, norms, practices, and beliefs of a people. In addition, the instructor has taken note of culture as defined by Patrick Moran in his book entitled, Teaching Culture: Perspectives in Practice. Culture, according to Moran, “is the evolving way of life of a group of persons, consisting of a shared set of practices associated with a shared set of products, based upon a shared set of perspectives on the world, set within specific social contexts” (24). Furthermore, when the instructor uses the term *Western*, she is referring to the Anglo perspective. The term *gap* in this paper means an empty space; there is no blending of culture and academics. *Academics* as defined later in this paper mean scholarly excellence. One who is academically prepared has engaged in formal instruction through the western form of education. Moreover, the term *Micronesia* refers to a regional grouping of small islands scattered in the Pacific Ocean. It includes the Republic of Palau, Guam, Saipan, the FSM and the Republic of Marshalls. The FSM is a federation of four island groups: Pohnpei, Chuuk, Yap, and Kosrae. The FSM alone consists of 600 islands and land area of 702 square kilometers with an estimated population of 105,500 as of the 1994 census (Recehebei 10). Finally, the term *Micnesian* refers to the indigenous roots of the people of these islands. Thus, the Micnesian perspective or the Micnesian thinking refers to the traditional ways of these people.

## CHAPTER 2

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In the Pacific Ocean, there are over 1,000 Micronesian islands, each having its own distinct language and culture. Each island has been touched and governed by the Spanish, Germans, Japanese, and Americans since the early 1400's. The impact of these foreign empires is having a distinct educational system that does not seem to assist in the preservation and maintenance of the local culture. The four governing empires, Spanish, German, Japanese, and American, introduced new languages and cultures that greatly affected the perceptions and lifestyles of the Micronesians. Traditional and Western Education have existed in separate realms for over 100 years.

Early Micronesians were thought to have come from some parts of Southeast Asia between 4000 and 2000 BC. It is believed that they sailed on canoes from distant lands in search of new ones to inhabit. These people were fair-skinned, hard-working people where they were skilled in building canoes, navigating the seas, weaving baskets, fishing, farming, and utilizing the land (Rechebei 37-38).

Islanders of long ago learned by trial and error; they learned by doing. They had a "sixth sense" of doing things. They were very much in tuned with nature, and they seemed to have known what to do and when to do it. Their rich natural surroundings provided them with the time to do certain activities, and the necessary tools to produce materials. They simply followed their "internal clock" to wake up before the sun rose and tend to their daily chores. They worked to survive. They relied on the land for food, materials, and other necessities. Thatched-roof houses were built for a family that included both the nuclear and extended family members. Societies were based on clan groups that could be traced through a matrilineal line. Chiefs were in charge of each clan group. Women had their assigned duties while men tended to theirs. The islanders worshipped nature, the sea, the land, and other forms of mystical images that symbolized gods. When it came to healing, people were healed through natural means. When it came to learning, people learned how to do things as part of their daily living experience.

Elders were responsible to demonstrate how to build, weave, navigate, plant, and cook, while the younger people watched and followed the steps. Oral tradition thrived in the societies and story telling was a learned skill. Chants and dances were passed on from one generation to the next. They were sacred because they told people stories about their histories, wars and provided wisdom. Chants were also magical in nature as they could influence people to go into a trance. Today, the younger generation listens to and observes their elders, but with the introduction of the modern educational system, they are encouraged to participate in discussions, and use their minds in a classroom setting. Even though there are a great number of students today from the main commercial island centers who are considered fortunate and have access to educational opportunities, there are those who live on the outer islands who do not share the same educational opportunities. Students who live in on the main island ride the bus or a car to school. There are those who walk to school. They wake up to the ringing of an alarm clock and prepare themselves, and off they go to meet the day in a classroom. They sit, watch, listen, and perhaps participate. They bring the right tools with them and learn about different concepts and the world. Students of today are more exposed to the western world through television, radio, and technology than their predecessors. They are no longer isolated in their own village learning from their own related elders, rather they are learning in the classroom. But there are some students who still live in homes that rely on the lamp and the fire as their source of light. They walk to school and still tend to their traditional responsibilities. Based on this fact, *traditional culture is still very much alive and deserves a place in the classroom.*

#### Traditional Education in Micronesia

Traditional education in Micronesia began during the first settlement of the islands. It is practical which means one learns by doing. Through traditional education, people acquired knowledge and techniques in agriculture, fishing, astronomy, medicine, navigation stonework, and handiwork. In addition, knowledge about folklore, religion, and mythology were passed from one generation to the next. Through visual and oral means, knowledge and skills were transmitted. It is believed that visual observation and

memory were developed to a greater degree in traditional education. There were knowledge and skills that were only taught by a few people, and shared with a few. For example, certain people had knowledge about local medicine, but did not share that freely with others.

