

Wantok, Wanpis na Pasin
(Communal, Individual and Culture)

**Interpreting Adult Distance Education Students' Learning
Practices from a Melanesian Sociocultural Perspective**

A Case from the University of Papua New Guinea Open College

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Abstract

This thesis explores the pedagogical practices of distance education in Papua New Guinea (PNG) involving adult students as they interact with print media mode of communication. My research was motivated after identification of a gap in the literature with regard to enhanced insight into the adult distance learners in the PNG context.

My research focus incorporates PNG's unique indigenous cultural practices, forms of social organisation, knowledge and ways in which these '*ways of being*' frame the uses of distance learning resources. The research aims to use a concept of '*pedagogic structures*' as a way of interrogating these forms of social organisation and social position [re]construction. Collaboration and interaction as pedagogic themes resonates throughout the research.

My research design voice takes an interpretive approach, through observation and informed by ethnographic research techniques. Fifteen students (3 females and 12 males), from three study centres and four lecturers, two tutor/mentors and four instructional designers participated with the researcher as participant observer.

Qualitative analysis of data used a heuristic approach to code and categorise emerging themes from interviews, observations, and questionnaire responses. Distance learning resources and students' records were also examined.

The intersecting concepts of *ososom* and *osisim* are introduced as orientations of learning in a distance education pedagogy.

My research is theoretically guided by the ideas of Bernstein, Bourdieu and Moore, opening new avenues for analysing and shedding light on distance pedagogical practices on the premise that pedagogic practices are socially and culturally situated.

My main research findings reveal that while the transmitter prescribes certain pedagogic principles, the adult distance learners go beyond these prescribed types of interaction to acquire knowledge. Students draw from their invisible social capital and pedagogic practices of tribal and communal forms of organisation to manage learning in their invisible world.

This research points to the prioritisation for the enhancement of more meaningful collaborative and communal ways of distance education pedagogic transactions in PNG.

Declaration

I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

Word count (exclusive of appendices, list of reference and bibliography): **83,202** words.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Songorohuie Haihuie', is written above a solid horizontal line. The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized.

Samuel Songorohuie Haihuie

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my late father, Yehlenen, and my late mother, Yuhuoningai – as the only child out of your marriage.

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1 Chapter One

Introduction to the Thesis

...there are several paradoxes about learning. Some of it takes place in institutional settings: in schools, colleges and universities, in churches, mosques and synagogues; in clubs and societies. A lot of it does not: for example, the workplace is both a site and a platform for learning – many people learn in contexts deliberately chosen to contrast with their working lives. ... Sometimes learning has to be collective, sometimes it is profoundly individual.

(Schuller & Watson (2009, p. 8)

1.1 Preamble

This thesis is concerned with and examines through an interpretive approach the pedagogic practices in distance education involving adult distance students at the University of Papua New Guinea Open College (UPNG-OC). The focus specifically is on the relationships of the students' social and cultural background characteristics as adults and the strategies of collaboration and interaction they use to engage in learning as adult distance students to manage their studies. Furthermore, the emphasis is on the relationship of the pedagogic instructions from the lecturer at the provider institution and the students' level of engagement and interaction with the learning resources, lecturers and peers who are all institutionally recognized as 'formal' collaborators and those considered as 'non-formal' or the *invisible social capital* such as work colleagues, family members and others in the wider community in the management of their learning through the distance mode.

1.2 Problem leading to the formulation of this research

I have been a lecturer of distance education and course writer at the UPNG-OC for over ten years, with additional responsibilities for providing academic counselling, for example the selection of the applicable course and learning support to distance students. This learning support role is basically to help students to overcome the effects of isolation and lack of regular contact to cater for the absence of social presence in a pedagogic site. I also travel to the twenty UPNG-OC study centres; manage and organise the face-to-face *Lahara* sessions. The exposure to this sector has given me opportunities to explore the distance learners' world, from varying perspectives: social, religious, linguistic, cultural and tribal backgrounds. My academic research interest lies in the pedagogic practices of collaboration and interaction.

The problem leading to the formulation of the research question was based on the fact that during the course of my academic day, I am usually bombarded by anxious students seeking 'verbal' clarification of unambiguous written notices displayed on the notice boards. After a period of time, I became puzzled by this need for oral verification, as most of the students had

been through secondary school establishment, and a small percentage had little exposure to a formal education setting. This led to the formulation of questions such as: Why did the students want me to personally verify and authenticate through verbal means the genuineness of the message conveyed through another medium of communication? The reasons why the students show 'distrust' for the written word and the authenticity of its meanings? Are the students' action embedded in their need for societal support rather than their ability to function as autonomous learners? Can they function as independent learners or do they simply want some kind of social interaction?

During one-to-one counselling sessions, some students mentioned concerns about making sense of written instructions from the print material; at times worrying about the time spent reading it or having to involve the help of *Wantoks*. I further noted that during counselling conversations the distance students automatically spoke Tok Pisin (creole) and not English. Does this behaviour further highlight pedagogical implications for distance learners in low technology areas such as PNG? Despite my experience of distance students, I did not know much about how the students manage their studies away from the UPNG-OC study centres, how they interacted with the printed materials, especially for most of the distance students, English was a third or fourth language. However, the language factor is beyond the scope of this thesis.

I tried to seek solutions to this dilemma of notice clarification, during counselling after a *Lahara* session, I questioned a few distance students randomly enquiring about their reading habits, about reading notices when they visit government offices, when they come to the study centres, and notices sent out with printed materials. Their responses were basically, a reflection of them being educated by their village chief or initiated elders using a pedagogy that promoted listening, observation, memorisation, imitation but not seeking knowledge independently by reading notices, basically it should be read to them. On the contrary, tribal people including my own treat verbal instruction as of secondary importance to actual showing.

So, interestingly enough, when I was offered the chance to carry out this research, I decided to explore the impact of students interaction with the print media materials sent out by UPNG-OC to gain insight on adult distance students overall learning, which will enable me to be more effective in my delivery of student support especially at the *Lahara* sessions and of course possible solutions to the answering of my main research questions.

1.3 Research Questions

The institution's choice of distance education pedagogic practice is based on assumed notions of independent learning as defined by various authors including Moore (1972), Hodgson and others (1987) and self-directed study on the part of the learner in what was described recently by Evans (2003) as learning for a living. All these contemporary descriptions of learning was summated succinctly by Dewey (1933) who stated at the beginning of the last century that all the school can or needs to do for pupils, so far as their minds are concerned, is to develop their ability to think. I now pose my main research question:

What are the pedagogic practices in distance education involving, lecturers, instructional designers and adult distance learners using the medium of print-media in PNG?

The following sub-questions include:

- With whom do distance learners collaborate to interact with and why?
- How do students organise their studies and manage their learning?
- How do the students learn things in other contexts? For example, how do their local communities 'teach' their members?

While the concern is primarily with the students on *how* and *why* they engage in learning as adult distance students, the institutional perspective also need to be considered to answer this research question in a satisfactory manner. There are claims by authors such as Mehrotra, Hollister and McGahey (2001) that distance education is changing traditional classroom instruction. By responding to learning on demand and new developments in digital technology, many institutions have revised ways in which they offer classroom courses outside of the lecture room on a campus and the UPNG-OC is no exception. There is a paradigm shift in the course design and pedagogy from lecturer-centred to student-centred learning or from passive to active and participatory learning. Similarly, many aspects of distance education are conducive to teamwork and collaboration among students at a time when employers are also placing a greater emphasis on teamwork and collaboration.

In light of this paradigm shift in pedagogic practice from lecturer-centred to learner-centred approaches in teaching and learning in distance education, a number of specific questions are posed relating to institutional pedagogic practices.

- What types of pedagogic strategies can be found in the materials and practices of the

UPNG-OC?

- What sorts of skills are necessary for adult distance students to be able to fulfil the learning tasks required by the institution?
- Do students' possess the kinds of skills they need to do the course by distance mode?
- What forms of support do the students get on their courses?
- What is the relationship between 'traditional' modes of learning and the pedagogic strategies employed by the UPNG-OC?

The focus of this research is specifically on the local indigenous sociocultural oriented practices of learning as against the contemporary pedagogic strategies and assumptions prescribed by the UPNG-OC, and I ask the question. *What is the student's learning practices using this set of printed distance learning resources sent from the UPNG-OC as contrasted with their own local indigenous ways of teaching and knowing?* Having introduced my main and related research questions I turn to discussing the significance of this research for the PNG context.

1.4 Statement of the General Problem

Ideas about learning seem to be based upon different assumptions about the nature of knowledge. For some, knowledge can be conceived as a (valuable) commodity, which exists independently of people and as such, can be stored and transmitted (sold). For others, knowledge, more appropriately knowing, is best seen as a process of engaging with and attributing meaning to the world, and one's self in it. For the former, then, learning becomes a process of acquisition and addition of facts and skills. Whereas for the latter, learning is the elaboration and change of meaning-making processes and the enhancement of personal competence.

In traditional Melanesian societies in PNG, knowledge and the authority of its custodians is thought to have been 'acquired' by a select group of privileged tribal elites (Lindstrom, 1990). They were the 'legitimate custodians' and disseminators of knowledge (Lewis, 1975) and 'transmitted' it to members of the society as and when the need arose.

Knowledge in the form of distance learning instructions and resources structured and delivered through print-media can be viewed from different social positions. In this 'new' and introduced way of teaching and knowing, how do students manage their learning to acquire knowledge through the mode of distance study using print media learning resources?

1.5 Introduction to the Research Problem

The development of distance education is to link the inevitability in the use of this mode of education to deliver higher education and its impact and influence on a transforming PNG society. Distance learning courses at university level are designed on transmission pedagogic principles. That is, the principles are sets of ideas about how people do or should learn and how the materials are to be dealt with. These principles are centred on instructional design models of either instructivist or constructivist pedagogy. An instructivist model holds that knowledge is 'structured and fixed' and therefore, this model of instructional design facilitates the transmission of knowledge from the 'knower' (lecturer) to the 'passive recipient' (learner). On the other hand, a constructivist model of instructional design perceives knowledge as being constructed through human perception and social experience and facilitates for the 'construction' of meaning.

Increasingly there is an interest from researchers on practices embedded in indigenous culture Kovach et al (2008) among the First Nations in Canada, Wortham and Contreras (2002) in Latin America and Zepke and Leach's (2002) exploration of indigenous pedagogic practices among indigenous Maoris. The study by Zepke and Leach (2002) for example, reports on indigenous Maori students in New Zealand enrolled in a Bachelor of Education program. While embracing new forms of communication technologies they want to assert their identity as members of an oral culture insisting to learn in ways that are appropriate to them using these modern communication technologies.

The assumption is that practices of learning vary among adults in a distance education environment. This research takes an interpretivist approach¹ through participant observation into the cultural modes of learning with reference to the local Melanesian context in PNG. In an endeavour to re-conceptualise a 'local methodology' of enquiry and interrogation of the social world of the adult distance learners, this methodological approach is based on the idea of collaboration to co-construct meaning.

I am interested in exploring the sets of practices where adult learners engage with printed learning instructions and resources and specifically how students from a particular region/province 'come together' in a UPNG-OC study centre and undertake 'learning' and the discursive pedagogic relations that are used in their learning experiences as distance students

¹ The product of an interpretive description, or the object of the exercise, is a coherent conceptual description that reflects thematic patterns and commonalities believed to characterize the phenomenon that is being studied and also accounts for inevitable individual variations within them.

through the duration of a 15-week semester. The aim of this investigation is to look at the subjective micro level of the adult learner, that is the ways in which 'knowledge' or learning is conversationally worked out through social interaction and collaboration between participants in the distance learners' sociocultural environment. The 'coming together' at an UPNG-OC study centre is considered to be a one-off 'formal meeting' during the induction and orientation session organised by the institution in the beginning of the semester and at *Lahara* (equivalent to summer) sessions. For the most part of the semester, students are expected to be independent, self-directed learners 'studying on their own' collaborating and interacting with the 'absent teacher' through the printed materials. As such students have their own ways of going about their university level study through the distance mode and their motivations are personal and subjective reflecting the cultural diversity of the indigenous population. To make-up for the 'absent-teacher' they may collaborate and interact with other people. In which sociocultural context does this collaboration and interaction take place and why?

