

WAY FINDING: ENVISIONING A CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE  
EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM FOR CHUUK STATE, FEDERATED  
STATES OF MICRONESIA

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## **ABSTRACT**

This qualitative study employed Grounded Theory to identify core cultural themes that may serve to undergird an educational reform movement in Chuuk State. Guiding the research were three questions: (1) How do Chuukese educational stakeholders evaluate their experiences with Chuukese education? (2) What do Chuukese educational stakeholders consider to be central Chuukese values, practices and knowledge that could guide education in Chuuk? (3) How might incorporation of Chuukese values, practices and knowledge inform educational practice in Chuuk? Research participants included six males and five females, 29 to 83 years old whose geographic, gender, educational levels, and social roles (e.g., education leaders, government officials, church leaders, traditional cultural leaders, parents and students) were representative of the Chuukese people. Participants lived in Hawaii, but spoke Chuukese and most graduated from schools in Chuuk.

Methods included individual interviews followed by a focus group discussion to verify and validate accuracy of numerous themes emerging from individual interviews. The focus group allowed further categorization into three major themes: individual learner, learning environment, and school system. From the focus group discussions and the major themes an over-arching theory emerged. *Fairo* is Chuukese sacred knowledge that encompasses all other themes in guiding how a person carries her/himself. It is the overarching theme, a theory that this research suggests may guide school reforms in Chuuk.

Fairo as the theory emerged in this study is considered to be the foundation of learning every Chuukese must possess. The study inspires an urgent call to Chuukese people to engage in a national dialogue on educational reform, to document Chuukese culture, and to teach our values, knowledge and practices in our schools

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## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

*E mweir ee,  
E mweir e ruu,  
E mweir e lengaa,  
E lis pwe ii,  
E lis pwe sasaaa.*

*Eee...  
Uuu...  
Aaa...  
Iii...  
Wiiiiuuuu.*

This is a Chuukese chant that often echoes along the shore as young and old men haul big sailing canoes out into the sea and back on shore. In the 1960s I often heard this chant as a young girl growing up on Losap, my island in the Mortlocks Region, Chuuk State, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). A well-known elder, a chanter by the name of Mokis Amumu called out the lyrics on the left side and the haulers responded with the lyrics on the right. This allowed the haulers to attentively listen and follow the chanter in order to move the canoe easily. It sets the tone and direction of my proposed journey.

The educational system in Chuuk is in great difficulty (Hezel, 2001; Leger, 2009). There is widespread consensus that it requires radical restructuring and infusion of indigenous values. This undertaking is a “challenging” journey that respects and recognizes the essential role of people “working together” to achieve monumental tasks. Working individually the journey will surely fail. Working as a village it may succeed. This is my quest: to bring together the divergent yet representative voices of the Chuuk State Community in a quest to envision a culturally responsive educational system for our island people.

A well-known Chuukese proverb, “*Aramas chok Angang*” (The task can only be accomplished because of the people) expresses the organizing principle of my research.

It is actualized through naturalistic and constructivist methods of inquiry anchored in indigenous values, knowledge, proverbs and stories to emphasize the importance of personally held meanings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These were expressed and shared through a series of individual interviews and focus group giving voice to indigenous stakeholders in the Chuukese community.

I employ the phrase “Way Finding” to describe a culturally congruent process to bring Chuukese people together to envision a responsive educational system for Chuuk. This dissertation generates both a framework for educational reform in Chuuk state; and validates a process for collective reflection and problem-solving to enable Chuukese voices to contribute to education.

The topic of this dissertation arises from my own personal educational history including my lifelong career as both student and teacher. I have seen first-hand as a lifelong learner, parent, teacher, and educational change agent that comprehensive educational restructuring is essential for my island community. The public education system as it currently operates is in disarray. The failure rates of children and youth in the public schools of Chuuk are so embarrassing that top officials are calling out for national and international assistance (Levin, 2010). There has been an exodus of people from our islands seeking better lives in the United States. We left for reasons of health, employment and education (Heine, 2002). I understand this, first-hand, as my own family is a part of this exodus. Many of us live in Hawai'i. We are loyal to our culture and our nation, but we realize there is no going back until fundamental structural reforms are in place. I hope that through this dissertation research process, I can focus a rich set



of Chuukese voices in the direction of educational reform. That is my journey, “*Aramas chok Angang*.”

It is my sincere vision that what emerges from this research is a seed for change in which indigenous values inform a pedagogy of education for Chuukese children – raising and preparing them to be respectful, loyal and rooted in their Chuukese culture, while also preparing them “to become responsible 21<sup>st</sup> century global citizens” (Kahakalau, 2002, p. 5).

### **Statement of the Problem**

“It is no secret that the Chuuk State School System is in dire need of substantial change.” (Leger, 2009, p. 1)

Soaring illiteracy and dropout rates, widespread public school vandalism, a dearth of textbooks and supplies, uncertified teachers, disconnections between schools and communities all serve to illustrate the magnitude of the crisis (Hezel, 2000, 2001; Leger, 2009). Simply put, the public schools of Chuuk are not seen as connected with island communities. They are perceived, instead, as government agencies imposing standards and practices that are foreign to village life. The mismatch between culture and public education in Chuuk is stark.

The reasons for this are many, both historical and contemporary. In recent centuries Chuukese people have been exposed to four foreign educational models: Spanish, German, Japanese and now American. It is no wonder they have experienced a legacy of confusion. Now, in recent years, with pressures of over-population, environmental decay, increasing unemployment, rising food costs, and the soaring health crisis of diabetes and high blood pressure, the people have been hit by a perfect storm of

destructive change. The exodus of people from the islands was staggering, with far-reaching implications for Guam, Hawai'i and even various states on the mainland United States.

There are few written reports that revealed the reality of how Chuukese children performed within the Chuuk State School System. One that was reported by Hezel (2001), which showed how Chuukese students scored both on an FSM National Standardized Test (NST) and an entrance test to the College of Micronesia- FSM (COM- FSM). Findings presented in Tables 1 revealed that Chuukese students scored at the bottom of the nation in Language Arts compared to the other sister states, Yap, Pohnpei, and Kosrae.

**Table 1.1. FSM National Standardized Test in Language Arts**

NST Language Arts (1995-1997) (Average Score by Percentage)				
Grade	Yap	Pohnpei	Kosrae	Chuuk
6 <sup>th</sup>	50	53	58	34*
8 <sup>th</sup>	53	60	63	---
10 <sup>th</sup>	63	64	74	53*

*Note.* Average score by percentage. (\* indicates results based on 1995 test only)

It is with no surprise that the devastating results in language arts would be similar across different subject areas. Without any doubt, poor skills and abilities in language arts also affected students' performance in social studies, in science, as well as in mathematics.

Results from Table 2 indicated that mathematical abilities of Chuukese students at both elementary and high schools are far lower compared to those of the other three sister

states in FSM. Students in public high schools in Chuuk were performing at the 29 percentile while students from other states were performing in the 30s and 40s.

**Table 1.2. FSM National Standardized Test in Mathematics**

NST Mathematics (1995-1997) (Average Score by Percentage)				
Grade	Yap	Pohnpei	Kosrae	Chuuk
6 <sup>th</sup>	35	41	39	31*
8 <sup>th</sup>	46	55	54	---
10 <sup>th</sup>	38	44	45	29*

*Note.* Average score by percentage. (\* indicates results based on 1995 test only)

Table 3 shows Chuuk High School had the lowest pass rate on the COM-FSM entrance examinations from 1994-2000.

**Table 1.3. FSM Public High school: Pass Rate on COM-FSM Entrance Test**

FSM Public High School Pass Rate on COM-FSM Entrance Test (1994-2000) (Percentage of Students Passing)								
School	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	Ave.
PICS/BOHS- PNI	38	27	37	44	65	65	72	50
Kosrae HS	35	40	22	38	40	75	73	46
Yap HS	29	44	25	24	47	59	60	41
Yap Outer Island	35	26	11	19	27	39	39	28
Chuuk HS	8	3	1	2	5	8	11	5

The critical educational problems affecting Chuukese students were recognized by the governor of the Chuuk State. On October 2009 Governor Wesley Simina's letter to Honorable Mori, President of the Federated States of Micronesia requested assistance:

I am happy to formally request the FSM National government's assistance in the request for and fielding of a technical assistance from the Asian Development Bank or any other relevant international or foreign donor regarding a fundamental review and assessment of the education system in Chuuk State School System (pg.1)

In response to the above request, Levin (2010) conducted an in-depth study of the Chuukese educational system and concluded with the following:

It is widely acknowledged that the quality of education in Chuuk is unacceptably poor and that this carries enormous costs to both Chuuk State and to the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). Despite over a decade of efforts to improve the system (including three major strategic plans in 2001, 2005, and 2007; a series of audits; creation of the Compact Funds Control Commission (CFFC); various ad hoc reviews, substantial investment in training and capacity-building; and, a proposal for a new organization structure for the Chuuk State Department of Education (CDOE), there is little or no evidence of substantive progress as well as a general consensus that standards have continued to decline (p.7).

This dissertation was in progress even before this discouraging report came out, but it is in fact a great confirming piece of information. As Levin described, many interventions have been explored in recent years. All were to no avail. It was my intention to bring a different methodology and voice to this crisis. Using an interview methodology, supplemented with focus group, it was my intention to identify key Chuukese cultural values along with strategies to imbue these values into educational reform.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this study is (1) to identify Chuukese cultural values, traditional knowledge and practices appropriate to frame a national dialogue on educational restructuring and transformation for Chuuk State, and (2) to illustrate ways that research findings can inform pedagogical practice. My intention is to identify core cultural “themes” that may serve to undergird an educational reform movement for my Chuuk State.

## **Research Questions**

The three following questions will be used as guide to investigate as well as inform the course of this study:

1. How do Chuukese educational stakeholders evaluate their experiences with Chuukese education?
2. What do Chuukese educational stakeholders consider to be central Chuukese values, practices and knowledge that could guide education in Chuuk?
3. How might incorporation of Chuukese values, practices, and knowledge inform educational practice in Chuuk?

## **Definitions of Terms**

**Aramas chok Angang:** A proverb that is well-known among the Chuukese people that served to remind us that "people must work together to accomplish great tasks." Chuukese culture is collectivist in nature (in contrast with western "individualism"). It is hoped that both the "interviews" collective responses and "focus group" methodology will be compatible with this collectivist value.

**Chuuk State:** One of four states in the Federated States of Micronesia (abbreviated FSM). Chuuk encompasses five geo-political regions, including Northern Nomeneas, Southern Nomeneas, Faichuk, the Mortlocks and the Northwest. Chuukese people are united by a shared language that includes many dialects. The Chuukese island group includes more than 290 islands (inhabited and uninhabited).

**Weno:** One of the high islands in Chuuk which is the center of Chuuk State, the Federated States of Micronesia.

**Stakeholders:** For this study, interview individuals and focus group participants were selected to include traditional and religious leaders, government officials, health and

education professionals, parents and students. Priority was given to gender equity and respect across the age span (elderly to youth).

**Focus Group:** Focus groups and individual interviews were the two most commonly employed data gathering techniques in qualitative research. Each presented unique advantages and disadvantages. Focus groups may be recommended when the interaction of respondents may stimulate richer responding, especially during the early “creative” stages of program development (Debus, 1986, p. 16).

**Indigenous People:** “Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing on those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal system” (Cobo, 1986, p.1)

**Proverb:** A proverb is a “short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorizable form and which is handed down from generation to generation.” (Mieder, 1993, p. 24)

**Value:** “Cultural values represent the implicitly or explicitly shared abstract ideas about what is good, right, and desirable in a society. These cultural values (e.g. freedom, prosperity, security) are the bases for the specific norms that tell people what is appropriate in various situations. The ways that societal institutions (e.g. the family,

education, economic, political, religious systems) function, their goals and their modes of operation, express cultural value priorities.” (Mieder, 1993, p. 24-25).

**Matrilineal:** Matrilineal describes a society where women play significant roles in the culture. In Chuuk, the Federated States of Micronesia is a matrilineal culture. It is where women hold the rights of lands and carry the clan in their lineage. My mother comes from the clan of “Masano.” All her siblings are also considered Masano. All female generations in this line cannot intermarry. (Bernard, Personal Communication, December, 2009).

**Tirow:** *Tirow* as described by Goodenough (2002) are “honorific greeting, which involved stooping, literally bending, crouching or even crawling.” (p.306) It is a gesture to show respect when asking for permission.

**Fairo:** *Fairo* comes from two words *fai* (under) and *ro* (bow). *Fairo* can be best described as a stage of lowering your own self to give and show respect and loyalty to something or someone. It is a body of teaching of precious communication created by ancestors who were wise and knowledgeable in order to bring and strengthen peace and harmony among the people of Chuuk. ***Fairo*** (under brow or under arc of heaven) people are assembled under the aegis of the arc of heaven and also under the aegis of the *Fairo*.

## CHAPTER 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature review that follows includes (a) a geographical description of Chuuk, including setting, culture and languages; (b) an overview of the history of Chuuk from an indigenous perspective; (c) a history of Chuukese education during pre and postcolonial eras; (d) indigenous education models from Hawaii, Aotearoa and Western Samoa; and (e) a discussion of “educational reform” from a Chuukese perspective.

### Geographical Description, Setting, Culture and Language

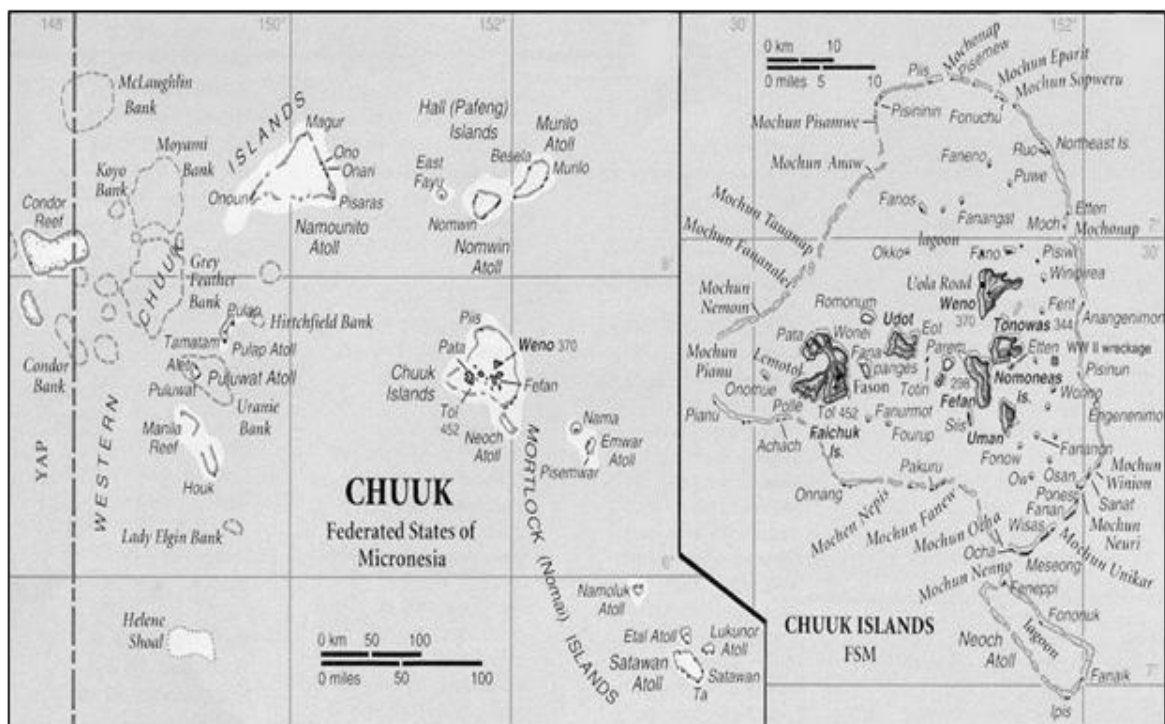


Figure 2.1. Map of Chuuk, FSM, Chuuk State Department of Education Collection, 2007

Chuuk (formerly called Truk) is an indigenous word that means “mountain.” It is located about 960 kilometers southeast of Guam. Chuuk refers to many different islands,



including both atolls and high islands, organized into five political regions. Each has its own distinct name, but collectively referred to as Chuuk. The Northern Namoneas, Southern Namoneas and Faichuk are mostly high islands, and are located within the Chuuk Lagoon. Beyond the lagoon are the outer islands – two groups of atolls called the Mortlocks and Northwest (Goodenough, 2002).

The different regions share similar traditions. They share a matrilineal culture where children follow the lineage of their mother. It is lineage or clan that enables the Chuukese people to recognize their kinship. Whatever clan the mother belongs to is also what the children follow. Within each clan there are many smaller groups of extended families. Some may live on the same island and some on other islands. This shows how people travel from islands to islands. Lands of each extended family pass through the female lineage. The men care for the land, but the land rights are in the hands of the eldest female in each extended family within each clan.

The language spoken by the people is Chuukese language. Each island within each region has its distinct dialects thus sometimes people from different regions have difficulty understanding each other. The dialects spoken in the outer regions are difficult for the regions within the lagoon to understand. The lagoon dialect is considered the dominant, therefore, in many cases the people in the outer islands learn to speak the dialects spoken by the lagoon people.

### **Overview History of Chuuk from Indigenous Perspective**

Chuuk is unique in its own history, for it is an island nation made up of many different islands; atolls and volcanic islands. Traditionally, each island has its own stories and histories of how it was first settled. Part of this history covers Chuuk as a

whole, but mostly about Weno, the capital of Chuuk State is elaborated for its historical aspects.

First, before any sacred knowledge about Chuuk can be publicly shared, it is appropriate to acknowledge the Chuukese people. This is one way to show respect to our elders and leaders. It is also one way to ask for their blessings. I begin with all *samol*, (traditional chiefs), *itang*, (political priests), elders, youth and young children. It is including *niekewe achengicheng fefin*, (knowledge and wisdom keepers, the Chuukese women). “*Tirow me fairo, fiti ai enletin sufon.*” *Tirow and Fairo* as described by Goodenough (2002) are “honorific greeting, which involved stooping, literally bending, crouching or even crawling.” It is a gesture to show respect when asking for permission.

In this respect, I humbly asked all aforementioned individuals *ika ouse kan mochen oupwe mwut ngeni ei feiochun ai upwe makkei ekkoch porousen fonuwach, Chuuk. Ren an epwe anisi fatefateochun ekkoch porous auchea fan itan ei research.* (To please allow me to share some sacred knowledge about our culture that is greatly needed for clarity of this section and other parts of this research).

### **History of Chuuk from an Indigenous Perspective**

Chuuk is an oral tradition society where *tuttunap* (story telling) is told and passed down from generations to generations. There are several stories about the first people in Chuuk. One was told in the story of *Enunap* and *Lukeileng*. *Enunap* (the highest god) and *Lukeileng* (center of the sky) son of *Enulap* dwelled in the middle of the sky. *Inot*, his sister came to earth and bore a girl who received the name *Lifonu* (Earthly Woman). Thus, it was beginning of the clan Sor. From her eye came another girl from whom the Masale clan derived its descent. From a swelling on *Lifonu*’s body sprang a third girl,

whose descendants made up the *Luk* clan (body or belly). Supported by an opening chant; “*Mei newotiw, me ren Enunap, me won i nang*” (Acknowledging the creation by *Enunap* (the highest god) from above. Similar story is also found in the “History of Chuuk.” (Bolig, 1927)

Another story is about *anu aramas* (half ghost people). In the beginning there were these *anu aramas* who lived on *Weno*. One day a sailing boat from *Achau*, traditional name for *Kosrae* came to Chuuk and landed in the harbor of *Wichap*, one of the villages on *Weno*. The name of the harbor is *Pworukunong* (dancing with happiness) signifies how the people on the boat felt when they safely arrived in the harbor. There were men and one woman on this boat. The name of this woman is *Neupfonu*. *Neupfonu* is a Chuukese term which refers to bearer of land. It is from this woman who gave birth to six boys and six girls. It was through this woman that started the human race on *Weno* and spread to other islands in Chuuk State.

The story continues telling that one day these children went bathing in a pond called *Neutumas* (eyes splashing). As they splashed each other’s eyes with water the girls became pregnant. So, today the water is named after this incident; *Neutumas*, splashing each other’s eyes with water. This was how people started spreading out on *Weno* as well as the rest of the islands in Chuuk. *Weno* is not only the central city of Chuuk, but traditionally it was the bearer of people, original homeland of the Chuukese people. Similar account was told by Honorable Mayor Mailo in his speech during the first Truk High School Graduation Ceremony. This story is being elaborated in a Chant “*Fetanin Weno, Sefanin Weno*” a traditional chant which depicts how people left *Weno* and came back to *Weno*. Similar account is quoted by (Bautista, 2005).

Another Chuukese oral story tells that Chuukese people first came from Achaw, a Chuukese traditional name for Kosrae. Kosrae is one of the four states in the Federated States of Micronesia. In a similar account written by Bolig (1927) there was a woman *Nienkachaw* sister of a famous navigator, *Soukachaw*. She fled *Achaw* and went to Yap where she married a famous navigator from Yap. His name was *Souyap*. She had two sons and when these sons grew up they learned the secret of navigation from their father. Later the sons left with their mother and went back to *Achaw* where they met their uncle, *Soukachaw*. When *Soukachaw* learned about the expertise of his nephews, together with his family they decided to sail to Chuuk.

Another oral Chuukese story told that when more people spread on Weno, some moved on to the neighboring islands namely Fefan. Sopwunipi Clan was known to be the clan of the first people in Chuuk. More people of this clan now live on Fefan. This piece of information was also supported by Goodenough (2002). The earliest known human settlement in Chuuk was recorded from sites on Weno and Fefan Islands. The findings were dated to the first and second centuries. Pottery was present in these early sites.

### **Indigenous Education in Chuuk during Pre-Colonial Period**

To understand the process and development of education in Chuuk, it is helpful to first learn something about the Chuukese indigenous knowledge system as it was practiced during the pre-contact period.

The Chuukese culture was characterized by oral traditions in which knowledge was passed down from generation to generation by word of mouth. There were no written materials about Chuuk by native Chuukese during the pre-contact period. The information described in this section derived from materials written by a few foreign

anthropologists and missionaries who came to Chuuk in the early 1900s to the present, including Gladwin (1916-1954, 1970), Bollig (1927), Kramer (1932), Mahony (1958), LeBar (1964), Alkire (1977), Marshall (1977), Severance (1976), Hezel (1974, 1975) and Goodenough (1947-1965, 2002). These foreign observers witnessed and described small pieces of Chuukese knowledge and ways of knowing that were practiced among the native people. As provoked by what they had witnessed, their writings addressed such themes as the religion, the land and the people (including ethnographies). It should be noted that their interpretation of practices and events were clouded by the fact that they were all outsiders.

### **Religion**

Religion can be best described as *nuukuw* (beliefs) in the Chuukese culture. The Chuukese people believe in many different gods; god of the sea, god of the skies, god of land and other gods. All activities, for example, fishing, sailing, harvesting, feasting, were associated with the worshiping and pleasing to the gods.

Bollig (1927) used the term “religion” when referring to the traditional beliefs and practices of the Chuukese people. He described the native religion as “cosmology, mythology, spirits and gods; and relations of spirits to man and relation of man to spirits” (p. 88). Each of these beliefs and practices were imbued with *anu* (spirit) because the indigenous people believed that living things and sacred non-living things possessed spirits. It was also believed that gods were associated with skills. *Iotek* (Prayers) and *pinin* (abounded) – requiring the obedience both of *sou* (masters) and companions, his followers. This means that in the case of canoe carving, for example, the master carver was the *soufalafal*. When he prepares to carve a canoe, he and his companions prayed to

*Onulap* (the highest of the gods) and to *Semenkaror* (the god of Wisdom). The intention was to ask the gods for guidance and to pay their respect. Bananas, coconuts and roasted fish were hung in the canoe house. To be successful, the *soufalafal* (carver) and his companions complied with the *pinin*: there were certain foods that they were prohibited from eating; they physically isolated themselves from family; and they consumed *safeian asaram* (medicine) as protection from danger and injury (Bollig, 1927; Kramer, 1932; Goodenough, 2002).

*Penu* (navigation) is the same word for the navigator himself. He provides guidance and protection on the sea, including *Inenikes* (the goddess of favorable winds), *Enuunuwey* (the god of voyaging), and *Nichuchumataw* (yet another sea goddess). The navigator relies on his own mental map of the ocean (*los*). Instead of using a compass, the *penu* reads the star constellations. Each island has its constellation. Additionally, fish, waves, birds, clouds and currents provide directional information. Sailing alongside the *penu* is an accompanying expert (*soupwenin waa*) who knows how to right the canoe should it be capsized in a storm. It is due to this great body of knowledge and skill, with the approval of the gods and goddesses, that the navigator and his sailing companions are successful (Bollig, 1927; Gladwin, 1916, 1970; Goodenough, 1951, 2002).

The people of highest chiefly rank were the political priests (*itang*). These people spoke a unique language, and they alone knew the old legends and stories, the genealogies, and settlement histories of the islands. They were versed in medicine and sorcery (Bollig, 1927). Goodenough (2002) described their importance as follows:

They are the most prestigious and awesome members of Chuukese society. Their knowledge gave legitimacy to chiefs and provided a system of sanctions upholding the political and social order. They were the orators at assemblies, where they expounded on public morals, preaching

on the proper way for people to behave to one another and to their chiefs. In chants they referred to themselves as *mwaanesor* (effecting men), thus defining themselves as living counterparts of ‘effecting spirits’ (*enuusor*) (p. 290).

In his book, *Under Heaven’s Brow*, Goodenough (2002) quoted Efot, a well-respected traditional chief on Romanumw, who described *itang* as:

They are special people who are knowledgeable in medicine to safeguard the land and the people. They dealt with various spells and recipes to cure illness. They have specific cryptic ways of talking. Their special skills include rhetorical arts, lore of the land including history and lore relating to the creation or beginning of the world (p. 291).

When an *itang* was ready to pass on his knowledge to the next generation, it was to the first-born son of his eldest sister. If he should not have a sister, his knowledge (and most likely his title) could be passed on to his son – only under the condition that his son deserved to earn this respect by having been obedient and respectful to his father and his father’s family. A notable example is the late Petrus Mailo, who was recognized as a respectful *itang* and the first Chuukese with the political title of a “Mayor”. Petrus Mailo was a traditional chief who claimed to have gotten his knowledge from his father (Bollig, 1927; Goodenough and Skoggard, 1999; Mailo, 1964).

## **Land**

Goodenough (1964) translated a speech given by an *Itang* Mailo during the first high school graduation in Chuuk . Part of Mailo’s speech noted the importance of land:

Every person must know his land. We should know where we were born, for that is our land. We should know the name of that land, the nature of the soil, what direction the island face and our land should be kept in our heart. Not just to know the name of the land, but also know the contents

of the land, its soil, and what the soil is. Understand also the things in the soil, what the things in the soil are and the trees that we plant. Understand from what among the things in the soil we get the strength of our bodies, the fruits of the trees we should cultivate. (p. 2)

Goodenough (2002) added that the Chuukese people have always had a very strong attachment to their land. Young children were taken around by their fathers and mother's brothers and were taught the names and boundaries of the lineage lands and something of the traditions associated with them. Each piece of land had a separate name. Many of the names were descriptive of the location, but others were named to commemorate events in the lineage history.

Hezel (2002) after living in Chuuk for a long time learned a very important proverb regarding land. "Land is our strength, our life and our hope for the future translated from a Chuukese Proverb." Similar to the sacred knowledge described above, land also has supernatural ties, as it is considered to be the home of local gods and ancestor spirits. (Fischer, 1950)

Chuuk is a matrilineal society where clan, land and special knowledge pass on to the next generation through the mother's lineage. For example, if there is a family of ten children, the land that is in the line of the mother is understood to belong to all of the children. Unlike the western concept of land "ownership," however, Chuukese land is not "owned" by any individual. It is intended for the use of the entire family in perpetuity.

The eldest son is responsible to insure that land is well taken care of and that its produce is shared fairly among the family. The younger brothers are expected to do the



manual labor. The eldest sister holds the right of ownership. This means that the land continues passing through the line of the sisters and it is their children who continue maintaining it. There are times when the elder son may want to give land to his children. This cannot be accomplished without consensus among family members, especially the sisters and his relatives on the mother's lineage (Bollig, 1927; Fischer, 1950).

### **People**

*“Angang chok aramas, Aramas chok angang”* (This proverb can be best translated as---it is with people that the task is done. It is with people that there is life. Without people, there is no life.)

(N. Bernard, personal communication, January 12, 2009)

These traditional Chuukese proverbs clearly describe the value that Chuukese placed on people. After studying the women of Chuuk for three years, Fischer (1949) learned that almost all Chuukese women wanted to have children – and in most cases as many children as possible. It was children that represented wealth for the family: they did family chores; they brought joy in the family and brought life in the family; they cared for the parents when they got old.

Severance (1976) elaborated on the social structure of the people on Losap and Pis, two atolls in the upper Mortlocks, which had many social ties to the other islands in Chuuk. He described three major *ainang* (clans) on these islands. These were “the largest social unit, a non-localized matrilineal clan, *ainang*, that is made up of all persons who can trace stipulated descent through females to apical ancestress.” (Severance, 1976, p. 36)

Each island had the traditional *samolen fonu* (chief of the whole island) who oversaw the peace and welfare of all the people. It is to this *samol* that all clans provided

the first and best produce during harvest time, including breadfruit and taro. Then there were also *samol* for each *ainang* (clan) and additional *samol* for the *eterenges* (extended family). These leaders worked together to serve the larger good of the community (Severance, 1976).

The concept of “people” is at the very core of Chuukese culture. There are no terms for family, uncle, aunt, cousin, grandparents or great grandparents. “Father” refers both to the biological father and the men who are in both the father’s and mother’s lineages. The same applies to the words “mother,” “brother” and “sister.” This illustrates the extraordinarily close ties among the people of the clan.

### **Transmission of Knowledge: Formal and informal Education**

Within the Chuukese culture, passing on knowledge - especially the sacred knowledge – was formalized and rule bound. Goodenough (2002), for example, wrote, “It could be dangerous for political priests, masters of known divination, and other ritual specialists to reveal the specifics of their knowledge to unauthorized persons.” (p. xvii)

Learning the sacred knowledge of the *itang*, *penu*, and *soufanafan*, for example, required a formal means of education. Formal education in the indigenous Chuukese context can be understood as instruction/apprenticeship provided by an “expert” to teach sacred knowledge to chosen learners. At the same time “formal education” refers to the observance of sacred – including prayers and offerings to the gods and spirits. The means of instruction includes stories that are listened to and memorized (often in rote fashion); followed by hands-on, guided practice (Bollig, 1927; Goodenough, 2002).