Despite the many educational changes that have taken place in Micronesia, traditional education has somehow coexisted with the modern educational concepts learned through Western education. Schools have been in operation since the early 1600's beginning with the influence of Spain, followed by Germany, Japan, and the United States.

### Modern education in Micronesia

Modern educational concepts are transmitted in an artificial environment through instruction based on methods and content selected by educators trained in Western pedagogy. In Micronesia, students are taught to examine, analyze, and synthesize modern concepts. Based on their knowledge about modern concepts, they are expected to apply their principles. Modern education encourages adaptation, but it does not build on the pre-existing foundations of traditional education. In fact, it is believed that problems would arise if traditional skills were introduced in the classroom. First, some traditional skills are considered sacred and cannot be shared. Second, the artificial setting of the classroom makes it an improper place to transmit such skills. Finally, a classroom in today's Micronesia consists of a melting pot of different language speakers where a common language is needed.

### Goals of the School System

Historically diverse, uniquely Micronesian, and globally connected, the College of Micronesia-FSM is the national institution of higher education of the Federated States of Micronesia. Originally established to develop Teacher education, its current mission is to provide educational opportunity -- academic, vocational and technical -- for all people. Aimed at nourishing individual growth and national unity, scholarship and service, COM-FSM is dedicated to developing

integrity, critical thinking skills, a breadth of vision, and the habit of reflection in an educational environment enriched by cultural traditions.(http: [www.comfsm.fm](http://www.comfsm.fm) September, 2004).

### College of Micronesia-FSM

The College of Micronesia-FSM (COM-FSM) is the only national institution of higher education in the Federated States of Micronesia, which is located in Palikir, Pohnpei with state campuses in the four FSM states of Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, and Kosrae. Being the only national institution of higher education, the College of Micronesia-FSM carries the responsibility of trying to meet the evolving needs of the society and the integration of outside impacts and resources. Students from the four FSM states are represented in the classrooms at the College of Micronesia-FSM. They bring with them eight major languages, diverse cultural backgrounds and different dialects. The students represent high schools nationwide, both public and private institutions. The English language is the official language of the FSM; thus students learn subject matter through the English language.

Since its inception in Micronesia, the function of education has been the socialization of students into the dominant culture, which is not Micronesian, but Western. That is, educators feed students the values, beliefs, routines, and expectations of the Western culture. But Noel suggests that, “One of the main conflicts that results from these socialization practices is the concept called cultural discontinuities” (21). This means that students are taught differently at home and at school. Thus, educator’s expectations may not be met if they do not consider their students’ cultural heritage. Likewise, students will probably fail because they do not understand the educator’s expectations, which are not coherent compared to the expectations at home.

In general, the goal of many schools is to provide academic and social opportunities for their students so that they succeed at all levels of their education. Based on what they have learned in the classroom, students are expected to apply their principles in everyday life. But if their everyday situations do not relate to the modern concepts they have learned in the classroom, then what use is this learning?

A noted historian and director of the Micronesian Seminar, ( known popularly as MicSem, is a private non-profit, non-governmental organization that has been engaged in public education for thirty years) Father Francis Hezel, S.J. wrote the following excerpt in his article entitled, *"Who Shall Own the Schools?"* where he describes the impact of education on the family. In this excerpt, the Micronesian family is not aware of the impact of education on the children. Education is attractive, yet it brings much trouble to the family. It describes a typical Micronesian family wanting his son/daughter to reap the benefits of education, but not to get tainted by the effects. However, the opposite seems to happen. He wrote:

Get an education, but don't change; go out into the larger world, but don't become a part of it. One can well imagine that this must be the sentiment of many a Micronesian parent as he sends his son or daughter off to school. He looks forward to the day when his child will return, well-versed in the necessary survival skills for a life of gainful wage employment, to take up his rightful position in the community. Apart from some incidental changes, he expects back basically the same young man or woman that he sent. But in office buildings somewhere sit the men who financed and designed the network of village and district-center schools in Micronesia. They know well how fatuous the parent's pious hope for his child really is. As educational planners, they know that change is not incidental to the educational system in a developing country; it is its *raison d'etre*. Education has always been one of the most effective means whereby the "crust of custom" can be broken so that new attitudes, more favorable to development, might be engendered in a society. Schools, for instance, are supposed to teach children to save money and time, to work hard, to want better sanitation and housing, and to eat a balanced diet, among other things. For those committed to development, education is a powerful vehicle of social change. (1)

He continues by stating the problem as:

Here, then, lies the problem. The parent has bargained for a cow and been given a horse. While he expects the school to turn out for him a skilled but docile wage earner, it actually produces something quite different. He

looks to the school as somehow preservative of society's traditional values and goals, but it is in fact designed to supplant many of these with others more suitable for modernization. (1)