1.6 Context of the Research

Papua New Guinea is located south of the equator, some 150 kilometres north of Australia. PNG occupies the eastern half of the rugged tropical island of New Guinea, which it shares with the Indonesian province of West Papua, including atolls and smaller islands in the Pacific. PNG comprises over 600 islands and occupies a region of 462,840 square kilometres (NDOE, 2000). The middle part of the island rises into a topographically complex landscape such that the island's indigenous population remained isolated from each other for millennia. The lesser group of islands of PNG consist of the Bismarck Archipelago, Manus, New Britain, New Ireland and Bougainville. Some of the islands are volcanic, with steep mountain ranges, and are relatively undeveloped. PNG is divided into four regions: Papua, Highlands, Momase and New Guinea islands. For political reasons underpinning the requirement for national unity, these four regions are divided further into twenty-two provinces. The lack of infrastructure encumbers the delivery of government services and the development of the country's wealth of mineral resources.

1.6.1 Brief PNG History

The Portuguese explorer Jorge de Meneses discovered the island around 1512, and named it *Ilhas des Papuas*, (Land of the fuzzy-haired people). The European missionaries and traders began to settle on the island in the mid-1800, and restricted their presence mostly to the accessible coastal regions.

The Germans, British and Dutch claimed PNG over several decades. After World War I, PNG came under the political control of Australia. The inland Highland region was not explored until the 1930's. European explorers in seeking gold, found instead over one million tribal people, living in fertile mountain valleys and following a subsistence lifestyle. By the 1960's there had emerged a movement towards independence movement in PNG. After a short period of internal autonomy, the country declared its full independence in 1975.

1.6.2 Social Organisation in Melanesia

PNG has a population of approximately six million people, with more than 1000 tribes with distinctive cultures and over 800 identified languages (Foley, 2002). PNG tribes are structured on the basis of kinship, a characteristic feature of global tribal societies. *“Kinship is a system that prescribes how people living together should interact with one another”* and within each cultural group *“there are usually smaller groups of more closely related people whose loyalties to one another are greater and who interact more frequently with one another than they do with other groups”* (Whiteman, 1995).

The creed of reciprocity and ‘wantok system’ are features within the kinship system (Tivinarlik, 2000). The concept of reciprocity entails input of food and wealth among community members that are living, those that are deceased and the cosmos (Mantovani, 1995). The majority of the population lives in small, isolated communities undertaking subsistence farming; fishing and a small percentage of rural people are involved in the cash economy, such as the coffee industry mostly for school fees payments. However, there is an increasing drift into the urban areas, where government or private enterprise employs a large percentage of the population. There is an enormous gap between the conditions of the urban centres and the inaccessibility of some rural areas where there is an absence of electricity, schools, shops or libraries.

1.6.3 Indigenous Tribal Pedagogy

The tribes of PNG had their own education system before European contact in the 1800's. Their indigenous curriculum of education was based on the life experiences and wisdom of 40,000 years of history (McLaughlin and O'Donoghue, 1996). The curriculum was informal and primarily for survival skills (Louisson, 1974). While traditional education was appropriate for traditional society, it no longer provides the structure, knowledge and skills needed for the 21st century. Therefore, PNG is trying to address this concern in its current education system including learning by distance mode, which is based on a western ideology. Not unexpectedly, the education system needs to be relevant, of good quality and accessible. This means an

education that can respond to the needs of the people of PNG and provide them with the appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to live meaningful lives now and in the future. Currently, the language of instruction in all existing UPNG-OC distance education courses is English. There are no plans to develop any distance education courses in local languages because of the large number of languages in PNG, not even in *Tok Pisin*, a Melanesian Pidgin, which is commonly spoken by a large percentage of PNG nationals.

1.6.4 Role of Women

The role of women is briefly explored, due to three female participants in the research. In most traditional PNG society women play a private rather than a public role in decision making (Flaherty, 1998). The woman's role was as homemaker, caring for the children, spouse and cultivating the gardens. Women had specific roles and were not without influence, but responsibility for the processes involved in decision-making was mostly the domain of the male members of the society. However, some Melanesian societies are matrilineal in forms of social organization where the women have property inheriting rights and genealogy is traced through the female line. There are spouses of student participants who come from matrilineal societies and their interactions with their husbands to manage learning make interesting interpretations, as I will show in Chapter 8.

According to Dovona-Ope (2008), presently PNG women have entered a world where the barriers between men's work and women's work as determined by traditional roles have dissipated. Some PNG women are in public life as qualified professionals such as doctors, lawyers and parliamentarians.

With the introduction of this PNG context, I now move to present my focus and significance of this research.

1.7 Focus and Significance of this Research

Even though there is a large body of literature concerning collaboration and interaction and how adult students manage their learning, little has been written in the context of PNG. According to Guy (1994) there is a need for further research studies on distance teaching and learning to arrive at locally appropriate and culturally sensitive methodologies and practices. This research, therefore, aim to provide a means of increasing understanding of pedagogic transactions in distance education settings and in particular, on the critical concerns of collaboration and interaction in the transmission and acquisition of knowledge by stakeholders in distance

education pedagogy. To do this I frame and apply the concept *distance* as an issue of sociocultural phenomenon that separate, divide and connect social agents in the negotiations and contestations that take place in what I label as the distance education market place. It is also hoped that increased knowledge will contribute to structuring institutional policies that are socially and culturally relevant to local context to deal with student support areas of instructional design and delivery, and counselling and guidance in the practices of pedagogic design and learning. Why is this of significance to the PNG distance education context?

The primary focus of the research reported in this thesis is the exploration of the learning practices of adult distance students' interaction with print-media technology as they participate in their chosen UPNG-OC courses. To tell a more nuanced and holistic story I also focus on the pedagogic design and transfer of knowledge practices of the lecturers and instructional designers. This research is significant for the following reasons: the quality of PNG distance education needs improvement in all pedagogical aspects ranging from delivery of courses, course design, tutor/mentoring of distance students in terms of the diversity of languages and cultures.

At the National Government policy level, Component 5 of the National Higher Education Plan II (Commission for Higher Education, 2000) identifies DE as one of the key areas to addressing the issue of access to tertiary education. Both the plan and the government policy aim to provide tertiary education opportunities to as many people as possible. UPNG through its Open College has taken on board this policy by taking action in implementing the policy directive. Effective implementation however, requires greater knowledge and understanding of the student's ways of learning and how these relate to lecturer and institutional support through learning resources produced and teaching conducted via the distance mode. This study will enhance overall PNG National Government policy and UPNG initiatives by providing reliable and trustworthy data for the effective management and decisions on the operations of the Open College distance education programme and add to the literature base for further research in the area. Other universities in the country and the South Pacific Island countries may also benefit and gain an increased understanding of their own institutions and their students' diverse sociocultural context from the findings and conclusions drawn from this study.

Apart from the above, there is a demand on increased return on investment in public goods and services by governments all over the world. PNG is no exception and students and their families that have chosen to pursue studies through distance mode to uplift their social conditions will find a lot of relevance and use from the findings of this research and improve on how to manage

students and their learning. This will be shown in the analysis of my findings under theme of motivation in Chapter 8.

1.8 Organisation of the Thesis

Chapter 1 describes the context of the research; identifies the problem statement; the research questions; the purpose of the study; the significance and focus of the study.

Chapter 2 explores the concept of culture; pedagogies from my own indigenous tribal Sausewian community with relationship to western adopted pedagogies; distinctions of the scientific and indigenous PNG ways of knowing.

Chapter 3 is a narrative of the development of distance education in PNG, to inform this research on the practices and theoretical debates of learning practices in distance education.

Chapter 4 examines the learning practices of adult students from a theoretical perspective. In particular I will focus on the practices of collaboration and interaction in learning by distance.

Chapter 5 outlines the three theoretical frameworks for my study. These are: Bernstein's, Bourdieu's and Moore's theories.

Chapter 6 describes and justifies the research design that focussed the way that the study is conducted using a qualitative approach.

In Chapter 7, I present and discuss my framework of data analysis and the treatment of data using the qualitative data analysis software. My analysis is through coding and thematisation of pedagogic themes.

Chapters 8 and 9, is the engagement with my data to construct a holistic story of distance education pedagogic practices in PNG through a theoretical framework of theory of practice and theory of pedagogic discourse drawing from the rich narratives from my coded data. In both chapters the main findings will be discussed and addressed drawing on Bernstein and Bourdieu's theoretical perspectives.

Finally in Chapter 10 I will address the main findings and draw conclusions. Implications for distance education pedagogical change are highlighted and future research directions are recommended.

1.8.1 Definitions of Terms

Kuamainge: Ceremonial courtyard in a hamlet of my indigenous Sausewia society.

Lahara: This is equivalent to what is called the Summer Session that involves six weeks of intensive face-to-face teaching of distance students. Classes are held every day for two hours per day per course in no more than two course units per session.

Masalai/Wale: This term comes from the Melanesian Tok Pisin Creole meaning a supernatural intermediary between humans and the creator force. The word is used in the realm of existence and being and has an ontological connotation of how things came to be through the inertia of the supernatural force (*yuo-sahi*).

Moka: A complex system of exchange that relies heavily on pigs as currency for the construction of social status in the Western Highlands Society.

Ososom: This term defines dispositional orientation of the student in a distance education pedagogic context. It is the state of being separate spatially but for the description of the empirical context in this research, it is the social, cultural in what can also be labelled as the temporal distance between the knowledge transmitter and the acquirer. Literally *ososom* is translated to mean the situation of being; *out-of-site-out-of-sight-out-of-mind*. However, the descriptive context in which *ososom* is used is that of the social and cultural space between two agents or the abstraction of meaning and the unthinkable.

Osisim: This is the counterpart to *ososom*. The disposition of being in the same place at the same time. However, while the social and cultural *distances* might still be in existence, pedagogically, there is a commonly shared meaning for the mutual benefit of understanding between transmitter and acquirer. Literally, this is translated to mean the situation of: *on-site-in-sight-in-mind*.

Rhambu: Communal meeting house in a hamlet of my indigenous Sausewia society.

Wantok: The literal translation is *Wan* meaning one, same or common and *tok* means talk i.e. 'one-talk'. In contemporary use *wantok* defines people who share a common culture, such as language, and social attribute, such as ethnicity. In urban PNG, *wantok* also denotes those who come from the same province/region and the term came into the vocabulary of *Tok Pisin*.

Wanpis: This is also a word from the Melanesian Creole *Tok Pisin*. A *wanpis* i.e. 'one-piece' is a single entity or an individual and the determinism to be a self.

2 Chapter Two

Indigenous Culture and the Subjective Reality of Pedagogy

Culture – Through Who's Culture?
The total way of life of a people – Clifford Geertz 1973

2.1 Introduction

My formal schooling commenced in 1972, when my father took me for enrolment in a fee-paying preparatory school, set up by the Christian missions. This supports Crocombe and Crocombe's (1994) findings that most South Pacific island countries began formal schooling with educational institutes set up by Christian missions in the nineteenth century.