There was also “informal education.” This refers to the type of learning all children received to become contributing members to the life of the immediate and

extended family and clan. Every child was expected to have a part in carrying out chores at home. Girls usually followed their mothers learning the kinds of chores that were traditionally for women: cooking, cleaning, weaving, farming, fishing and caring for children and family members. The boys were taught by their fathers to farm and cook for large feasts. They also learn to fish and build canoes. Children were expected to shadow their parents; observe and imitate. When children were at play, they often practiced the skills to which they had been exposed. Informal learning took place every day. It was expected that children were to apply their skills as soon as possible to contribute to family life (Bollig, 1927; Goodenough 2002).

### **Chuuk during Post-Colonial Period**

#### **German and Spanish Era**

Although Chuuk (then called “Truk”) was initially visited by Alvaro Saavedra 1528 and by Alonso de Arellano and Lopez Martin in 1565, it was not widely known in European circles until Dublon visited the islands in 1814 and indicated the group of islands on his maps. Soon thereafter, in 1824 French and Russian explorers mapped the area. Dumont d’Urville sailed into the lagoon in 1838 (Kramer, 1932; LeBar, 1964). Although Spain was credited as the first colonial power in Micronesia, it did not exert much influence in Chuuk.

The whaling era (1830-1860) inaugurated extended and sustained foreign contacts especially with the development of the copra trade. The Germans established a trading office and encouraged the Chuukese people to cultivate coconut plantations for the production of copra. Kubary was a German citizen who resided in Truk during 1878-1879. He wrote about his experience in Truk and his publication helped awaken interest

in the area (LeBar, 1964; Hezel, 1974). The first Christian mission station was established in 1879 on the island of Weno. The American Board of Commissioners sponsored the ministry for Foreign Missions.

Germany purchased the Caroline Islands in 1899, following Spain's defeat in the Spanish American War. In 1907, German missionaries built mission schools on various Chuukese islands, including Tonoas, Udot and Tol within the Chuuk Lagoon. From 1912-1914 a Catholic Mission ran by German members of the Capuchin Order established their schools (Goodenough, 2002; Young 1997).

This "new" religion of Christianity spread rapidly across the islands. It was widely adopted including, of course, the worship of a new and different God. Many of the traditional beliefs and practices were prohibited – including the worship of traditional gods; the use of local medicines; the practices of sorcery, magic and divination; even traditional dress. "Christianization" of the natives included the introduction of western clothing, metals, medicines, guns and literacy.

Both the Spanish and German missionaries focused their religious education on adults, intending for them to read the Bible and spread the gospel – what Hezel (1985) called "fitting young men for teaching and preaching the gospel" (p. 3). The missionaries soon came to realize the value of teaching the Chuukese to read and write in a written vernacular so they could read and understand the Bible. So the literacy in Chuukese language was promoted in the newly formed church schools. This era was soon ended. Then, Japan took over the islands after World War I.

## **Japanese Era**

Beginning in 1914 under the League of Nation Supervision, Japan took over the islands in Micronesia. The Japanese Mandate emphasized the importance of education. Japan valued Christian missions for their civilizing influence on the islanders but chose to focus their schooling system on children. It was the Japanese intention that the native children would grow up able to speak, read and write in the Japanese language. The purpose of the Japanese education system, as quoted by Hezel (1985) from an official Japanese ordinance, was “the bestowal on children of moral education as well as of such knowledge and capabilities as were indispensable to the advancement and improvement of lives” (p. 5). Japanese education meant to instill loyalty among the Chuukese to the Japanese Emperor, while preparing economically productive members of the Empire. Hezel (1985) noted what one Micronesian student, who attended the schools said:

Vernacular was completely eliminated from the curriculum. Students were punished if they spoke their native tongue. Most subjects were taught by rote memorizing. Group reading was a common way of teaching reading. Corporal punishment was the usual way of discipline and school children were slapped or hit on the head with the fist or bamboo if they misbehaved (p. 16).

The Japanese era was remarkable for its intense economic development and colonization (Peacock, 1990). Initially, the Japanese opened six public schools in 1915. The number grew to 17 schools by 1922, serving 2,500 students. By 1937 there were 24 schools with more than 3,000. It was estimated that more than fifty percent of the school-age population attended school by the middle 1930. Although the schools only included five grades, the typical graduates were able to converse, read and write in the Japanese

language. In all, there were nearly 9,000 Micronesians who finished the first three years of schooling, with about 3,500 of them also completing the additional two years (Hezel, 1985). The Japanese education system was strict, disciplined and memorization-centered.

### **American Administration**

After World War II and the fall of Japan, the United States of America became the administrator of what was then called the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI). The TTPI was a United Nations entity that included Palau, Yap, Saipan, Truk, Ponape and the Marshall Islands. The U.S. Navy was authorized to be the initial administrative agency for the Trust Territory (TTPI). Over the life of the TTPI, the administrative headquarters were first situated in Hawaii, then Guam, and finally Saipan (Hezel, 1989; Peacock, 1990; Goodenough, 2002).

From its inception, the U.S. Navy determined that the Micronesian as well as Chuukese school system (as created by the Japanese) should be continued without interruption; but with different curriculum and instruction. The Navy sought assistance from an “Advisory Committee on Education” appointed in Hawai’i. This committee along with Director Mr. Robert Gibson strongly recommended that education in Micronesia should foster island cultures, languages, and ways of living while at the same time preparing islanders to adapt to the modern world (Peacock, 1990).

This committee was quite far reaching in its vision - strongly favoring instruction in the vernacular languages in the early grades, with English as a “supplementary” language. This value of “home language” and “home culture” instruction continued even after the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI) was replaced by the U.S. Department of the Interior, under the direction of Robert Gibson. Mr. Gibson was the

first civilian to become Director of Education for the TTPI. His philosophy was rooted in the Progressive Education Movement of John Dewey in which schools should reflect the life of their society - bridging the gap between school and community through curricula that begins with the students' familiar experience. Gibson encouraged an island-centered approach designed to promote a self-sufficient Micronesia.

In 1951, Gibson's philosophy of education in Micronesia was strengthened by the results of the "Management Survey of the Government of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands" which recommended that (a) reading materials should be developed in the vernacular languages; (b) island cultures deserve respect; (c) education should fit the island's needs; (d) emphasis should be given to professional teacher training, (e) language policy and secondary and higher education. In the same respect creation of broad goals were set for the schools to follow.

Under Gibson's leadership, despite difficulties of funding and far distances, many significant improvements were evidenced throughout the schools of Micronesia. A few selected students from each of the districts; Marshall, Ponape, Truk, Yap, Palau and Saipan continued their education in the Pacific Teacher Training School (PITTS).

Gibson's philosophy and the recommendations of his Advisory Council, however, came into conflict with President Kennedy's "Call for Accelerated Development for Micronesia." With these conflicts Gibson resigned – marking a changing view of role and place of education in the territories (Peacock, 1990; Hezel, 2000; Hezel, 2001). During this Gibson administration, elementary schools started from first to sixth grade. Only students who passed the California Achievement Test could move in the center to attend the only intermediate high school. Now elementary schools start from first to

eighth grades. Students who passed the Junior High School Examination Test (JHET) move on to the junior high schools in their respective region. Junior High Schools begin from ninth to tenth grades.

Under the Kennedy administration there was an influx of funding to construct new school buildings and to enable American “contract teachers” and Peace Corps volunteers to work in Micronesian communities. By the 1970’s, the TTPI became eligible for new federal grant funding which brought in new monies for Bilingual/Bicultural Programs. The pendulum was swinging again – this time favoring the values of bilingual education, including the teaching of home culture and language. Resources were also made available to develop vernacular language teaching materials (Peacock, 1999; Hezel, 2001). This era marked the beginning of Micronesian students’ enrollment in American colleges and universities. Many scholarships and grants became available.

This was the same time when the Congress of Micronesia accelerated its momentum toward political sovereignty for the trust islands, including the creation of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau. In 1987 the Compact of Free Association went into effect, beginning with a 15 year political/economic relationship called “Compact I” (Young, 1997; Hezel, 2001).

### **Self-Sustained Government**

The Compact of Free Association between the Federated States of Micronesia and the United States was signed into law on November 13, 1986. Under Compact I, the first 15-years marked a time in the history of Chuuk (as well as the Federated States of



Micronesia) in which increasing dollars were placed under the control of the state and municipal governments (Hezel, 2001). The Chuuk State Education Department negotiated professional development trainings from many western entities, including Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL), FSM National Education, Truk Organization for Community Action (TOCA), and the U.H. Center on Disability Studies (CDS).

The optimism associated with Compact I for improvements in health, education and welfare proved to be unrealized. Hezel (2005) quoted a representative of the U.S. Department of the Interior's comments describing the disappointing results of the first compact period:

“The first economic assistance package under the Compact of Free Association provided over \$1.5 billion to the FSM since 1986 . . . Most of that \$1.5 billion, over \$890 million, was spent on the day-to-day operation of the FSM State and National governments. No less than \$334 million was spent on the "capital account" for capital improvement projects and economic development . . . The use of Compact funding did not achieve the social gains or as much economic growth as all had expected in 1986. After 17 years of Compact assistance, levels of academic achievement and health care, the effectiveness of government services, the condition of the schools and hospitals, roads and ports, water and sewer, and even electrical services are not what the FSM's founders or any of us present today had hoped” (p.1).

Under the Compact II, conditions have perhaps deteriorated further. Results of a report from the most recent FSM Leadership Conference in 2009 sounded an alarming call for the Chuuk State School System. The discouraging news was quoted as follows by Levin (2010) “The quality of education in Chuuk is unacceptably poor despite over a decade of efforts to improve the system. There is little or no evidence of substantive progress as well as a general consensus that standards have continued to decline” (p.7).

Currently, high numbers of Chuukese citizens are migrating from Chuuk to Guam, Hawai'i and the mainland U.S.A. – evidence that the Chuuk State Government cannot sustain its citizens in terms of employment, medical services and education. Further, the lure of “western culture,” “youth culture” and the U.S. military add to the drain of young people (Hezel, 2001).

### **Chuuk State School System Reform in the 21st Century**

School reform began with Spanish rule and continued through the 21st century. Hezel (2010) described grassroots efforts of school reform. He empowered a group of Chuukese women to clean and maintain school facilities. The women's campaign was aborted because the anticipated results did not come to fruition. A director of a parochial high school conducted a three-week staff development workshop for 30 elementary school principals in 2007. The principals felt confident about their leadership skills and were ready to share a vision of education but according to Hezel, the community was not ready to accept change.

Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL), in cooperation with Chuuk State School System (CSSS), is developing academic language in both Chuukese and English in a Dual Language Arts Program. (PREL, 2012) From September to December 2011, PREL teamed with 12 CSSS specialists and teachers to draft an elementary (K to Grade 8) standards-based curriculum framework for teaching English content with the support of the Chuukese language. Currently, three elementary schools are piloting the framework. The team of PREL and CSSS professionals, known as Community of Practice (CoP), shared the benefits of a dual language program with the communities of the three pilot schools. Institutes were held in the Northwest and Lagoon regions this

past summer to share the Dual Language Arts Program with more teachers in different regions.

### **Indigenous School Models in Hawai'i**

In 1978 the Hawai'i State Constitutional Convention recognized the need to revive the Hawaiian language. It was the same time when Hawai'i State created the Office of Hawaiian Affairs. It was this office that created the Comprehensive Hawaiian Culture Curriculum. This included the opening of Hawaiian Language Immersion schools, Native Hawaiian Chartered Schools and the establishment of a Hawaiian language department at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. In Fall 2006, the University of Hawai'i, Hilo, established a doctoral program in Hawaiian language studies. This became the first doctoral program established for the study of any native language in the United States of America. This was considered by many global scholars to be a “pioneering” revival effort (Bradley, 2006; Heckathorn, 1987; Warschauer, 1997). Additionally, significant culture and language preservation initiatives have come from the Kamehameha Schools, the Bishop Museum and the Polynesian Voyaging Society. All of these initiatives contributed to a positive momentum for preservation, restoration, cultural growth and revitalization.

*Kanu o Ka 'Aina*-Native of the Land from Generations Back: A Pedagogy of Hawaiian Liberation by Kahakalau (2003) is a type of school model that I would like to learn from. It is a model of education designed for Hawaiians by Hawaiians. Its primary objective is the empowerment of the Native people of Hawai'i. It is to bring together the strengths of Hawaiian culture and tradition, with the best of modern educational practices and standards and prepares students to walk successfully in two worlds (p. ii).

The goal of this school model was to serve as a tool for Hawaiians, as well as other Indigenous peoples to establish culturally driven models of education. It was also to prepare Indigenous people to remain Natives of the land from generations back, while also imparting the skills to become responsible 21<sup>st</sup> century global citizens.

The objectives of Kanu o ka `Aina as an educational framework include giving Native Hawaiians a choice to perpetuate and revitalize their Indigenous culture and traditions. (p. 173) This empowerment and self-determination were also objectives of the “Hawaiian Renaissance” which began in the 1970s. Another objective of Kanu is to cultivate responsible stewardship over Hawaii’s Indigenous resources, which includes social and political affairs as well as the natural resources in the environment. A third objective of Kanu is academic rigor interwoven with a culturally driven curriculum. Kahakalau recognized a need for Hawaiian students to be technologically literate and competent and a need for Hawaiian communities and educators to be involved in developing rigorous standards. A fourth objective of Kanu is to reach out into the wider community to teach parents, staff, and community members about the Native Hawaiian culture and traditions. Interested learners are encouraged to delve deeper into the Hawaiian language and stewardship and understand their roles in self-determination.

This collaboration across public and private entities to support culturally respectful institutions of learning in Hawai'i was noteworthy. It provided beacons of light for the Chuukese people – recognizing that culturally responsive schools provided opportunities to build healthy communities.

Kahakalau (2003) describes the Native Hawaiians in Hawai'i Public School System:

Native Hawaiians have suffered an education nightmare, and they are entrapped in a colonial way of schooling that is oblivious to their cultural desires, these Hawaiian students have struggled within Hawai'i's public school system, only to end up as educational and subsequently societal failures. We should be given an opportunity to control own process of education, since it is us who are ultimately responsible for the education of our people and for preserving and protecting our culture (p.1-2).

### **Indigenous School Models in Aotearoa**

In 1931 a new Maori education policy of integration was incorporated into the Native Schools. The policy stressed the importance of including Maori culture in the teaching. Beeby (1992) echoed what the framer expressed:

The Government's objective, broadly expressed, is that every person, whatever his level of academic ability, whether he be rich or poor, whether he live in town or country, has a right, as a citizen, to a free education of the kind for which he is best fitted and to the fullest extent of his power (p. 10).

Beginning in the early 1970s the New Zealand government began education reform to increase Maori participation and success in education. This education reform used the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi as the basis in its policies in making sure Maori culture is reflected in policies, practices and instructions including the Maori language as part of the language of instruction (Mihi, 1999).

A movement by the Maori advocated establishment of *Kura Kaupapa Maori* Schools. It was in response to a report by Benton in 1971 that the Maori language was nearly in a death stage. Then the Maori set up preschools, elementary schools, secondary schools and tertiary schools where the language, knowledge and culture were taught (Smith, 2003).

A group called *Nga Tamatoa* (The Young Warriors) petitioned the government to promote *te reo Maori* throughout New Zealand. From 1976 more universities included Maori language in their curriculum and in 1978 the first bilingual school in New Zealand began. In 1981 the first *kohanga reo* (language nest) pre-school Maori language immersion program led by Maori women started. The aim was to prepare every Maori child to speak both Maori and English by the age of five. Later the Maori language became an official language of New Zealand (Chemis, 1981).

The Education Act of 1989 allowed the public education of Maori children to be under the control of Maori parents and communities. This was for the purpose of restoring Maori language and culture (Whaanga, 1993). Maori strategy for reclaiming their language, identity, and cultural heritage is expressed as *Tino Rangatiratanga*, which means that the Maori people must assume local control. Bishop (2003; Smith (2003) describe “*Kaupapa Maori*” as the philosophy and methodology as revolution for the Maori. It is not so much only the language and culture revitalization initiative but a ‘shift of mindset’. Bishop further added that “It is a shift away from waiting for things to be done for them to doing things for themselves, a shift away from negative motivation to positive motivation” (p. 2).

Five elements of Aotearoa/New Zealand education reform include *Taonga Tuku Iho* (Cultural Aspirations), *Ako* (Reciprocal Learning), *Kia Piki Ake i Nga Raruraru o te Kainga* (Mediation of Socio-economic and Home Difficulties), *Wha nāu* (Extended Family), and *Kaupapa* (Collective Vision Philosophy). The implied meaning of *Taonga Tuku Iho* is that each Maori child is special, should not be marginalized, and the Maori culture is valued. *Ako*, or reciprocal learning, is a culturally appropriate strategy for many

Pacific cultures because learning is active. The teacher, the guide, encourages learners to create their own meanings as they interact with one another while learning different content areas. The role of teacher may even be taken on by one of the learners.

*Kia Piki Ake i Nga Raruraru o te Kainga* (Mediation of Socio-economic and Home Difficulties) is the principle of building relationships between the home and school to increase understanding of each environment and to support the learner. *Kia Piki Ake i Nga Raruraru o te Kainga* is related to *Wha nāu* (Extended Family) because if school is seen as family rather than a sterile mechanical entity, the learner will feel more connected to the learning. *Kaupapa* (Collective Vision Philosophy) is the idea of having a common set of goals, principles, and practices for the home and school to support aspirations, languages, and cultures.

### **Research on Western Samoa School Model**

One related research that was done by Tavana (1994) on cultural values relating to education in Western Samoa has some significant findings related to what this research has found about education in Chuuk. This was done from the perspectives of Samoan social leaders in schools, churches, business, government and the *matai* group. Matai is a “chief; or a person selected through family consensus and bestowed the chiefly title to be a “steward” in the allocation and accountability for the use of the land, resources, and protection of certain interest of family members.” (Tavana, 1994) The educational histories of Western Samoa were very much similar to the educational histories of Chuuk. They both experienced educational influences from foreign countries. Thus, Tavana is a native Western Samoan who was interested to find out the general problem with education in Western Samoa. He was able to do this through integrated conceptual

analysis of perception from leaders of established Samoan social institutions. Conceptual analysis is an educational tool designed to organize conceptual knowledge. It is a schematic device intended to represent meaningful relationship among concepts in the form of propositions (Tavana, 1994).

So, this study uses similar approach in that meaningful themes are organized from the 11 participants. Tavana organized similar themes from each group of ten participants within each group and compared to the other groups with 50 total participants. The meaningful themes are from five different groups of ten. Aside from different findings he identified core Samoan values to provide a foundation for the consideration of an appropriate Samoan educational philosophy and practices. This research also concluded that education in Samoa should provide comprehensive programs which consolidated core Samoan values with academic/intellectual skills, spiritual/moral values, and vocational/practical skills.

Reviewing the histories from Native Hawaiian, Maori and Western Samoa from indigenous knowledge, colonial histories, post-colonial periods until the stage of cultural and language revival reveals many parallel relationships. One significant key element that Chuuk Education may learn from them is their collective ability in working together to revive their language and culture through school initiatives.

### **Conclusion**

The important lessons that I have learned from Maori, Hawaiian and Western Samoa experiences in educational restructuring is that indigenous leaders must collaborate with the larger community in a visioning process. It is to help the people to see the possibilities that schools can in fact reflect community values, practices and



knowledge. In many indigenous communities of the Pacific, the school systems that were brought in from outside do not match how the people live. This leads to loss of trust between schools and the communities. The people may care for their churches more and neglect the schools. In Chuuk it is common that the schools belong to the government; the churches belong to God. Given this, it comes as no surprise where the people place their trust.

In this dissertation I explored a “visioning” process in which key stakeholders across Chuuk State were able to find and share their voices to identify cultural values and practices to shape a process of educational renewal. From the discussions by the stakeholders reveal that sharing of proverbs and stories of their lived experiences may serve as springboards to school reforms in Chuuk State.

The research was conducted using individual interviews and focus group with representatives of the Chuukese community residing in Hawai'i. This qualitative research methodology (i.e., interview and focus group) was chosen because of its cultural congruence with Chuukese oral traditions - in which community leaders met face-to-face to seek consensus on community relations. Both the interview group and the focus group were constructed to respect Chuukese cultural norms, in terms of gender, age and social role.

At first, I wanted to carry out this research among Chuukese living in Chuuk. Due to different constraints the research was conducted among Chuukese citizens residing in Hawaii. Now the diaspora to Guam and Hawaii where more Chuukese from the different regions are accessible, my decision to anchor the research in Hawaii is more appropriate. Large numbers of key Chuukese stakeholders currently reside in Hawai'i;

and it was possible to bring them together for interview and focus group meetings. Doing the research would be difficult or impossible to accomplish in Chuuk State given the transportation challenges and the dispersed populations across many islands. There was no budget that could bring people together to the central island of Weno for a sustained series of meetings.

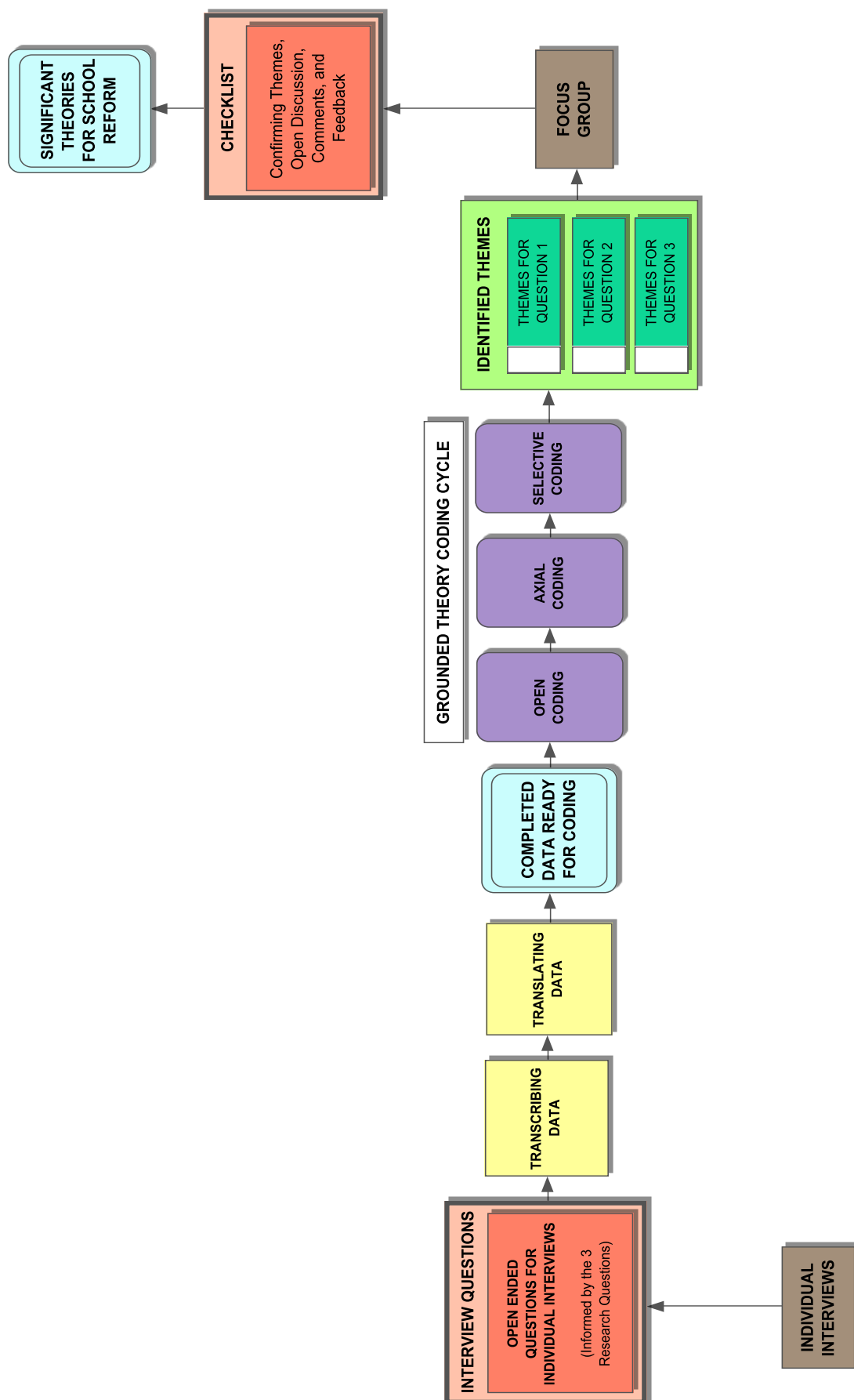


Figure 3.1. Design Layout Showing Entire Research Process

## **CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN**

### **Methodology**

This chapter will provide an introduction to the research design, the role of the researcher, participants, instruments, data collection, data analysis, and data validation.

### **Research Design**

As illustrated in Figure 3.1, the design layout began with the individual interviews and ended with the developing theories. This research benefitted from two types of data that were fed from two types of instruments. These instruments were administered to two types of participants. The two types of data also prompted the researcher to utilize two different ways of data analysis. Raw data gathered from individual interviews were analyzed using the three coding cycles in grounded theory. Data from focus group were measured using a Likert scale. During the focus group, themes were confirmed by consensus of the group. In addition, members of the focus group also further discussed the developing theories and finally anchored all developing theories on *Fairo* (the most humanistic way of living that an individual, a group, an agency, or a place must have for the price of peace and harmony).

### **Qualitative Paradigm**

This research represented a qualitative study undertaking (Denzin, 1978; Creswell, 2008) that employed a grounded theory research approach (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). A very important Chuukese proverb “*Aramas Chok Angang*” was also employed in the methodology believing that without the ‘others’ (the research participants), these

research goals would not materialize. I know of no theory that reflects “*Aramas Chok Angang*” therefore, I will explain its meaning and significance in the Chuukese culture. Within the Chuukese culture, individuals’ ideas are respected and sought. However, as a collectivist society, like many Pacific island cultures, great tasks are only possible through the work of individuals who come together with a common purpose (Tavana, 1994). In one of the interviews, Kanoso asserted this by stating, “*Watten angangen fonuwach a chok tufich ren aramas... aar ochuu ekkiekir, nettiper, me pour* (Big task on our islands are only possible because of the people... when they put their minds, their heart, and their hands together.)” (A. Kanoso, Personal Communication, January 14, 2008).

### **Qualitative Paradigm and Methodology**

Grounded theory as explained by Creswell (2008) is a systematic procedure that enables the researcher to generate central themes that are grounded in the data collected. Glaser and Strauss (1976) define grounded theory as an approach to research in which theory is discovered by the collected data. Strauss and Corbin (1990) provide a detailed definition of grounded theory stating as follows:

A grounded theory is one that is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents. That is, it is discovered, developed and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon. Therefore, data collection, analysis and theory stand in reciprocal relationship to one another. (p. 23)

Grounded theory is appropriate for this research also because of its respect in recognizing the concerns and voices of its participants in the generation of themes and theories. The notion behind “*Aramas Chok Angang*” best fits to this method due to its

respect on both the collective input and effort of the people in providing a solution to the situation or in accomplishing the task.

The purpose of this study is (1) to identify Chuukese cultural values, traditional knowledge and practices appropriate to frame a national dialogue on educational restructuring and transformation for Chuuk State, and (2) to illustrate ways that research findings can inform pedagogical practice. In respect to the goal of this research, these three following research questions served as guides to inform its course of investigation and exploration.

1. How do Chuukese educational stakeholders evaluate their experiences with Chuukese education?
2. What do they consider to be central Chuukese values, knowledge and practices that could guide education in Chuuk?
3. How might incorporation of Chuukese values, practices, and knowledge inform educational practice in Chuuk?

### **Role of Researcher**

As the primary researcher, I played multiple roles throughout this study. Besides designing the layout of the study and the study instruments, I played a role of a negotiator, securing consents of participants, setting up appointments with my participants and arranging for meeting places. I also facilitated my interviews and focus group discussion. All data gathering used group process techniques to insure that everyone had a voice (Burnside, 1986). Interviews were semi-structured, allowing informants unfettered freedom to share. I encouraged story telling of lived experiences as I wanted less theorizing and more firsthand recounting of how we, Chuukese, were

raised and educated in our villages or on our islands. After data gathering, I also played the role of a translator translating all my data into English before running data analysis.

### **Being an Insider**

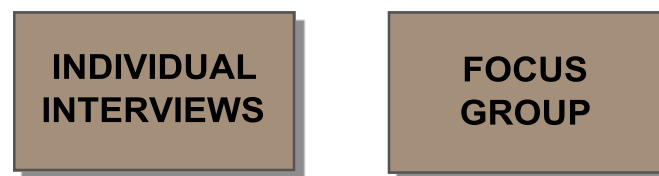
Being an insider, a native of Chuuk and a life-long educator, provided me with both benefits and limitations with respect to the intended purpose of this research. As an insider, I have direct understanding of the language and the culture. I am fully aware of certain protocols that I must abide by when carrying out this research. I also have a network of people who are influential in community, churches, schools, state government, as well as the national government. I was an administrator and a teacher for the past 35 years, ranging from elementary to tertiary positions. Throughout the 35 years, I have also been involved in multiple educational reforms provided me with profound understanding of the issue.

Being an insider of grassroots research like this has potential strengths. Aside from speaking the language and understanding the culture, I understand specifics that an outsider may not be aware of. One example is upon approaching the elders, certain behaviors must be shown, especially as a woman approaching a home of an elder man. In my situation, I always have to show respect by bowing down, or even crawling on my knees. Certain ways of greetings and handshaking are always necessary. In certain instances, food and drinks can be added to show special gestures of appreciation. Today money plays important roles but it does not equivalent to the values of *kon* and *fish*.

On the other hand, being part of a system or an issue can also blur my focus. My decision can be biased especially when I am emotionally attached to what is being discussed or raised throughout the research. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) stated that, in

qualitative data collection, the researcher is considered an instrument, meaning that the data gathered are mediated through human instrument rather than from what emerged from the coding process. DeLyser (2001) and Hewitt-Taylor (2002) further added that great familiarity can lead to the loss of objectivity. Insider researchers can make wrong assumptions based on their prior knowledge instead of letting the data generate the rightful solutions to the underlying problem.

### Participants



*Figure 3.2. The Two Types of Research Participants*

There were two types of participants in this research. There were individual interviewees or individual participants who participated in the interview sessions. The other group was the focus group who participated in the focus group discussion following the individual interviews. All participants are Chuukese who are well versed in their Chuukese culture. All speak Chuukese Language as their first language. All participants in this research were voluntary.