Today, parents eagerly send their children to school because they want them “to become somebody.” To be somebody in today’s world means that a person becomes educated, gets a decent job, marries, owns a big house and several cars, and lives accordingly. In Micronesia, parents want their children to have such opportunities, but not to the extent where they will forget about their traditional responsibilities. Such traditional responsibilities include: participating in traditional functions, working on the land, showing respect to elders, and expanding one’s knowledge about traditional practices. In fact, when a person in Micronesia has completed his/her studies from a school abroad, he/she is expected to continue supporting his/her parents, to participate in traditional societal functions, and to practice forms of respect to the elders. But often, the educated person has become independent and only looks out to help himself/herself. Some parents do not realize that when their son or daughter was away attending school, he/she adopted certain values that were necessary for him/her to adapt. These values may have encouraged the son or daughter to change and disregard traditional responsibilities. Modern educational concepts must, therefore, blend with Micronesian cultural heritage to assist in the development of the individual. Instead of leaving traditional learning at home and promoting modern educational concepts in the classroom, it is suggested that, we as educators blend them in the classroom, so that students will become culturally responsible and academically effective in their studies.

Elizabeth Rechebei who wrote her dissertation on the Political Leadership Perceptions on the College of Micronesia System in the Federated States of Micronesia clearly stated that, “Education is now the basic tool for survival in a modern island setting and has made an impact on almost every aspect of life in the community” (49). In fact, education is a vehicle for change. But, it should not only serve as a tool for change, rather the maintenance and sustenance of people’s identity. Furthermore, Rechebei stated that, Today’s generation is expected to learn a standard curriculum, and must cope with the challenges of adapting to and adopting new values and knowledge into their cultural

norms when necessary (50). This is a challenge for all educators to recognize, because students should not just learn to adapt, but be encouraged to maintain their identities.

The last line of the mission statement of the College of Micronesia-FSM reads,

Aimed at nourishing individual growth and National unity, scholarship and service, COM-FSM is dedicated to developing integrity, critical thinking skills, a breadth of vision, and the habit of reflection in an educational environment enriched by cultural traditions, (COM-FSM website)

which implies that cultural traditions are an important factor in assisting the nourishment of individual growth. Thus, the goal of the school is to prepare students culturally and academically for the many challenges that lie ahead, because society is constantly changing, and their survival depends upon being prepared to meet these challenges. But, it appears that the idea of educating the young in any school environment means to prepare them academically and socially, so that they can be successful in their studies. This means that once they have completed their studies, and acquired a degree, they are expected to participate in civic engagement the western way. In fact, there is a demand for the younger generation to obtain higher degrees because jobs today require that. The existing cash economy has affected the way people live, thus creating a modern culture; a culture that tends to ignore the traditions of the society. For example, instead of encouraging the younger generation to eat locally made food, we are feeding them processed foods. Instead of encouraging them to work on the land, we turn on the television and allow them to become couch potatoes. Finally, instead of encouraging them to consider majors in the vocational trades, we are encouraging them to consider majors that will allow them to sit at their desks in air-conditioned rooms. Thus, it is fitting to re-ask the question that was posed by a prominent educator, “Is education a vehicle merely to succeed in a wage economy at the cost of sacrificing one’s culture?”(Ramarui 2-7). Thus, what role should culture play in the school system?

## CHAPTER 3

### WHAT IS CULTURE AND HOW IMPORTANT IS IT?

*During class time, a student approached the instructor and asked for the equivalent native word for the English term **vital**. The student did not know what the term **vital** meant and wanted the instructor to explain it. The instructor gave the student the equivalent native word, **kesempwal**, and explained that the word also meant something of importance. As a result, the student understood the term (Personal communication, December 2004).*

Culture is not just about identity; rather it is also about survival as a people. The survival of a group of people depends on how they are grounded in the roots of their “cultural tree.” In her book Developing Multicultural Educators, Jana Noel uses the image of a tree to describe culture. Culture is like a tree having many components: knowledge, beliefs, morals, and custom. “Some of these components can be visualized as the branches of the tree, as the outward and observable customs of a culture. It is the roots, however, that provide the deeper, shared values and beliefs out of which the branches grow” (Noel 3). The roots include the belief system, language, and perceptions. Without the blending of Micronesian cultural heritage and modern educational concepts, an educated Micronesian will become as one famous author puts it, “A white mind wrapped in brown skin.”

During the twenty-second special session in the year of 2002, the Fifth Pohnpei State Legislature introduced and passed an act that included the following:

- ✓ To preserve and protect the historical and cultural heritage of Pohnpei
- ✓ To establish the Pohnpei Historic and Cultural Preservation Review Board and the state Registry of Historical Properties
- ✓ To authorize funds therefore; and for other purposes

(Pohnpei State Legislature Act: retrieved on November 11, 2004).