An older cousin, who attended a different school, had 'inside' knowledge of the schools renaming policy, took the initiative to name me *Samuel* after the biblical prophet.

My indigenous name, *Songorohuie*, legitimises me the use of the clan land and the resources above, on and below it. These resources include all the animate and inanimate objects on it as the clan's totemic symbols including the space itself and the plants, soil and the land and marine organisms. All these have a social meaning with "spiritual" values attached to the land.

During the enrolment procedure, the teacher asked my name, my father replied, '*Samuel*'. The teacher asked for my surname, my father replied, '*Songorohuie*'. However, wantoks who were present at the enrolment, with understanding of the Western concept of surname, informed my father, that the child's surname is his first name, *Haihuie*.

The concept of surname is foreign to PNG even today in the context of traditional society in terms of the labelling and sociocultural organisation, hence my father's ignorance of it.

The purpose of the 'renaming story' is to demonstrate the types of simplistic problems that may emerge from the intersection of diverse 'traditional' forms of social organisation in PNG societies and Westernised 'ways of knowing'. This example shows that variation in basic categories of social practices (in this case, social labelling) and the difficulties that surface from trying to translate one way of doing things into another.

This thesis aims to explore the intersection of pedagogic practices of learning through a detailed study of the experiences of adult distance students and educators' on the Bachelor of Management Programme at UPNG-OC.

I view that ways of knowing and teaching or pedagogy is socioculturally situated. Hence, my interest lies in the exploration of these distinctions in PNG. In the opening up of this discussion, I move to further explore this notion of culture, as this helps to situate the discussion on pedagogy as a sociocultural activity within the broader field of education. Education, as I will approach to interpret and comprehend distance pedagogical practices should not be about preparation for life, but should be intertwined with life itself.

I will illustrate distance pedagogy through the data in Chapters 8 and 9, as an act of living-it to know-it. With this pedagogical reorientation, my approach is that, clear understanding of the concept of culture for me, will set the parameters of my examination of the different views of knowledge and practices as a cultural artefact, that is relative to a given society.

My rationale for taking this angle is to move outside of the contemporary conceptions of pedagogy. The people of PNG at one time and even up to the present had limited access to education establishments in the contemporary context, but knowledge transmission did occur from and between *wantoks*. The questions of interest are: Where and how did teaching and learning occur? Who were the main participants in the pedagogic transactions? How did this provide meaning or create knowledge and its maintenance in PNG society even up to now?

The varied ways of learning were framed in my indigenous society with reference to the use of the five senses. In Boikin-Yangoru Language, to know is translated to *ng'kwo*; thus *hu-ng'kwo* (touch to know), *wang-te ng'kow* (hear to know), *eer-ng'kwo* (see to know), *her-ng'kow* (taste to know). Teaching and learning to acquire knowledge were defined by these acts associated with the experiences of these senses, and occurs in both the formal and the non-formal context. The formal practices of teaching and knowing takes place during the period of seclusion at initiation rituals while the non-formal pedagogic transactions are life-long and ongoing. The pedagogic practices in this chapter will focus on the non-formal, which I have introduced above as *live-it-to-know-it*, which requires the novice acquirer of knowledge to participate to know by living in the given sociocultural context.

The discussion in this chapter is useful to understanding my re-conceptualisation of the term *distance* in the pedagogy of distance education, basically, as the social and cultural space or spaces between one entity and another.

In the next section, my use of the term culture as a concept and its application will be examined as a precursor to indigenous ways of knowing.

2.2 Defining Culture

Before examining the term indigenous and what constitutes indigenous knowledge and practices I attempt to interpret and understand the concept of culture. By doing so I am conceiving that knowledge is a cultural artefact in a given socio-political and socio-cultural context. As such the term 'culture' seems a slippery concept to define as noted by several authors such as Kluckhohn and Murra (1953) and Geertz (1973a) as there are varying definitions of culture reflecting differing theories for understanding or the criteria used to evaluate human activity.

According to Reagan's (2005, p. 29) observation, "The word 'culture' is perhaps the prime case of a 'week-off word' as Williams' noted, culture, 'is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language.'" Excerpts from Williams (1983) key words suggest that *culture* is complicated because of its intricate historical development in several European languages.

Culture in all its development uses was a noun of process: the tending of something, basically crops or animals. At various points in this development two crucial changes occurred: first, a degree of habituation to the metaphor, which made the sense of human tending direct; second, an extension of particular processes to a general process, which the word could carry abstractly. It is of course from the latter development that the independent noun *culture* began its complicated modern history, but the process of change is so intricate and the conditions of meanings are at times so close, that it is not possible to give a definite date. Culture as an independent noun, an abstract process or the product of such a process, is not important before the 18th century and is not common before the 19th century. But the early stages of this development were not sudden. Through social anthropology, we are informed that one of the earliest definitions of culture is attributed to Tylor (1889) who described the concept as '... that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities acquired by man as a member of society' (Tylor, 1889). This is the definition of *culture* from a Westerner articulated over a century ago in what is at present times in sociological language defined as industrialised society.

The above postulation is that culture is given meaning to by the language of a given society. For the purposes of this discussion I rely on an expanded definition of culture in Geertz's (1973a) book *The Interpretation of Cultures* in which he draws from Kluckhohn's *Mirror of Man* to define the concept of culture. According to Geertz (1973a, pp. 4-5) Kluckhohn defined culture as: (1) "the total way of life of a people"; (2) "the social legacy the individual acquires from his

group”; (3) “a way of thinking, feeling and believing”; (4) “an abstraction from behaviour”; (5) a theory on the part of the anthropologist about the way in which a group of people in fact behave; (6) a “store-house of pooled learning”; (7) “a set of standardised orientations to recurrent problems”; (8) “learned behaviour”; (9) a mechanism for the normative regulation of behaviour; (10) “a set of techniques for adjusting both to the external environment and other men”; (11) “a precipitate of history”; and turning, perhaps in desperation, to similes, as a map, as a sieve, and a matrix.

The above definition of the concept of culture in the words of Geertz (ibid, p. 5) ‘is essentially a semiotic one’. That is, a study of sign processes or signification and communication explicitly includes the study of how meaning is constructed and understood in different societies. This suggestion is inclined towards a social construction of meaning (Berger and Luckmann, 1967 see also Vygotsky) in which knowledge is derived from and maintained by social interactions in society.

Furthermore, in Geertz’s (1973a) symbolic view of culture, symbols are both the practices of social actors and the context in which this takes place that gives such practices meaning. In other words, symbols provide the limits of cultured thought whereby members of a culture rely on these symbols to frame their thoughts and expressions in intelligible terms. Symbols therefore make culture possible, reproducible and readable. They are the webs of significance and according to Bourdieu (1977) give regularity, unity and systematic to the practices of a group, whether this be Westerners or non-Westerners.

From the above list, Kluckhohn’s first articulation as *the total way of life of a people* best captures my interpretation and application of *culture* as knowledge. Culture as knowledge expressed through language is the usefulness of its applicability in a given locale and in my indigenous society we interpret knowledge to be holistic and reciprocal between the secular and the spiritual realms. This will be expanded further on in this chapter.

Moving from this discussion I want to look at my particular interest, which is in pedagogy as a socially and culturally situated practice. In the next section I look at distinctions of the domains of knowledge, Western² and non-Western or indigenous knowledge and science and non-science. There is a commonly used distinction between indigenous knowledge/culture and Western knowledge/culture. This distinction underwrites the idea about development by Western based

² By Western I mean those industrialised societies of Northern and Western Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand.

institutions such as the World Bank. In addition to this is the distinction between scientific and common sense knowledge.

2.2.1 Knowledge as Cultural Artefact: the artefact of science and non-science

In this section I want to delineate briefly the distinctions of knowledge to guide my discussion on what I label as Melanesian cosmology to anchor my literature review, research methodology and analysis of data and the findings and conclusions I have drawn in this thesis. My conceptualisation and application of the concept knowledge includes the social forms of organisation and culture related practices of a people.

The confusion for me that needs clarification is that because the “modern” scientific method of inquiry, framing and classification of knowledge emerged in the West, there is the tendency to refer and place knowledge that is universally true as “Western scientific knowledge” and knowledge from outside this parameter as non-scientific. Therefore, with such view indigenous knowledge and practices of knowing are unfortunately labelled as non-scientific, primitive or simply myth. To avoid ambiguity and my loose usage of these terminology and confusion let me make a distinction of knowledge into the two commonly known categories, that which is *science* and the *non-science*.

I illuminate this division of scientific against non-scientific knowledge by summarising Ward’s (1996) attributes of science versus non-science (Table 1):

Table 1: Science versus non-Science

Science	Non-science
Knowledge	Belief
Truth	Speculation; opinion; superstition
Reason	Faith
Reality	Rhetoric
Specialized language	Ordinary speech
Knowledge produced through ordered investigations and experiments	Knowledge produced through hearsay and personal accounts
Knowledge produced in a special place (the laboratory) by special people (scientists) with special equipment (instruments in the laboratory)	Knowledge produced by anybody from any source

From the above two categories we can see that there is the scientific or nature and the human construct or society. This division in Ward’s (1996) characterisation is between science and literature and scientists and humanists. The attributes of scientists versus humanists are further contrasted in the next table below.³

³ With input from Paul Dowling, these tables of categorisation are also used by Jammia Galant in her project on the sociology of knowledge and knowledge practices that I find useful for my construction of hierarchies of knowledge-authority in distance education pedagogy.

Table 2: Scientists versus Humanists

Scientists	Humanists
Scientific knowledge	Literary and philosophical knowledge
Fact	Fiction
Research objects in nature	Research human affairs
Experimental, scientific methods	Interpretative and speculative methods
Contribute to the advancement of knowledge and truth about reality	Enhances the appreciation of everyday life

From the two categories above, I summarise that scientific knowledge is knowing and understanding derived through a scientific method of inquiry and gathering of empirical evidence that is observable and measurable that is then subjected to logically coherent principles of reasoning. This process can be repeated in other contexts resulting in the outcome of same or similar results.

In contrast, non-scientific knowledge in my interpretation and application from the above is situational knowledge and specific to a particular situation and is often embedded in the language, culture and tradition of a group of people. The question then is what are the practices of learning for the adult distance students' in their given sociocultural context? To answer this question I look at human affairs in relation to the natural environment and the intangible "spiritual" world characterised by terms such as belief, faith, opinion and speculation. In broad sociological categorisation these are the pre-industrial and industrialised societies.

There are two diagrams, the river and the forest on its embankment and my native pre-industrial indigenous hamlet, *Sunkunumbo*, I will use these later on in this chapter, to show the reciprocal and interdependent nature of relationship in our indigenous sociocultural world and its connectedness to the natural physical environment.

The connectedness is defined through the value placed on the idea of spirituality. My use of 'spirituality' places my analysis and reasoning in this thesis under a humanist approach of meaning-making. To conclude this section I am using the term "indigenous knowledge" to mean local knowledge held by indigenous peoples, or local knowledge unique to a given culture or society (see also Ohmagari and Berkes, 1997; Warren, Slikkerveer and Brokensha., 1995).

From the writings of these authors and others it can be summarised that indigenous knowledge and practices is knowledge acquired by local people through the accumulation of experience, informal experiments and intimate understanding of their physical and social environment in a given culture. This knowledge maintains the existence of a given society and it can help people to learn how to live in harmony with nature and the environment (Warren, Egunjobi and Wahaab,

1996). My use of the notion of spirituality should not be misconstrued and associated with the practices of magic and witchcraft and the trickery inherent in such practices even though the practices of magic and witchcraft do frame the social structure of some societies, as I will allude to briefly in the first paragraph of the next section.