### Individual Interview

**Table 3.1. Demographics of Individual Interview Participants**

Part.	Gen	Age	Religion	Region	Education	Degree	Social Status
RAY	M	29	Catholic	Faichuk	College	MA	Youth/Edu
PET	M	45	Catholic	Mortlocks	College	MA	Gov/Edu
MAN	M	62	Protestant	N.Nomoneas	College	AS	Edu/Church



IRO	F	50	Catholic	North-West	College	AS	Parent/Women
RES	F	61	Catholic	N.Nomoneas	College	AS	Parent
HIL	F	59	Catholic	Faichuk	College	AS	Gov/Women
KOV	M	63	Protestant	Mortlocks	H. School	Diploma	Trad/Church
KAN	M	53	Catholic	Faichuk	H. School	Diploma	Trad
CHO	F	57	Catholic	Mortlocks	College	MA	Educator
ANG	M	58	Catholic	S.Nomoneas	College	BA	Church
BER	F	83	Protestant	Mortlocks	None	None	Trad/Women

*Table Legend:* Gov= Government, Edu= Education, and Trad= Tradition

There were 11 individuals who participated in the interview sessions; five females and six males. Participants were from the five geopolitical regions in Chuuk: Northern Nomoneas, Southern Nomoneas, Faichuk, Mortlocks, and the Northwest Region. The research participants were also selected from various areas of expertise and interest including tradition, government, religion, schools, parents, women, and youth. All participants speak the Chuukese Language. They played significant roles in influencing decision making in the system.

All of the participants that were chosen to represent their regions are currently residing on the island of Oahu in the state of Hawai'i. The selection sampling hoped to give every part of Chuuk a voice to share ideas and perceptions on education improvement. Patton (1999) shares that purposeful sampling is one important means of identifying research participants. It is defined as the intentional selection of "individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon." There are two categories under purposeful sampling that best fit how the participants are selected for this study: "criterion" involving picking all cases that meet some criteria, and "convenience," being on Oahu. (Patton, 1999)

## Focus Group

The same 11 individuals who participated in the interview sessions were also the participants in the focus group. The focus group involved only five of the participants. The other six were not able to attend the focus group due to some other important reasons such as work, family, and medical appointments. Following are the participants in the focus group.

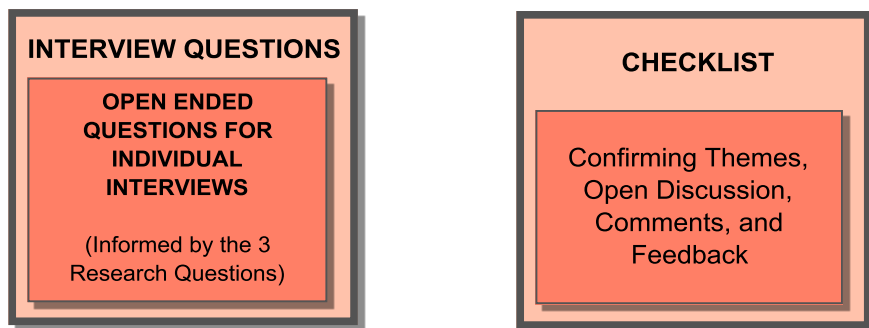
**Table 3.2. Demographics of Focus Group Participants**

Part.	Gen	Age	Religion	Region	Education	Degree	Social Status
RAY	M	29	Catholic	Faichuk	College	MA	Youth/Edu
PET	M	45	Catholic	Mortlocks	College	MA	Gov/Edu
IRO	F	50	Catholic	North-West	College	AS	Parent/Women
RES	F	61	Catholic	N.Nomoneas	College	AS	Parent
CHO	F	57	Catholic	Mortlocks	College	MA	Educator

*Table Legend:* Gov= Government, Edu= Education, and Trad= Tradition

## Instrumentation

There were two different types of instruments, (1) the 6 individual interview open-ended questions and (2) the 6-page focus group checklist. Both instruments were differently designed to gather the research data for the two types of participants.



*Figure 3.3. The Two Types of Research Instruments*

### **Individual Interview**

The interview questions (see Appendix 1) were designed to be used with individual participants. The interview questions consisted of 6 open-ended questions were given to all the 11 participants at the beginning of each interview to serve as guide to the discussion. Individuals were asked the six questions in the order as they appeared on the questionnaire.

### **Focus Group Checklist**

The focus group check list seen in (Appendix 2) consisted of the three research questions and a Likert scale (ranging from 1 is unimportant, 3 is important, and 5 is very important) and blank space reserved for additional comments and feedback. On some of the questions, the Likert scale measured participants' satisfaction using the rating, strongly disagree to strongly agree. Focus group participants were also instructed that the back of the checklist could also be used for note taking.

### **Data Collection**

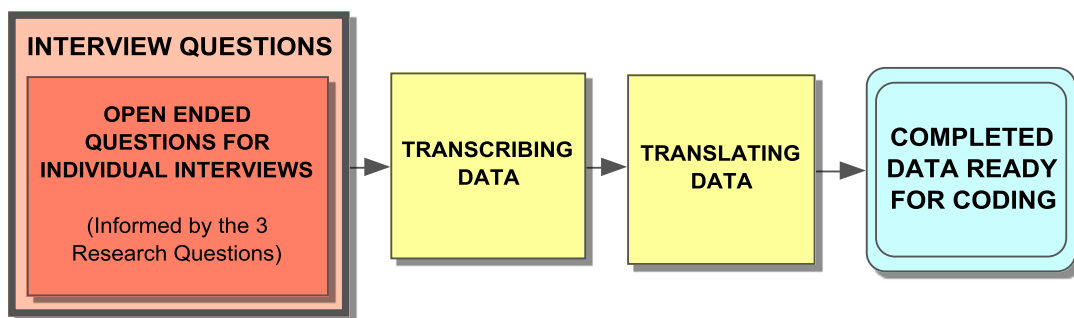
Research data were collected from both of the two instruments. I used an Ipad to video record both individual interview and the focus group discussion. Video recording was used in order to maintain accuracy in participants' comments and feedback. At the beginning of each meeting, I took the time to seek participants' consent to video record the session. I made sure that they understand why I video recorded the session and the purpose of the recordings to this research. Individual interviews took place at different places and different times throughout 2011. After member check was done, the focus

group discussion was scheduled. The focus group was held in Wist Hall at University of Hawai'i, College of Education on April 12, 2012.

Participants in both individual interviews and focus group discussion shared their lived experiences growing up and going to school on their home islands. Perceptions of how the integration of Chuukese traditions into the modern school system were also shared. Participants were also asked to share their hopes and visions for a better school system for Chuuk State that respects Indigenous values. Participants, who are typically private and reserved, reached into their hearts and minds to share their lived experiences believing that what they contributed can lay the first brick in the formation of educational reform that recognizes Chuukese values.

A few interview participants requested a continuance of the interview because they had more stories to share. Individual interviews required at least two to four hours for each participant. Member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) for the individual interviews occurred over a 2-week period. Folders with responses in Chuukese language on the left and respective English translations on the right were prepared for each individual. Participants were given time to read and review the folders prior to my sitting with them to assure the accuracy and completeness of their responses.

### **Individual Interviews**

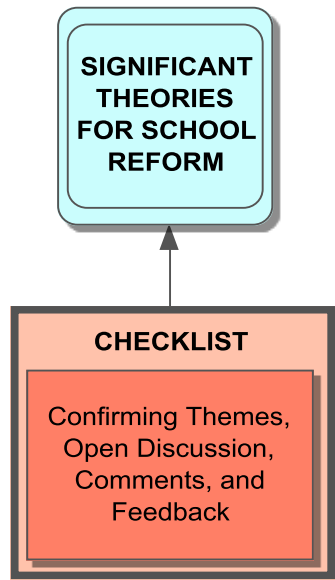


*Figure 3.4. Process of Data Collection from Individual Interviews*

Data collected during individual interviews were mostly short stories about growing up and going to school in Chuuk. Some shared about the learning at home, which eventually finds its way out into communities, villages, island, and up to the role that they are currently holding today. All raw data taken from the interviews were transcribed and translated into English before they were sent back to participants, a process that is called 'member checking', for validation and approval. After being validated and approved, data were put into the 'three coding cycle' for analysis.

### **Focus Group Discussion**

The second stage of data collection involved reviewing, confirming, and discussing emerged themes that were identified after the analysis of the data from the individual interviews. The collected data were indeed emerging themes, which later developed into theories.



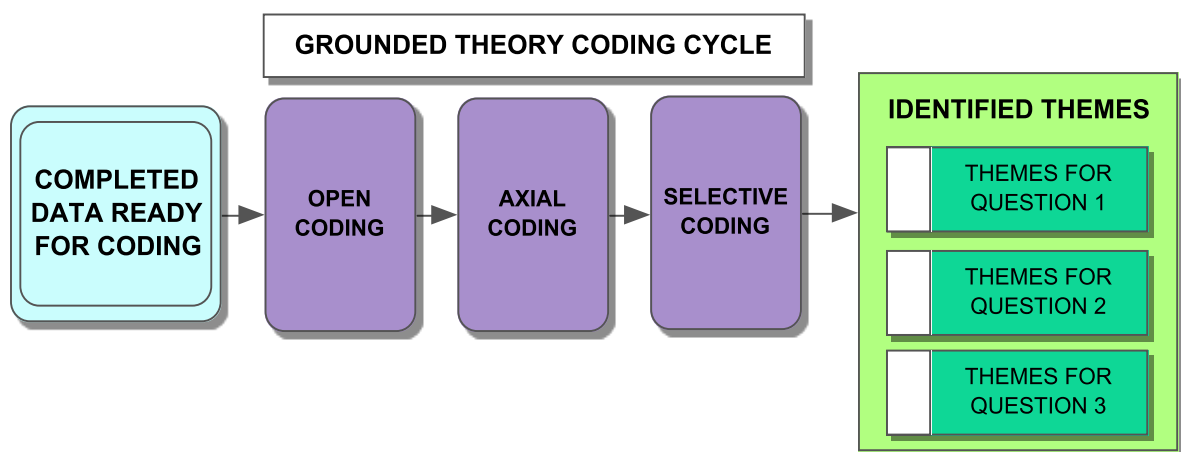
*Figure 3.5. Process of Data Collection from Focus Group Discussion*

The focus group provided a follow-up opportunity for clarifications, extended discussion and consensus building. It was conducted at the conclusion of individual interviews. For reasons of health and travel, 5 out of 11 interviewees were able to attend. The 3-hour meeting was conducted on the University of Hawai'i campus, and included a shared meal. The intent of the focus group was: (a) thank the informants, (b) to confirm that my interpretations of the individual interviews were accurate, in terms of identifying core themes, (c) to confirm that my identification of implications for educational reform were accurate, and (d) to provide opportunities for clarification and elaboration within a group setting. A checklist was administered prior to beginning of the oral discussion. Every participant was given a structured (round-robin) opportunity to express their thoughts. Open discussion was encouraged.

### **Data Analysis**

The data analysis involved (1) data from individual interviews and (2) data from the focus group discussion.

#### **Individual Interview Data Analysis**



*Figure 3.6. Process of Data Analysis in Individual Interviews*

Raw data from the individual interviews were analyzed using a three coding cycle-- as recommended in grounded theory analysis. In the three coding cycle analysis, data were processed through three stages--- open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. In open coding, important and common themes were identified and coded. After being coded, data were placed into axial coding where they were organized into different categories depending on their relevancy and relationships to other codes. After they were categorized, I moved onto selective coding where themes emerged.

### Focus Group Data Analysis

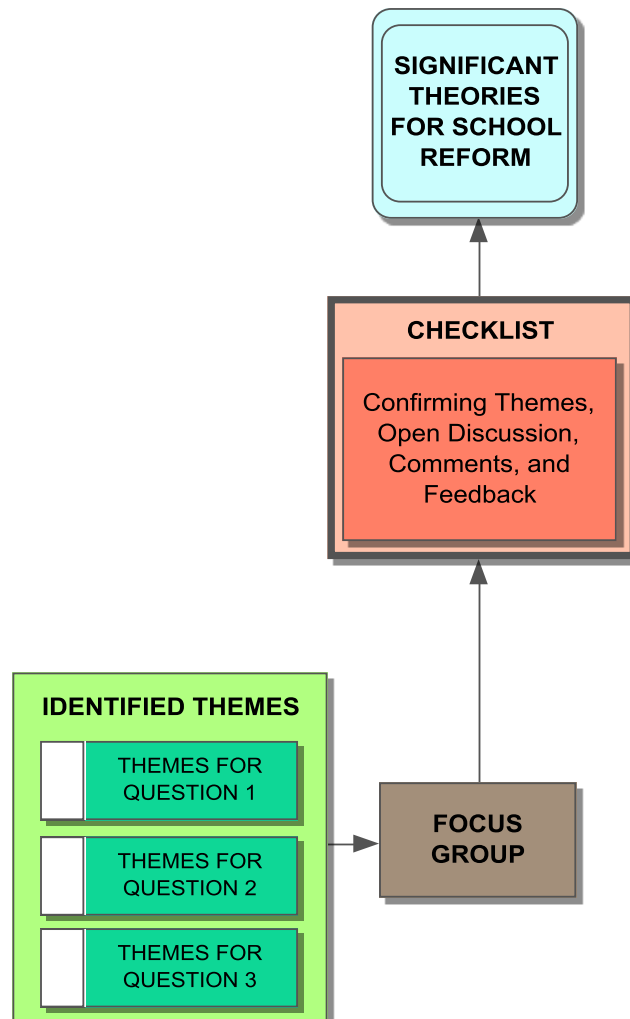


Figure 3.7. Process of Data Analysis from Focus Group

Data from the focus group checklist were analyzed using Microsoft Office Excel, 2007. Comments and feedback, whether verbally or written, were also reviewed to identify its relationship with the emerging themes and the developing theories. Decisions among all the participants in the focus group were also reviewed and further discussed with participants.

The culminating focus group included a written survey followed by round-robin discussion and consensus building. The written survey required 30-minutes to complete; asking participants to confirm or disconfirm the accuracy and completeness of the researchers' interpretation of interview findings. Informants were asked to rate and elaborate on three topics: Topic One: What are our life stories? Topic Two: What are our core values? Topic Three: What is our collective vision?

For Topic One, participants were asked if I “distilled” their core values accurately from their stories. For Topic Two, participants were asked to rate the relative importance of the 7 identified core values (a) Respect; (b) Perseverance; (c) Collaboration; (d) Environmental Stewardship; (e) Sanctity of Farming and Fishing: Breadfruit and Crab; (f) Community Service; and (g) Sanctity of Place: Navigation and Exploration. For Topic Three, informants were asked to evaluate the relative importance of 6 identified elements of educational reform, including (a) Values-based education; (b) Physical design of schools; (c) Teacher recruitment and preparation; (d) School-community relations; (e) Curriculum and materials; and (f) Language of instruction. Curriculum and materials requested ratings for 5 identified practices: Heterogeneous grouping (age and ability); Gender-based grouping; Hands-on learning; Cooperative learning; and Outdoor education. Finally, the informants were asked to evaluate the importance of a request to



the FSM for a national dialogue on educational transformation. The survey instrument is attached in the Appendix 2.

### **Data Validation**

There are various approaches a researcher can use to address validity and reliability in a qualitative research. There are triangulation of information among different sources of data, receiving feedback from informants (member checking) and expert review (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

In this study the researcher made sure collected data according to University of Hawaii Committee on Human Subjects standards was closely followed. Informed consent forms were read and understood before signatures were given. Rephrase Informed consent forms from research participants applied. Individual interviews were given back to participants for member checking for verification and brought back with agreement. The triangulation of focus group affirmed validity of the individual interview data. It is important that the number of participants reach a point of sufficiency in that demographic data were identified. The coding stages use in this research was documented throughout the 3 stage coding processes until the theoretical saturation was achieved (Smith, 2003).

Cornejo-Garcia, R (2010) proposed an approach that fits the indigenous means of gathering data that focused on validating findings by using data from elders to strengthen external validity of his results. It is related to this research. The consideration of including elders to represent each region in Chuuk State had special reasons. One is each participant represented the very important traditional roles in the Chuuk community. Other roles are important, but traditional roles are something much important. They are knowledgeable about the different aspects of the culture and they also have strong

authority where their voices carried great impact. Women are also considered very important in the Chuukese matrilineal society. The women represented in this study are women who are important figures. In Chuukese culture there are times when only women can solve certain issues. Once a woman voices her point of view on an issue usually men listen and follow. That is how strong a woman is in Chuukese culture. Thus, the different roles of the participants also added validity to this study.

Two key researchers, F. Hezel and W. Goodenough have been doing research in Chuuk and Micronesia. Interviewing elders in the society is one of their research methods. Because the elders are considered knowledgeable the topics, the research findings that are based on their stories also added weight and strength. If the lived experiences of Chuukese elders are considered valid in previous anthropological and ethnographical works from western researchers, then I find it unacceptable to question the data given by well-respected educators, elders, government leaders, parents, youth and women in the discussion on educational reform and traditional practices.

## CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

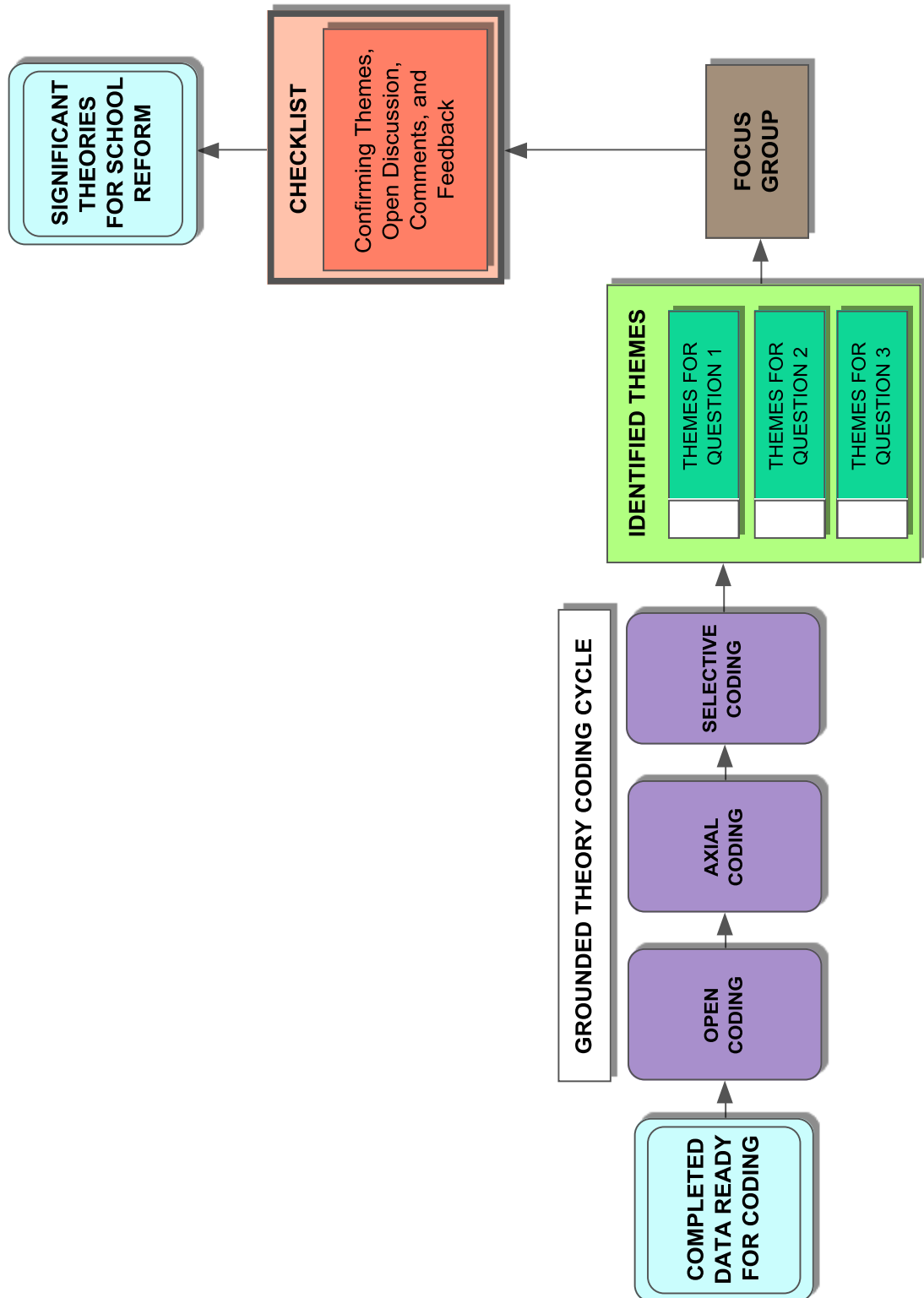


Figure 4.1. Process of Data Analysis

This chapter will focus on analyzing the collected data from the individual interviews and the focus group checklists and discussions. It will also provide a detailed explanation of how the data from the individual interviews were coded and categorized and how themes emerged from the three coding cycles. It will further discuss the general conscious of the focus group including important comments that were brought up during focus group open discussion. This chapter will end with the discussion of the results that were generated from the data analysis.

### Nature of Analysis

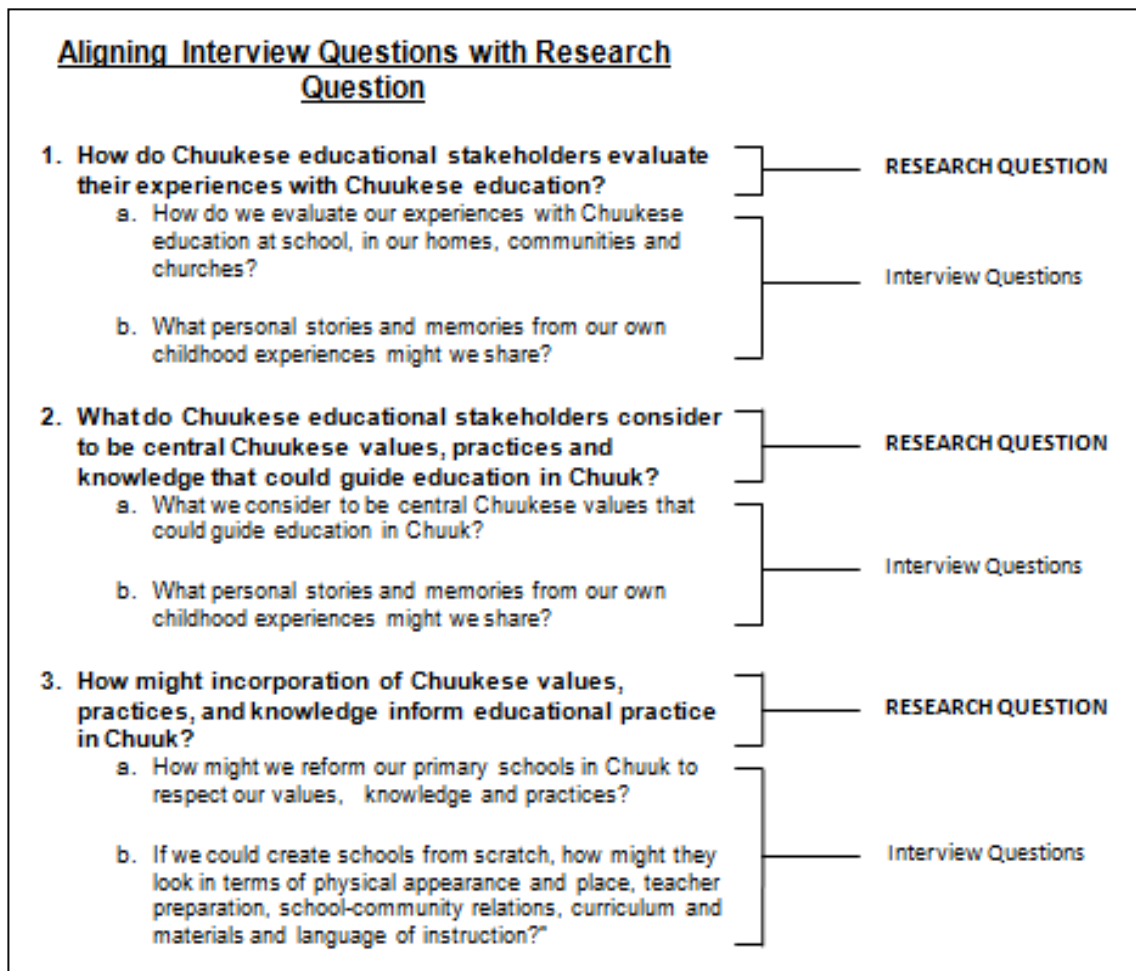


Figure 4.2. Aligning Interview Questions with Research Questions

To better analyze the multiple layers of data that I have gathered, I decided to examine each set of data in the nature of the interview questions that they hope answer. To do this, I took apart my six interview questions and placed them underneath each of the three research questions (See Figure. 4.2). Aligning the six interview questions with the three research questions clarified not only how the analyzed interview data answered the research questions but also how the themes emerged from the analysis.

### **Individual Interviews**

The analysis of interview data in a grounded theory study involves the use of coding system. The coding system of grounded theory according to Strauss & Corbin (1990) follows different stages. Data had to follow through the different coding cycles; opening coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Open coding was the first step of data analysis. “It is a way of identifying important words, or groups of words in the data and then labeling them accordingly”. The second coding is axial coding. “It is the second coding where the researcher now develops individual categories by connecting sub categories together” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). From the key words and phrases in the open coding the researcher started connecting subcategories that fit together. Last stage is selective coding. It is where core categories are further combined and integrated and theories are developed.

### **Analyzing Interview Questions 1 and 2**

Following are data analysis for interview question one and two under research question 1.

#### **Interview Question 1:**

How do we evaluate our experiences with Chuukese education at school, in our homes, communities and churches?

Interview Question 2:

What personal stories and memories from our own childhood experiences might we share?

Use of a four column table on an excel file was created. Raw data from the individual interviews are plotted in the first column. Following the open coding first, raw data that I read through over and over again, I was able to recognize repeated and highlighted key words and phrases. It was these key words that I pulled out and plotted into the second column of the excel file. It was the end of the open coding and beginning of second coding which is “axial coding”. During this axial coding stage I combined sub categories from open coding stage and created new categories. It is selective coding, the last stage, where I continued comparing and relating categories to other categories to combine and created core categories. As shown in the following table, all three coding cycles were being illustrated using raw data from interview questions one and two. Table 4.1 illustrated how the three stage coding revealed themes that emerged from data corresponding to question one. To help clarify this process, samples of two quotes were pulled out from the raw data and analyzed through the different coding cycles. These were the quotes:

“One thing in particular that I appreciated from **my mother** was her support for me to learn and recite the **family prayers**. **My father** helped me to learn many of the **men’s responsibilities**. **From him** I learned to **farm, build houses** and **fish**. Most significantly from **both my parents**, I learned the importance of **relationships** among **people**.”

"Although **education** was **anchored at home**, it was extended and **reinforced** in **the village life**, including both **traditional and church leaders** who provided **moral and cultural education**. Within these extra **educational contexts**, **children learned about themselves** and their **history**. They **also learned the Chuukese ways** of learning by **observing, listening, and modeling** and

respecting authority. By the time children embarked for public school, they had acquired **the necessary skills for classroom learning.**"

**Table 4.1. Coding Process for Interview Questions 1 and 2**

RAW DATA FROM INTERVIEWS	OPEN	AXIAL	SELECTIVE
One thing in particular that I appreciated from <b>my mother</b> was her support for me to learn and recite the <b>family prayers</b> . <b>My father</b> helped me to learn many of the <b>men's responsibilities</b> . <b>From him</b> I learned <b>to farm, build houses and fish</b> . Most significantly from <b>both my parents</b> , I learned the importance of <b>relationships</b> among <b>people</b> .	APPRECIATE MY MOTHER HER SUPPORT RECITE FAMILY PRAYER MY FATHER HELPED ME LEARN MEN'S RESPONSIBILITIES LEARN TO FARM BUILD HOUSES FISH PARENTS PARENTS TEACHING RELATIONSHIP PEOPLE	HOME ROLE MOTEL HOME SUPPORT PRAYER HOME ACTIVITY VILLAGE DUTY HOME CHORES LEARN FROM HOME PARENTING RELATIONSHIP PEOPLE	HOME LEARNING VILLAGE LEARNING
Although <b>education</b> was <b>anchored at home</b> , it was extended and <b>reinforced in the village life</b> , including both <b>traditional and church leaders</b> who provided <b>moral and cultural education</b> . Within these extra <b>educational contexts</b> , children learned about <b>themselves</b> and their <b>history</b> . They <b>also learned the Chuukese ways</b> of learning by <b>observing, listening, and modeling</b> and respecting authority. By the time children embarked for public school, they had acquired <b>the necessary skills for classroom learning</b> .	EDUCATION ANCHOR AT HOME REINFORCED VILLAGE LIFE TRADITIONAL LEADER CHURCH LEADER MORAL CULTURAL EDUCATION CHILDREN LEARN THEIR HISTORY CHUUKESSE WAYS OBSERVING LISTENING MODELING RESPECT AUTHORITY NECESSARY SKILLS CLASSROOM LEARNING	EDUCATION HOME LEARNING VILLAGE LIFE TRADITION CHURCH LEADER MORAL CULTURAL ED. HISTORY CHUUKESSE WAYS LEARN FROM COMMUNITY RESPECTING OTHER	HOME LEARNING VILLAGE LEARNING TRADITION CULTURE CHURCH

Two important themes, (1) learning at home and (2) learning in village and church, emerged following the coding process for the participants' responses to interview questions one and two. These two themes reflected back to research question one and at the same time revealed significant information needed to the overall purpose of this study.

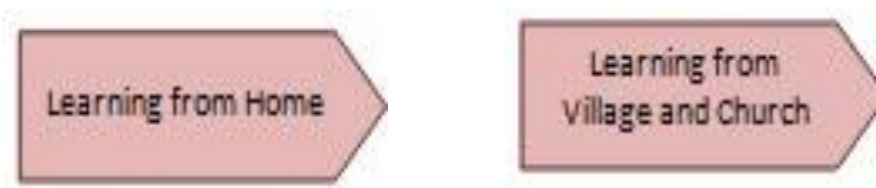


Figure 4.3. Two Themes Emerged from Interview Questions 1 and 2

### ***Learning from Home***

“Growing up, I remember 2 or 3 special places where learning occurred. Home is the first one. It is so very significant. It is “ut”. In my dialect the “home” is “ut” but in other Mortlockese dialects the word is “fal.” At this “ut” (the men’s house) this is where I learned lessons from the elders, as they shared stories.”