Furthermore, a Review Board on Pohnpei Historic and Cultural Preservation was created, and members were recently sworn in the year 2004. Their goal is to identify key

elements of culture and take necessary steps to preserve them. What the latter suggests is that the preservation of culture and the maintenance of identity are important to Micronesians, specifically Pohnpeians. In fact, during interviews with traditional and government leaders here on Pohnpei State, the instructor learned a great deal about how the term culture is defined, perceived, and viewed by these islanders. Ten questions relating to the role and importance of culture, and the integration of culture and academics, were posed to the five leaders during interviews (See Appendix B1). It was also learned that the main concerns among traditional and governmental leaders today include: 1) preservation of traditional culture and 2) the effects of change.

Culture is defined as a way of life by the three traditional leaders. Their definitions suggest that culture is the umbrella of valued components that contribute to the uniqueness of a people; similar definitions to that of Noel. For example, one traditional leader noted that, “Specifically, culture is a way of life” (Edwin interview). Another traditional leader expressed that “culture encompasses three things: custom, tradition, and culture” (Joseph interview). Moreover, culture is “the way we, especially Pohnpeians, were brought up to live; the way we interact with people....it’s a way of life” (David interview). The valued components of the Pohnpeian culture are the traditional practices. For example, the traditional leaders emphasized a great deal about the practice of WAHU. As stated earlier, WAHU is the act of respect in the Pohnpeian society. It is important to Pohnpeians that they treat others with respect. They greet with a “Kasehlie maing,” bow and say “iehng” when they walk pass someone; they speak with kind words and act politely. Based on their observations, the leaders identified the unwillingness of the younger generation to practice WAHU. It appears that traditional leaders believe that this WAHU practice is key to creating harmony in the society. Without this practice, harmony will be lost and people will become less in tune with their culture. Furthermore, traditional leaders of today are concerned about the rapid changes taking place and how they are affecting the life of the people. In fact, one traditional leader noted that, “we are losing some of the touches of our culture because of the effects of change” (David interview). This is true and as one government leader noted, “We are doing very little to preserve some of our key cultural expressions.” Thus, if we as a society are doing very

little to preserve some of our key cultural expressions, then there is a need to examine in our educational system what we are teaching students in the classroom.

The only native anthropologist from the FSM Historic Preservation Office provided several definitions of culture. First, he defined culture as a broad concept having many meanings. Second, his definition as an anthropologist is that, “the emphasis on culture is behaviors or conduct of the people of a society that is shared by all the members of the community, and is handed down from one generation to another over many years.” Third, he noted that culture can be compartmentalized which can include language, religious practices and rituals that are indigenous to the people, traditional economic system, the subsistence economy, sociopolitical system, oral history, folklore, arts and craft.” He added, “Overall, culture encompasses a wide area of concern” (Eperiam interview). Indeed, culture encompasses a wide area of concern and determines the identity of a people. It is also bound to evolve and instill unforeseen changes.

In fact, Patrick Moran mentions this evolving nature when he defines culture as, the evolving way of life of a group of persons, consisting of a shared set of practices associated with a shared set of products, based upon a shared set of perspectives on the world, set within specific social context (24). As culture evolves, some of its components may be affected. In this case, within the educational system, the world of academics has affected the traditional values of the Micronesian people. Therefore, traditional culture is a necessary element in the modern classroom.

In an interview, a local senator noted that culture and academics must work hand in hand as does the government of Kitti, (which is one of the ten municipalities of Pohnpei State), where traditional government and modern government are integrated to create a unique local government (Martin interview). As a result of integration, traditional practices are preserved and applied by the people.

Thus, devising ways to blend Micronesian cultural heritage and modern educational concepts should be a goal of the academic classroom, or even better, the school as a whole. Again, we look at what Father Francis Hezel, wrote in his article, “What should our school be doing?” He asserted:

Culture is picked up in the environment of the home and community; the school has the task not of teaching culture but of reinforcing it. Culture is not a

subject to be learned, but an atmosphere that is exuded in everything that is carried on in the school. It is the environment in which school is conducted. Culture should condition everything that happens in the school and everything that is taught—every subject, every word spoken, and every nuance.” He added, “Elements of traditional culture such as oral history and language need not be neglected, but they should be taught in such a way that they are consonant with the other goals that education serves: literacy and higher thinking skills, for instance.(4)

Before they were introduced to formal education, early Micronesians were taught to listen, observe, and then apply what they learned. Today, young Micronesians are still very much visual and auditory learners. Overall, they learn by doing. Knowing this, Micronesian educators consider the style of “learning by doing,” and implement it through their instruction. Educators can utilize experiential activities, cultural assimilators, values clarification, film, video, literature, and much more. In fact, educators have the responsibility of devising their own materials to meet the cultural challenges in the classroom.