2.3 The Distinctions of Scientific and Indigenous Ways of Knowing

The status of indigenous forms of social practice as a comparative example to scientific modes of organisation has been of strong concern by sociologists and anthropologists. One of the particularly important aspects of debates around the practice of comparing cultures in this way is neatly exemplified by the exchange between Wynch (1964) and Evans-Pritchard (1937), and their anthropological studies of the Azande. Briefly, Pritchard's ethnographic work of the role of Witchcraft in the Azande tribe of Sudan and the Northern Congo led him to conclude, that while the systems of belief present in the Azande possessed an 'internal logic', that they were nonetheless inferior to those of Western Science. This conclusion was strongly criticised by Wynch, who argued that there is no external point of comparison to make an evaluation of the relative worth of any culture. The assessment of 'one culture as intrinsically more logical' than another is always itself a culturally situated evaluation.

The purpose of this example is to exemplify one of the intrinsic difficulties of making evaluative comparisons of distinctive cultural perspectives. In this study my intention is not to evaluate but merely to analytically characterise the intersection of practices in the context of distance learning provision in PNG. These characterisations or pedagogic constructs that emerged through my literature review of Melanesian culture and society in relation to distance education pedagogic practices are *top-down authoritative*, *collaborative*, *imitative* and *myth-enshrined*. This will emerge in my subsequent literature review.

The examination of the intersection of 'scientific' and 'indigenous' forms of knowledge and practice is a key interest in postcolonial studies of culture and international relations.

In this section I will focus particularly on the work of Agrawal and Freire. Agrawal (1995) distinguishes indigenous from scientific knowledge through three headings of substantive difference, methodological and epistemological difference and the difference of contextuality of the two knowledge systems. In exploring this work, I will attempt to draw out the difficulties of making a clear analytic distinction between such knowledge systems. What is of interest is the pedagogising of these knowledge systems.

Warren (cited by Agrawal, 1995) outlined the following characteristics of indigenous knowledge in a paper prepared for the World Bank:

...indigenous knowledge is an important natural resource that can facilitate the development process in cost-effective, participatory, and sustainable ways. IK is local knowledge that is unique to a given culture or society. IK contrasts with the international knowledge system generated by universities, research institutions and private firms. It is the basis for local-level decision-making in agriculture, health care, food preparation, education, natural resource management, and a host of other activities in rural communities. Such knowledge is passed down from generation to generation, in many societies by word of mouth. Indigenous knowledge has value not only for the culture in which it evolves, but also for scientists and planners striving to improve the conditions in rural localities. (Agrawal, p. 416 emphasis added)

To recognize and acknowledge indigenous knowledge as pivotal to positive development change, Agrawal cites a United Nations report, which stated that indigenous knowledge includes the cultural traditions, values, beliefs, and worldviews of local peoples as distinguished from the scientific classification of knowledge that originated from the Western world. According to Agrawal, such local knowledge is the product of indigenous peoples' direct experience of the workings of nature and its relationship with the social world; it is also a holistic and inclusive form of knowledge. In the PNG/Melanesian sociocultural context such views of reality is enhanced by the principle of 'reciprocity'. That is, every entity has 'life' or is living, and human actions with both the physical and social environment is undertaken in this cultural principle of reciprocity and has an intrinsic meaning and internal logic to understanding it in the society in which it is situated.

Such forms of 'indigenous' understanding of the world are of course very distinct from rationalised scientific forms of understanding the world. According to Warren et.al (1996) the primary dimension of difference and uniqueness seems to lie in an organic relationship between the local community and its knowledge. Let me then explicate the difference between the two knowledge systems under the three headings put forward by Agrawal that I alluded to earlier. According to Agrawal (1995), first, there is substantive difference in the subject matter and the character of the two systems. On some accounts, indigenous knowledge is concerned primarily with those activities that are intimately connected with the daily livelihoods of people rather than with abstract ideas and philosophies.

The second difference highlighted by Agrawal (1995) is the methodological and epistemological difference between indigenous knowledge and scientific knowledge. What scientists do is supposed to be strictly separable from common sense or non-science. Indigenous knowledge in contrast, is no more than common sense; it is closed, non-systematic, without concepts that would conform to ideas of objectivity or rigorous analysis, and advances, if at all, in fits and starts. On this account, seemingly with greater intellectual content, science is open, systematic, objective, and analytical, and advances by building rigorously on previous achievements.

Agrawal (1995) further outlines that the final difference is in the context in which these two views of knowledge exist. Indigenous knowledge according to Agrawal (1995) exists in close and organic harmony with lives of the people who generated it and I have attempted to illustrate this knowledge system among my own Sausewia people further on in this chapter. In contrast modern or scientific knowledge thrives on abstract formulation and exists divorced from the lives of the people. Let me further elaborate on this by citing Ward I had referenced earlier. According to Ward (1996) the attributes of science versus non-science is that, what is defined as ‘knowledge’ in science is labelled as ‘belief’ in non-science. That is what scientists define as scientific knowledge or ‘truth’ is for non-science literary and philosophical knowledge based on speculation, opinion and sometimes superstition as shown in the tables in *Section 2.1* and my opening paragraph of *Section 3*.

Citing the 1980 work of Chambers, Agrawal (1995) provides an explanation of the implications of distinctions between indigenous and scientific knowledge:

Modern scientific knowledge is centralized and associated with the machinery of the state; and those who are its bearers believe in its superiority. Indigenous technical knowledge, in contrast, is scattered and associated with low prestige rural life; even those who are its bearers may believe it to be inferior (Agrawal, p. 417).

To put this another way, the presence of a discourse of ‘scientific knowledge’ in ‘developing’ countries through processes of colonisation leads to the creation of social divisions and a *politicised* distinction between ‘forms of knowledge’, ‘ways of knowing’ and how this knowledge is transmitted and passed on from one generation to the next.

Knowledge, the social practices and ‘ways of life’ to which they relate, become mechanisms to social distinctions and, consequently, resources to social labelling and social movement/progression. The differences between knowledge systems then, and the ways that

people use and traverse them are important for understanding settings where such ways of knowing intersect.

2.4 Indigenous PNG/Melanesian Ways of Teaching and Knowing – Live-it to Know-it

This research is about the pedagogy of distance education with a focus on the learning practices of adult students. Learning conjures up an imagery of a school, classroom, teacher and books. While this is obvious in present times, the main purpose of this chapter and the discussion on knowledge and ways of knowing/learning is for me to present a pedagogic context prior to Western colonisation of Melanesia. Were there any concepts defining practices equivalent to pedagogy, learning, instruction and meaning-making? In the absence of the imagery of a school with classroom, teacher, students, subjects and curriculum; how did teaching and learning take place and continue to take place in PNG traditional village societies?

Transmission of knowledge did take place but through what means and forms of social organisation? To answer this question I examine indigenous sociocultural forms of organisation and how the social is related to the natural physical and the metaphoric spiritual world. This is done to postulate that the closest practice to the concept of pedagogy is what I am labelling here as *live-it to know-it*.

The accounts of indigenous local communities within PNG themselves vary. They tend to emphasise the spiritual, ancestral, relational and cosmological connections to their knowledge. While traditional knowledge may be acquired from a “teacher”, and improved through experience, it ultimately may be derived through direct communication with the abstract or “spirit world”.

Defining and understanding the ontological basis of Melanesian societies, is culturally speaking, problematic. Generalisations cannot be made that cover all language groups as one homogenous entity, as will be mentioned again in my Methodology Chapter. The way in which one language group knows about existence/being will be different to that of another. Melanesian worldviews, through creation myths and the idea of reciprocal relationship to the natural physical world, contrasts with scientific ways and methodologies of interpreting and defining the lived world. I will illustrate this through an example of my own society further on.

The problematic introduced is shared by a number of other researchers from and on indigenous knowledge, such as, Agrawal (1995) and Kuokkanen (2003) that I discussed in *Section 2.3*. Recently and taking up the position of development through other eyes, Andreotti and deSouza

(2008) put it bluntly that by not addressing these different interpretations may result in the uncritical reinforcement of notions of the supremacy and universality of 'our' (Western originated scientific) ways of seeing and knowing, which can undervalue other knowledge systems and reinforce unequal relations of dialogue and power. I will expound on this further when presenting and analysing the world view and the ways of teaching and knowing of my own indigenous people, the Sausewia, of Yangoru in the East Sepik Province.

Daes in 1994 (cited by Kuokkanen, 2003) also acknowledged and tried to differentiate this problem of defining indigenous knowledge through Western epistemological conventions (norms regarding the nature and kinds of knowledge and how this relates to notions such as truth-value and belief) as being widely recognised. He said that in many ways, they represent two different systems of knowledge based on different conceptions of the world. Many indigenous people have noted that imposing definitions from other epistemological conventions would violate and transgress the integrity of indigenous systems of knowledge and distort them. Take the land and the related issue of ecology and conservation in this time of global climatic change and its impact on humanity as a case in point about indigenous people and their relationship to the land and the ecological environment. For indigenous people, heritage is not merely a collection of objects, stories, and ceremonies, but a complete knowledge system with its own concepts of epistemology, philosophy, and scientific and logical validity (Daes, 1994 which is actually a UN sanctioned report on indigenous people).

In the next section I introduce and examine an indigenous knowledge system and a pedagogic context in which this takes place. The first is the layout of my indigenous hamlet. In the context of this hamlet I want to examine how knowledge is passed on from one generation to the next (teaching and learning) centred on the *Rhambu*⁴ and the *Kumainge*⁵. The second is the peoples' intimate relationship in a sociopsychological way and the value and beliefs we attach to the ecological/physical environment. Within the context of this relationship is the management of what is defined by the language of natural science as environment and conservation. Melanesian societies had knowledge of environment and conservation long before science and the industrialised world came to define this as conservation. Our definition and knowledge of conservation was by *living-it*, and not teaching about it within the confines of a fixed space and time.

⁴ Communal meeting house, close approximation to classroom

⁵ The front scared ceremonial courtyard of the *Rhambu* close approximation to school playground

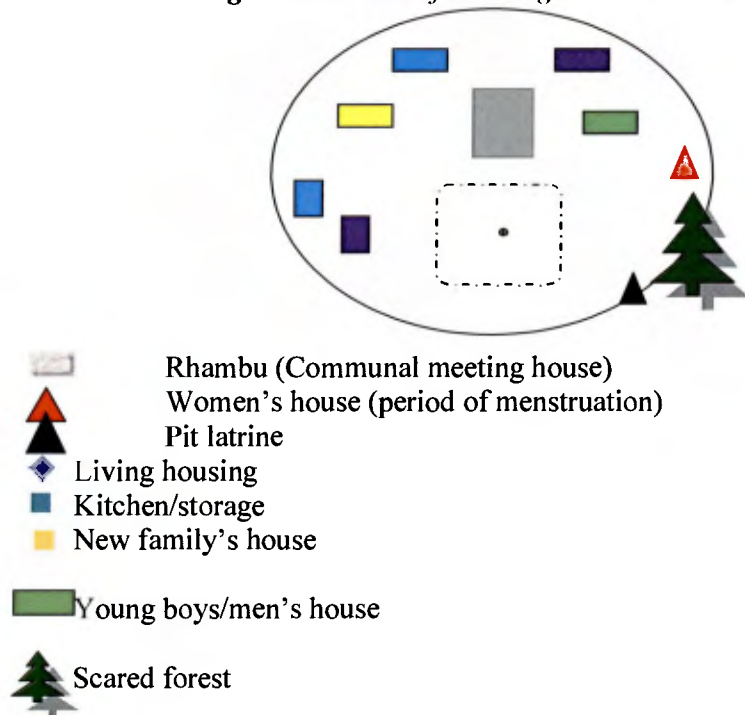
2.4.1 Pedagogic imagery: school, teacher and learners in an indigenous context

I have stated earlier that my indigenous cosmology defined as a holistic worldview contrasts with Western originated scientific forms of knowledge segmentation and classification. In my indigenous community, learning occurred in both formal and non-formal contexts. The formal would be that period of seclusion during initiation rituals. In the non-formal context, it is “life” in which one lives that constitute teaching and learning. I am conceptualising this indigenous pedagogy as *live-it to know-it*.