A. Kovack (personal communication, December 3, 2011)

There was consensus among informants that for them “Chuukese education” was (and should be) anchored in home and religious community. Family and church community were the “first teachers.” “Family” included grandparents and parents, extended clan (uncles, aunts, cousins, in-laws), siblings and “adoptees.” Families were expected to instill values, knowledge and skills; and to reinforce the values of the church. Bible stories were shared and read aloud daily. A Chuukese translation of the Bible was in the home and a part of family worship. Children were expected to learn to read from the bible; and participate in prayer sessions. There was also recognition that conditions are changing with the diaspora to western cities; and the growing dependence on remittances from the west.

Families were “place-based.” Extended families lived together in one or adjacent houses located on family land. Houses were constructed from wood and thatch. Stories were shared in the evenings before bedtime -- including bible stories, legends, tales, and family histories. It was a commonly held belief that stories were to be told in the evening before bedtime. A storyteller who violated the tradition might age quickly and die young.



Chuukese extended the concept of “home place” to include plantations, beaches and reefs where important stories and lessons were shared.

At a certain age, boys moved to the *uut* -- a traditional meeting place for men; and “school” for boys. It was in the *uut* that boys learned to be away from home; to gain independence; and to learn from new “teachers”, i.e., village elders who shared stories, knowledge and skills.

Girls spent significant time in the *falang*, which was a cooking house separated from sleeping places. The *falang* derived from *afana* or *afala*, which meant to teach, to explain, to demonstrate and to interact for clear understanding (Welle, 2007, personal communication). It was around the preparation and serving of food that many core values and practices were transmitted. It is important to note that all of these values and practices represent living memories for my informants; and represent ways of life that are still vibrant on many islands to this day.

### **Hear our Voices on Learning From Home**

“One thing in particular that I appreciated from my mother was her support for me to learn and recite the family prayers. My father helped me to learn many of the men’s responsibilities. From him I learned to farm, build houses and fish. Most significantly from both my parents, I learned the importance of relationships among people.”

J. Angkel (personal communication, November 9, 2011)

“Now when I reflect on this set of hidden rules taught to us by our parents, I realize that this was their way of teaching us to focus on the lives of our families and to the activities of our home. This expectation of playing and being near the home functioned to keep children close at hand so that they could observe adult role models and be helpful when asked. In other words, these expectations both showed respect for others and also functioned to provide teaching and learning opportunities for the children in their homes.”

*MAN*

“We have acquired so much in our home lives: The habit of respecting our home knowledge gives us the courage and confidence to try new concepts and practices.”

*CHO*

“So instead of going off to school I stayed home to learn from there. I learned through playing games with other children, helping with home chores, and from the teachings of my parents and grandparents. At home, I learned basic to do mathematics and to do some reading and writing. I was taught how to read the bible.”

*BER*

“Our parents instilled in us the concept of “Likoipei.” This concept relates to a very important teaching which is that we are not free to go anywhere we might like; instead, we are to go where there is a meaningful reason for us to be.”

*PET*

“What I recall from the time I grew up, learning takes place in a person from home around family members, community, society, church, and school. Girls shadow their mothers. What mothers do, girls learn; some examples are cooking, caring for home, caring for the young children (especially the siblings), older grandparents, small gardening, weaving, fishing, and many others.”

*HIL*

“Looking back at my childhood, I learned from my mom, and elders at home. I also learned from watching and helping my mother and father and sometimes from elder women in my family.” I learned a lot from my grandmothers. Both of my grandmothers lived with my parents and I used to watch them preparing food, cooking, cleaning the house, and weaving. I first learned some children songs from home.”

*CHO*

“My parents served as excellent models for us children. They respected one another. From them we learned the importance of extended families (on both sides). I learned from my parents the importance of food. I watched my father work hard every day to provide for us. Food was not to be wasted. My mother cared for her own parents. I learned again the importance of “family” by watching and helping. We learned by being at our parents’ sides, watching and later trying on our own.”

*RES*

“I learn from my mother the important role of women in preparing food. Another one is once the food is prepared it was part of the culture that

food is shared among family members even when they live far in different houses. Once the food is divided among family members, it was our roles as young girls and boys to bring the food to different houses.”

*IRO*

“My father was very helpful in helping me to understand my relationships with other people. He helped me to understand that I was part of our families “falang.” Each “falang” (cook house) symbolizes an extended family. It is a very important symbol in our culture. Food is central to relationships. This was very helpful to me to come to an understanding of my relationships with others. I also learned from my father the techniques for building the earthen oven (“um”). I had the opportunity to learn fishing; preparing the traditional dish of pounded breadfruit which is called “kon.” This learning process is what enabled a young man such as myself to know whether or not he had become a man, as measured by his ability to demonstrate the knowledge and skills.”

*ANG*

### ***Learning from Village and Church***

“The consistency of doing something is important. One example is saying the prayer. I learned to pray morning and night. The habit of consistently praying also helps me to consistently study.”

J. Angkel (personal communication, November 9, 2011)

Although education was “anchored” at home, it was extended and reinforced in village life, including both “traditional” and “church” leaders who provided moral and cultural education. Within these “extra” educational contexts, children learned about themselves and their history. They also learned the Chuukese ways of learning (i.e., “how we learn”) -- by observing, listening, modeling and respecting authority. By the time children embarked for public school, they had acquired the necessary skills for classroom learning.

Perhaps the most surprising outcome from this research question was that my respondents, coming from diverse islands throughout entity, remembered growing up in a

tie when Chuukese schools and communities (including traditional chiefs and church leaders) represented a shared voice. Parents were excited to have their children go to school and reinforced school work at home. Teachers were dedicated to the profession. Children left their islands to go to high school amid encouragement and pride.

**Hear our Voices on Learning in Village and Church**

“Now, when these values are brought into the classroom setting, they will produce positive outcomes. It is the true sharing of knowledge. When students learn in the classroom, everyone is learning together. Otherwise, when one thinks only of himself, this creates large gaps among the students.”

*PET*

“I also believe the Christian values. I gain learning from my mother, family and community. They too can be very helpful in integrating values into the school. These Christian values enable me to become what I am today. It helped me. I now look back, realizing that all that I learned from home really helped me as I was traveling away from home—in school and in work.”

*KOV*

“When I first went to college, I was fearful - thinking I had nothing. I had no confidence, believing that I had no preparation. I did not realize I was full like a cup is not really empty. It is filled with knowledge. It is from those wonderful experiences - learning from parents, elders and experts in the village. I do have something worthwhile stored in me. I simply was unaware of how to turn my storage of knowledge into something to help make meaningful connections.”

*ANG*

“This story from my childhood describes the times I was first learning to fish. There were certain types of fishing exclusively practiced by the women on my island; and as a young girl they were to teach me the skills. This particular story relates to night fishing. In the night a woman wanting to gather us, would stand outside to make a very special call. All of us knew its meaning—it was time to go fishing. What I am to describe is net fishing. Every woman had her own nets, 2 of them, one for each side. The woman would tie a basket onto her back and arm herself with one net in each hand.”

*BER*

## Analyzing Interview Questions 3 and 4

Following are data analysis for interview questions three and four underneath research question 2.

### Interview Question 3:

What we consider to be central Chuukese values, knowledge and practices that could guide education in Chuuk?

### Interview Question 4:

What personal stories and memories from our own childhood experiences might we share?

The analysis for interview question 3 and 4 followed the similar format in the analysis of question 1 and 2. Sample quotes are pulled out for analysis. Following similar coding processes interesting themes emerged. Based on how the interview questions were worded and presented themes such as: respect, perseverance, collaboration, environmental stewardship, sanctity of farming and fishing, community services, and sanctity of place emerged. These important themes from question two also reflected back and supported the main purpose of this study.

Following are two quotes that were pulled out from the interview data to demonstrate the analysis for interview question 3 and 4:

Let me give the example of “**respect**.” I observed that the **concept of respect** is integrated into many **school and classroom rules**. **Respect** comes in many forms -- **respecting one another; teachers; elders and parents**—what is **ours and what is not**. As in the **story** of Nemwes, it teaches the important **value of respect**. I would suggest **stories** such as this be integrated into the **curriculum** in our Island. I wish to emphasize the goal of **integrating values into the curriculum**. First and foremost, we are expected **to listen, trust and obey** our **parents** who **love us** and try to **guide us**.”

**Moteitemol**” is another name of our island **Losap**. There are **significant meanings**. Our **forefathers** explained that it is **like a mother who holds her child, breast feeding**. There is a special chant for that: **:mitimitin tuut**”. This is a **special chant** for this feeding. It means **that people from Losap get their**

food from the **neighboring island (Lewel)**. It is considered to be a **storage island**. Learn to **handle gently, not to “overdo” the harvest**. **Take just what you need. Don’t be greedy**. A concept related to **babies sucking the milk from a mother’s breast**. **A baby doesn’t eat too much**. It takes just what it needs. **“Mongon Le Chennau”**. Through **the tongue**.

**Table 4.2. Coding Process for Interview Questions 3 and 4**

RAW DATA	OPEN	AXIAL	SELECTIVE
<p>Let me give the example of <b>“respect.”</b> I observed that the <b>concept of respect</b> is integrated into many <b>school and classroom rules</b>. <b>Respect</b> comes in many forms -- <b>respecting one another; teachers; elders and parents</b>—what is <b>ours and what is not</b>. As in the <b>story</b> of Nemwes, it teaches the important <b>value of respect</b>. I would suggest <b>stories</b> such as this be integrated into the <b>curriculum</b> in our Island. I wish to emphasize the goal of <b>integrating values into the curriculum</b>. First and foremost, we are expected to <b>listen, trust and obey</b> our <b>parents</b> who <b>love us</b> and try to <b>guide us</b>.”</p> <p><b>Moteitemol</b>” is another name of our island <b>Losap</b>. There are <b>significant meanings</b>. Our <b>forefathers</b> explained that it is <b>like a mother who holds her child, breast feeding</b>. There is a special chant for that: <b>:mitimitin tuut</b>”. This is a <b>special chant</b> for this feeding. It means <b>that people from Losap get their food from the neighboring island (Lewel)</b>. It is considered to be a <b>storage island</b>. Learn to <b>handle gently, not to “overdo” the harvest</b>. <b>Take just what you need. Don’t be greedy</b>. A concept related to <b>babies sucking the milk from a mother’s breast</b>. <b>A baby doesn’t eat too much</b>. It takes just what it needs. <b>“Mongon Le Chennau”</b>. Through <b>the tongue</b>.</p>	<p>RESPECT CONCEPT OF RESPECT SCHOOL, CLASSROOM, RULE RESPECT OTHERS RESPECT TEACHER ELDER PARTENTS OUR AND NOT OURS STORY OF NEMWES VALUE OF RESPECT STORY CURRICULUM INTEGRATED VALUE INTO CURRICULUM LISTEN, TRUST, OBEY, PARTICIPATE LOVE GUIDE MOTEITEMOL LOSAP SIGNIFICANT MEANINGS FOREFATHERS LIKE A MOTHER HOLDS HER CHILD BREAST FEEDING MITIMITIN TUUT SPECIAL CHANT PEOPLE FROM LOSAP GET THEIR FOOD NEIGHBORING ISLAND HANDLE GENTLY THE HARVEST WHAT YOU NEED DON'T BE GREETY BABIES SUCKING MILK FROM MOTHER BREAST NOT EAT TOO MUCH MONGON LE CHENNAU TONGUE</p>	<p>RESPECT RESPECT PART. RESPECT ELDER RESPECT TEACH RESPECT PROP. TRUST LOVE GUIDE OBEY CURRICULUM</p> <p>LOSAP FOREFATHER MOTHER CHILD BREASTFEEDING CHANT PEOPLE FOOD ISLAND GENTLY OVERDO HARVEST NEED GREETY SUCKING BREAST EAT TONGUE</p>	<p>RESPECT TRUST LOVE GUIDE</p> <p>PLACE HARVEST GENTLY CHILD PEOPLE FOOD</p>

Following the analysis of the interview question 3 and 4, seven significant themes emerged. These were the following themes:

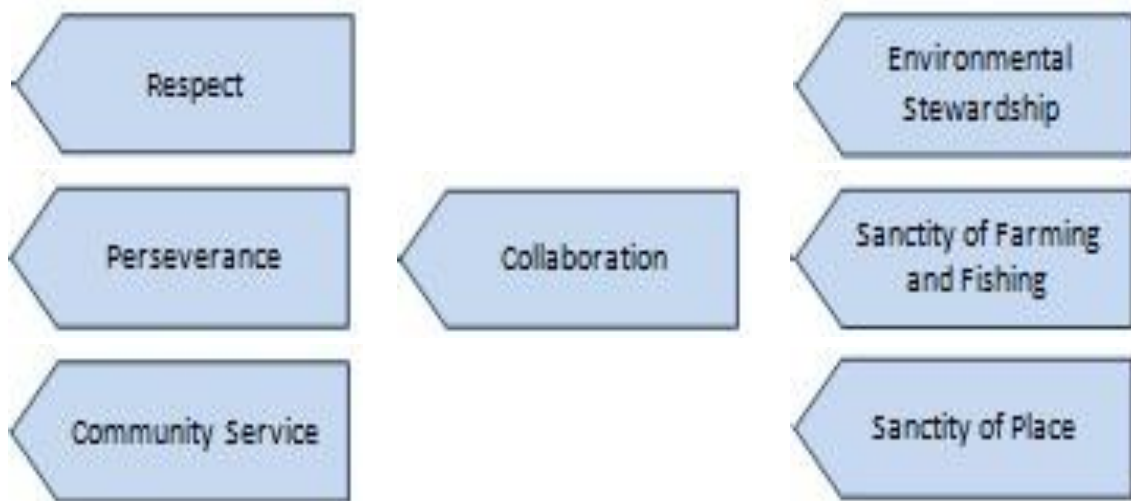


Figure 4.4. Themes Emerged from Interview Questions 3 and 4

Seven core themes were identified from semi-structured interviews. These themes do not “translate” easily across language and culture. I will use the Chuukese words along with English “interpretation” -- hoping that the informants’ examples will provide context for understanding. For the most part, these themes were *extracted from stories*, as I wanted to encourage my informants to employ familiar communication forms. The seven core themes include as identified through semi-structured interviews and focus group:

**Table 4.3. Core Themes Emerged from Interview Questions 3 and 4**

DATA (In Chuukese Language)	EMERGING THEMES
Fairo, Sufon, Mennin, Mafen, Rongosich, Anneasosich, Tirow, Amwansosich, Amwanifich, Faffarirotiw, Faffairota	Respect
Achocho, Nikitu, Tinikken, Chofo	Perseverance

Angangen Iechuun Aramas non Fonu	Community Service
Tipeeu, Angang Fengen, Kissaswe, Nepouecho, Aea me Pipisek Fengen, Fang. Kiis	Collaboration
Tumunun, Asufonun Fonu, Saat, Mataw, Ira, Maan me aramas	Environmental Stewardship
Tumunun, Asufonun Tannipi me Attaw ika Neeset	Sanctity of Farming and Fishing
Sufonun neni, fonu, mataw, maan, me aramas	Sanctity of Place

### ***Respect***

“Let me give the example of “respect.” I observed that the concept of respect is integrated into many school and classroom rules. Respect comes in many forms -  
- respecting one another; teachers; elders and parents—what is ours and what is not. As in the story of Nemwes, it teaches the important value of respect. I would suggest stories such as this is integrated into the curriculum in our Island. I wish to emphasize the goal of integrating values into the curriculum. First and foremost, we are expected to listen, trust and obey our parents who love us and try to guide us.”

L. Rayphand, (personal communication, October 27, 2011)

“Respect” is a core Chuukese value that serves to harmonize and regulate relationships among people and with nature. All of the informants shared stories of “respect”, regulating expectations and behavior among children toward one another (related to age and gender); relationships among adults and children (including teaching roles of elders, grandparents, parents, uncles and aunts); relationships among traditional chiefs, church leaders and teachers; and relationships of people toward land and ocean (including plants and animals). The rules of “respect” are complicated -- some are implied and others explicit. Often they are taught by example or parable. “Respect” is the cornerstone of the Chuukese character.



### *Hear our Voices on Respect*

“I came to learn how to respect the elders. Respect was taught through demonstration and example. There are levels of people. The first born son of the first born daughter is to be respected by the younger siblings. He directs what needs to be done at home; and must be respected for this responsibility. When he has the brothers together the younger ones follow. This applies similarly to the sisters.”

*KOV*

“Before the culture was strong, students respect teachers, school and each other. They listen to what teachers asked them to do. My own example, as a student, I respect teachers, (*asomonu, menniniti, aucheani*) respect someone being older, respect directions, and respect someone / something as being precious. It is one reason why learning was easier during those times. The concept of respect was high. One example, in my own family, we all respect each other. We respect our parents and our elders. We follow what they asked us to do and what not to do. It is one reason why learning in school was so easier because they came from homes with the attitude. Before, in my village of Mechitiw, I recall it was used to be a very peaceful village. As I was growing up, many of the young teenagers respected the elders. They never could raise themselves over the elders as if they were always crawling.”

*MAN*

“Culture manifests itself in many ways. Within our families it includes respect, love, care and obedience. When parents model these elements with their children, the children learn and give them back to the parents. This same manifestation occurs within the larger society, i.e., beyond the family to the church, the extended family and clan, the government and of course the schools. The elders serve as models for respect and in turn the community reciprocates.”

*REC*

“One very important learning skill in our family was the showing of respect—the girls for the boys; and the boys for the girls. I respected my teachers. I was both obedient and respectful. In return, I noticed that the teachers cared very much for me. This attitude was instilled in me from my home. It continued after leaving home and moving to the new island. I feel the same attitude toward my uncles, aunts and cousins. Sometimes we did have misunderstandings, but we always settled our differences peacefully.”

*ANG*

“Another important value is what my mother instilled in me. Once I was able to remember, my mom told me to respect the men. I can never stand or walk where men are sitting or where they are assembled. Once the brothers and uncles see how we honor them, the more they also respect us in return. We learn to respect, care and love each other.”

*HIL*

“The story teaches important lessons about respect. First and foremost, we are expected to listen, trust and obey our parents who love us and try to guide us. I would suggest stories such as this be integrated into the curriculum in our Island. I wish to emphasize the goal of integrating values into the curriculum—this does not mean that we cannot teach technology, math and science, language arts and so on. It means that we should infuse our traditional values into the existing curriculum.”

*RAY*

“Two brothers Rongolap and Rongechik is a very important story that is told throughout Micronesia. Every child is taught this story. It is a story of obedience and respect. Respect for the father. Respect for the teacher. Respect for the environment. Respect for fellow human beings and of course great love and respect for the canoe.”

*BER*

“Certain elements of respect are taught to young girls. For example, when you are walking, and there are men sitting, you need to kneel or bow down. On certain occasions women get onto the floor and crawl. It is important that you are not above the men. Some men are very understanding. When they see women bowing down or kneeling down, they immediately stand to allow the women to pass. Another important element of respect is learning the use of words. Certain words are not appropriately use when men are around. Regarding respect for brothers, we are not to go into their sleeping rooms nor use their clothing, towels or dishes. All of these examples are intended to show respect. RESPECT comes in many manifestations: respect for self and others; peers, brothers, parents and elders; the environment, land and ocean.”

*HIL*

### ***Perseverance***

“My parents did not work for money. To my memory, we had everything we needed to survive, without depending upon money. Every day there was food. Both my father and mother making sure they went out in the jungle to bring breadfruit. My father also went out fishing to make sure there was meat for the

breadfruit. These are fruits of perseverance. Both my father and my mother always had work to do, from early morning onward. I observed and learned. I carry this lesson with me to this day.”

N. Bernard (personal communication, December 12, 2011)

Chuukese people learn to persevere. Perseverance is woven into the fabric of the culture. People struggle and suffer in the face of great hardships, including typhoons, illness, disability, hunger, malnutrition and diaspora). Chuukese people know what it is to go to bed hungry; and to bid final farewells to loved ones. The culture teaches its children to persevere in order to survive. It is a value that is applied to life in community and to success in school.

### **Hear our Voices on “Perseverance”**

“To continue what I believe about our children, for learning to be improved, is when there is perseverance. Learning cannot be achieved if there is no *achoch*, *tiniken*, *mwasengeiti*, (keep trying, perseverance, eager to). These are some basic values that are important toward improving learning.”

*MAN*

“The second value is perseverance. This too is learned first and foremost at home. They observe their parents struggling and persisting; and then they do so too. Again, I speak to you from personal experience. Many times I depended upon the lessons from home to cope - first among them was perseverance. I give credit both to my parents and to the nuns for my character development. Later I was to attend Chuuk High School, then college, followed by marriage. The virtue of perseverance always stood me in good stead.”

*RES*

“My mother taught me many lessons about perseverance; but this is a special one. In order to feed our family, we picked the ripe breadfruit that would fall to the ground. Every morning, I would join my sisters and brothers to wade across the shallow waters to our neighboring island, where we would go to work picking up the breadfruit from the ground.

The harvest that I am describing lasted for 2 or 3 months. It occurred during the summertime when there was no school. My brothers and sisters and I would work the harvest every day from Monday through Saturday. We would clean each of the breadfruit underneath the tree, peeling it and preparing it for preservation. To accomplish this we would dig a hole which we would line with breadfruit leaves and grass. We did this every day without fail until the harvest season ended—respecting the fact that Sunday’s were reserved for worship. I tell this story because I realize now as I look back on my life that these events shaped my character. I learned to persevere in life. Perhaps children today would judge this experience as a “waste of time”—but it was our way of helping the family to survive. It is difficult to express the significance of breadfruit, and its preservation process, to our culture. It is very significant.”

*HIL*

### ***Community Service***

“I remember once when three boys on our island took something from a neighbor’s land. You could say they were stealing. The entire village came together. This was an issue of concern. There was consensus on the island that the concept of “Likoipei” needed to be emphasized. This same concept was valued in the school with the teachers and administrators ensuring that children understood the rule and the reasons for it.”

J. Peter (personal communication, October 6, 2011)

When this researcher was a child growing up on Losap, schools were part of village life. The community supported the school; and in turn school curriculum reflected community values, as evidenced by the following expressions. Everyone in the community is expected to do service whether helping out in village functions, providing fee labor for house building and canoe carving, and cleaning the government facilities school areas. Sometimes during summer, the community came together to repair the school buildings. Men would repair the roof and repaint the classroom while women were inside classrooms scrubbing the floors and organizing school equipments and instructional materials.

### *Hear our Voices on Community Service*

I remember the time when students were being prepared to leave the island. The children were embarking to go to school on the main island. Everyone on the island would gather. It is intrinsic to our culture that the community celebrated these departures by bringing food and understanding. It was important for the community to teach the children why it was so important that they go off to school.

*PET*

“I would suggest during the summertime the school be opened to community groups. For example, women and girls can study home economics. This is not a radical suggestion. It is perfectly doable if we simply change the way we think about the place of school on the islands. If community groups could begin to enjoy the school themselves, pride in school will grow. This will impact the children as well.”

*RAY*

“We need to understand that the school is a window to the community. Just as I have suggested that curriculum and materials should emanate from the community, so must the spirit of ownership. For example, schools should be open even when teachers are not present. Other designated community members can show leadership. Schools should be open on weekends to permit community groups to engage all manner of activities. Students should participate in service learning activities in which they volunteer in the community to help others.” (Rayphand) “In those days, the classrooms were cleaned by volunteers from the community. I remember a positive community spirit as many people contributed to this effort.”

*IRO*

“Everyone comes together to impress on young people the importance of representing family and Island with dignity and hard work. With all of these contributing factors of community support, we see important effects such as our students score highly on entrance exams for the eighth-graders. I have no doubt that there are consistent high-performance results from this community value. I referred to the children of the Mortlocks Islands.”

*PET*

“School and community will work together, they will agree on how to operate the school. The whole community of Mechitiw believed they own the school. The school belongs to them. It is why the sense of ownership is there. They work together, and they make sure everything works well. From my initiative, the leaders from the village got together and agreed to

give away the land so the school can be built. It is one reason why there has not been any land dispute in this school. JEMCO has granted funding to this school because it is a community own school. It is a good role model to the whole Chuuk State.”

*MAN*

“What I ask is that we put the responsibility for the schools back into the hands of our community people. We are fully capable of constructing physical schools using materials and designs connected with our culture. We have not lost those skills. These skills are in fact alive and well on the islands; however, they are at risk to be lost if we do not value them. When I was a child there was much more of a connection between the elementary school curriculum and the knowledge and ways of thinking in the community.”

*PET*

### ***Collaboration***

“There is also a special way of fishing. This is *lale* (a fishing method were people use coconut leaves). This is where all people gather and fish using coconut leaves to bring fish together. People formed a big circle and surrounded the school of fish. This kind of fishing required everyone to collaborate. Once the fish were caught, certain fish were selected for the chiefs. Then, the rest were shared among the people.”

B. Hilario (personal communication, February 2, 2011)

Chuukese people work and live together -- sharing, reciprocating, and accomplishing difficult tasks in concert. This is the meaning of a valued proverb: “Angang chok aramas.” It is a value that is experienced and learned in homes, churches and schools: Life is with people. We collaborate to accomplish small and great things. This expresses itself time and again in stories of farming and fishing.

### **Hear our Voices on “Collaboration”**

“I would like to make particular mention however to the significance of the first harvest, as that is a very important element in our culture. The first harvest is an annual event. It requires the cooperation of many people including the immediate family, the extended family and the clans. For this event to be celebrated smoothly people must work together in

harmony with the aforementioned values. Once the preparations are complete, everyone gathers. This represents a very important time for teaching, as the stage is set for community leaders to acknowledge the contributions of others, connect the harvest to heritage and values, and create opportunities for the community to understand the significance of the event. The significance of this occasion cannot be overstated. The first harvest represents a time to teach the community about the importance of the environment and the human community.”

*RAY*

“First harvest is when people prepare the food and bring to the home of the chief. Even though the food is brought to his house, but the chief in return divide among the people to share. The chief liked to show the people that without them the food will not be possible. It is the reason that the food is shared among all.”

*KAN*

“What I learned from the “men’s house” (the elders) were the cultural lessons. Each clan has its own meeting house; so boys from each clan get to dwell with the older men in the meeting house. I began to enjoy learning from the elders. Let me explain the purpose of the meeting house for men in our culture: The meeting house for men is a place for young men and older men to get away from home and learn together. When it is time for the crops to be harvested, for example, all extended families serve him. There is one practice which we call “*umwun samon*”. This is a common practice throughout Chuuk. It relates to the serving of the first harvest to the traditional chief.

*KOV*

For example, when the first harvest is ready, each “*falang*” prepares pounded breadfruit. The members of each *falang* pick breadfruit and prepare it in an earthen oven and pound it. When it is ready, all of the *falang* bring it to the traditional chief. It is done ceremonially. Even though it is intended for the chief, elders from each *falang* gather to exchange words of wisdom and take their share. Boys reach a certain age, he is considered to be a “man.” He must leave home and live with the older men in the meeting house. This was where cultural learning occurred.”

*IRO*

“The following day the bowl of food is taken to a special location which is called a “*ras*”. It usually requires eight or 10 men to transport the dish. They carry the bowl on polls resting on their shoulders. They walk with prescribed movements that are accompanied by a particular chant. In this chant they express appreciation for the harvest. They also specify where the food comes from and the specifics of the harvest. They ask for

blessing. Included in the chant is a proverb that describes how the first crop of breadfruit are for the ghosts; the second crop for the chief (*samol*). The men transport the food to the “*ras*”, which is not so much a place as a center— as in the center of a circle. The food container is placed in the center. The men back away. One man is designated to come forth to uncover the dish. There is a ritual that accompanies this process too. The man is expected to crawl like a lizard across the circle to the bowl. As he crawls he chants.”

*MAN*

“There are two important words in our language to encapsulate the above: “*faffairotiw*” and “*faffairota*.” \*These are sacred words. We do not just give these to anyone. In our language these words describe what might be called the notion of reciprocity, the responsibility to give and receive; to give and take. Reciprocity is anchored in the family but expressed in all of our social institutions including church, state and school. The second term illustrates the concept of reciprocity—one might think of it as the other way around. Just as parents, teachers, religious leaders and others demonstrate respect love and care for their family, students and congregations; so do we expect the recipients to give back. It is a principle based on modeling.”

*KAN*

“Another example might relate to the ocean. If the chiefs identify a certain part of the ocean as needing to be fished, they will call all of the people; and together they will all fish that certain part of the island. Then, instead of each family taking home their catch, the food is taken to a central place where it is divided and shared among all. It is the chiefs who will divide the catch among the falang.”

*HIL*

“Besides the two expressive terms above, there are two other important terms to mention. These terms in fact convey deeper meaning: “*amwansosich*” and “*amwanifich*.” These two concepts represent what might be called guiding rules for the community—beginning at the family level, the clan, government, schools and so forth. This first term that describes the relationships between authority figures and those, for whom they are responsible, including parents to children, government officials to the broader community. It relates to the concept of respect, trust and care. Community spokespeople teach the importance of caring for the land, growing crops in sustainable ways, managing the reef including sustainable fishing practices, and ways to promote harmony including demonstration of respect for the elderly, children and women.”

*RAY*



“I cannot overemphasize the importance that these departure ceremonies play in the health and well-being of our islands. Everyone comes together to impress on young people the importance of representing family and Island with dignity and hard work. These ceremonies functioned (and still do) to teach and support the young people who were leaving; and all so to instill in the younger ones that one day they would have their chance to leave for school to. To this day, when Islanders gather at the airports to bid farewell to loved ones, the principal remains the same. It is that we are to hold one another in in our hearts and minds no matter where we may reside.”

*PET*

“As men or women gathered together to do the “um”, it is the best time to share together the important skills. Working together and learning together are fun. Good times sharing, including passing on knowledge to the younger generation. Before, when a “*falang*” is preparing food, all of the extended family is included even those who may live far away. This too is a very important value in our culture as we must keep everyone in mind. Reciprocity is very much practiced in the culture.”