In his book, entitled, Teaching Culture: Perspectives in Practice, Patrick Moran explains that, “The way we teach culture springs from our histories as language and culture learners and our understanding of ourselves” (3). It is believed that every experience of a student, especially new students is considered a “cultural experience.” In fact, Moran defines cultural experience as “the encounter with another way of life” (13). This means that when someone steps out of his/her home and sets foot on another soil, he/she has encountered a “cultural experience.” For example, incoming freshmen from all four states of the FSM who leave their homes to attend college in Palikir are encountering a cultural experience. The fact that they have set foot on another soil allows them to enter another culture, thus experiencing a cultural experience. This cultural experience then continues in the classroom, where the student is bombarded by new ways of thinking. With the blending of Micronesian cultural heritage and modern educational concepts, students will not only adapt to the new ways of thinking, but be encouraged to maintain their identity.

## Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (ELC)

Kolb, in 1984, created a model from experience that suggests learners go through a cycle of observation, theorizing, and strategizing. The stages of this model occur in sequence: 1) *concrete experience or participation*; where learners participate in the experience and are engaged on a number of levels—intellectually, physically, emotionally, spiritually—depending on the nature of the content and the form of experience itself; 2) *reflective observation or description*; where the learner pauses to reflect on what happened in order to describe it; 3) *abstract conceptualization or interpretation*; where the learner assigns meaning to the experience by developing explanations or theories based on other sources or from the learners' own; 4) *active experimentation or response*; by devising strategies consistent with personal learning goals, the nature of the content, and the form of experience, the learner prepares to reenter experience (Moran 18). This cycle suggests that all learning is experience. In other words, the educator can engage students in a direct or indirect engagement in traditional culture related to the modern educational concepts learned in class, by knowing about it, knowing why, and knowing oneself. For example, through the modern means of video, educators can show students how to weave a locally made basket from coconut leaves and expect them to write a process analysis essay about the steps of weaving a basket. Or even better to have students demonstrate the steps. Through the experiential learning cycle, the educator 1) gives them directions, and allows them to watch the videotape attentively (participation); 2) gives them time to think about it, and identify its nature through concept mapping (description); 3) gives them the opportunity to make a meaningful connection (interpretation); 4) expects them to apply what they have learned (See Appendix E on Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle).

Furthermore, traditional culture can be taught in such a way that it relates to today's educational goals. For example, educators can show students that the process of building a canoe and weaving a basket requires the same analytical skills that they are expected to learn in the classroom. In addition, exposing students to past ways and relating them to what they are learning in the classroom, allows them to recognize the values of the past

and understand who they are today. More importantly, they are able to make connections between modern educational concepts and their cultural heritage. Through making such connections, they are able to understand the nature of what is being taught in the classroom.

### Culture vs. Academics

*It's 9am and the instructor begins her study skills class by making eye contact and greeting her students. Once rapport with her students has been established the instructor writes her goal and objectives on the board so that students know what to expect in the remaining 50 minutes of the class time. After writing the goal and the objectives on the board, the instructor explains the lesson. Being culturally sensitive, the instructor explains the modern concept of time management to her students through an analysis of comparing "Micronesian time" to "Western time." Students chuckle as they recognize that "Micronesian time" refers to Micronesians attending an event an hour later than scheduled. When hearing about the fact that "Western time" refers to being on time, not coming an hour late, the students laugh harder because they recognize the difference. They recognize that Micronesians' concept of time is different from non-Micronesians who tend to be more serious about time. This kind of response in the classroom draws students' attention. They become motivated when they make a connection. As Micronesian students attending college, they are learning the differences between what it means to be a Micronesian learning to adapt to Western ways, and trying to maintain their identities. Learning to adapt to Western ways is only possible when their traditional selves become related to what is being taught in the classroom (Classroom experience, October 2004).*

Over the years, there has been a debate between traditionalists and modernists about today's young Micronesians whether they should have the same educational opportunities as students in the United States, or become educated through traditional practices. The growing concern among the traditionalists seems to be that young Micronesians in today's world have become educated elitists who only seek to gain opportunities for themselves. Take for example the young Micronesian female who spends four years in the United States, obtains a degree from a well-known University, and returns home. Upon returning home, she rejects everything she has been taught by her family. She does not show respect to her elders. She claims that her ideas are better.

She advocates that society takes on foreign practices. This kind of attitude antagonizes the practice of “WAHU” that traditional leaders of today are trying to maintain.

On the other hand, those who believe in modern education suggest that young Micronesians of today must conform and become educated. They must be educated the same way as their peers in the United States, since the way of life today in Micronesia resembles that of the United States. In fact, many of today’s generation have gone abroad to America, Europe, Southeast Asia and other parts of Asia to obtain degrees in Business, Political Science, Medicine, Education, Marine Science, and Law. Some of them have found the life abroad to be comfortable, and have decided to remain there after obtaining a degree and finding suitable work. However, there are those who have returned home to work and participate in traditional civic engagements.