In the modern post-contact era teaching and learning invokes the images of a school, classroom, teacher and students. My interest is to explore and understand the ways in which indigenous communities organised themselves and understand how they interacted with the social, cultural and physical environment in which they lived and passed on knowledge from one generation to the next to maintain the existence of our society. How do these ways of organisation intersect into contemporary pedagogic practices introduced from the outside Western world? In an attempt to understand this, I discuss two different areas of social life: first, the organisation and sociocultural patterns surrounding a native indigenous hamlet and, second, the cultural understandings of a river and forests on its embankments. That is the closest proximity to a school and classroom of the contemporary context. First is the sketch of a hamlet in *Figure 1* below followed by a discussion of the sociocultural dynamics of Sunkunumbo.

2.4.1.1 Figure 1: Sunkunumbo Hamlet, The Indigenous Social Production

Figure 1: Sketch of an indigenous h31amlet - Sunkunumbo



The indigenous hamlet layout is shown in *Figure 1*. The small rectangles are houses for dwelling, storage and cooking. The larger rectangle (grey) represents the *Rhambu*. In front of the *Rhambu* is the *Kumainge* (ceremonial courtyard) represented by the dotted oval-like square. Teaching and learning is centred round these two venues. Lewis (1975) undertook observations of the communal gatherings of the Gnaou in this type of tribal village venue. The sacred forest is the symbolic habitat of the spiritual forces. The red triangle-shaped hut on the periphery of the hamlet represents the females' house during their period of menstruation and the black one on the border is the pit latrine close to the scared forest, which is the symbolic habitat of the spiritual forces. This shows the forms of sociocultural production in the pedagogic site of my indigenous society defined in sociological categorisation as pre-industrial.

In my traditional village setting, learning entailed both formal and non-formal contexts. In the formal context the *Rhambu* and the *Kumainge* were the venues, in close approximation to a contemporary school site for pedagogic transactions, which dominated my peoples' ways of transferring knowledge from one generation to the next. The *Rhambu* catered for all kinds of meetings and all other activities, which could be described as learning events. Such events are *duo-romo duombari* (communally meeting together) in the *Rhambu* and the *Kumainge* in our (Sausewia people) Yangoru-Boikin language group. It is in the *Rhambu* that elders and the tribal

chief who is responsible for the knowledge about the whole tribe and the land, orally passes on the knowledge which includes historical tales, the tribal epics and chants, the rituals, the genealogies, the features that indicate land boundaries, the sacred sites and so forth. The tribal chiefs gain prestige and power for having such knowledge. All such knowledge was traditionally passed from generation to generation mostly by memorisation, recall and oral recitation, songs and dances, and also used images of artefact such as clan totemic symbols of flora and fauna, paintings and carvings.

In each of the Sausewian hamlets, and the rest of the Sepik Region such as the Iatmul (Moutu, 2010) there is a central space called the *Kumainge*, which bears similarities to other South Pacific islanders hamlets, to negotiate the business of civil life, to clarify what constituted appropriate behaviour (for men, women and children) and to acquire knowledge about clan and tribe genealogy or more generally, how one relates to the ancestors of the present village.

An example of the importance of the *Rhambu* and the *Kumainge* relates to how visitors are welcomed into the tribe by the hosts. Usually a male preserve, the hosts and visitors engage in speech-making wherein the participants often displayed considerable oratory, sharing stories of the past and present but importantly functioning to find points of mutual interests, especially in terms of genealogy (shared customs). This responsibility fell to male elders as the public face of our clan or tribe, and the girls and women occupying more private spaces such as but not confined to the *hungnae r'ke*⁶ (meal preparation area but considered no less important in terms of the extent of the welcome).

In regard to teaching and knowing within the context of our indigenous society young children of both genders were acculturated into the important norms and routines, *sek-phaa're*⁷, of our clan and tribe and were socialised from a very early age into suitable behaviours. Acquiring new knowledge in this indigenous setting seemed formally structured, is communal and based on social hierarchy which I had identified in my literature review and categorised it as *top-down authoritative* and is also gender-based.

This hierarchy is based on knowledge and experiences in the custodianship of the elders similar to the lecturers at the UPNG-OC that I will show in Chapter 9 of my data analysis. Boys learnt skills such as how to engage in oratory and extensive memorisation related to genealogy such as the act of reciting of the instructional design tools by Moses in Chapter 9. The girls meanwhile

⁶ Cooking house (a noun) and has not gendered connotations in comparison to the menstruation house.

⁷ A way of doing things, an abstract concept similar in meaning to the term culture

learned supportive roles such as hospitality, caring and weaving baskets or making string *bilums* (bags). Having discussed and described the social structure and set-up of my indigenous hamlet presented in *Figure 1*, let me now turn to our pedagogical relationship and interaction with ecology and the environment as these two have an interdependent relationship. *Figure 2* depicts a river and the forest.

2.4.1.2 The Natural Physical, River and the Forest

Figure 2: River and the trees in the forest on the embankment

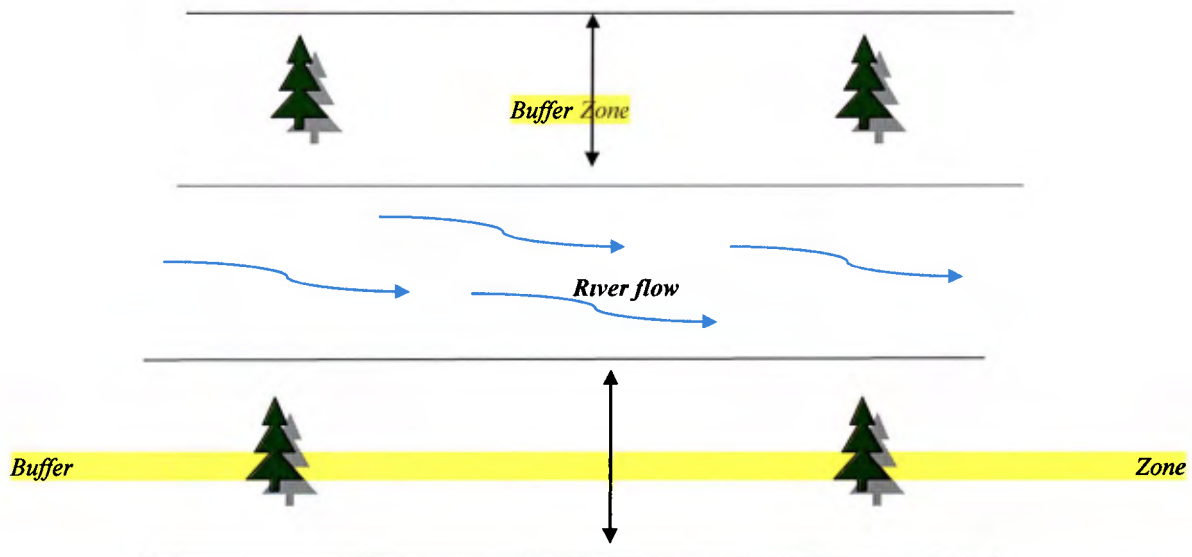


Figure 2 depicts a flowing river with all the forms of living and non-living in it and on each embankment, the buffer-zone forest. When the clan members clear forest to plant food gardens the trees in this buffer-zone is never cleared as it has a spiritual value in that this is where the totemic symbols of the clan dwell. The people of Sausewia have beliefs and values in a spiritual way of knowing which is attached to the river, the fish and other life forms habiting it and the forest and undergrowth on its banks. These ecological elements have both economical or materialistic and spiritual value and as totemic symbols relate back in exactly equal terms to the *Rhambu* and *Kumainge* in my clan's social organisation in the hamlet shown in *Figure 1*.

The spiritual significance that the Sausewians have for their environment is often misconstrued by non-Melanesians, as a form of animistic religion. To be better informed and understand, the reality of this context, it is important to acknowledge the numerous concepts that operate beneath the surface in our Yangoru-Boikin speaking language group.

These concepts emanate from the *Yuo-Sahī*⁸ supernatural notions or creator deities, which is the highest in our classificatory system of *being/ontology*. There are a number of myths and legends, which relate back to the creation myth where *yuo* is the male equivalent and *sahī* or sometimes added with the suffix *sahirahua* to denote the femininity of this “force/god” of which both are equal. Below these are lesser and minor gods to which clans have aligned with and adopted as their respective totemic symbol. These gods or what is commonly referred to as *wale-kambua* are embedded in both the living and non-living domains of Sausewia life. The non-living domains could constitute the *Rhambu* itself, the *Kumange*, the *garamut* (wooden slit-gong) in the *Rhambu* and so on. The living domains are the forest and trees in it, the wild game in the forest, the river and all the living organisms in it, domesticated as well as wild plants.

This way of conceptualising the world and the (loosely) ‘sacred’ constituting of the world contrast with Western discourses regarding the natural ecology and environment. For example, in the Western originated scientific approach, the explanation for the clearing of trees on the embankments of the river will cause soil erosion and sedimentation, and as a consequence, the fish will disappear and the wild game and birds will also flee due to the loss of their habitat. From an indigenous world view, interaction with and abuse of the living physical environment will impact on the *wale*’s reciprocal relationship to man’s social world. The crops from the garden will yield a poor harvest; fish, prawns and tortoise will no longer be found in the river because of the destruction to the physical environment. Maintaining the reciprocal balance of relationship with the *wale*, is the responsibility of the clan members.

The environmental concern of erosion has implication for pedagogic design and transmission of knowledge as will be shown in Chapter 9 in the thinking and negotiations between an instructional designer and a lecturer in the design of a physics course. That is how to convey a concept in the physical sciences without contextualising this and accommodating local indigenous way of understanding the same phenomenon about the strong link between the social and the natural physical worlds in Melanesian cosmology.

The ‘monitoring’ of exploitation and abuse of the river and the forest by the custodians (my clan members) is the responsibility of the offspring of the female line of our clan members. This group of offspring are the embodiment of the “spiritual world” embodied in the human form. They are the children from my fathers’ sister (my aunt), my sister and my daughter’s children are the signifiers of the *wale*. This description helps to emphasise the distinction between ways of conceptualising the environment, and the types of knowledge systems that are used to

⁸ Male-female forces of nature, somewhat equivalent to *ying-yang* in the Far East and Confucius philosophy

constitute a sense of the world⁹. It is not my intention to explore these ‘belief systems’ in any detail, but merely to use them to indicate the quite profound differences in forms of life and ways of knowing that exist within PNG/Melanesian society. This is the difference between traditional indigenous and contemporary ways of teaching and knowing. Further, this discussion helps to emphasise something of the practices of learning in traditional communities: that is knowledge transfer from one generation to the next for the continued existence of any given social unit.

A second point that I wish to draw out from the above examples is the form of knowledge transferral and constitution – that is the pedagogic structure – that is typically used to disseminate knowledge. This distinction is between what I will describe as a ‘*top down*’ and *decontextualised* pedagogy, and one that is *contextualised* and related to the life-world of the students.