*RES*

Preparation and presentation of the dish involves prescribed rituals. Even the container in which the food is transported is very special and carried by a group of men. They move in a particular rhythm as they deliver and present the gift to the chief. The ritual is sacred, intended to insure the survival of the people. The containers for the dish are owned and protected by a select few. First, the men are expected to confirm the maturity of the breadfruit—to ensure that it is time for the harvest. The maturity of the breadfruit also signals the time to harvest coconut when it is at a special stage called “*iot*.” This is also the day to grate the coconuts and put the meat in the sun to dry. On the second day, the bread fruit is collected from underneath the trees. The coconut meat continues to dry underneath the sun. At the same time, coconuts at a different stage of development are picked—these are the ones with thicker meat and milk. What I’m describing includes a great deal of learning; it is not something that can simply be talked about. It must be experienced. There is also mathematics involved because the various ingredients are proportional to one another. First, one estimates the size of the total preparation and then calculates the relative number of the three types of coconuts and amounts of other ingredients. Hopefully, from my description, one can understand why the undertaking involves so many people from different families. The grating of the coconut is done by women. It is the men who mix the grated coconut with the pounded breadfruit; and prepare the earthen oven. Perhaps as many as 30 herbs, leaves and flowers are included as ingredients. They are not all added at the same time. The sequence is prescribed by tradition. It must be learned. The taste of the dish depends

upon the skill and dedication of the community. Because so many coconuts are required, we have developed a tool to facilitate squeezing. This tool is called *uchuuch*. *Uchuuch* is made out of hibiscus tree that curved like a shallow u-shape. It hangs between two posts. Imagine the collection bowl: surrounding the bowl sit the men or pounding the breadfruit. When a man finishes pounding one portion (as defined by his pounding board), he places this portion into the collection bowl. Each man does the same. This forms a bottom layer of pounded breadfruit, which in turn is covered by squeezed coconut. Remember that the bowl is huge in size. The men continue to layer breadfruit and coconut until the bowl is nearly filled. Then, they break the breadfruit portions into smaller pieces in order to fill in the top layer. Remember too that three different types of coconut are used and added according to recipe. The pounding continues until the collection bowl is full. At this point the bowl is covered by nine selected leaves. These too carry significance and meaning. On top of the leaves, are placed fish and coconut for drinking. Thus, the great bowl is ready for carrying on the subsequent day. The fish that is appropriate for this dish is dried and salted. The coconuts that are arrayed on top of the bowl are for drinking—they are the kinds that are braided together. The word for this is “*nu kate*.”

RAY

### ***Environmental Stewardship***

Our island is tiny. It includes only one physical source for fresh water. All of us on the island knew to care for that place, as our lives depended on it.

C.Rescue (personal communication, October 28, 2011)

The Chuukese are people of “place” -- not simply in respect to our islands; but in respect to our family lands, reefs, and communal properties. Informants’ stories revealed the importance of people, land, plants, trees, ocean, fish, reef, air and water, including both lessons of stewardship and sacred respect.

### **Hear our Voices on “Environmental Stewardship”**

“Scarcity of resources can actually promote environmental protection and positive collective action. This same teacher whom I mentioned above insisted that we use sugar bags as our book bags, as quite honestly that was all we had. Looking back, it was an ingenious solution. The sugar

bags accommodated our books—usually we had to share; and they were transparent so that we could see what they contained. He insisted that each of us come prepared with a pencil which was evident quite simply by glancing at our bag. He also taught us to protect our books by making covers out of the plastic material. These were all good lessons for us. They taught us to cherish what we had.”

*IRO*

“*Moteitomwol*”: Another name of our island Losap. There are significant meanings. Our forefathers explained that it is like a mother who holds her child, breast feeding. There is a special chant for that: “*Mitimitin Tuut*”: This is a special chant for this feeding. It means that people from Losap will get their food from the neighboring island (Lewel). It is considered to be a storage island. Learn to handle gently, not to “overdo” the harvest. Take just what you need. Don’t be greedy. A concept related to babies sucking the milk from a mother’s breast. A baby doesn’t eat too much. It takes just what it needs. “*Mongon Le Chennau*”: Through the tongue.”

*KOV*

“As a boy I did not learn very much about fishing; however, by my third or fourth grade I had learned to plant breadfruit and Taro. I also learned to plant tapioca, potato and other crops. My father showed me how to prepare the earth for gardening. There were times when I became angry for having to join him. He continued encouraging me to stay the course. My father explained that gardening was one way to insure that one day I would return home. I sincerely believe to this day that this is one of the important reasons why I yearn to return home.”

*RAY*

“Perhaps this is a special way of eating that prevents over indulgence. We take only what we need, a little at a time. It is Lewel, the storage island, that holds Losap like a mother holding her baby -- gently. What was special on that day was the fact that coconut leaves had been laid end to end across the beach and all the way to the meeting hall along with clusters of coconuts, many of them which represents an important significance to the island. This display symbolized the openness of our people to give everything they had to the visitors. I must add that besides Coconuts there was another plant called “*luk*” or “*nuk*.” Like so many other things, these concepts are very difficult to translate into English language. Suffice it to say that I interpreted the meaning of these plans to the committee members, explaining that the coconut leaves and coconuts represented the entirety of the people—their consensus that they wholeheartedly supported our visit and the meeting that was to ensue—and the “*Luk*” or “*Nuk*” represented the beliefs of the people and the strength of the people to be as one. So what is the lesson of this story? In part

perhaps it is that when we say the coconut tree is significant in every detail, in every way, it is both a physical reality as well as virtual. The coconut represents our very being.”

*KOV*

“My parents served as excellent models for us children. They respected one another. From them we learned the importance of extended families (on both sides). This respect was manifested in several ways. But because of the significance of family, even though it was difficult to travel back home, my father continued to do so, making sure that our families remained connected. My mother cared for her own parents. I learned again the importance of “family” by watching and helping.”

*REC*

“On our island, most usually it was the responsibility of the eldest member of our extended family to announce the harvest time. According to our traditions, the first breadfruit to be harvested was presented to the traditional chief. It was not my parents’ role to announce the beginning of harvest. In order to feed our family, we picked the ripe breadfruit that would fall to the ground. Every morning, I would join my sisters and brothers to wade across the shallow waters to our neighboring island, where we would go to work picking up the breadfruit from the ground. The harvest that I am describing lasted for two or three months. It occurred during the summertime when there was no school. My brothers and sisters and I would work the harvest every day from Monday through Saturday. We would clean each of the breadfruit underneath the tree, peeling it and preparing it for preservation. To accomplish this we would dig a hole which we would line with breadfruit leaves and grass. We did this every day without fail until the harvest season ended—respecting the fact that Sunday’s were reserved for worship. What are the lessons from this story? We learned to appreciate what little we had. We learned to appreciate the natural resources of our island, realizing that they give us life.”

*BER*

“Another example might relate to the ocean. If the chiefs identify a certain part of the ocean as needing to be fished, they will call all of the people; and together they will all fish that certain part of the island. Then, instead of each family taking home their catch, the food is taken to a central place where it is divided and shared among all. It is the chiefs who will divide the catch among the *falang*.”

*HIL*

“Mothers and fathers teach their sons and daughters the importance of relationship. It is very important that we know our blood relationships

with one another. In our Chuukese language, we have no word for “cousins” or “uncles” or “grandparents” or “aunties” – everyone is related through mother’s line and father’s line.”

*IRO*

“There is a time when crabs lay their eggs. This usually occurs when the moon is full. Our ancestors knew this. They also knew that crabs usually laid their eggs during the summertime. The night before the night of the full moon, we would walk to our neighboring island to confirm that the harvest was about to begin. This was accomplished by pushing aside rocks and branches to see if in fact the crabs were congregating. If the crabs were plentiful, we knew that the following night we would find many of them by the ocean. Then, on the night of the full moon, we would come as a group, boys and girls together, with food to sustain us as we would wait and harvest the crabs of plenty. I should add that we never took more than we needed. We certainly did not want to waste the food, realizing that we would want to have crabs in the future. For example, we would only collect extra crabs for our relatives in the center, if we knew that a boat was coming. In that case, we would place the living crabs in our rice sacks and place the sacks under leaves to keep the crabs cool until their delivery. The word “aro” refers to the eggs that the crabs lay. We also use the word to refer to abundance, because the crab lays so many. Before the crab begins to lay its eggs, it forms its back shell. When that shell is forming it is a perfect time to harvest. The shell is still soft so it tastes delicious. You know, we also eat the contents of the shell of the crab. Before the crab produces its eggs, we call the unformed organ the “*fourrip*.” For us it is a delicacy.”

*BER*

“My father was very helpful in helping me to understand my relationships with other people. He helped me to understand that I was part of our families’ “*falang*” (cook house). Each “*falang*” symbolizes an extended family. It is a very important symbol in our culture. Food is central to relationships. This was very helpful to me to come to an understanding of my relationships with others.”

*ANG*

### **Sanctity of Farming and Fishing**

“There is on practice which we call “umwun samon”. This is a common practice throughout Chuuk. It relates to the serving of the first harvest to the traditional chief. For example, when the first harvest is ready, each “*falang*” prepares pounded breadfruit. Members of each *falang* pick breadfruit and prepare it in an earthen oven and pound it. When it is ready, all of the *falang* bring it to the traditional chief. It is done ceremonially. Even though it is intended for the

chief, elders from each falang gather to exchange words of wisdom and take their share. This ceremony is conducted island wide.

A. Kovack (personal communication, December 3, 2011)

“Once the preparations are complete, everyone gathers. This represents a very important time for teaching, as the stage is set for community leaders to acknowledge the contributions of others, connect the harvest to heritage and values, and create opportunities for the community to understand the significance of the event.”

A. Kanoso (personal communication, December 18, 2011)

Although related to the environmental stewardship, this value celebrates the spiritual nature of food for the Chuukese people. Food is more than nutrition. It is a gift of nature and God to be accepted humbly and in celebration. It is rooted perhaps in our heritage of perseverance and survival. It is evident in Chuukese sayings as “*chuuch chok mongo*” (strength is food), and “*ik me kon a aseliselia*” (fish goes well with pounded breadfruit, or breadfruit goes well with fish). There cannot be feast without food. Food is defined as produce from the garden (plantation) and fish and other sea foods. Several of the interviewees shared stories of one common practice which is *umwun samon*. *Umwun samon* is a well-known feast in Chuuk when the whole clan, community, village, or island came together to offer the first harvest of their crops to the chief.

### **Hear our Voices on “Sanctity”**

“The first harvest represents a time to teach the community about the importance of the environment and the human community. Community spokespeople teach the importance of caring for the land, growing crops in sustainable ways, managing the reef including sustainable fishing practices, and ways to promote harmony among people, including demonstrations of respect for the elderly, children and women.”

*BER*

“When I think of a curriculum outline for my Island school, a number of suggestions come to mind: agriculture, navigation, fishing, social studies

(learning the relationships and interrelationships of people, families and clans), and of course food preparation including the very important dishes associated with the first harvest.”

*IRO*

“This comes back to the “first harvest.” This is the time when the men pick the breadfruit and prepare it according to tradition. It is also important that fish be caught to go with the breadfruit. This “first harvest” serves as a symbol of respect for the traditional “samol.” Again, this celebration of respect, serves to prepare children for life beyond (in school, college and married life).”

*RES*

“It is the same thing with fishing of turtle. Turtle is meant for all the people. The name “Pwaapwa” is to reveal and to share. Once a turtle is caught, it is not meant for only one family. It is shared among all the people on the island. There was this one time when several men went to the nearby island and caught a turtle.”

*HIL*

“I was to learn an important element of respect. You see, each family is responsible to care for its portion of the reef, so of course the first catch is to go to the family that cares takes the place.”

*CHO*

“My mother fished with nets. Sometimes she used a pole with line; but usually it was the women’s net, which actually was a pair of nets, which were laid down in the water with both hands.”

*RAY*

“The first harvest is an annual event. It requires the cooperation of many people including the immediate family, the extended family and the clans. For this event to be celebrated smoothly people must work together in harmony with the aforementioned values. I do want to emphasize that the extensive preparations, ceremonial activities, including special foods—although appearing to be for the “somol”, are in fact intended for everyone. It is truly an event that is of the people, by the people and for them. In this ceremony food is metaphor for knowledge and value. The people partake of the food as they are nourished by ethics and wisdom.”

*KAN*

“Another example might relate to the ocean. If the chiefs identify a certain part of the ocean as needing to be fished, they will call all of the people; and together they will all fish that certain part of the island. Then, instead of each family taking home their catch, the food is taken to a central place

where it is divided and shared among all. It is the chiefs who will divide the catch among the “falang”.

MAN

### ***Sanctity of Place***

“Pei”, it relates to the home. I refer to the word “tumuneoch” -- this word means “caring for your home.” These terms are interrelated in the sense that children are expected to remain physically close to the home site and in so doing to learn the value of home and family. It is very important to understand that “caring for the home” relates to caring for the people. People are central to this value. “Pei” relates to the home, i.e., the people. This important concept suggests that home is more than physical place or land. It is people - living and dead.”

J. Peter (personal communication, October 6, 2011)

Place is considered sacred in the heart of Chuukese people. Place can be best defined as *neni* (territory) or *fonu* (land or island) in the Chuukese language. “Place” refers to the land and all that is on it -- past, present and future. “Place” is location; but also all living things; thus, the Chuukese proverb “*fonu chok aramas*” me “*aramas chok fonu*” (land is people and people are land). There is nothing more valuable than place in the Chuukese culture. Young people are encouraged to work the land. It is believed that their only way to bond to the land is to have your sweats drip on it.

All of the participants mentioned the significance of place in their lived experiences. They also talked about the importance of place by relating it to an individual, a community, as well as the school system in Chuuk. The contemporary idea about “*sukun chok aramas*” me “*aramas chok sukun*” (school is people and people are the school) sometimes mentioned at community speeches or as words of advice from parents to their children who leave the islands to further their schooling.



### **Hear our Voices on “Place”**

“The first harvest represents a time to teach the community about the importance of the environment and the human community. Community spokespeople teach the importance of caring for the land, growing crops in sustainable ways, managing the reef including sustainable fishing practices, and ways to promote harmony among people, including demonstrations of respect for the elderly, children and women.”

*KAN*

“Again, I remembered what the old man had shared with me regarding the place of people on the land. The land is not empty when the people are held central. As a student leaving the island, I realized that I too was not empty.”

*PET*

“*Moteitomwol*”: Another name of our island Losap. There are significant meanings. Our forefathers explained that it is like a mother who holds her child, breast feeding. There is a special chant for that: *Mitimitin Tuut*. This is a special chant for this feeding. It means that people from Losap get their food from the neighboring island (Lewel). It is considered to be a storage island. Learn to handle gently, not to “overdo” the harvest. Take just what you need. Don’t be greedy. A concept related to babies sucking the milk from a mother’s breast. A baby doesn’t eat too much. It takes just what it needs.”

*KOV*

“RESPECT comes in many manifestations: respect for self and others; peers, brothers, parents and elders; the environment, land and ocean.”

*Margarita Cholymay*

“What was special on that day was the fact that coconut leaves had been laid end to end across the beach and all the way to the meeting hall along with clusters of coconuts, many of them which represents an important significance to the island.”

*KOV*

### **Analyzing Questions 5 and 6**

The analysis for interview questions 5 and 6 followed the similar pattern in the first two sets of analysis. Data in the following two interview questions aimed at answering research question 3.

**Interview Question 5:**

How might we reform our primary schools in Chuuk to respect our values, knowledge and practices?

**Interview Question 6:**

If we could create schools from scratch, how might they look in terms of physical appearance and place, teacher preparation, school-community relations, curriculum and materials and language of instruction?

**Table 4.4. Coding Process for Interview Questions 5 and 6**

RAW DATA	OPEN	AXIAL	SELECTIVE
I believe <b>going back to our old ways</b> is very important; that is <b>CULTURE</b> . If we go back to <b>use classrooms constructed from local materials</b> (like the <b>thatch from trees</b> ), we should continue <b>planting those trees</b> . These are difficult tasks, but they <b>represent who we are</b> . Instead of emphasizing “mine” (“me”), we can reinstitute <b>the concept of “our”</b> . If we go back to <b>construct our own buildings</b> , this is the idea. Everyone <b>works together</b> ; everyone <b>shares in the responsibilities</b> .”	GOING BACK TO OUR OLD WAYS CULTURE INSPIRE USE CLASSROOMS CONSTRUCTED FROM LOCAL MATERIALS THE THATCH FROM TREES PLANTING THOSE TREES REPRESENT WHO WE ARE THE CONCEPT OF “OUR” CONSTRUCT OUR OWN BUILDINGS WORKS TOGETHER SHARES IN THE RESPONSIBILITIES	OLD WAY CULTURE LOCAL MATERIAL THATCH PLANTING IDENTIFY OUR OWN BUILDING TOGETHER SHARE RESPONSIBLE OWNNESHIP ISLAND COMMUNITY SERVE RESPONSIBLE HANDS PEOPLE IDEAL CITIZEN TEACHERS ROLE MODEL INSPIRATIONAL CULTURE CURRICULUM ANCHORED HOME LANGUAGE PARTCTICE LESSONS PRACTICE COMMUNITY CLASSROOM HOME LANGUAGE	CULTURE INSTRUCTION DESIGN SCHOOL COMMUNITY TEACHER PREPARATION MATERIALS CURRICULUM MATERIALS HOME LANGUAGE TEACHE PREP LANGUAGE
I believe quite sincerely that we can and should <b>give these responsibilities of ownership of schools back to the island communities</b> they are <b>intended to serve</b> . What I ask is that we <b>put the responsibilities</b> for the <b>schools back into the hands of our community people</b> .”	GIVE RESPONSIBILTIES OF OWNERSHIP SCHOOLS BACK THE ISLAND COMMUNITIES INTENDED TO SERVE PUT THE RESPONSIBILITIES SCHOOL BACK INTO THE HANDS OF OUR COMMUNITY PEOPLE		
In describing <b>the teachers</b> I would begin by suggesting that they must <b>function as role models of ideal citizens</b> . We have words for these which are <b>“tipe tou”, “tipe ngupur”, “tipe pwos”, “tipe tong”, “tipe mecheres</b> .” They referred to the <b>heartfelt being, inspiration and vision</b> .”	THE TEACHERS FUNCTION AS ROLE MODELS OF IDEAL CITIZENS TIPE TOU TIPE NGUPUR, TIPE PWOS TIPE TONG, TIPE MECHERES HEARTFELT BEING INSPIRATION AND VISION WE NEED TO INFUSE CULTURE INTO TEACHING INSTRUCTION BE ANCHORED HOME LANGAUGE MORE THAN TALK ACTIVELY ENGAGED CULTURAL PRACTICES		
I would like to begin by saying that we <b>need to infuse our culture into the curriculum</b> . This <b>that instruction should be anchored in our home language</b> . is <b>more than “talk”</b> – our children need to be <b>actively engaged in cultural practices, touching , seeing, smelling, and manipulating the valued elements of our lives</b> . <b>Many valuable lessons can be taught within the</b>			

community, beyond the classroom walls.” I believe that instruction should be anchored in our home language.”	TOUCHING SEEING, SMELLING, MANIPULATING VALUED ELEMENS MATERIALS TAUGHT WITHIN THE COMMUNITY BEYOND THE CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION ANCHORED HOME LANGAUGE		
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After the raw data were coded and categorized, five significant themes emerged. Based on how the two interview questions were worded and presented themes such as: school design, school community relations, teacher preparation, curriculum and materials, and language of instruction emerged. These important themes that informed research question three also reflected back and supported the main purpose of this study.



Figure 4.5. Emerged Themes from Interview Questions 5 and 6

### ***School Design***

“I believe going back to our old ways is very important; that is CULTURE. If we go back to use classrooms constructed from local materials (like the thatch from trees), we should continue planting those trees. These are difficult tasks, but they represent who we are. Instead of emphasizing “mine” (“me”), we can reinstitute the concept of “our.” If we go back to construct our own buildings, this is the idea. Everyone works together; everyone shares in the responsibilities.”

A. Kovack (personal communication, December 3, 2011)

If the Chuuk educational system is to infuse Chuukese values, knowledge and practices into public education, it should be expressed in the design and construction of village elementary schools. Island schools should be constructed and maintained from local materials with the hands of local island-based artisans. Within our living memory, island primary schools reflected traditional practices, including coral foundations, open-wall construction, and thatch roofing. They were constructed and maintained using communal systems prescribed by the culture. Construction did not depend upon the *money economy* (including cargo ships, foreign building supplies and “outsider” workers); instead, materials and labor were locally “donated” through island ways of gifting, bartering and negotiating.

Design, construction and maintenance were regulated through village councils, including traditional and church leadership. People felt welcome in the schools. Public meetings were held on the grounds and in the pavilions. Schools were strategically located near reef and plantation. The school was part of the village; rather than “agent” of distant government.

My informants agreed by consensus that island-based primary schools should have the look and feel of traditional Chuukese architecture. When children leave the islands (usually at 8th grade) to attend centralized high schools, perhaps this should change; but primary schools should be restructured using building techniques “tried and true” to the traditional culture.

We say this fully aware that this has implications for curriculum and instruction. Traditional schools were without electricity, air conditioning, security and protection from inclement weather. For the most part, they were open to the elements. This

“reality” will be taken into account in the subsequent section on “curriculum and methods” as it has implications for technology in education and such.

### **Hear our Voices on School Design**

“For what I see now, the classrooms that are currently in place were designed by outsiders. I believe that we can and should use the resources that are quite naturally available on our own islands. Again this brings us back to the concept of “tumunoch.” This is what I referred to as “caring.” I believe quite sincerely that we can and should give this responsibility of ownership of schools back to the island communities they are intended to serve. It is true that the natural resources of our islands require constant attention, perhaps more so than the block and concrete structures that we currently have. This however should not be a problem because we have the people to do the work. What I ask is that we put the responsibility for the schools back into the hands of our community people. We are fully capable of constructing physical schools using materials and designs connected with our culture. We have not lost those skills. These skills are in fact alive and well on the islands; however, they are at risk to be lost if we do not value them.”

*PET*

“What if we were to go back to the old ways? What if our schools were designed as open centers?”

*IRO*

“I would like to offer my opinion regarding the physical design of school buildings. As a nation we have now adopted the construction styles of the West. Our schools are built of block and concrete. When I was at our national college it saddened me to see the older thatch structures dismantled in favor of the new construction. It was claimed that the thatched structures were fire hazards. The physical appearance of schools can have a psychological impact on communities. I believe the school should reflect heritage. It even bothers me when I see the brooms. We make very good brooms. We always have. So why do we feel compelled to purchase the store-bought ones?”

*RAY*

“I strongly recommend that we return to the old ways of construction for our schools. They are perfectly well-suited for learning. I remember as a child in first grade attending a classroom built with local materials including thatch roof. The classroom was cool and comfortable. The traditional classrooms were open to the outdoors. They were in fact happy places where we could see the ocean and trees and life of the community. It was not distracting. It was motivating. We liked coming to school. I

remember my teachers taking us out of doors for lessons. We would draw in the sand. I remember looking across the lagoon at the various islands, sketching them with my fingers or stick in the sand.”

*KAN*

“The structure of a school is not really important. Education can take place any place. If financial distress continues, so be it; we can provide schooling in community halls, out-of-doors, even in teachers’ homes.”

*RES*

“I believe that if we are able to start a school, we should follow the Chuukese way of knowledge. It is very important to remember that we must anchor our work in what belongs to the Chuukese people. If we use our local materials we will be strong for it. No need to wait for grants and funding to come from the sky. Everything comes from our local environment. I hope that this new movement will lessen the “greedy feeling” that is destroying our people: money, money. It will also teach the younger generation a different way of looking at life. I recently heard, when someone was telling me his story of fear that the compact funding would end. This person is only depending on outside wealth. He is not realizing that we have many things at home to help us survive. For now, our people are dependent on outside wealth; when in reality we have wealth in our own backyard (ocean, land, soil and so forth). Going back to our “old ways” is to grow our own food. That was our “wealth.” We can continue to support one another, and cooperate together.”

*ANG*

“I don’t know how much longer we rely on outside support, but if we can build our own school building from our own materials, then I believe we can also support the idea. Plus our own is comfortable. It helped our people to care for each other more.”

*BER*

“For school building, I would recommend our own kinds of buildings. Knowing now that money is a big issue, we cannot make our own money. “ I believe we can rely on what we have in the environment. We have our trees, and we can build our own school buildings using our own materials.”

*HIL*

### ***School-Community Relations***

“I believe quite sincerely that we can and should give this responsibility of ownership of schools back to the island communities they are intended to serve. What I ask is that we put the responsibility for the schools back into the hands of our community people.”

J. Peter (personal communication, October 6, 2011)

It is within the lived experience of the informants that island communities were actively involved in the life of the village school. Many of our teachers grew up in our villages, knowing everyone by name and title. We had active parent-teacher associations in which parents were welcomed onto school grounds; and consulted on such things as homework for their children. In some instances, parents prepared fish and taro for the school lunch programs. Land owners bequeathed land for school construction. Children engaged in community service projects. Church leaders reinforced literacy instruction in the churches. Traditional and church leaders acknowledged outstanding students -- celebrated youth as they departed for high school and returned. It was not perfect, by any means, but villages valued their schools as “keys to a better future.” This stands in stark contrast with the current conditions: “brick and mortar” schools in disrepair; defaced by vandals; locked and shuttered.

### ***Hear our voices on School and Community Relations***

“We need to understand that the school is a window to the community. Just as I have suggested that curriculum and materials should emanate from the community, so must the spirit of ownership. For example, schools should be open even when teachers are not present. Other designated community members can show leadership. Schools should be open on weekends to permit community groups to engage all manner of activities. Students should participate in service learning activities in which they volunteer in the community to help others.”

RAY

“I would also like to describe summer activities to make my point. As it is now, in the summertime the classrooms are locked. The children may play in the compound but the grass grows long because there’s no one to cut it. Children engage in various acts of mischief—breaking open the locks or cutting the screens. All of these malicious acts are symptomatic of a bigger problem; namely, the distance between school and community—physical, psychological and social. I would suggest during the summertime the school be opened to community groups. For example, women and girls can study home economics. This is not a radical suggestion. It is perfectly doable if we simply change the way we think about the place of school on the islands. If community groups could begin to enjoy the school themselves, pride in school will grow. This will impact the children as well.”

*KAN*

“At this school Mechitiw Elementary School, there is a strong respect among all levels of people (parents, community, teachers, students and all) When this link is strong, it is a great school. When there is no strong connection, it will not be a strong school. This will produce good learning among the students.”

*MAN*

“During the early years when school first started hot lunch program, there was only rice. Then the chief requested the support of the community that parents provide fish for their children. Parents supported the request. There was a very strong movement in the community that they brought firewood for cooking of the rice. Each family took turns cooking and preparing meals for the students.”

*RES*

“School and community will work together, they will agree on how to operate the school. The whole Community of Mechitiw believes they own the school. The school belongs to them. It is why the sense of ownership is there. They work together and they make sure everything works well. From my initiative, the leaders from the village got together and agreed to give away the land so the school can be built. It is one reason why there has not been any land dispute in this school. JEMCO has granted funding to this school because it is a community own school. It is a good role model to the whole Chuuk State.”

*MAN*

### ***Teacher Preparation***

“The reality as I see it is that for the most part the teachers in Chuuk have the necessary knowledge and skills to teach. The problem is that they are not connected to the local communities. The teachers see themselves as working for



the Central Department. And because there is this lack of connection between the school and the community, community members themselves lose faith in the schools. I believe it would be an entirely different situation if we restructured the system to empower local communities (including parents, Chiefs, elders, and others) to assume greater responsibility for the life of the school. Most of my teachers were not college graduates. But I believe that they were responsible in the sense of the word as expressed by “tumunoch.”

J. Peter (personal communication, October 6, 2011)

It is not that Chuuk has ever had “professionally trained” teachers. The Japanese installed their own. The Americans provided “Peace Corps.” It was beyond the scope of this dissertation to address teacher preparation for secondary education. However, my informants agreed that primary school teachers teaching in village schools should *speak the Chuukese language of the island, teach in the Chuukese language of the island, and know and practice the Chuukese culture of the island*. At least a majority of the teachers should have grown up on the island they are serving -- as cultural practices, ways of life, and social networks differ across islands and districts. Peace Corp volunteers and other “outsiders” may be welcomed in a minority; but they too should be expected to learn the language and culture and practice it in their “co-teaching.”

What is described above is within the lived experience of my informants. When we attended our village schools, our teachers were dedicated to children. They were active in community affairs. They were paid very little money. They embraced teaching as a “service” profession, similar to church service. Teachers were dedicated out of love for children. These ethics and values still abound on the islands, although they are threatened by “professional standards” and “regulations” that function to remove the local work force.

All informants agreed that teachers need to learn to teach; and that colleges may serve a role in teacher training. This college role, however, should be balanced by the teacher preparation that occurs through mentoring, role modeling, interning and co-teaching on our local islands. The current practice of sending young people “off to college” to become teachers is ineffectual. Most of the young people do not return. We recommend creative “place-based” alternatives to teacher preparation, including perhaps “summer programs” away at college; and field-based, island- based internships during the school year.

We are skeptical of “western testing” to measure teacher competence. Our islands are small. We know one another. We can use our own standards to determine if our teachers are meeting our children’s needs. The literacy and numeracy skills of our children can be measured; and used as part of our teacher evaluation system. But, most importantly, we want our children to be well- grounded in core Chuukese values, knowledge and practices as discussed above -- all elements that no standardized tests can measure.

### **Hear our Voices on Teacher Preparation**

“I believe that good teachers will be those with good educations and respect for Chuukese culture. “When I was a child, I remember all of my teachers to have been caring and dedicated—without exceptions. They promoted the cooperation of levels of people.”

*KOV*

“Teachers are “role models” for our children. They should understand and model the culture; and possess teaching credentials. They should represent the concept of “*miri*” (wisdom) with the children”.

*RES*

“In describing teachers I would begin by suggesting that they must function as role models of ideal citizens. We have words for these which

are “*tipe tou*”, “*tipe ngupur*”, “*tipe pwos*”, “*tipe tong*”, “*tipe mecheres*.” These words do not directly translate into English language. They referred to the heartfelt being, inspiration and vision. The second term is often used when a person envisions his/her interest in achieving something that is difficult to reach. It suggests strength and speed. The third term relates to humility and self-effacement. The fourth suggests love and care. And finally is the value of resilience and compromise—understanding that sometimes it is better to respect and accept the opinions of others even if you should disagree. These qualities are not necessarily learned. They are qualities that certain people may possess and those are the ones who should be our teachers. Besides this, I also believe that our teachers should be credentialed in the profession.”

*KAN*

“It is important that we institute ongoing in-service training for our teachers. The world is changing, the information base is growing, new technologies are appearing—it is essential that teachers are respected as change agents who need and deserve ongoing education and support. I also believe that teamwork is very important. Teachers must not work in isolation of one another. Every teacher possesses skills and talents to be shared. Schools need to be organized with this principle in mind. For example, there are teachers who know a great deal about science and agriculture. Those that don’t should have opportunities to shadow those that do. I say these things because there is a legacy in education that isolates teachers from one another. They close their classroom doors and teach autonomously. This needs to change.”

*RAY*

“I believe in teacher training using the standard methods of the Western educational system. But, as much as possible, the teachers need to learn about the Chuukese culture. If a teacher does not have the credentials in “Chuukese culture”, the teacher needs to go back to school. It is essential that our colleges teach cultural values, history and practices. Our children must learn about themselves; before they can learn about other cultures. Fifty years ago, our students learned so much; our teachers never went to college; many did not go to high school. But nonetheless the students learned so much -- because the teachers were dedicated. Teachers were devoted; they cared for their jobs; they loved the children.”