### Academics

Longman’s dictionary defines academics as “being or based on subjects that are taught to develop the mind rather than provide practical skills” (4-5). That is, students become scholars in an academic setting through intellectual participation in the arts, sciences, and humanities. The academic culture has its disadvantages and advantages. The advantage is that students acquire knowledge and skills. With knowledge and skills, they have power. On the other hand, as previously noted, academics or modern education does not build on the preexisting foundations of traditional education. This means that modern education aims at teaching the opposite of what traditional education teaches.

Thus, it is not enough to implement lessons based only on modern educational concepts, but educators must, as one Micronesian educator puts it, “blend the inevitable values influenced by the American style of education and American culture with the various Micronesian cultural heritage and values so that Micronesia’s identity will not be lost” (Ramarui 13). A society that tries to maintain its identity must consider creating a balance between the elements of Academics and Culture. For when one is grounded, one can adapt. In fact today’s dilemma seems to be about “what Micronesians face with respect to the suppression by the traditional culture and the liberation of the individual through Modernization” (Heine 3). A Micronesian student is battling with two extremes: the traditional culture and the modern culture. In the classroom, the student faces the

unfamiliar. At home, the student faces the familiar. The role of academics then is to ensure that students are not just knowledgeable about western ways, but also about their culture and to assist students to relate their cultural heritage to the modern concepts they are learning in the classroom.

## CHAPTER 4

### CONCLUSION

*During one of the instructor's classes, students were asked the following questions: "How did people of long ago deal with stress? Were they healthy? Why? These questions were based on a chapter from a textbook focused on the key concepts of stress, health, and wellness. Students conducted research at the library and at their homes where they posed the question to elders. Their findings included the following: They worked very hard to make ends meet. They ate locally made food. They were strong people (Classroom experience, December 2004).*

In addition to using Kolb's experiential learning cycle and traditional strategies in the classroom, educators can consider the following set of guidelines that direct culturally responsive educators to integrate traditional ways of learning in their teaching, and culturally knowledgeable students to become rooted in their cultural heritage and traditions. The following guidelines were adapted from the "Guidelines for Preparing Culturally Responsive Teachers for Alaska's Schools," adopted by the Assembly of Alaska Native Educators, Anchorage, Alaska, February 2, 1999, but they have been revised to fit the Micronesian setting, specifically at the college level.

Culturally responsive educators integrate traditional ways of learning in their teaching through the following:

- Understanding that culture changes, educators need to maintain the continuity of the past in ways that relate to the goals of the educational institution, and to continue to learn about the traditional culture.

For example, educators must continue to reassess their teaching methods and to include traditional values in their lesson. They need to keep abreast with their traditional culture in the same way as they are tune with today's modern world

- Being aware that culture is a complex process, educators need to guide students through the process of adaptation.

For example, educators guide and teach students through experiential learning.

- Knowing the dynamics of diversity, educators need to be sensitive to the different needs that exist in the classroom and provide ways to help learners express themselves.

For example, educators acknowledge students' backgrounds and employ a wide variety of strategies to allow students to be confident in their school work.

- Recognizing the importance of using older members as resources and ensuring the preservation of past knowledge, educators need to consult with them on an ongoing basis.

For example, educators invite traditional leaders to be part of the educational curriculum and discuss ways to include traditional values/concepts in the academic lesson.

- Being aware of the challenges of teaching in an ever-changing world, educators need to prepare academic related lessons in relation to the goals of the institution and traditional values.

For example, based on students' ethnic backgrounds and skills, educators work on identifying effective strategies to use in the classroom.

Furthermore, culturally knowledgeable students are deeply rooted in their cultural heritage and traditions of their societies through the following:

- Knowing the rich history of their islands and their own genealogy and family history, students need to live a life in accordance with their traditional ways and integrate them into everyday situations.

For example, students are given the opportunity to write and read about their family history, through journal writing or as part of an academic presentation.

- Noticing that culture is always changing, students need to reflect on the choices they make in everyday living and maintain their traditional values and relate them to their understanding of the world around them.

For example, students are given the opportunity to reflect on modern educational principles in relation to their traditional values, through the various methods employed in the classroom.

- Being aware of the importance of preserving cultural traditions, students need to pass on these traditions through oral and written communication.

For example, through the four skills employed in any classroom, students are given traditional topics to write, read, and speak about, as well as to pay attention.

- Knowing that they have roles to assume in the society, students need to practice their traditional responsibilities in their surrounding environment.

For example, through modern concepts blended with traditional strategies, students conduct class projects that allow them to be aware and practice traditional responsibilities.

- Recognizing the changes affecting behavior, students need to be aware of the value of respecting the past, the older members of the community, and utilizing them as resources to survive in a changing society.