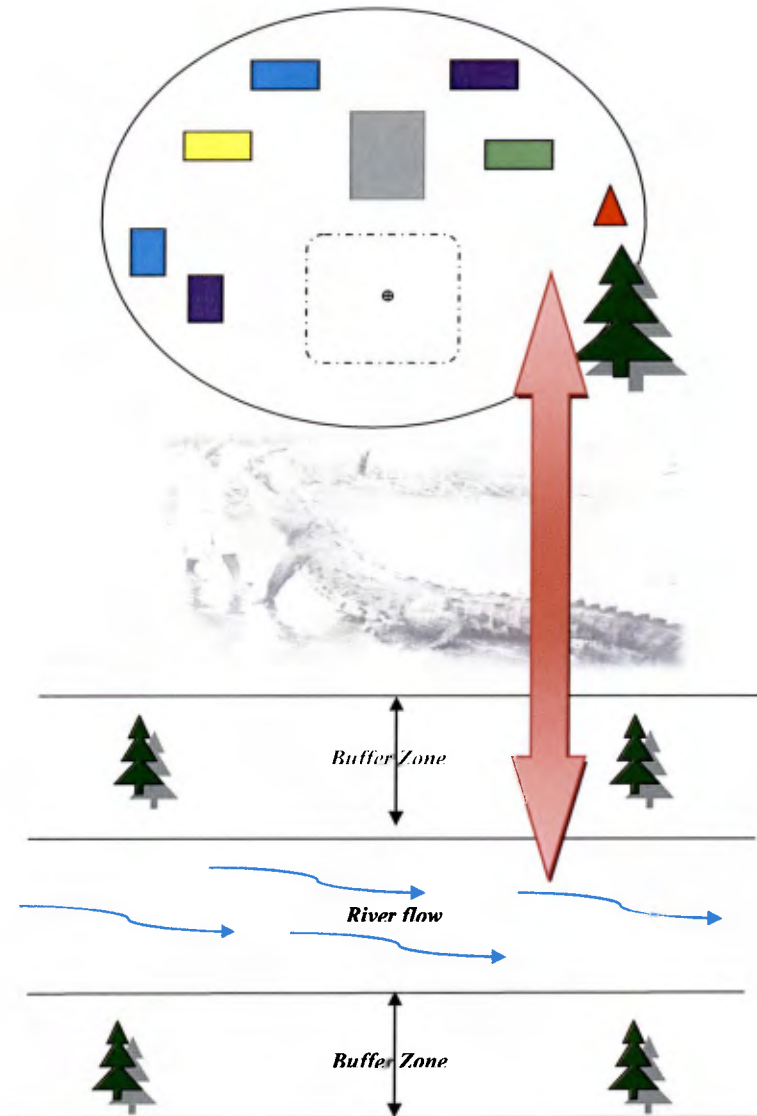
2.4.2 Pedagogy of Reciprocity: Social and Natural Physical – Live-It to Know-It

The diagram in *Figure 3* is highlighting the fact, that it may not be easy to connect our indigenous mythology and forms of social organisation with modern forms of learning, but there is a definite strong link. This becomes evident in the motivations for collaboration and interaction among adult distance students such as Waranduo and Nick with their spouses at the Kinienen study centre and in general about the group and communal orientation to managing knowledge acquisition as opposed to an individualistic approach.

Creation by the *yuo-sahi* entailed the integration of the river, the land and the forests and the sky all having materialistic as well as spiritual significance in our cosmology. Our indigenous practices of caring for the ecological environment relates to the cooperation and reciprocal relationship of the *masalai* of the river, the trees and the forests, other supernatural deities and people in society. Sausewia people showed respect for our environment by conducting rituals for the *masalais* and chanting prayers prior to consuming products of the natural environment (fish, birds, pigs, trees for housing etc...). In pre-colonial times public gathering and meetings begin with a prayer, a mark of respect to the ancestors of the spiritual world and the forces of *yuo-sahi* in the natural environment. In similar fashion to the hand gestures symbolising the *father*, *son* and the *holy spirit* in the prayer ritual of Christian Catholicism, the tribal orator would acknowledge the presence of both the living and dead and the forces in the sky above and earth below as a prelude to the occasion for which all members of the community that are gathered.

⁹ I could have used the butchering of a pig and the distribution of the pork to illustrate the same differences knowledge systems but due to word and space limitations in my thesis this is not possible.

Figure 3: Pedagogic Context Live it to know It – An Experiential Approach



In this indigenous context, pedagogy is based on an approach of *lived* and *contextually relevant knowledge*. That is, the knowledge acquirer has to *experience* the given cultural practices of the society in order to know. This ‘experientialism’ incorporates uninstructed observation and, later on, forms of participation, to know it. Children and adults both participate in the act of collaborative teaching and learning.

The experiential pedagogy that I am describing here I should state is not an exclusive practice to non-Western or indigenous societies. Experiential pedagogy is also used in Western introduced contexts. Experiential learning or what I have conceptualised as the pedagogic practice of *live-it-to-know-it* is learning through reflection on doing. This is distinct from rote or didactic learning that normally takes place in the context of a fixed place and time.

In Western introduced contexts, this process of making meaning from direct experience was popularised by Kolb (1991). In Western interpretation which is similar to my traditional society, experiential learning does not require a teacher as the learning process is defined by meaning-making process of the individual's direct experience (Kolb, 1991; 1984) in the environment one lives.

I reiterate here that analysing and discussing the ontological and epistemological basis of Melanesian societies is problematic if one attempts to make generalizations that cover all language groups. The analysis and understanding of one language group will be different to that of another. However, one basic but important generic statement can be made: that Melanesian worldviews in general contrasts to Western or other approaches to interpreting and defining the lived world. In broad terms this differentiation is portrayed through the debate between scientific knowledge systems and Non-Western indigenous knowledge worldviews (Agrawal, 1995 and also Geertz and Kluckhohn's work). The difference is Western origin science is defined by categories and classification whereas Melanesian seem holistic. This debate is brought to the fore as a consequence of political imperialism by Western powers and Non-Western worldviews which are at times labelled through a Western language as native, primitive, indigenous, mythologising the lived world and places our knowledge systems and pedagogic practices in a subordinate position.

2.5 Indigenous Practices of Teaching and Learning

In this section I intend to briefly bring to the discussion about the anthropological observations of the practices of teaching and knowing in indigenous Melanesian societies drawing on examples from what now constitutes PNG. These observations will be examined to theoretically frame practices of knowledge construction, ownership and its distribution as an analytic to understanding the production and reproduction of order and authority in society. This I intend will bring to bear on the *problematic* in my empirical of adult distance students' use of text-based print-media to learn.

Anthropological studies (Lewis, 1975; Malinowski, 1948; Mead, 1930) reported sociocultural practices of people technologically defined as primitive and simple (Luria, 1977). While the ethnographic approaches used by anthropologists is subject to ethical criticisms in the 'power' relations between the 'researched' and the 'researcher' what is of interest here is their conceptualisation of pedagogic practices among the indigenous Melanesians of PNG.

In the first setting, the student as a novice imitates the actions of a mentor or adult member of the community to acquire a skill or knowledge. This is evident in the observations made by both Mead (1930) among the Manus and Lewis (1975) among the Gnau of the Sepik.

Mead (1930) observed that in the company of children a year or older, the young initiates play all day in shallow water. She describes this process as one of *imitation* by the student and unobtrusive by the teacher;

His elders keep a sharp lookout that he does not stray into deep water until he is old enough to swim. However, the supervision is unobtrusive. Mother is always there if the child gets into difficulties, but he is not nagged and plagued with continual 'don'ts'. (Mead, 1930, pp. 27-28)

There seems a stark contrast to the concept of *imitation* observed by Mead close to a century ago when compared to a contemporary educational setting in the same location among the younger generation of the Manus Islanders. The contrast in a conventional teaching-learning context (a conventional high school) as reported is that some students were creative and went beyond simple absorption of academic subject matter but were chastised by fellow students as 'acting-extra' when the students imitated a foreign culture (Demerath, 2001). This study by Demerath shows how these discourses of learning through *imitation* were channelled in the social field of the school but all students did not uniformly accept it and those students who did were mocked and ridiculed by their fellow students. Imitation is an indigenous practice of knowing that existed but 'seen through a different lens' by the younger generation.

The above observations made by Mead can be defined as the act of learning skills through *imitation*. The Gnau of Sepik imagined the image of the supernatural deity to engage and interact with it to cure a woman who had taken ill (Lewis, 1975). An image of the masalai¹⁰ as imagined by the Gnau elders from their position of knowledge-authority was to be constructed and appeased for the sick woman to be cured. Through a *top-down authoritative* style of instruction based on a mythical idea, the elder men 'shouted out sporadic lists of the woods and herbs needed but none of the younger men appeared to take any attention or show any doubt or hesitation over the ability to make the figure' (Lewis, 1975, p. 254). The adept elders gave the instructions to the novice younger men and even if one of the novices doubted the transmission of instructions this could not be voiced in public. For instance, the brother of the deceased as result of *wale* attack had other interpretations for the cause of his late brother's death but could not dispute the knowledge-authority position of the initiated elder in the Gnau society. This hierarchy of social

¹⁰ Creator deity of the supernatural world.

order in the pedagogic relationship is also evident in the contemporary pedagogic site of the UPNG-OC as I will show in reference to one of the lecturers; experience of lecturer-student interaction and what happens when the knowledge-authority figure is removed.

Malinowski (1948) reported observations of *myth-enshrined* approaches to knowing. The indigenous population's *myth-enshrined* knowledge was that their bad luck was brought upon by Malinowski's presence that was a 'curse' living among them. Bernstein's (2000, p. 29) distinction of the two classes of knowledge as they exist in 'small-scale non-literate societies and complex literate societies' according to the division of labour helps to clarify this kind of *myth-inspired* pedagogic practice in meaning-making or in the distinctions he makes as the thinkable and the unthinkable. Bernstein states that;

The unthinkable in small-scale non-literate societies is managed and controlled by their religious systems, agencies, agents, practices and the cosmologies to which they give rise. (Bernstein, 2000, p. 29)

From the above anthropological observations, four pedagogic concepts of *imitation, collaboration, top-down authoritative, and myth-inspired* emerge from the practices of teaching and knowing.

Study of distance students' view of knowledge at the UPNG-OC by Guy et.al (1996), suggest one of 'god-sent' not to be questioned and challenged. In other words, this pedagogic practice is evidence of what is conceptualised as *top-down authoritative* and possibly *myth-enshrined* as well. Learning resources sent from the provider institution in an unseen location is to be unpacked for 'consumption only', not to be questioned and challenged and this goes against the notion of *collaboration* or co-construction of knowledge. Along a similar pattern of thinking, Kukari's (2004) study reports of PNG trainee teacher's preconceived *top-down authoritative* ideals they bring with them into pre-service teacher training. Upon qualifying as teachers and rather than be seen as mentors and collaborators in the students' process of learning, the trainees' perception is one of 'a deity being', full with knowledge to go out and fill their 'empty vessel', the learners with knowledge that has been ready-made awaiting un-packing and consumption.

There are rules and regulations about knowledge in traditional Melanesian societies, which have their foundations in traditional epistemological positions that I had attempted to illustrate above. Lawrence (1959) describes traditional knowledge in PNG as follows:

Except in minor matters, they dismissed the principle of human intellectual discovery. They accepted myths as the sole and unquestionable source of all

important truth. All the valued parts of their culture were stated to have been invented by the deities, who taught men both secular and ritual procedures for exploiting them ... the body of knowledge was conceived to be as finite as the cosmic order from which it was contained. It came into the world ready-made and ready to use, and could be augmented not by human intellectual experiment but only by further revelation by new or old deities. There was no need – in fact, no room – for an independent human intellect. (Lawrence, 1959, pp. 52-53).