*CHO*

“Let everything in Chuuk become part of the teaching. With our money problems, we can never bring in the types of teaching materials we have in America. I believe that teachers can be trained in how to turn a coconut into a teaching lesson -- everything (language arts, science, arts) can be taught just from the coconut tree. Most important is for us to develop Chuukese materials that are done in the Chuukese language. What we have now are sets of performance expectations that we call “curriculum

framework. We can keep this as a guide ... but incorporate everything about the culture as part of the curriculum.”

MAN

### ***Curriculum and Materials***

I believe our children are our future. They are culturally considered the “paddle” and the “pole” on our island. We do not simply paddle. We also pole the canoe. It is the reason it is so important they be educated in both worlds. They can move our island. The island can be moved with their guidance and leadership.

A. Kovack (personal communication, December 3, 2011)

Primary education in Chuuk needs to be infused with locally-referenced curricula and materials. Literacy and numeracy should be taught as “tools of empowerment” -- not as ends in themselves. Chuukese curriculum should be organized around core themes into which literacy and numeracy are infused:

These themes impact both “curriculum” and “instruction.” Our *social studies* should incorporate Chuukese concepts of respect, perseverance, collaboration, service and sanctity. Our *sciences* should include environmental stewardship, farming and fishing. Our *literacy* should permeate everything as we learn to “read and write” our world. We value the “language-experience” approach to instruction in which teachers and children “story their world” by writing about it as they experience it.

Children should be organized using principles of “cooperative learning” (heterogeneous grouping; project-based, hands-on, experiential learning) -- giving particular value to fishing, farming and food preparation -- and the accumulated “village wisdom” we possess. Our materials should derive from our natural and cultural environment. We do not need western textbooks and workbooks. We would appreciate paper and writing tools; and training supports for us to “story our world. We would also

ask that the post-secondary institutions in the region, conduct *writer's workshops* to produce and publish stories in our vernacular languages. We will not “depend” on that hope, however -- as our expectations for “foreign” assistance is low. Our expectation is that our children will leave for high school with strength of character and pride; able to articulate our values, knowledge and practices, and literate.

**Hear our Voices on Curriculum and Materials**

“I want us to learn both English and Chuukese (American culture and Chuukese culture). Let’s blend them both together; and the teacher will teach this. I envision both sides: American and Chuukese. But first we must start with what we have in the culture. As the children learn a second culture, it will be easier for the children having first learned our own. They will have the prior knowledge.

*KOV*

“When I think of a curriculum outline for my Island school, a number of suggestions come to mind: agriculture, navigation, fishing, social studies (learning the relationships and interrelationships of people, families and clans), and of course food preparation including the very important dishes associated with the first harvest.”

*IRO*

“I don’t really know what is in the curriculum. What I do know is that our “culture” is missing. I see what is going on in Hawai’i. They see the importance of teaching the English language and preserving culture. Before we lose our culture, we should do the same. We should start to create our own curriculum. We can use everything in our environment. We can even make our own materials.”

*RES*

“Regarding curriculum and materials, let us specifically strengthen our values to be taught. Everything about people, culture, land, environment, skills and practices that helped our ancestors to survive include all in our curriculum. It is important that our language be prioritized, but we can also learn others. Not just English, but others that can benefit us in the outside world.”

*RAY*

“I would like to begin by saying that we do have some materials that are made available by the central office—not enough by any means. But most importantly we need to infuse our culture into the curriculum. This is

more than “talk”—our children need to be actively engaged in cultural practices, touching, seeing, smelling and manipulating the valued elements of our lives. I do not suggest that everything should be conducted within the school building itself. Many valuable lessons can and should be taught within the community, beyond the classroom walls.”

*KAN*

“I am very aware that much of the contemporary curriculum of our schools has been imported or imposed from the outside. If we are to truly design an educational system that is child centered and culturally values based, we must infuse our community values and practices into the very lifeblood of the classroom. There is perhaps a strange irony which is that our educational leaders seem to value education intended to prepare our children for lives away. Shouldn’t we first begin by teaching our children to maintain, survive and thrive right here on our very own islands? Is the function of education to send our children away?”

*RAY*

“For curriculum and materials, I would strongly recommend things to be local: local materials, local knowledge, and local talents. The knowledge of Chuukese math, language can be part of the curriculum. I know Chuuk in the past did not run on a curriculum and learning still existed. Now there is curriculum, students do not learn as much.”

*MAN*

### ***Language of Instruction***

“I would suggest that both are native and English languages are important. However, emphasis should be given to the native language. In my own growing up, I missed out on significant language learning. Looking back, I realized there were many important terms and concepts that I should have been taught, but was not. Our language is very rich. It deserves its rightful place in the center of our curriculum”.

A. Kanoso (personal communication, December 18, 2011)

We are very aware that our children live “in the world” -- and that English language and other languages are important for survival. We understand that when our children leave their home islands to attend high school and college, their textbooks may likely be in English language.

This dissertation focuses on the *elementary education* of our youth. For our children, we believe that they should first and foremost be firmly grounded in the

language of their island and of the Chuukese state. We encourage our FSM nation to standardize the orthography of our languages; but until such time, we believe that children should acquire literacy as best defined by local island leadership.

We accept the research base of “bilingual education” that children should first acquire a firm literacy foundation in their home language. English (or another second language) may be introduced when children master third grade read levels in the home language -- not before. And when English literacy is introduced, Chuukese literacy instruction should be continued, promoting a balanced bilingualism.

This means, too, that island teachers may require “professional” post-secondary training, through summer programs and workshops. Many of our teachers are not well-trained in home language instruction.

### **Hear our Voices on Language of Instruction**

“I believe it both our own language and English-language must be emphasized in our schools. I remember attending high school in Guam. Students made fun of me when I mispronounced English words. For example, I said “Huston” for “Houston.” This embarrassed me. First and foremost, our own language must be taught. Other languages can follow.”

*IRO*

“Chuukese language is important to teach to our children. It is also important for our children to learn foreign languages to survive in the world.”

*REC*

“This is a very important issue which is complicated by the fact that many parents and other community adults believe that schools should give priority to the English language—realizing that it is very important that children learn this second language. What is not well understood is the role of home languages to support second-language acquisition. Many people do not understand that a first language actually supports the acquisition of a second language. When a child acquires a concept in the language of the home, this knowledge carries over to a second language in that the child already has the concept as an anchor upon which he or she can depend. This confusion needs great public discussion because many

well-meaning individuals are confused about it. I think that my own life serves as a case in point. When I grew up on my home island I learned in my home language. Years later when I left home to attend Xavier high school I was placed in remedial classes because my level of English was low. What I found however was that I could still be a very good student in my classes because I was accustomed to thinking about the many concepts I had acquired as a child and using them to bridge to the new knowledge. Of course my English improved quickly at Xavier high school. I am sure in part it was because of the school and family support site had received as a young boy back home.”

*PET*

“It is important that our language be prioritized, but we can also learn others. Not just English, but others that can benefit us in the outside world.”

*ANG*

“I believe that instruction should be anchored in our home languages. There is a well-researched body of evidence support the fact that learning in the home language transfers to second and third languages—especially concepts. When I suggest that the home language should be taught first in school this includes literacy and language, i.e., reading, writing and critical thinking. I’m also very aware that learning English and other languages open important opportunities for many of our young people. Of course these languages should be taught to but not at the expense of the home language. I do believe especially when envisioning early education for children should be exposed exclusively to the home language, as it can be confusing and distracting to mix languages. I myself am a product of a small island school in which my home language was the primary vehicle of instruction through my elementary school years. This experience only served to strengthen my success in secondary and postsecondary education in which the English language came of paramount importance. Let me paint the picture of a runner. Back home this young person learns to run. He or she is very fast. Then this runner comes to Hawai’i. Does he still know how to run? Can he run even if he now is expected to wear shoes or a different kind of uniform? Of course he does. We only have to learn to run once.”

*RAY*

“I believe that children need to learn other languages. But I also believe that our children need to speak, read and write in the Chuukese language. This is their mother tongue. This is the language of their comprehension. As they read and write in Chuukese language, they will develop their communication and understanding. Then, of course, they should be taught other languages; not only English. But I also believe that all the other



languages of Micronesia should be taught. There is no point in learning Japanese, if we do not know Pohnpeian or Kosraean or Yapese, or others.”

*CHO*

### **Focus Group**

There were two folds for the focus group. The first one was the checklist and the second one was the open discussion where participants share comments, feedback and insights.

#### **Focus Group Checklist**

A focus group meeting was conducted at the conclusion of individual interviews. For reasons of health and travel, only five of the 11 interviewees were able to attend. The three-hour meeting was conducted on the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Campus, and included a shared meal. The intent of the focus group was (a) to thank the informants; (b) to confirm that the core themes form after the three coding cycles were (c) to discuss the coded data in relation with identified themes on the; and (d) to provide opportunities for clarification and elaboration within a group setting. A checklist was administered prior to beginning the oral discussion. Every participant was given a structured (round-robin) opportunity to express their thoughts. Open discussion was encouraged. Follow up questions were made to elicit additional feedback and insights.

Data from focus group checklist were analyzed using Microsoft Office Excel 2007. Numbers from the Likert scale were entered into the spreadsheet in Microsoft Excel. From the data on the spreadsheet, a table was created summarizing the responses gathered from the five focus group participants (See Table 4.3).

**Table 4.5. Gathered Data from Focus Group Checklist**

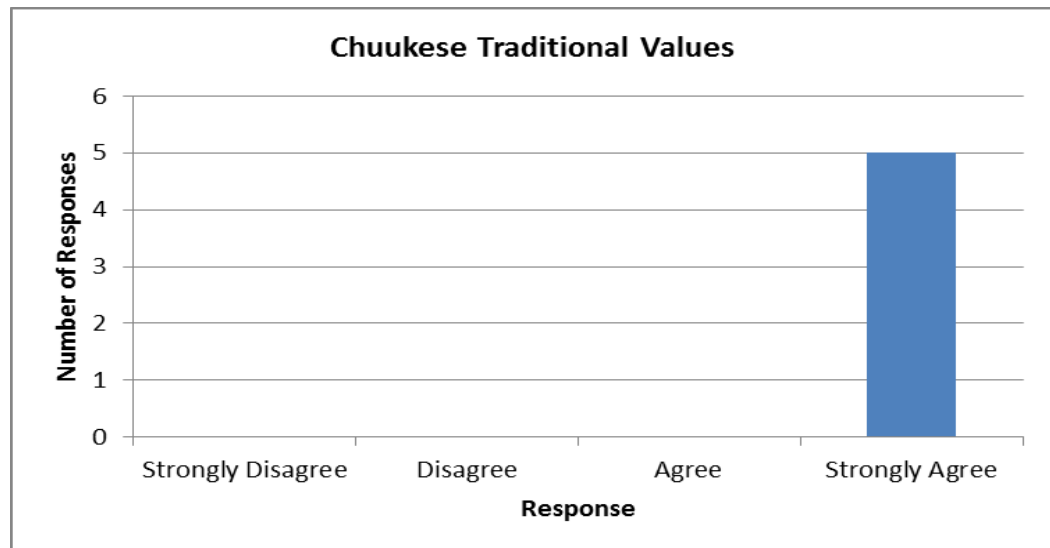
PART.	Q1	Q2	Q3					
			KNO PRA	PHY PLA	TR. REC	SCH. COM	LAN INST	NAT DIA
IRO	SA	5 5 5 5 5 5 5	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA
RES	SA	5 4 5 4 4 5 5	A	A	SA	SA	SA	SA
PET	SA	5 5 5 5 5 5 5	SA	SA	SA	SA	A	SA
CHO	SA	5 5 5 5 5 5 5	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA
RAY	SA	5 5 5 5 5 5 5	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA

*Table Legend:* Part.= Participants, Q1= Question 1, Q2= Question 2, Q3= Question 3, KNO PRA= Knowledge Practice, PHY PLA= Physical Place, TR. REC= Teacher Recruitment, SCH. COM= School Community. LAN INST= Language of Instruction, NAT DIA, National Dialogue, SA= Strongly Agree, and A= Agree.

From the table above, Table 4.3, 14 different graphs were created to illustrate the results from the focus group checklist. These were the 3 main questions on the checklist followed by their answers. Each of the answers was graphed.

**Question 1:**

*What are our Life Stories? We shared life stories and live experiences, in order to activate our memories and identify a positive “narrative” that includes core cultural values to anchor the reorganization of our schools.  
I believed that I conveyed my Chuukese traditional values when interviewed and that they were transcribed accurately.*

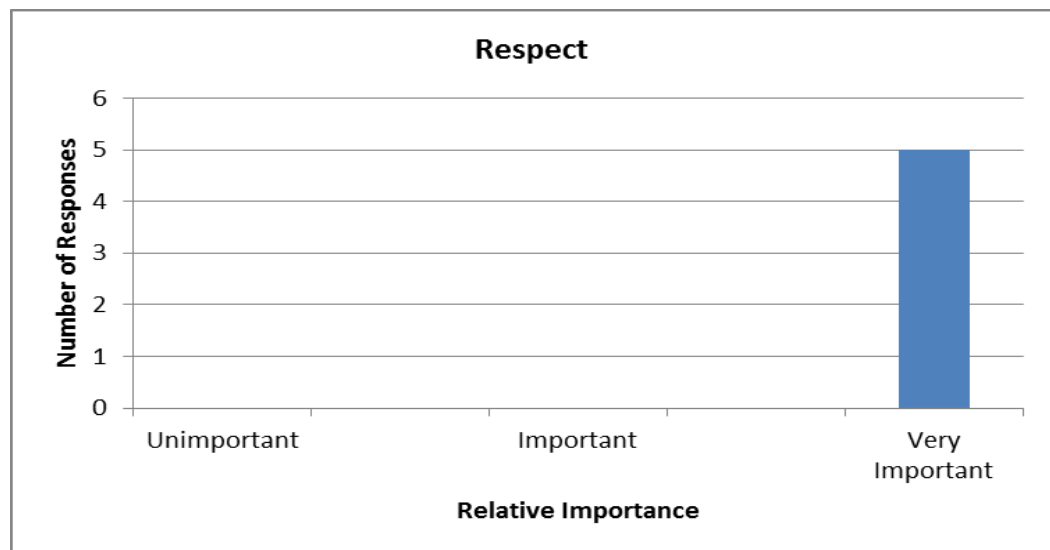


The 'Chuukese Traditional Value Chart' indicates that all five focus group respondents strongly agreed that they conveyed their values during interviews and they were transcribed accurately.

**Question 2:**

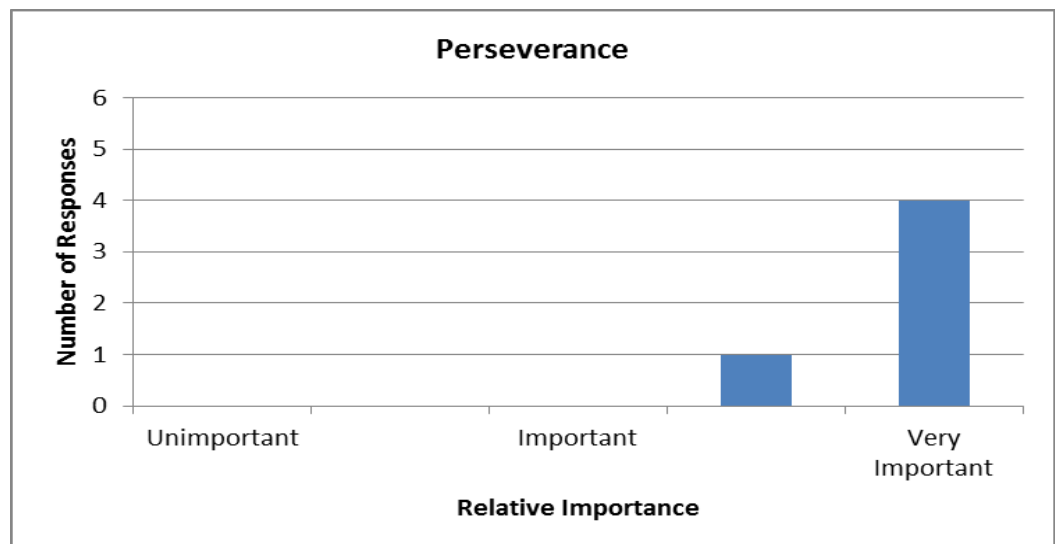
*What are our core values?*

**Respect**



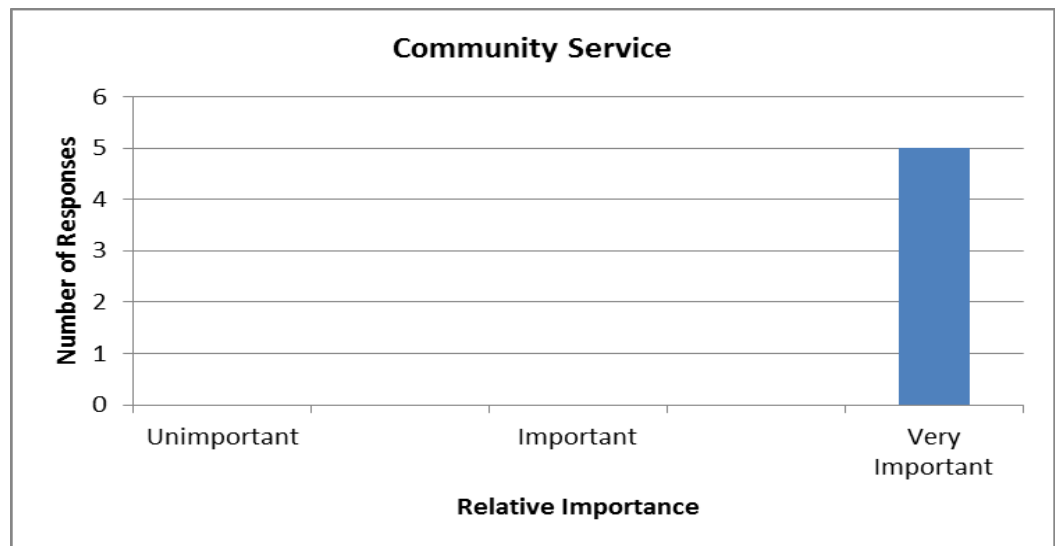
The 'Respect Chart' shows that all five focus group participants agreed that respect is a very important value for school reform.

**Perseverance**



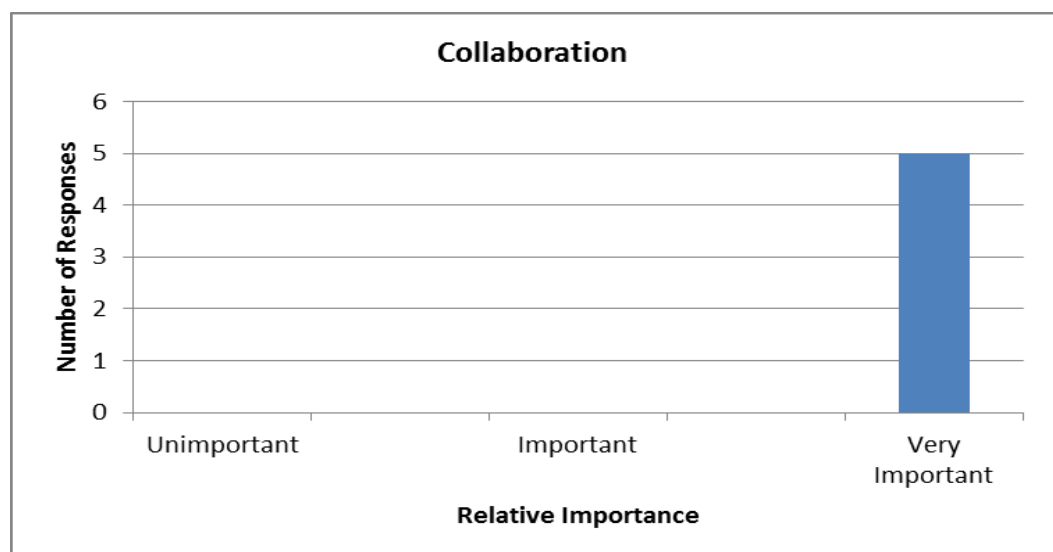
The 'Perseverance Chart' indicates that four out of five also felt perseverance is a very important value to school reform.

### Community Service



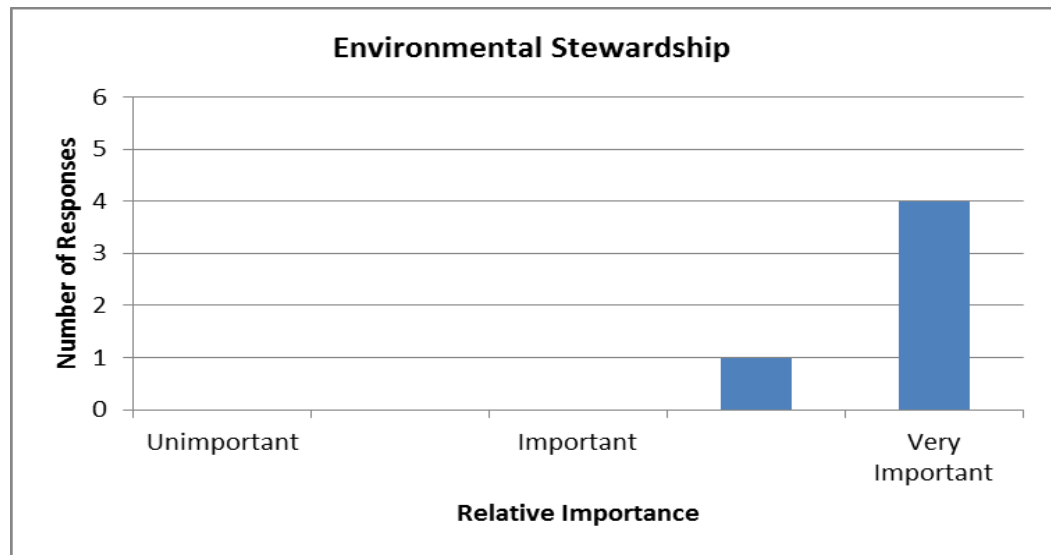
The 'Community Service Chart' indicated that all focus group participants felt community service is very important for school reform.

### Collaboration



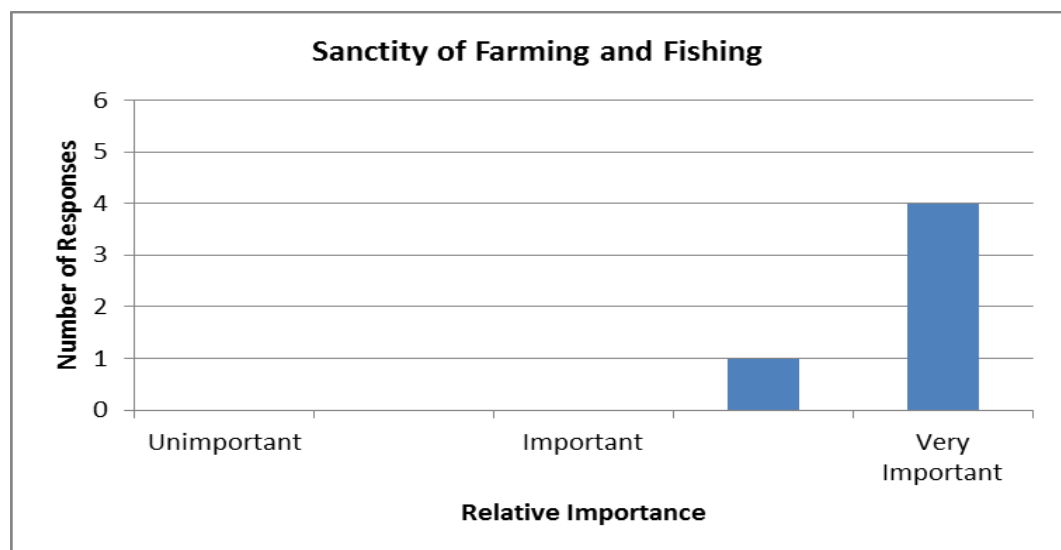
The 'Collaboration Chart' also indicates that all focus group participants felt collaboration is very important for school reform.

### Environmental Stewardship



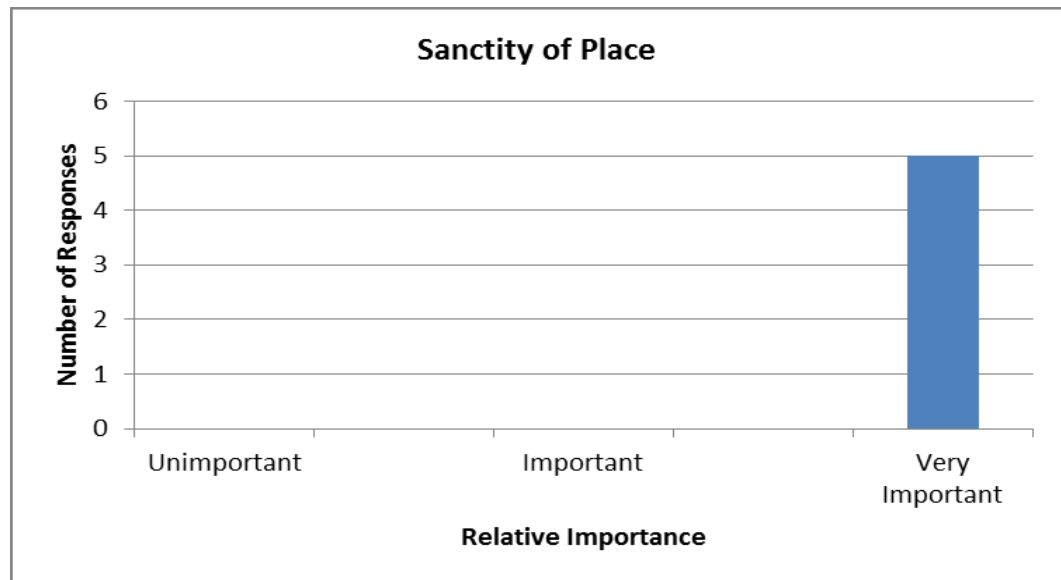
The 'Environmental Stewardship Chart' indicates that four out of five focus group participants felt environmental stewardship is very important for school reform in Chuuk.

### Sanctity of Farming and Fishing



The 'Sanctity of Farming and Fishing Chart' shows four out five focus group participants felt sanctity of farming and fishing is very important for school reform in Chuuk.

### Sanctity of Place



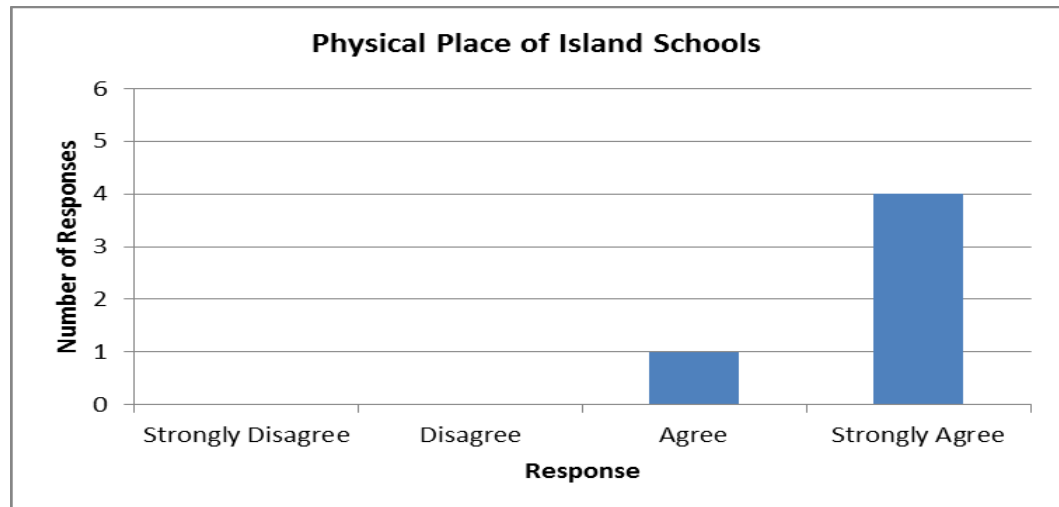
The 'Sanctity of Place Chart' shows all focus group participants felt sanctity of place is very important for school reform in Chuuk.

### **Question 3:**

*What is our collective VISION?*

### **Physical Place of Island Schools**

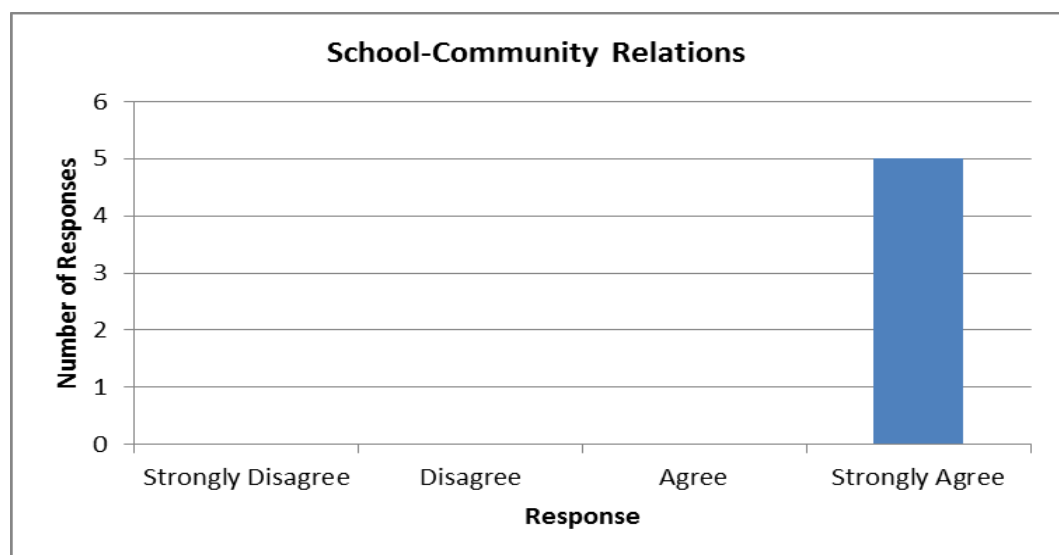
We believe that all children of Chuuk State should be welcome to attend local schools until high school. These schools should be constructed and “owned” by our island communities. They should be built and maintained with local materials. The construction and maintenance of the schools should serve as part of curriculum -- including knowledge, skills and values related to sustainable habitats, agriculture and aquaculture. The “school” should be centrally located in the community; respected and cared for by community members.



The 'Physical Place of Island School Chart' shows that four out of five focus group participants are strongly agreed that physical place of island school should be owned by local community.