For example, students are given the opportunity to consult with elders on a traditional topic that requires them to exercise their analysis, and communication skills.

In conclusion, the gap between culture and academics is evident in the changing Micronesian society. While it is evident, efforts are being made at the community level to preserve traditional cultural heritage of the people. Once they are preserved, an integration of the culture and academics can take place. When the integration is made, students are able to succeed and become in tune with their traditional selves. In a world that is changing, students should not just be taught “how to be somebody” rather they should also be reminded of their roots and how important they are to their future success

## Appendix A

### List of Respondents

#### I. POHNPEI STATE

1. Traditional leader (Peace Corp Administrator)
2. Traditional leader (Finance Official)
3. Traditional leader (Governor)
4. Senator (Vice Speaker, PSL)

#### II. FSM National Government

1. Anthropologist

#### III. COM-FSM

1. Students representing FSM states (Seventy students)

## **Appendix B1**

### *Interview questions (leaders)*

In your role as a traditional leader, how do you define culture?

Where are we now with preserving culture?

Why should we preserve them?

How important is preservation of traditions and customs?

What should we preserve?

What role should culture play in the classroom?

Do you think that culture should be taught in the classroom? Why or why not?

How do you think traditions could be integrated in the school curriculum?

What is the importance of culture?

What do you think of teachers using older members or leaders like you as resource to whom they would consult on an ongoing basis regarding traditions?

## **Appendix B2**

### *Interview Questions: Students*

Where were you born and raised?

What kinds of stories did your parents or relatives share with you?

Which story did you like the most?

What did your parents teach you about culture?

What do you think Culture is about?

Do you have a sense of how people in the past learned?

How do you view young peoples' attitude today compared to the attitudes of the younger people of the past?

What do you think is important to young people today?

Why do you think some Micronesians have returned and not completed their education?

Do you think the College is culturally responsive? How? Why not?

## Appendix C1

September, 2004

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

I am a graduate student of the School for International Training in Brattleboro, Vermont, United States. I am currently working on a professional project in the form of a thesis that centers on the idea of bridging the gap between culture and academics. I am interested in collecting data and analyzing them for the sole purpose of proposing guidelines for a curriculum that would integrate culture and academics. Thus, I would like to invite you to participate in this project toward my thesis.

If you agree to be a respondent, you will participate in responding to a set of questions relating to the role of culture and academics. The interview is expected to take up 15 minutes of your time. There will be a follow up interview for elaboration if needed. Furthermore, you are under no obligation to continue with this interview, thus you may terminate the interview at any given time.

Moreover, I have included a consent form detailing the questions and the method that will be used during the interview. Please note that your name will not be used in the findings or in my project.

I sincerely hope you can participate. Your responses are valuable to this project. I will call you within two days to set up an interview time with you. Thank you for your attention on this matter.

Sincerely,

Patricia K. Pedrus

Instructor, College of Micronesia-FSM

## Appendix C2

### Consent to Participate in Research Study

The purpose of this research is to gather information relating to bridging the gap between culture and academics at the College level. The focus of this study is to examine and analyze the roles of culture and academics and propose a set of guidelines to be utilized by the teacher in the classroom. The method used for this case study includes document reviews, observations, and interviews. Thus, as the respondent, you will be given a list of questions to respond to. Your answers will be either tape-recorded or written down which may be tape-recorded or written by the researcher. Before your responses are considered to be included in the thesis report, you will be given the opportunity to review and edit if you so choose to do so. The information that you provide the researcher will be kept confidential and your name will not appear in the paper unless there is importance in identifying your title. Again, participation in this interview process is optional. Finally, this is the only consent form that the researcher has used for this study.

I, the undersigned, understand the above explanation and give consent to my voluntary participation in the research.

Signature of respondent: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Printed Name and Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

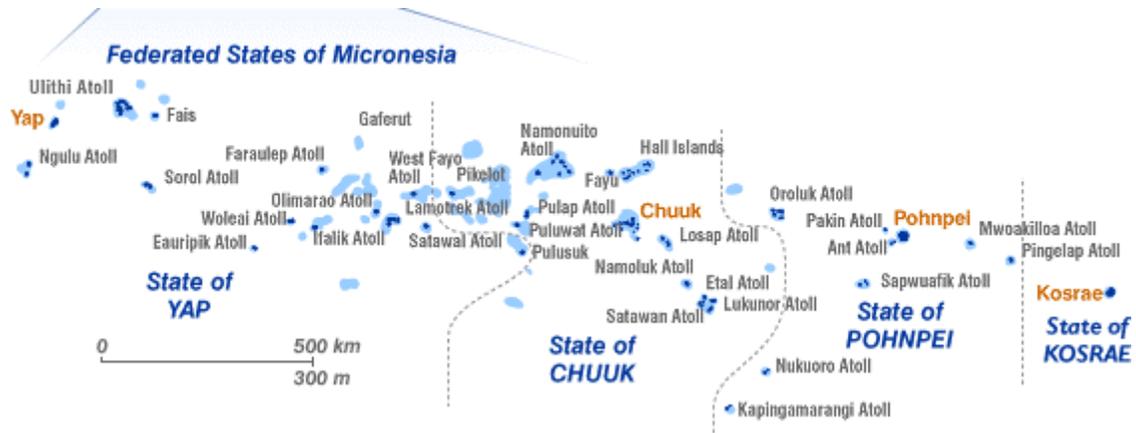
Contact: Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please use the enclosed stamped envelope to mail to: Patricia K. Pedrus, P.O. Box 1198