Lindstrom (1990) confirms that the dominant framework for the production of knowledge in the South Pacific remains an ‘inspirational’ one or is myth-inspired. Knowledge, in such a conceptualisation, is only revealed at appropriate times and to particular people, but gaining access to that knowledge is a ‘struggle’. The knowledge, once gained, is not questioned, but rather the recipients evaluated the source of the knowledge. Should the person who is giving the knowledge be considered a ‘trustworthy’ person and who has access to ‘true’ knowledge? It is necessary to ‘find’ trustworthy people who possess knowledge in order that learning may take place. For the adult distance student in PNG, these are the issues of knowledge being confronted when printed distance learning resources are received from a distant institution and ‘knowledge’ coded and transmitted by an unseen author in symbols adopted from another culture. According to one of the lecturers, Paul in my analysis, students in PNG will believe what is transmitted in writing when they see the author in person. Adult learners want to authenticate and verify the source of knowledge to accept it as trustworthy. This is the indigenous perception of the hierarchies of knowledge, knowledge custodianship and knowledge transmission.

2.6 Conclusion

The objective of this chapter was to set the scene for and provide a cue in my examination of the discourses of distance education pedagogy in my thesis. That is, in what ways do the social activity of teaching and knowing in the contemporary forms of pedagogic practices located in the provider educational institution intersect with the traditional indigenous Melanesian ways of teaching and knowing from the students’ indigenous sociocultural context?

I have attempted to show the distinctions between Western originated scientific practices and PNG/Melanesian ways of knowing. I put forward that there is more than one approach to knowing, the scientific and humanists, and these two perspectives present a number of challenges to understanding what reality is or *whose reality it is?* The interpretation and application of the slippery concept of *culture* illuminates the juxtaposition of meaning-making between the scientific and humanist. Among these is the issue of language as a cultural tool. Informed by the ideas of indigenous knowledge I drew from Agrawal (1995) to put forward that,

'History followed different courses for different people because of differences among peoples' environments [physical, social and cultural]. This is not because of biological differences among people themselves'(Diamond, 1997, p. 25). That is, knowledge and inherent in it the social practices of pedagogy as a cultural artefact is situated and relative to the pedagogues' geographical and sociocultural environment.

To conclude, the distinction to note in the discussion and the issues I have raised in this chapter to set the backdrop for my thesis is that while both approaches to understanding reality could be complimentary, scientific knowledge as a cultural artefact tends to promote a materialistic worldview compared to a humanist worldview of indigenous peoples including Melanesian societies that incorporate values of spiritual connection to our lived environment. To make this explicitly clear I had shown through the detailed drawings of my native hamlet in *Figure 1* and my people's interdependent relationship and interaction with the ecology in the natural physical environment as in *Figure 3* to demonstrate that there is another practice of knowing or learning and meaning-making, which is through experiential pedagogy or by *living it to know it*. I have relied on my own indigenous Sausewia society and its cultural resources which may not necessarily be the same in other Melanesian cultures or language groups or indeed other parts of the non-Western world to contextualise the pedagogic discourses of distance education. This framing of indigenous practices as a form of culture or ways of doing things in pedagogic practices resonates right through my thesis including the literature review, methodology and the analysis and discussion chapters to illuminate the pedagogic site as an arena or a site of social and cultural [re]production.

In the next chapter I will tell the story of the development of distance education in PNG.

3 Chapter Three

The Development of Distance Education at UPNG

*Conventional education educates some of the people whereas
distance education can educate all the people*
(Keegan, 1990)¹¹

3.1 Introduction

In Chapter 2, I started with a personal story of my first encounter in a Western introduced schooling/culturing system that came into clash with some forms of social organisation in my society and then explored the concept of culture a bit further with illustrative examples drawn from my own indigenous society. Setting that as a context, in this Chapter I tell the story of the development of distance education in PNG, which is the focus of my research. In contrast to conventional education in the PNG context, distance education is considered a ‘poor cousin’ because of inadequate budgetary support by the government in the inequitable practice of non-provision of government scholarships to students choosing to study mode.¹² Furthermore, in comparison to conventional education, distance education is a latecomer to the educational scene in PNG. As will be explored and discussed further in this thesis, the socioeconomic and socio-political development of the country is also considered. Is education for the objective of liberation, emancipation and empowerment of the individual or is education an agenda of colonisation, perpetuating the hegemony of a dominant culture and [re]construction of those adult distance students’ cultural identities? Putting it another way, is education for social equality or is education a tool for enhancing social stratification.

Theoretical debates continue and decisions on developmental policies by governments the world over abounds on the issue of what development are and if it can be achieved and if so how development can be achieved. These debates have sometimes stressed that technological advancement and material goods and services are important but at other times have focused on the social wellbeing of humanity. In pursuing either of these goals for development, a key variable has been the role that education plays in the process of development.

Education and its role for development in PNG have been researched, discussed and debated over time from the colonial days by Jinks and others (1973) and at the time of the country’s independence in 1975 by Thomas (1976) and continues on to this day by a number of Papua

¹¹ This reference is Keegan’s largest volume on distance education but the quote actually comes from a smaller publication by the Extension Studies College that I read when in PNG.

¹² All degree and diploma students studying by distance mode do not receive any scholarships grants from the government like the most conventional mode students studying on campus.

New Guinean authors in various research publications and National Government commissioned reports (Haihuie, 2003; Matane, 1986; Office of Higher Education, 1986). Implicit in this is the question on the correlation between education and social development. If there is a relationship, how has PNG as a country planned and managed the development of its education system and more specifically what is the existing policy on distance education and its related practices? While the role of education and development is not central to the focus of my investigation, in this chapter I intend to examine the related body of literature on the development of distance education in the higher education sector in PNG. Even though my interest is in distance education I should state that among some development theorist, there is assumed to be a relationship between education broadly and development.

For instance, more than twenty years Fagerlind and Saha (1989) and in recent times Hanushek and Welch (2006) in presenting a comparative perspective on education and development basing on the work of economist, Shultz, on investment in human capital point out that education has traditionally been justified by optimistic assumptions. The first being that an educated population contributes to the socio-economic development of the society as a whole, and the second, that education contributes to the well-being of individuals within the society.

Further, it has become clear that rapidly changing technologies and the changing face of the world economic and political systems require a new flexibility and adaptability by societies and individuals. Within the context of such assumption, there is little doubt that education is increasingly being seen as an essential component of an adaptive and flexible population. As a member of the changing global community with aims to achieve its developmental objectives, there are policy statements made by PNG governments past and present that have articulated that education must be embraced as a major factor in achieving these developmental goals. The concern here is the value and relevance of knowledge to the local culture and the ways in which this is organised and transferred. In that education is a broad concept my focus is on distance education.

The evolution of distance education as an 'off-shoot' of education has drawn support as well as criticism. Those rallying and advocating for distance education present a range of pragmatic and theoretical arguments. For example, the economic argument by Rumble (1987; 2001a) and again Rumble together with Neil and Tout (1981) put forward that distance education is more cost efficient than the conventional mode. Distance education based on an industrial model as theorised by Holmberg (1989) and Garrison (1997) would in Perraton's (1981) view facilitate for mass education and Howley's (1993) extension of mass education to rural areas as well

rather than only a privileged few. The theoretical arguments that distance education is student-centred, empowering the learner was put forward by Smyth (2005) and Beldarrain (2006) thereby shifting pedagogic power from the teacher to the learner as current trends in distance education seem to suggest with the integration of new technologies to foster student collaboration and interaction.

On the flip side, distance education is seen by some as a 'second chance' opportunity to the academically ['intellectual' would be too harsh] ineligible who would otherwise be 'drop-outs' (Kember, 1991), further heightening the perception of the conventional mode being positioned by Kirschner, Sweller and Clark (2006) to be superior in comparison to the distance mode and that the attrition rate is assumed to be higher in distance education than in face-to-face teaching. Further to this argument is the thinking advanced by some educational technology researchers in distance education such as Muirhead (2000) that learning is more efficient with a humane facet of social interaction in a fixed space and time compared to pedagogic transactions via some form of media. To put it simply, the debate seems to be about which mode of education will achieve higher learning outcomes. There are no definitive answers to these comparative questions but a new emergence seems obvious with the advance of broadband-based information communication technologies. This emergence is the convergence of distance and conventional modes of pedagogic practices at all levels of education as a result of improved real-time and interactive communication technologies thereby blurring the boundaries that exist between conventional and distance modes of pedagogic transactions.

Having alluded to this broader on-going debate on distance education let me draw some parameters around the body of literature I wish to examine. The intention in this chapter is to review the existing literature in order to understand the development of distance education in PNG. A critical examination of such literature will lead to informing policy makers and practitioners about the distance education system and its inherent pedagogic practices. From a theoretical perspective, this review may also inform the theoretical debate about knowledge and authority, about knowledge creation, its authenticity, custodianship and legitimacy of the authority for knowledge dissemination and its acquisition. In the introduction chapter, I noted the absence of an empirical body of literature on distance education pedagogic practices in PNG. This peculiar situation in PNG is contrary to the availability in abundance of such debate in the literature, both empirical and theoretical, on distance education practices elsewhere in the world. Guy (1994) observed the same sixteen years ago to which I reiterate that distance education pedagogic practices can only be improved when informed by local research.

The focus in this review of literature will not be on the broad concept of education but specifically on distance education, its government driven policies and the inherent practices in the existing distance education teaching and learning practices at the UPNGOC. By identifying relevant and supporting literature, I intend to demonstrate that the growth and expansion of distance education is a globalising trend for a number of reasons, among which are economic arguments of cost efficiency (Rumble, 2001a cited earlier) propelled by advances made in information and communication technologies as suggested by Dennen, Darabi and Smith (2007). Another trajectory that I am not pursuing but worth highlighting is the contemporary phenomena of globalisation that seems to replace colonisation and its related prejudice. This has some bearing on traditional PNG society with its heterogeneous culture of indigenous language diversity and the state of transformation that would impact on this distinct cultural feature to make it either disappear or be resilient and adapt to the pressures of globalisation and homogenisation as opposed to heterogeneity in the polarity of the two cultural identities.

Presenting the above as a backdrop, I will specifically examine the literature relating to PNG government policy decisions on the development and adoption of distance education in the country. Central to this analysis will be my attempt to argue a case that distance education was used as a 'pressure valve' to relief the growing pressure on demand for conventional face-to-face education that was inadequately provided. This was because of the incapacity of the existing conventional institutions at that time to adequately meet a growing demand for university and tertiary education in PNG.

Pertinent to my labelling of distance education as a 'pressure valve' is my argument on the assumption that the distance education pedagogic practices in use were and are culturally and contextually considering the geographical terrain of PNG inappropriate. I will go on further to justify this view by asking whether, by simply adopting existing distance education systems and practices from outside, were implicit local cultural practices of teaching and knowing disregarded as 'inferior' and not accommodated into instructional design and technology of print media instead of simple radio technology for course delivery. This question is being asked in view of the debate between the instructivist (Kirschner, Sweller and Clark, 2006) and constructivist pedagogic models (Tenenbaum *et al.*, 2001) of delivering distance education learning instructions that I will take up again in Chapter 4 of my thesis.

The argument in other words is that, the distance education system adopted and the particular practices such as choice of media combined with the model of instructional design in use is not

appropriate to the implicit indigenous culture-related pedagogic practices. Such practices include that of undertaking tasks 'together' in a communal way and not alone individually. This practice is also interpreted as the theory of 'interdependence' (Kay, 1988) or what Guy (1994) refers to as 'others and otherness'. Communal or 'group-centred' teaching and learning is a feature of PNG/Melanesian and many other South Pacific island societies. Therefore, the question is, does the distance education practices acknowledge and accommodate such indigenous ways of 'doing things together' in a collective, communal and egalitarian context?