### School-Community Relations

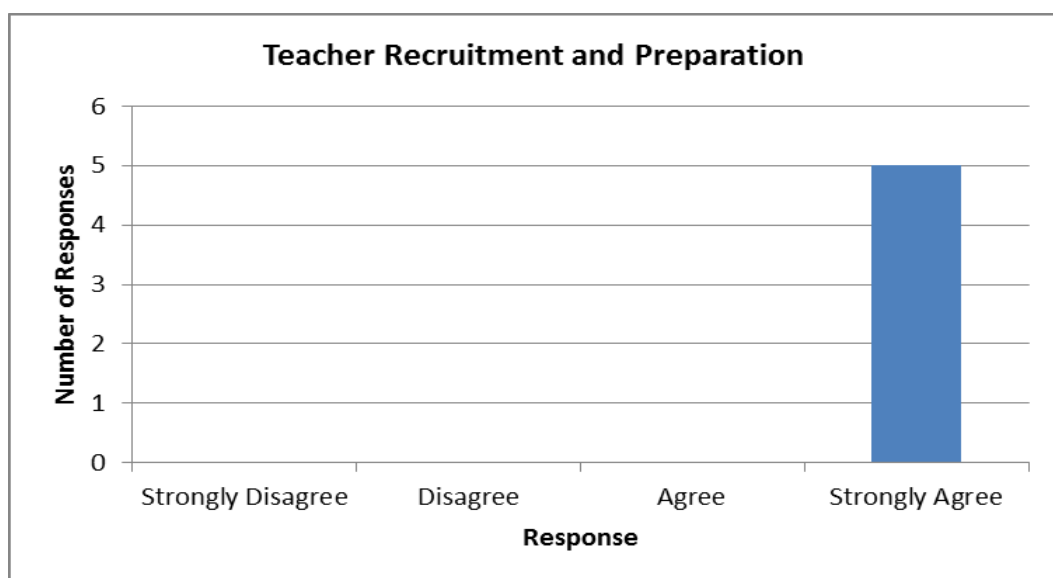
Schools should be guided by local authorities, including a governing council of teachers, parents, church and traditional leaders. The entire island community should be *welcome* to participate in school governance; curriculum development and instruction. \*We have models for this in our own living history, in which communities were active in school life.



The 'School-Community Relations Chart' shows all focus group participants strongly agreed that school community relations should be guided by local community.

### Teacher Recruitment and Preparation

We believe that teachers and other school staff should reflect the make-up of the local community. They should attend national *summer school* trainings, perhaps on Weno or in Pohnpei; and then be available for teaching service during the academic year. Teachers should be literate in the Chuukese language (reading and writing); respectful of children; and committed to a career of service. Teacher preparation should begin with interested high school students (*Future Teachers of Chuuk*)

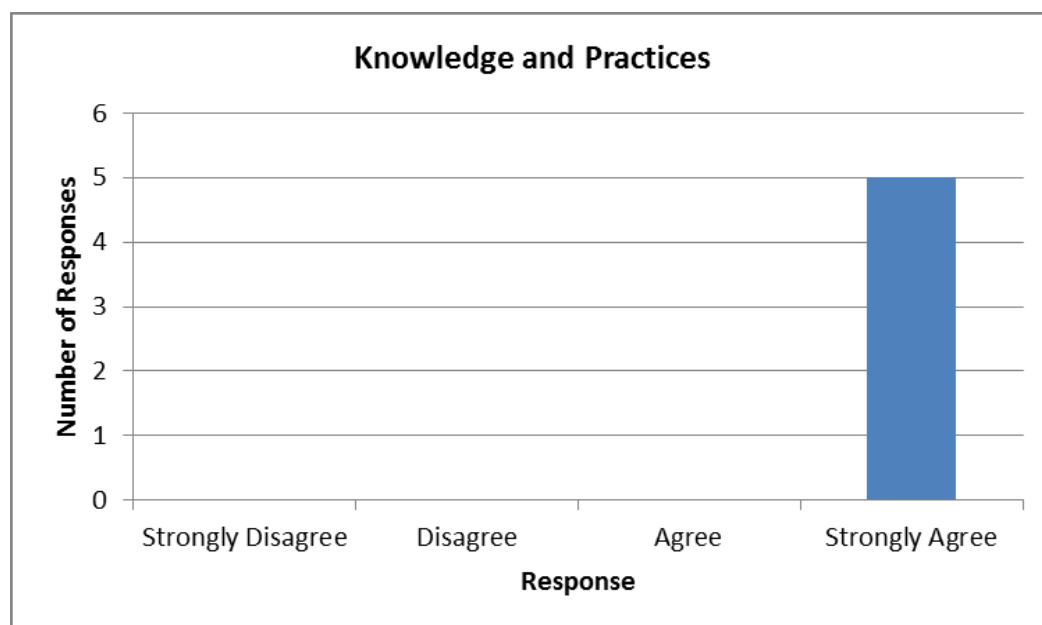


The 'Teacher Recruitment and Preparation Chart' shows that all focus group participants strongly agreed that teacher recruitment and preparation should reflect the make-up of the local community.

### Knowledge and Practices

First and foremost, Chuukese children should learn from their own natural environment, including our traditional ways of living. Stories and lessons should emanate from this. We recommend that a national agenda for indigenous curriculum development be convened, modeled after the PALM project of the 1970's. *We need to create our own stories in our own language and dialects.* \*We recognize that there are "issues" regarding orthography and dialect which need to be resolved.

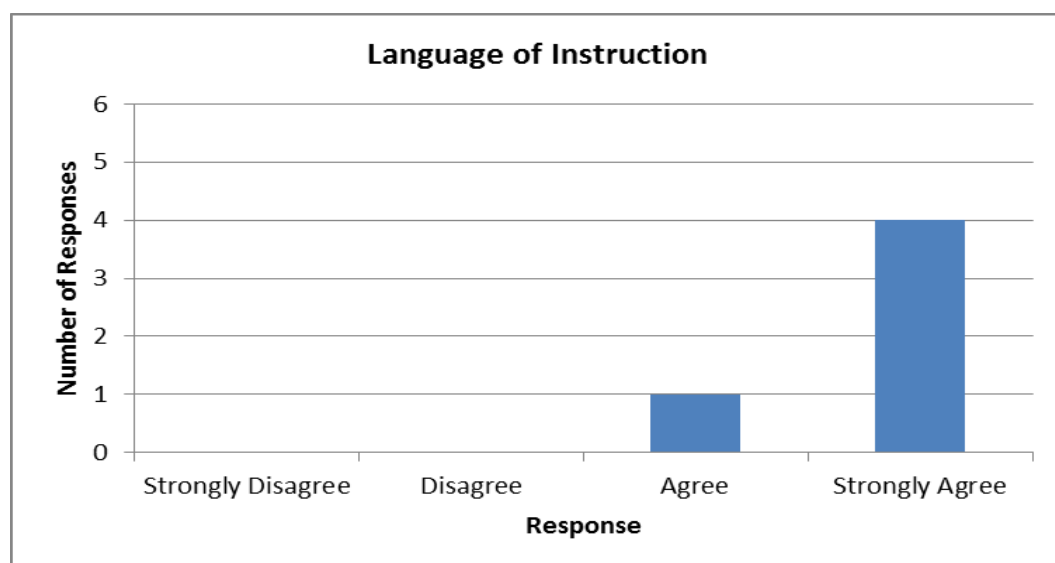




The 'Knowledge and Practice' shows that all focus group participants strongly agreed that Chuukese children should learn from their natural environment.

### Language of Instruction

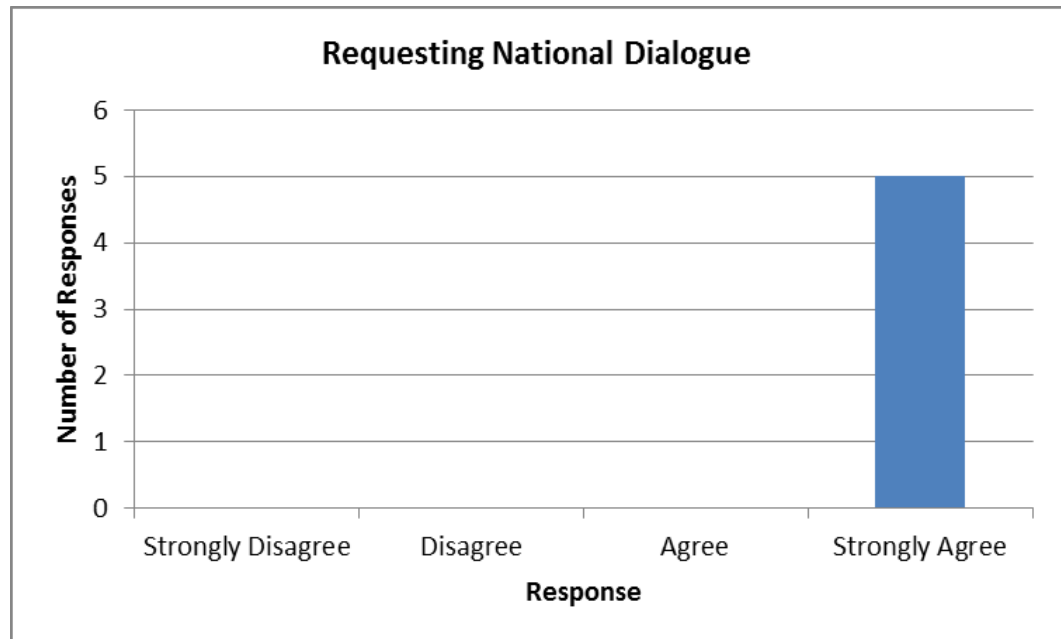
The first language of the school should be Chuukese. This includes spoken and written language. Children should first learn to think, read and write in the Chuukese language. We encourage the FSM to introduce other Micronesian languages, English and others, using trained native speakers -- but *first and foremost*, Chuukese children should become literate in Chuukese language.



The 'Language of Instruction Chart' shows that four out of five focus group participants strongly agreed that the first language should be Chuukese language.

### **Requesting National Dialogue**

We humbly request that Chuuk State and the FSM nation engage in reflection, dialogue and action planning for a transformation of public education in Chuuk. We are in crisis. The possibilities for transformation are real.



The 'Perseverance Chart' shows that all focus group participants strongly agreed Chuuk State and FSM National Government engage in dialogue and action planning for transformation of the public school in Chuuk.

### **Open Discussion**

During focus group discussion, conscious decision was made to create broader themes linking the three different sets of themes that emerged from the individual interviews.

### **Themes from Interview Questions 1 and 2**

The two themes ‘Learning from Home’ and ‘Learning from Village and Church’ were put together under broader theme ‘Learning Environment’.

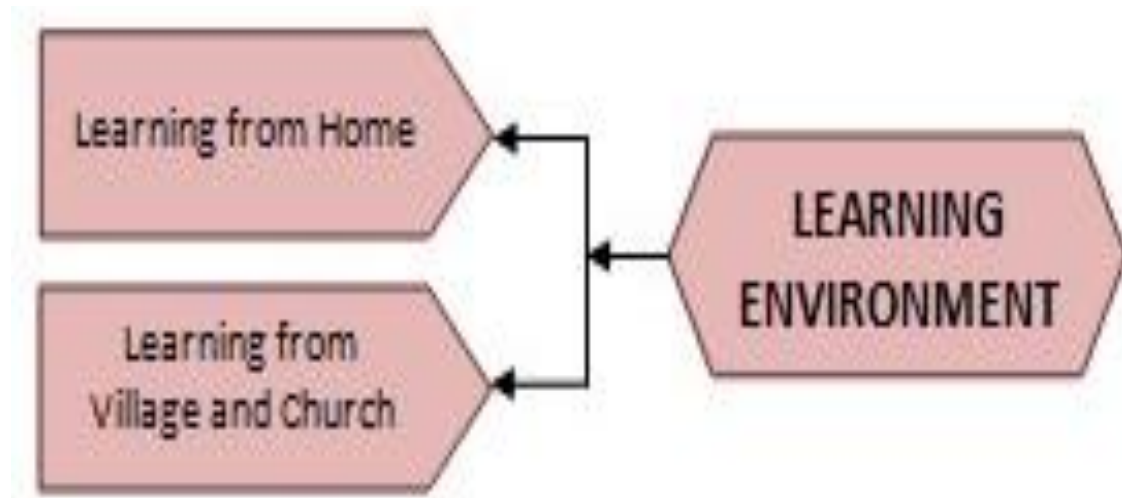
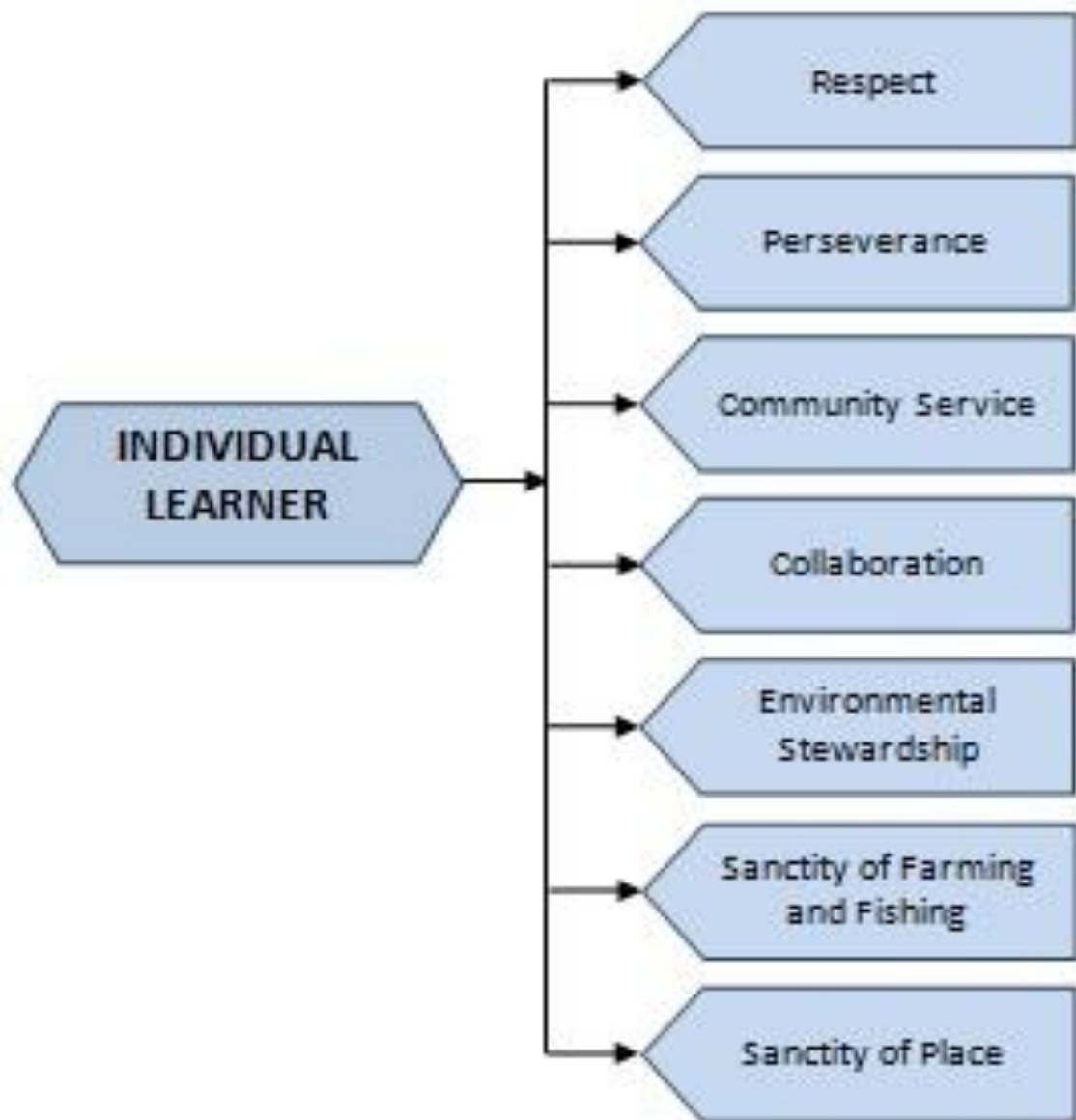


Figure 4.6. Merged Themes under Learning Environment

### **Themes from Interview Questions 3 and 4**

The seven themes, ‘Respect’, ‘Perseverance’, ‘Community Service’, ‘Collaboration’, ‘Environmental Stewardship’, ‘Sanctity of Farming and Fishing’, ‘Sanctity of Place’ that emerged from interview questions 3 and 4 were put together under broader theme ‘Individual Learner’.



*Figure 4.7. Merged Themes under Individual Learner*

**Themes from Interview Questions 5 and 6**

The five themes, ‘School Design’, ‘School Community Relations’, ‘Teacher Preparation’, ‘Curriculum and Materials’ and ‘Language and Instruction’ that emerged from the analysis of interview questions 5 and 6 were put together under broader theme ‘School System’.

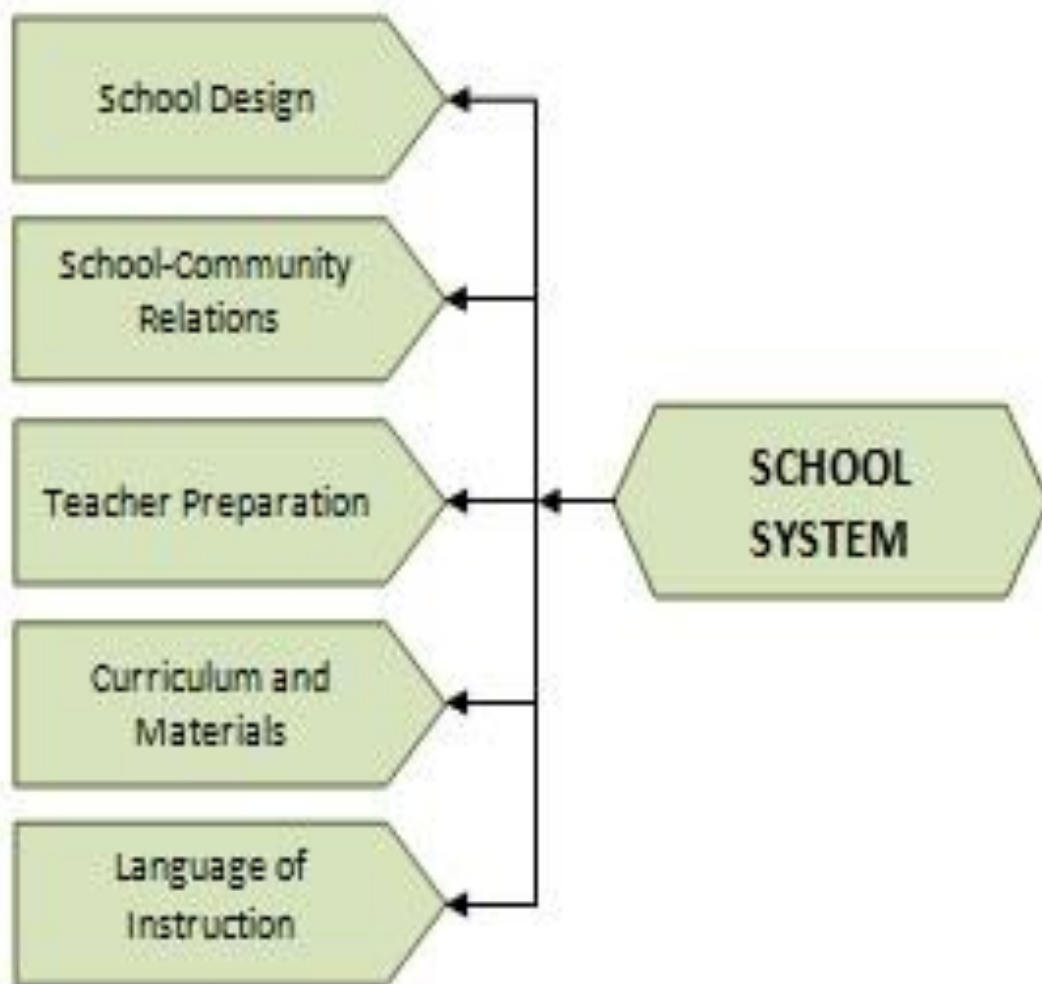


Figure 4.8. Merged Themes under School System

#### **Themes from Interview Questions 3 and 4**

To initiate open dialogues on the necessities of a school reform in Chuuk, it is crucial that all the counterparts, the learning environment, the 'individual learner', and the 'school system', must be connected and worked with one another. Having the three sets of themes to stand on their own is rather weak. Figure 4.3 illustrates the relationship between the three different themes.

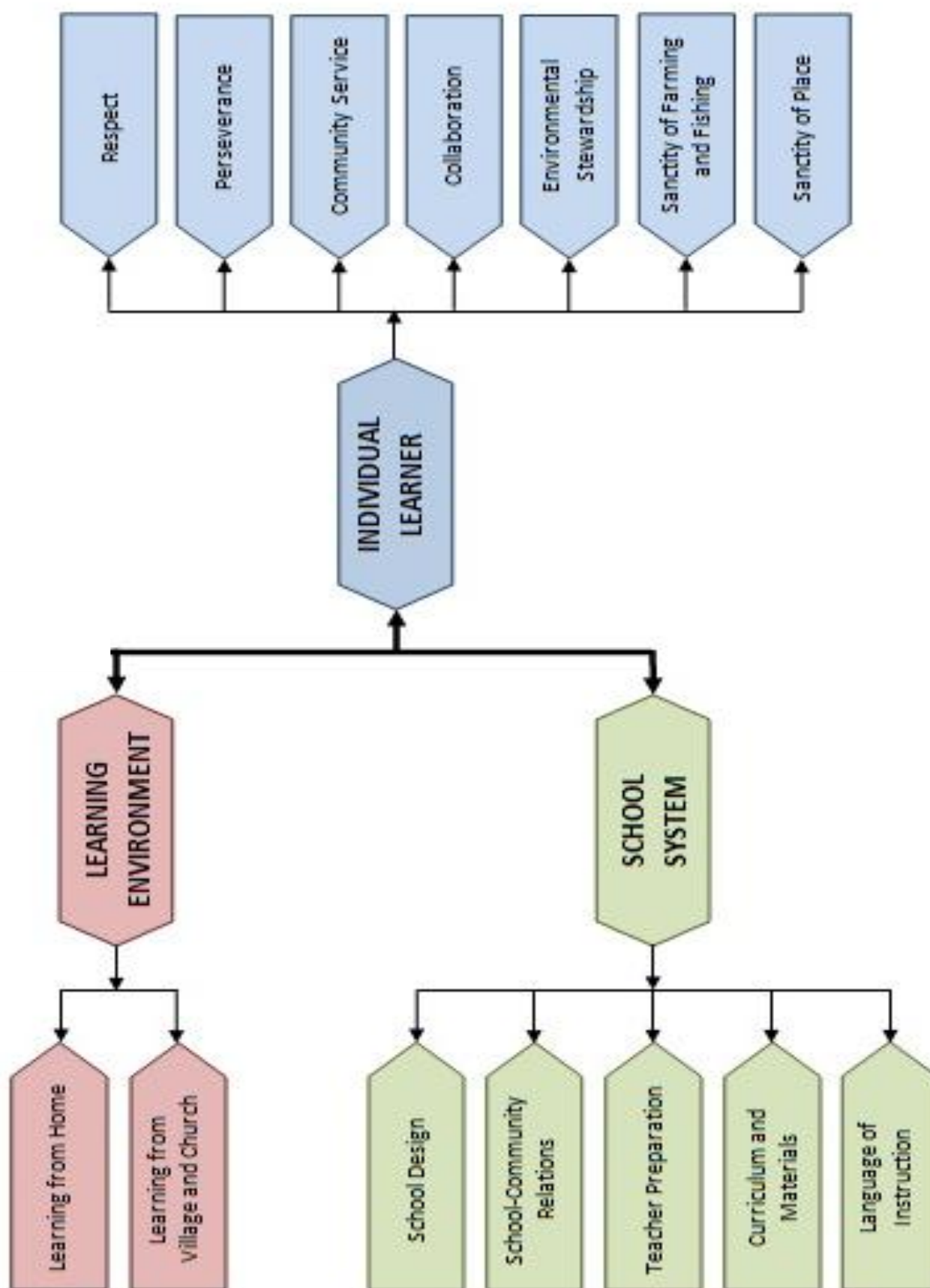


Figure 4.9. Collecting all Three Themes

## **CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, CONCLUSION**

This chapter will focus on the discussion and implications with respect to the meanings beyond the research findings, the emerging themes, and the developing theories. To channel the discussions and implications, I recall the three research questions that guided the course of this study ever since its beginning and use them to talk about the knowledge claims that were identified and developed in the data analysis. The research questions are as follows:

1. How do Chuukese educational stakeholders evaluate their experiences with Chuukese education?
2. What do Chuukese educational stakeholders consider to be central Chuukese values, practices and knowledge that could guide education in Chuuk?
3. How might incorporation of Chuukese values, practices, and knowledge inform educational practice in Chuuk?

Before talking about the over-arching theory that developed throughout this research, I want to begin my discussion with some of the significant themes that emerged from the interview analysis. I also want to extend my discussion by mentioning results from the focus group checklist including additional comments and consensus decisions that confirmed emergent themes. I also hope to present some insights that I learned while undertaking this research. Last, I wish to discuss where this research could go as well some recommendations for future studies and researchers

## Discussion

Before talking about the over-arching theories that developed through this research, I would like to discuss some of the significant themes that emerged from the six interview questions.

The first findings were the consensus among informants that “Chuukese education” was (and should be) anchored in home and religious community. Family and church community were the “first teachers.” “Family” included grandparents and parents, extended clan (uncles, aunts, cousins, and in-laws), siblings and “adoptees.” Families were expected to instill values, knowledge and skills; and to reinforce the values of the church. Bible stories were shared and read aloud daily. A Chuukese translation of the Bible was in the home and a part of family worship. Children were expected to learn to read from the bible; and participate in prayer sessions. There was also recognition that conditions are changing with the Diaspora to western cities; and the growing dependence on remittances from the west. The idea about home and village learning can be best supported the experience of participant ANG growing up on Parem, his home islands in Chuuk Lagoon. He shared the following:

“One thing in particular that I appreciated from my mother was her support for me to learn and recite the family prayers. My father helped me to learn many of the men’s responsibilities. From him I learned to farm, build houses and fish. Most significantly from both my parents, I learned the importance of relationships among people” J. Angkel (personal communication, November 9, 2011).

A similar experience was also discussed by participant PET who shared his youth days growing up on Ettal, one of the outer islands in the Mortlocks.

“Now when I reflect on this set of hidden rules taught to us by our parents, I realize that this was their way of teaching us to focus on the lives of our



families and to the activities of our home. This expectation of playing and being near the home functioned to keep children close at hand so that they could observe adult role models and be helpful when asked. In other words, these expectations both showed respect for others and also functioned to provide teaching and learning opportunities for the children in their homes” (J. Peter, personal communication, October 6, 2011).

Families were “place-based.” Extended families lived together in one or adjacent houses located on family land. Houses were constructed from wood and thatch. Stories were shared in the evenings before bedtime -- including bible stories, legends, tales, and family histories. It was a commonly held belief that stories were to be told in the evening before bedtime. Chuukese extended the concept of “home place” to include plantations, beaches and reefs where important stories and lessons were shared.

At a certain age, boys moved to the *uut* -- a traditional meeting place for men; and ‘school’ for boys. It was in the *uut* that boys learned to be away from home; to gain independence; and to learn from new ‘teachers’, i.e., village elders who shared stories, knowledge and skills.

Girls spent significant time in the *falang* (cook house), which was a cooking house separated from sleeping places. The *falang* derived from *afana* or *afala*, which meant to teach, to explain, to demonstrate and to interact for clear understanding (K. Welle, 2007 personal communication). It was around the preparation and serving of food that many core values and practices were transmitted. It is important to note that all of these values and practices represent living memories for my informants; and represent ways of life that are still vibrant on many islands to this day.

Perhaps the most surprising outcome from this research question was that my respondents, coming from diverse islands throughout entity, remembered growing up in a time when Chuukese schools and communities (including traditional chiefs and church leaders) represented a shared voice. Parents were excited to have their children go to school and reinforced school work at home. Teachers were dedicated to the profession. Children left their islands to go to high school amid encouragement and pride.

Other important findings that supported the key purpose of this study are the core values believed to guide educational restructuring in Chuuk. “Respect” is a core Chuukese value that serves to harmonize and regulate relationships among people and with nature. All of the informants shared stories of “respect”, regulating expectations and behavior among children toward one another (related to age and gender); relationships among adults and children (including teaching roles of elders, grandparents, parents, uncles and aunts); relationships among traditional chiefs, church leaders and teachers; and relationships of people toward land and ocean (including plants and animals). The rules of “respect” are complicated -- some are implied and others explicit. Often they are taught by example or parable. “Respect” is the cornerstone of the Chuukese character.

Perseverance is something that enabled Chuukese people to survive. It is woven into the fabric of the culture. People struggle and suffer in the face of great hardships, including typhoons, illness, disability, hunger, malnutrition and Diaspora). Chuukese people know what it is to go to bed hungry; and to bid final farewells to loved ones. The culture teaches its children to persevere in order to survive. It is a value that is applied to life in community and to success in school.

Collaboration showed Chuukese people work and live together -- sharing, reciprocating, and accomplishing difficult tasks in concert. This is the meaning of a valued proverb: *Angang Chok Aramas* (Task can only be done because of the people). It is a value that is experienced and learned in homes, churches and schools. Chuukese rely on each other for almost everything ranging from sharing to protection. We collaborate to accomplish small and great things. It is strange to see ‘a’ person fishing or farming. People fish in groups, farm in groups, work the taro patches in group, and prepare food in group. It always seem that the village is doing ‘one’ activity at a given time.

Environmental stewardship showed that the Chuukese are people of “place” -- not simply in respect to our islands; but in respect to our family lands/reefs and communal properties. Informants’ stories revealed the importance of people, land, plants, trees, ocean, fish, reef, air and water, including both lessons of stewardship and sacred respect.

Sanctity of farming and fishing celebrates the spiritual nature of food for the Chuukese people. Food is more than nutrition. It is a gift of nature and God to be accepted humbly and in celebration. It is rooted perhaps in our heritage of perseverance and survival. It is evident in Chuukese sayings as “*chuuch chok mongo*” (strength is food), and “*ik me kon a aseliselia*” (fish goes well with pounded breadfruit, or breadfruit goes well with fish). There cannot be feast without food. Food is defined as produce from the garden (plantation) and fish and other sea foods. Several of the interviewees shared stories of one common practice, *Umwun Samon* (Traditional Feast for the Chief). *Umwun Samon* is a traditional ceremony in which people prepare pounded breadfruit from the first harvest and presented to the traditional chief.