Kolonia, Pohnpei, 96941. An email version for immediate notification may also be sent to [patti@comfsm.fm](mailto:patti@comfsm.fm). Thank you for your assistance.

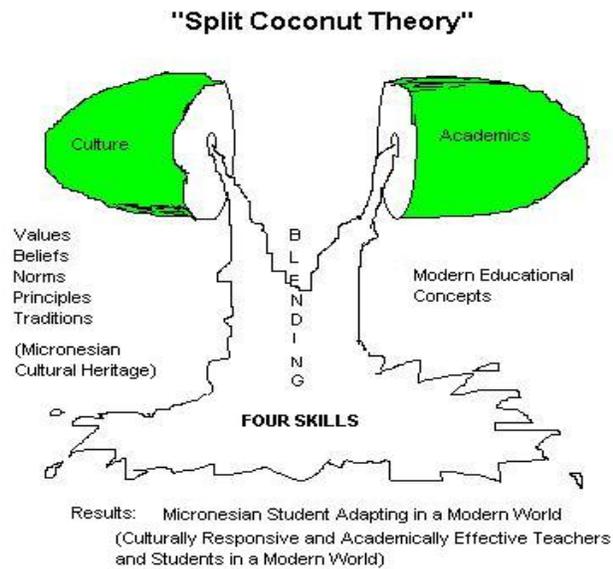
## Appendix D1

Map of the Federated States of Micronesia-FSM



Taken from <http://www.visit-fsm.org>

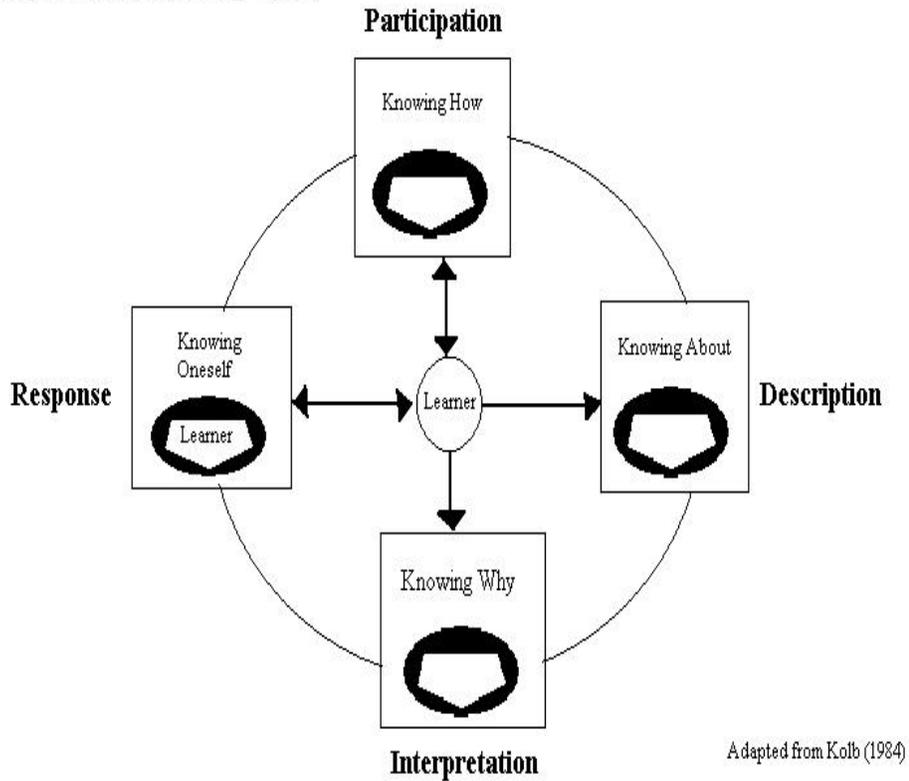
## Appendix D2



*Split Coconut Theory. © Peter K. Pedrus 2004*

## Appendix E

### The Experiential Learning Cycle



*Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle: Taken from Teaching Culture: Perspectives in Practice, Patrick Moran, 2001.*

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