Community service also was a very important part of Chuukese culture. When this researcher was a child growing up on Losap, schools were part of village life. The community supported the school; and in turn school curriculum reflected community values, as evidenced by the following expressions.

“I remember the time when students were being prepared to leave the island. The children were embarking to go to school on the main island. Everyone on the island would gather. It is intrinsic to our culture that the community celebrated these departures by bringing food and understanding. It was important for the community to teach the children why it was so important that they go off to school.” (J. Peter, personal communication, September, 2012)

Place is considered sacred in the heart of Chuukese people. “Place” refers to the land and all that is on it -- past, present and future. “Place” is location; but also all living things; thus, the Chuukese proverb *Fonu Chok Aramas* (Land is the People) and *Aramas Chok Fonu* (People are the Land).

The above core values that are also part of Chuukese knowledge and practices are believed to work hands in hands to “inform” education in Chuuk. The informants believed that all important themes can inform education in Chuuk in design of school village, teacher preparations, school-community relations, curriculum and materials and language of instructions. If the Chuuk educational system is to infuse Chuukese values, knowledge and practices into public education, it should be expressed in the design and construction of village elementary schools. Island schools should be constructed and maintained from local materials with the hands of local island-based artisans. Within our living memory, island primary schools reflected traditional practices, including coral foundations, open-wall construction, and thatch roofing. They were constructed and maintained using communal systems prescribed by the

culture. Construction did not depend upon the *money economy* (including cargo ships, foreign building supplies and “outsider” workers); instead, materials and labor were locally “donated” through island ways of gifting, bartering and negotiating. Design, construction and maintenance were regulated through village councils, including traditional and church leadership. People felt welcome in the schools. Public meetings were held on the grounds and in the pavilions. Schools were strategically located near reef and plantation. The school was part of the village; rather than “agent” of distant government.

It is within the lived experiences of the informants that island communities were actively involved in the life of the village school. Many of our teachers grew up in our villages, knowing everyone by name and title. We had active parent-teacher associations in which parents were welcomed onto school grounds; and consulted on such things as homework for their children. In some instances, parents prepared fish and taro for the school lunch programs. Land owners bequeathed land for school construction. Children engaged in community service projects. Church leaders reinforced literacy instruction in the churches. Traditional and church leaders acknowledged outstanding students -- celebrated youth as they departed for high school and returned. It was not perfect, by any means, but villages valued their schools as “keys to a better future.” This stands in stark contrast with the current conditions: “brick and mortar” schools in disrepair; defaced by vandals; locked and shuttered.

It is not that Chuuk has never had “professionally trained” teachers. The Japanese installed their own. The Americans provided “Peace Corps.” It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to address teacher preparation for secondary education.

However, my informants agreed that primary school teachers teaching in village schools should speak the Chuukese language on the island, teach in the Chuukese language on the island, and understand, aware, and practice the Chuukese culture on the island. At least a majority of the teachers should have grown up on the island they are serving -- as cultural practices, ways of life, and social networks differ across islands and districts. Peace Corp volunteers and other “outsiders” may be welcomed in a minority; but they too should be expected to learn the language and culture and practice it in their “co-teaching”.

We are very aware that our children live “in the world” -- and that English language as well as other languages are important for both survival and to connect with the *fonuwen nukun* (outside world). We understand that when our children leave their home islands to attend high school and college, their textbooks may likely be in English language. This dissertation focuses on the *elementary education* of our youth. For our children, we believe that they should first and foremost be firmly grounded in the language of their island and of the Chuukese state. We encourage our FSM nation to standardize the orthography of our languages; but until such time, we believe that children should acquire literacy as best defined by local island leadership.

We accept the research base of “bilingual education” that children should first acquire a firm literacy foundation in their home language. English (or another second language) may be introduced when children master third grade read levels in the home language -- not before. And when English literacy is introduced, Chuukese literacy instruction should be continued, promoting a balanced bilingualism.

One of the next steps is to explore how both religious and government schools might support educational reform given the important role they play in the community. Historically, both presented foreign values, knowledge and practices as better than Chuukese ways. But some church schools have bridged religious and Chuukese cultural values and knowledge, gaining community support. They may be a reason why religious schools produce higher student performances in both elementary and secondary levels in Chuuk as well as other Micronesian countries. The study found that Chuukese culture is considered to be the foundation of learning and that this is largely missing in the school system. Our future work to include Chuukese values, knowledge, and practices into Chuuk's standards and curricula will help us better understand the role of culture in school success.

### Fairo: Emerged Theory

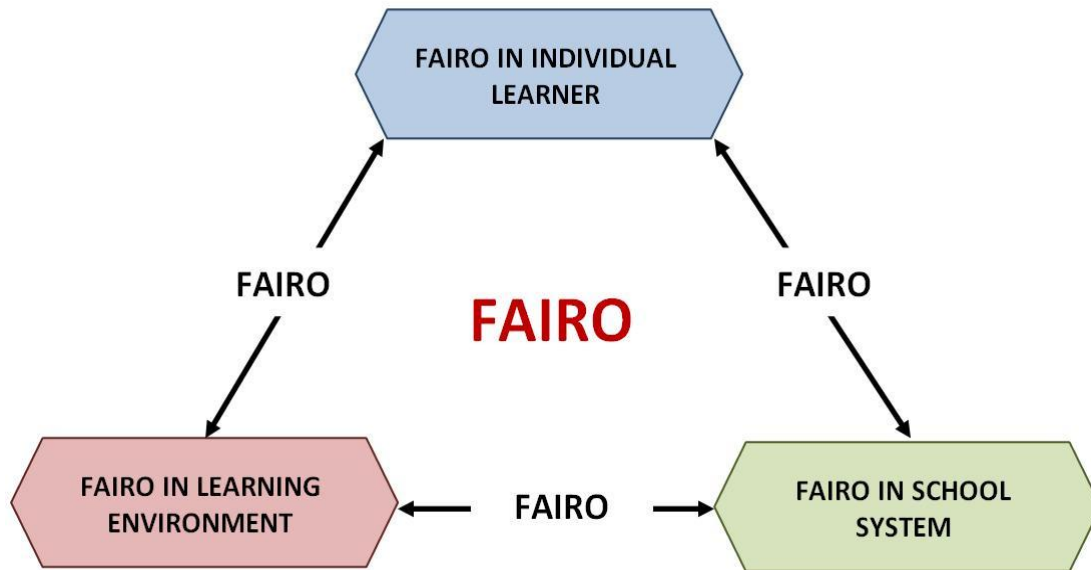


Figure 5.1. Fairo: Emerged Theory

This section includes both Chuukese definition and English translation of the word “*Fairo*”. It also includes excerpts from individual interviews and focus group participants that used the word *fairo* including explanations on how “*Fairo*”, the theory emerged.

*Fairo* as defined by a well known Chuukese *Itang Kintoky* (1986) quoted by Goodenough (2002):

*Fairo* (under brow or under arc of heaven) people are assembled under the aegis of the arc of heaven and also under the aegis of the *Fairo*. It is a very precious communication created by ancestors who were wise and knowledgeable in order to bring and strengthen peace and harmony among the people of Chuuk. It is also a communication to enable people to get on with their work, and it enables us to feel that we are all one people in “Under Brow”. It teaches us that there shall be seemly thoughts among people, polite communications, polite behavior, industriousness, honesty and truth, deference and respectful behavior, as to a chief, respect and obedience to elders, heedfulness and humility. It teaches that among people there shall be



proper clearing of actions in advance, knowing and understanding well. Learning “Under Brow” is not difficult, it is your wish to learn it and you undertake it with the whole of your thought and heart. Through it you will increase your capacity for empathy with and love for your mother and father, members of your family and clan, and your chief. It teaches us to be humble, heedful, mutually deferential and circumspect among ourselves so that we shall be scrupulous in showing chiefly respect to one another and thus bring peace and tranquility to our island communities, districts, and landholdings. It teaches that among people there shall be mutual assistance, friendship, working together, learning together, coming to decision together, meeting together, maintaining kinship together, and maintaining community together. It teaches that there shall be open handedness, generosity to one’s wife’s kin, generosity in our hearts, kindness, circumspection, self-restraint, thinking things through, doing things thoroughly (pp. 306-307).

While the above explanation is from a book there were excerpts from the individual interviews that shared the importance of “*Fairo*”.

First, during the individual interviews, every research participant told lived stories and personal experiences and practices that one way or the other were rooted in Chuukese cultural values, knowledge and practices. The fact that this word is considered sacred knowledge means it was not an everyday language for anybody to use. Other Chuukese words were used instead. This researcher only categorized them as values, knowledge and practices. Yet, two of the participants who were traditional leaders and chiefs had the capability to use this word in their stories. In the Chuukese culture, it is traditional chiefs and *Itang* who have the authority to openly talk about this concept in public. The following are excerpts for references:

*Fairo* according to Kaonoso (A. Kaneso personal communication July, 2011)

*“Ereni, wewen fotofotun fonuwach, nonnomwun fonuwach, fosun fonuwach. Ina anongonong ei fos ereni e nomw non. Nge ika emon epwe angei ena fos ereni, epwe manaweni, iwe ena atun epwe ne tongeni fotofotun fonuwach, nonnomwun fonuwach. Usun sise kan weweiti. Nge me rei ei pekin ereni, epwe katonong non angangan non ach kewe sikun, ika epwe wor nenian. Epwe ne wor ewe ekiengin tongei, aucheani me kirekiroch ngeni ewe semirit.*

*Ewer, mei ennet. Mei wesewesen, uwa sani ititin ena kapas eis. A men wenei upwe arau. Non eu chok, pwe ese wor asukunen akkomw me mwan. Mei chommong kinikinin non ereni. Fosun kaeo fosun fonu, angangen pau non pekin ereniach kewe, nge mei worn a pekin manaw. Sipwe tongeni ere pwe Fairo. Ena pekin ereni, ekon maseoch. Fairo, enletin non ai pwisin rongorong seni ekkewe chon asukuna, Fairo, Bible. Nge Fairo e etto seni 2 fos. 1. Fan, (under) 2. Ro. Ekkena 2 fos re kapach fengen re apachafengeni, rotiw fan. Ra forano non fosun, Fairo. Nge masowan non mei chommong kinikinin. Me akkauchean me non, mei pwan usun chok chommongun non Bible page eu tori soponon. Ika sipwe asukuna ereni, iwe sipwe asukuna “fairo”.*

### English Translation

I would like to begin with my definitions of culture. Culture includes three distinct, important elements: First, is “*nonnomwun fonuwach*”, which refers to how the people live; (this is where values, knowledge and practices fit under) second, is “*fotofotun fonuwach*”, which describes how God created our island world; and third is “*fosun fonuwach*”, which refers to the language of the people, also including values, knowledge beliefs and practices.

Culture manifests itself in many ways. Within our families it includes respect, love, care and obedience. When parents model these elements with their children, the children learn and give them back to the parents.

This same manifestation occurs within the larger society, i.e., beyond the family to the church, the extended family and clan, the government and of course the schools. The elders serve as models for respect and in turn the community reciprocates.

There are two important words in our language to encapsulate the above: “*faffairotiw*” and “*faffairota*.” \*These are sacred words. We do not just give these to anyone. In our language these words describe what might be called the notion of reciprocity, the responsibility to give and receive; to give and take. Reciprocity is anchored in the family but expressed in all of our social institutions including church, state and school.

Besides the two expressive terms above, there are two other important terms to mention. These terms in fact convey deeper meaning: “*amwansosich*” and “*amwanifich*.” These two concepts represent what might be called guiding rules for the community—beginning at the family level, the clan, government, schools and so forth. This first term that describes the relationships between authority figures and those for whom they are responsible, including parents to children, government officials to the broader community. It relates to the concept of respect, trust and care. Everything I have said came under a big umbrella that overlooks these ideas and concepts. It is “*FAIRO*”. If we want to pass on the concept of our culture, it is *Fairo*.

Kovack (A. Kovack, personal communication, December, 2011) aside from many other words and phrases leading to “*Fairo*”, he specifically referred to *Fairo* in the context:

*“Ikenai ia mochen ewe angangen sikun epwe napelo, non fonuwach Chuuk. Ina tufichun non fonuwah. Merei, ina eu saraman ach al, lon ach state, non fonuwach Losap, ei mettoch non fonuwach, sukun me lamalam. Ia aucheani pekin lamalam pekin ereni. Nge auchean sipwe fairo fengen. “*

“I very much see the great importance of learning in school. It is future of our islands. It is the light of our state, our island. I see the importance of learning in school, learning in church. Culture is also important. Most important is *FAIRO*. Keep *Fairo* among us. Without *Fairo* all of these cannot work out.”

In addition, more voices from participants did articulate key words and phrases which later were classified as key themes. Key themes from question 1 & 2 were: learning from home, learning from church and village. Key themes from question 3 & 4 were: respect, perseverance, community service, collaboration, environmental stewardship, sanctity of farming and fishing, sanctity of place. Key themes from questions 5 & 6 were: school design, school community relations, teacher preparation, curriculum and materials, and language of instruction. These themes were the subjects of the focus group discussion. From the focus group discussion deliberations, consensus was reached that the themes from the above questions were all closely related. They further recommended broader themes for each group of themes. They were: learning environment, individual learner, and school system. The broader theme, learning environment bound learning from home and learning from village and church. Individual learner bound respect, perseverance, community service, collaboration, environment stewardship, sanctity of farming and fishing and sanctity of place. School system bound

school design, community relations, teacher preparation, curriculum and materials, and language of instruction.

After discussing and understanding how the three broad themes (learning environment, individual learner, school system) emerged, the group came to the understanding that it was indeed a significant means of addressing indigenous school reform in Chuuk. School reform was not only necessarily about one theme, but rather all three themes together could benefit the overall school system.

Now as the researcher when I reviewed and reflected on the interviews and discussions there were one very important theme that could overall bound all other themes together. It is “Fairo”. As echoed by Kaneso in his own words:

First, it is “*nonnomwun fonuwach*”, which refers to how the people live; (this is where values, knowledge and practices fit under) second, is “*fotofotun fonuwach*”, which describes how God created our island world; and third is “*fosun fonuwach*”, which refers to the language of the people, also including values, knowledge beliefs and practices.

There are two important words in our language to encapsulate the above: “*faffairotiw*” and “*faffairota*.” Everything I have said came under a big umbrella that overlooks these ideas and concepts. It is “*FAIRO*”. If we want to pass on the concept of our culture, it is *Fairo*.

Echoed by Kovack in his own words:

I very much see the great importance of learning in school. It is future of our islands. It is the light of our state, our island. I see the importance of learning in school, learning in church. Culture is also important. Most important is *FAIRO*. Keep *Fairo* among us. Without *Fairo* all of these cannot work out.

I acknowledged what these two important traditional leaders and the rest of the research participants have said and confirmed it with what Goodenough (2002) recorded from Itang Kintoki regarding “Fairo”. It is Fairo that bound all the three themes together. Fairo can be a significant theory for a successful indigenous school reform in Chuuk.

## **Implications**

The findings of this study suggested that Chuukese values, knowledge and practices can inform educational reform in Chuuk. These can be translated and understood in this emerging theory of Chuukese education applying *Fairo*. It is confirmed that school reform in Chuuk can be possible if the whole society respects and collaborates. A. Kaneso (personal communication July, 2012) further stressed the two components under *Fairo*. “*Faffairotiw and faffairota*” are concepts depicting the importance of carrying oneself in upholding matters within family, villages, communities and societies. Remembering it requires both ways; top down, bottom up or even sideways, clockwise and counterclockwise. Further research in the hands of indigenous people is greatly needed. It is they, the Indigenous people of Chuuk, who understand the issues best.

## **Limitation of the Study**

A limitation of this research is the fact that it was conducted among the Chuukese community in Hawai'i rather than on the home islands. But this limitation may also be viewed as its strength. Back home because of such challenges as transportation (dependence upon boats to cover great distances), it would have been impossible to bring together statewide representation for interviews and focus group.

Although I tried very hard to have a representing voice from the different geopolitical regions in Chuuk as well as the different social status in the community to discuss the pressing issues of education in Chuuk, I also realized that there is still a long road head---- a need to take these findings and ideas about educational reform in respect to traditional values and plant them in the heart of community discussions, village

discussions, school meetings, workshops, and government summits. There is still a need to add more voices to what is done here. Sometimes in the villages when you are rushing to do something, the elder would advise you to take one thing at a time. Perhaps, taking one of the findings of this research and really embark upon it isn't bad at all.

### **Recommendations and Conclusion**

Based on the findings of this study I would like to make the following recommendations:

1. *Fairo* as the theory emerged in this study should be the guiding course for school reform in Chuuk. It conveys the fact that we Chuukese are preeminently invested in what might be called “character education.” For us, character is as important as “knowledge” and “skill.” Character expresses itself in “How we carry ourselves”.
2. Island schools should be constructed and maintained using the designs and building practices of traditional “meeting houses.”
3. Management authority of island schools should be decentralized to “island councils” (including budgeting; personnel decisions; curriculum and instruction);
4. Principals and teachers should be culturally competent and locally trained (via mentoring and internships), with off-island trainings scheduled during periods of school recess;
5. Curriculum and instruction should reflect the valued activities of island life, including hands-on, experiential learning in service of farming, fishing, food production and traditional practices of distribution. Academic skills of reading,

writing and numeration should be infused into this indigenous “heritage” curriculum.

6. The languages of instruction should be anchored in the vernacular languages of the island, including Chuukese language (with other national languages and English taught as foreign languages). Children should first learn to read and write in the Chuukese language (and their vernacular language, if different), with teachers employing “Language-Experience” approaches to literacy instruction.
7. Academic skills of reading, writing and numeration in English could be infused into this indigenous “heritage” curriculum.

*Fairo* being the first time identified as a theory of culture is suggested for future research related to education. There is a great need to learn more from the elders in order to maintain the Chuukese culture. There is also a great need to pass it on to our next generation.

### **Conclusion**

This study represents the first “indigenous” research for the Chuukese state -- carried out by a Chuukese person. There has been few research studies conducted in my country which were always conducted by “outsiders”, written for “Western” entities; rarely if ever coming back to the Chuukese people. We learned little if anything from these efforts. It was research “about us” rather than “with” us.

Second, this research is unique for Chuuk because it extended upon the works of other indigenous researchers and “movements” in the Pacific region; including Maori, Native Hawaiians and Samoans.

What perhaps most impacted me as the researcher was the fact that even though many Chuukese people now prefer to live in America with its “abundance, opportunity and wealth,” the research findings direct us all to look back home. It is “home”, our islands, states and countries where the richness of our culture can be found. As recorded by Goodenough (1964), Petrus Mailo (an Itang and Mayor) spoke to the first high school graduation on the main Chuukese island of Weno. He noted to our community that when we try to reach something that is not within reach, many times we will stand on a chair with outstretched arms. We may even fall down. “*Kosap* .”ochchang”.

This great *Itang* explained to the new graduates that “We have taro, breadfruit and coconuts in our own backyard. When you want any of this, you can reach for and get them. Yet, you prefer to have bread, biscuit or doughnuts where it is out of reach.” This research revealed to me that in order to reform the schools in Chuuk (and to guide our lives even when we are far away), it is advisable to realize that before we look elsewhere, there is something significant we can learn from within our own Chuukese culture -- more than knowledge and skills, it is how we “carry ourselves.” This goes to the very core of Chuukese “character.” For me, this emergent theory may be termed “*Fairo*.” *Fairo* is not something new. In fact, *Fairo* is profoundly anchored within our Chuukese culture. It is the central lesson of our ancestors. If our culture is survive, the values, knowledge and skills of “*Fairo*” should resurface as the weave of our future.



## APPENDIX 1. INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Thank you for agreeing to be one of the resource persons for my doctoral research. I value your insights and life experiences to better the educational system in our beloved Chuuk. The following questions will guide my study. I would hope to meet with you as many times as necessary to learn your wisdom. With your permission, I will video record your stories.

1. How do we evaluate our experiences with Chuukese education (at school, in our homes, communities and churches)?

*\*What personal stories and memories from our own childhood experiences might we share?*

2. What we consider to be central Chuukese values that could guide education in Chuuk?

*\*What personal stories and memories from our own childhood experiences might we share?*

3. What do we consider to be core Chuukese knowledge and practices that should be incorporated into education in Chuuk?

*\*What personal stories and memories from our own childhood experiences might we share?*

1. How might we reform our primary schools in Chuuk to respect our values, knowledge and practices?

*\*If we could create schools from scratch, how might they look?*

Envisioning Primary Schools for Chuuk		
Setting & Structural Design	Teacher Recruitment & Training	School-Community Relations
Curriculum and Materials	Language of Instruction	

*Physical Appearance and place:*

*Teacher preparation:*

*School-community relations:*

*Curriculum and materials:*

*Language of instruction:*

My intention is to review the video recordings and summarize them in Chuukese and English languages. I will then return the transcripts to you for your review to confirm that I have respected your thoughts and wisdom.

It is my hope that you will answer my questions with your thoughts and wisdom, including stories, proverbs and songs from your own childhood to illustrate your answers. Thank you for your interest and patience.

Sincerely,

Margarita Cholymay

## APPENDIX 2. CHECK LIST FOR FOCUS GROUP

Maargarita Cholymay: Focus Group

Participant's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Wayfinding

#### Purpose, Problem and Limitations

**Purpose:** To develop a framework for Chuuk state and FSM national dialogue on educational restructuring and transformation.

**Problem Statement:** Public schools of Chuuk State are failing our children, their families, our communities and our nation. As presently functioning our public schools fail to represent Chuukese values, language, knowledge and practices. Further, the "western" educational model as currently adopted depends upon "outside" resources, including money, materials and training that are in constant short supply.

This situation represents a deterioration from our remembered past. There has been a "break down" in public education within living memory.

**Limitations:** The intention of this dissertation is to identify core values to guide the restructuring and transformation of Chuukese public education; and to outline a framework for national reflection, discussion and action planning.

What follows represents a consensus of Chuukese stakeholders who have participated in *structured interviews* and *focus group*, culminating in our shared belief that educational transformation is possible in our beloved Chuuk.

#### Research Questions

**QUESTION ONE: What are our Life Stories?** We shared life stories and lived experiences, in order to activate our memories and identify a positive "narrative" that includes *core cultural values* to anchor the reorganization of our schools.

I believe that I conveyed my values when interviewed and that they were transcribed accurately.

*Strongly Disagree*

*Disagree*

*Agree*

*Strongly Agree*

*Comment:*

Page 1 (of 6)

**RESEARCH QUESTION TWO: What are our Core Values?**

Core Values	Relative Importance				
	unimportant		important		very important
Respect	1	2	3	4	5
Perseverance	1	2	3	4	5
Collaboration	1	2	3	4	5
Environmental Stewardship	1	2	3	4	5
Sanctity of Farming and Fishing (Breadfruit & Crab)	1	2	3	4	5
Community Service	1	2	3	4	5
Sanctity of "Place" Navigation & Exploration	1	2	3	4	5

Additional Core Values:

**RESEARCH QUESTIONS 3 and 4: What is our collective VISION?**

**Knowledge and practices:** We believe that an "indigenous curriculum" for Chuuk state should be anchored in the above core values. These values include both *character education* and *academic learning (language arts, math and science)*.

*Strongly Disagree*      *Disagree*      *Agree*      *Strongly Agree*

*Comment:*

**Physical "place" of island schools:** We believe that all children of Chuuk State should be welcome to attend local schools until high school. These schools should be constructed and "owned" by our island communities. They should be built and maintained with local materials. The construction and maintenance of the schools should serve as part of curriculum -- including knowledge, skills and values related to **sustainable habitats, agriculture** and **aquaculture**. The "school" should be centrally located in the community; respected and cared for by community members.

*Strongly Disagree*      *Disagree*      *Agree*      *Strongly Agree*

*Comment:*

**Teacher recruitment and preparation:** We believe that teachers and other school staff should reflect the make-up of the local community. They should attend national *summer school* trainings, perhaps on Weno or in Pohnpei; and then be available for teaching service during the academic year. Teachers should be literate in the Chuukese language (reading and writing); respectful of children; and committed to a career of service. Teacher preparation should begin with interested high school students (*Future Teachers of Chuuk*).

*Strongly Disagree*

*Disagree*

*Agree*

*Strongly Agree*

*Comment:*

**School-community relations:** Schools should be guided by local authorities, including a governing council of teachers, parents, church and traditional leaders. The entire island community should be *welcome* to participate in school governance; curriculum development and instruction. \*We have models for this in our own living history, in which communities were active in school life.

*Strongly Disagree*

*Disagree*

*Agree*

*Strongly Agree*

*Comment:*



**Curriculum and materials:** First and foremost, Chuukese children should learn from their own natural environment, including our traditional ways of living. Stories and lessons should emanate from this. We recommend that a national agenda for indigenous curriculum development be convened, modeled after the PALM project of the 1970's. *We need to create our own stories in our own language and dialects.* \*We recognize that there are "issues" regarding orthography and dialect which need to be resolved.

Instructional consideration should be given to cultural considerations as reflected in our stories, including



Instructional Practices	Relative Importance				
	unimportant		important		very important
Heterogeneous grouping (age, ability)	1	2	3	4	5
Gender-based grouping	1	2	3	4	5
Hands-on learning	1	2	3	4	5
Cooperative learning	1	2	3	4	5
Outdoor Education	1	2	3	4	5

Additional instructional practices:

**Language of instruction:** The first language of the school should be Chuukese. This includes spoken and written language. Children should first learn to think, read and write in the Chuukese language.

We encourage the FSM to introduce other Micronesian languages, English and others, using trained native speakers -- but *first and foremost*, Chuukese children should become literate in Chuukese language.

*Strongly Disagree*

*Disagree*

*Agree*

*Strongly Agree*

*Comment:*

#### **Requesting National Dialogue**

We humbly request that Chuuk State and the FSM nation engage in reflection, dialogue and action planning for a transformation of public education in Chuuk. We are in crisis. The possibilities for transformation are real. Thank you for consideration.

*Strongly Disagree*

*Disagree*

*Agree*

*Strongly Agree*

*Comment:*



## APPENDIX 3. PARTICIPANTS' CONSENT FORM

### **Consent Form**

University of Hawaii, Manoa  
College of Education, Curriculum Studies  
Theory on Chuukese Indigenous Education

You are invited to take part in this study to help identify a theory on Chuukese Indigenous Education that will serve Chuukese children. You are a potential participant because you are a Chuukese who was born and grew up in Chuuk and you have valuable experience and leadership in your respective fields such as: traditional culture, government, church, business, and schools. As a parent, you have valuable insights because you may have children who attended the schools in Chuuk and therefore, you have directly witnessed and experienced some of the problems in the schools in Chuuk.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this research is to develop a Chuukese Indigenous Education Theory that will be the central focus in the Chuuk Education System to produce Chuukese children who value both Chuukese Indigenous knowledge and western knowledge.

#### **Procedures**

If you agree to be in this research, and sign the consent form, I ask that you participate in a survey and interview. There will be survey questions written in both English and Chuukese language and you are welcome to answer in either language. In the end your answers will be translated into English language for the purpose of the research paper. For the interview, questions will be asked in the Chuukese language and later will be translated into the English language. A tape recorder will be used in recording your responses.

#### **Risks and Benefits**

The questions in the survey and interview will focus on the Chuuk State School System. You will share your own perceptions on the situations of the Chuuk School System. It will also include your views on what Chuukese values will guide the system and what hinders the inclusion of the values in the school system. It also includes possible solutions to overcome the problems. You may refuse to answer or discuss any of the questions during the process. The study will remove any information that will make it possible to identify who you are. Your participation will remain confidential. This research potentially benefits the school system as it learns from the views of people, especially in the area of Chuukese Indigenous knowledge.

#### **Confidentiality**

The records of this study will be kept private. Anything you share with me will remain confidential. I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you in any report. Your name and other identifying information will be kept private.

**Voluntary nature of study**

Your decision whether or not to participate in this research will not affect your current or future relations with me or the Chuuk State School System. Even if you sign the consent form you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

**Contact**

The principal investigator conducting this study is Margarita Cholyman, a PhD student at the University of Hawaii, Manoa, College of Education, Curriculum Studies. You may contact me at 1026 Kalo Place #507, Honolulu, Hawaii 96826. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, contact: University of Hawaii Institutional Review Board, B-104, (808) 965-5007.

I have read the above information and understand that my participation with this study is voluntary and I may stop at any time. I consent to participate in the study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

☐ Participant received a copy.

## APPENDIX 4. COMMITTEE ON HUMAN STUDIES APPROVAL

### UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Committee on Human Studies

November 24, 2010

TO: Margarita Cholymay  
Principal Investigator  
College of Education - Curriculum and Instruction

FROM: Nancy R. King  
Director

Re: CHS #18670- "Way Finding: Creating and Designing a System for Learning  
Drawing Upon the Knowledge, Strengths, and Wisdom of Chaukese  
Indigenous Knowledge"

This letter is your record of CHS approval of this study as exempt.

On November 24, 2010, the University of Hawai'i (UH) Committee on Human Studies (CHS) approved this study as exempt from federal regulations pertaining to the protection of human research participants. The authority for the exemption applicable to your study is documented in the Code of Federal Regulations at 45 CFR 46 (2).

Exempt studies are subject to the ethical principles articulated in The Belmont Report, found at <http://www.hawaii.edu/irb/html/manual/appendices/A/belmont.html>

Exempt studies do not require regular continuing review by the Committee on Human Studies. However, if you propose to modify your study, you must receive approval from CHS prior to implementing any changes. You can submit your proposed changes via email at [uhirb@hawaii.edu](mailto:uhirb@hawaii.edu). (The subject line should read: Exempt Study Modification.) CHS may review the exempt status at that time and request an application for approval as non-exempt research.

In order to protect the confidentiality of research participants, we encourage you to destroy private information which can be linked to the identities of individuals as soon as it is reasonable to do so. Signed consent forms, as applicable to your study, should be maintained for at least the duration of your project.

This approval does not expire. However, please notify CHS when your study is complete. Upon notification, we will close our files pertaining to your study.

If you have any questions relating to the protection of human research participants, please contact CHS at 956-5007 or [uhirb@hawaii.edu](mailto:uhirb@hawaii.edu). We wish you success in carrying out your research project.

1960 East-West Road, Biomedical Building, Room B-104, Honolulu, HI 96822-2303  
Telephone: (808) 956-5007, Facsimile: (808) 956-8683, Website: [www.hawaii.edu/irb](http://www.hawaii.edu/irb), E-mail: [uhirb@hawaii.edu](mailto:uhirb@hawaii.edu)  
An Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Institution

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