To put this review of literature in perspective I begin with an overview of the development of distance education. This overview is divided into two sub-sections of the wider world and in particular reference to the United Kingdom and Australia to which PNG has historical ties such as the English language and Westminster system of parliamentary democracy, followed by a discussion of examples in other selected developing countries and the South Pacific region.

On the development of distance education in PNG, my focus will cover three areas. Firstly, the policies and the reasons surrounding the formulation of such policies followed by examining the New England model (Crossley and Guy, 1991) adopted at the UPNGOC and finally critiquing its benefits but also its appropriateness to the learner's sociocultural context.

3.2 A historical overview and characteristics of distance education

For a historical overview, I begin by looking at the definitions and characteristics of distance education. Keegan (2000, p. 1) boldly claimed that 'distance training [education] has come of age'. My inclusion of the word 'education' in brackets is done to highlight the confusion that reigned up to the 1980s and even to the present time about the concept of distance education. In an earlier piece of writing under the title 'reintegration of the teaching acts', Keegan (1993a, p. 113) expounded on this confusion noting that, 'writers did not make it clear whether they were writing about or not writing about the use of computers in schools or Schools of the Air or rural development projects or technology-based training. The result of this confusion, he claims was discourtesy to the reader and lack of progress in distance education research.

Rumble and Harry (1982, p. 11) use *distance education* 'as a generic term' but also acknowledge the diversity of the terminology of the concept of distance education and its use in other parts around the world.

...distance education includes the range of teaching/learning strategies variously referred to as 'correspondence education or correspondence study' in both developed and developing countries; as 'home study' or 'independent

study' in the United States of America; 'external studies' in Australia; 'tele-enseignement' in France; 'Fernstudium' or 'Fernunterricht' in Germany; 'educacion a distancia' or 'enseñanza adistancia' in Spanish speaking countries and 'teleducacao' in Portugese....Related terms such as 'open learning, non-traditional studies, out-reach' and 'off-campus' programmes and 'telemathic' teaching also appear in the literature.

(Rumble and Harry, 1982, p. 11)

As the above quote demonstrates, many terms claim to identify as a distance education practice around the world. For my purposes and in my view, some common characteristics must be evident to qualify as a distance education system or practice. Suave (1993, pp. 93-109) captured the perceptions of post-graduate students doing a course on distance education by asking them to state what they got out of or understood from the ongoing debate on a definition of distance education. She noted that to delimit a definition of distance education, certain students relied on a concept analysis approach, in other words identifying the essential characteristics. Others deduced the definition on their own philosophy of education, whereas most relied on common points that was shared by leading theorists and practitioners in the field of distance education among them Holmberg (1989), Keegan (1993b), Keegan and Rumble (1982), Moore (1993), Perraton (1981; 1993), Peters (1993) and Sewart (1988).

While there is on-going debate for and against what the 'correct' definition of distance education should be, for the purposes of this chapter in my thesis, I draw on Sauve (1993) and her student's characterising of distance education. The students according to Suave (ibid 1993, p. 104) produced three characteristics of distance education to which all agreed with. They were as follows.

Firstly, the main characteristic of distance education is *distance*, in other words the temporal, spatial or psycho-social separation. This separation does not necessarily imply the lack of personal or direct contact between students and teachers. However, this contact is modified through the use of communication techniques for the transmission of information through which teaching and student support is assured. Secondly, the use of the *media*, whether it is called technical support or delivery methods technology, is necessary for the transmission of knowledge. Finally, *communication* between the student and teacher (tutor, counsellor, or institution) must be present whether this communication is by postal mail, real time by telephone, through face-to-face meetings, video-conferences or interactions via the internet.

This characterisation was done just more than ten years ago and the characteristics reflected the reality of distance education then, but even in current distance education practices, I can observe

that the characteristics remain, and aided by modern communication technology, there seem a convergence in the pedagogic practice of distance and conventional modes of education.

However, in my interpretation of distance education, the term *distance* is the ‘social and cultural’ *distance* between the transmitter and acquirer in a pedagogic relation [I elucidate on this further in my theoretical framework in Chapter 5]. I am stating that, yes, distance education should have the above characteristics but from a sociological stance interpreting and understanding distance education pedagogy is more than just the use of technology to bridge the geographical distance. As already alluded, I will explore and discuss this further in my subsequent chapters.

3.2.1 An overview of the development of distance education

Distance education has gained acceptance among the community of educationists. According to Rumble (2001b) over the period 1971 to 2001, distance education has changed enormously, and he identifies five key changes. These include technology, a pedagogical shift within distance education, the acceptance of distance education with its expansion, the change in the perception of distance education and finally distance education as a concept that is evolving.

On the technological front, Rumble (ibid, p. 31) observed that, the period opened with the establishment of one of the most successful of the multi-media based distance education systems, the UK Open University, but ends with ‘a rush towards on-line education’. Prior to the establishment of the UK Open University, distance education had been around in the UK for a longer period as was evidenced by the hosting of the Pan Commonwealth Forum in July 2008 under the theme of *Open Learning for Development*. The conference was held at the Institute of Education to commemorate 150 years of distance education at the University of London. The ‘rush’ or acceleration into the multi-media based distance education system in the context of my research is certainly an ambition. This is because not all stakeholders throughout the world, institutions, teachers and learners, in distance education have jumped on the ‘ICT bandwagon’. For instance, a survey by Kirkup and Kirkland (2005) showed a gradual ‘rather than a revolutionary’ adoption of ICT in higher education systems. One conclusion from this survey suggested that;

Whether or not these later innovations will ever be adopted by the majority of HE teachers depends both how well they function as tools within the teaching activity system and whether they offer an improvement on the existing tools in the system.
(Kirkup and Kirkwood, 2005, p. 97)

The results of this survey demonstrate that not all distance education systems around the world have rushed into using ICT propelled ‘fourth and fifth generation’ categorisation by Taylor

(1999) of distance education systems. Many institutions, especially those in the low social economic status countries continue to utilise communication technologies in what Nipper (1989) originally labelled as ‘first, second and third generation’ distance education systems. The type of communication technology used and the level of interaction facilitated by the medium of communication technology define the category of ‘generation’.

The focus on which this review is undertaken is on the notion of collaboration of adult distance education students using text-based print-media communication technology. This is in the ‘first generation’ category but with the use of other communication tools such as telephone, fax and email to provide student support, this category overlaps into second generation’ distance education or as Nipper (1989) labels it as the ‘multimedia generation’. According to Nipper (1989) second and third generation distance education facilitates an increase in interactivity between the student and the teacher and the institution.

This technological change underpins the second change, which is a pedagogical shift within distance education from a transmission model of education towards a constructivist model exploiting computer-mediated communication. In Rumble’s (2001a) view, this is a paradox as this has occurred just when some commentators such as Kirschner et.al (2006) have been critical on the ‘dehumanization’ of traditional education. They present ‘evidence’ of the superiority of guided instruction with a human element as opposed to unguided or minimally guided instructional approaches using communication technology. This debate points me to the theoretical framework of Bernstein (2000) and his pedagogic device of framing and classification that I explore in Chapter 5 as a tool to interpreting the pedagogic relationship in the social arena of distance education pedagogy.

To further elaborate on the pedagogical shift, on one side of this argument are those advocating the hypothesis that people learn best in an unguided or minimally guided environment [in Bernstein’s language this is a case of weak framing], generally defined as one in which learners, rather than being presented with essential information, must discover or construct essential information and subsequent knowledge for themselves. On the other side are those like Clark (1994) and Kirschner et.al (2006, p. 75) suggesting that novice learners should be provided with direct instructional guidance on the concepts and procedures required by a particular discipline [strong framing] and should not be left to discover those procedures for themselves.

The third change highlighted by Rumble (2001b) has been the growing acceptance of distance education more so in North America, and with this, its expansion in other parts of the world. The

growing number of distance teaching institutions twenty years ago as noted in a 1982 survey by Rumble and Harry (1982) reflected this growing acceptance and expansion. Recently, the increasing distance education student population reported in a 2004 UNESCO report by McIntosh (2005) further attests to this expansion. The Commonwealth of Learning and UNESCO predict that the population opting to study by distance mode will continue to grow.

'...the historic threshold of 100 million students worldwide has been crossed and the prospect of reaching the figure of 125 million students will be attained before 2020 ... Important increases in student numbers are reported in all regions, in particular in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Arab countries and in Eastern and Central Europe'. (McIntosh, 2005, p. 2)

Rumble (2001b) states that the fourth change is linked with the third in that by its acceptance, there is a consequential change in the way distance education is perceived. Distance education has moved from a low status to acceptance, with increased confidence as its methods are adopted across education as a whole, despite, criticisms alluded to earlier.

Finally, distance education can be seen to be evolving from an essentially, modernist¹³ (bureaucratic or Fordist) form of education into a post-modernist phenomenon with a focus on the student as consumer, on flexibility and global reach which seem to suggest the same rationale as that of Pitman in the 1840s using correspondence study to deliver his shorthand training.

What were the factors that influenced Pitman to offer his shorthand-training course through the method of correspondence study? Going correspondence was a 'big break' against the established traditions of education and training. Teaching and learning in an educational construct 'normally' occur within the confines, of a fixed location in a school classroom, at a set time and in a set way. The views of such traditional educationists linger. These views relate to the questions of credibility of the qualifications attained in shorthand training and whether these qualifications could be recognised and accepted by industry and the society in general on whether knowledge transfer had occurred. Was there sufficient and adequate transfer of skills and knowledge on shorthand for graduates to be recognised and considered as 'qualified' to perform the tasks requiring shorthand skills when there had been no face-to-face communication? The objection by the conservatist is that the use of communication technology may 'dehumanise' education and this view is also shared by distance education practitioners, among them Bates (1995a) who has an extensive research based literature. Bates poignantly reminds technology

¹³ Modernism in the context used here is describing distance education as an industrial process, more akin to correspondence study of the last century.

enthusiasts that, “Good teaching may overcome a poor choice of technology, but technology will never save bad teaching; usually it makes it worse” (Bates, 1995b, p. 12). Contrary to this observation there are other technology enthusiasts in support of the use of technology in distance education.

Nasseh (1997) in his review of the history of distance education acknowledges the significant impact of technology in shifting education throughout the history of human communication. He noted that communication between teacher and students is a vital element of successful distance education. Media has played an essential role in the establishment of teacher and student communication. For communication to take place, at a bare minimum, there must be a sender, a receiver, a message and medium. If this message is intended as an instruction, then besides student, teacher, and content, we must consider the environment in which this educational communication occurs. For distance education to succeed it must be based on the content of the dialogue between teacher and student and the effectiveness of the communication system in an educational process.

Historically, distance education has been described as courses and programs that provide instruction between students and teachers who are separated by either space or time. Students that enrolled in the early correspondences courses of the last century were required to receive their instruction, generally in print media, via correspondence mail with no face-to-face contact. The students worked alone, completed the assignments and mailed them back to their instructor for assessment. However, aided by the advances in modern communication technology, distance education in a way is bridging the geographical space element. As noted by Blocher (2005);

... the use of the internet as a learning space has transformed many aspects of distance education in the twenty-first century. With the advances in modern communication technologies, the advance of online learning environments has changed how we view distance education.

(Blocher, 2005, p. 270)

There are also the advantages of flexible learning strategies mentioned by Thomas (1995) and of the richness of the learning environment that Blocher (2005) found as well as Motteram and Forrester’s (2005) report of student’s induction experiences in which they noted the fact that increasingly, distance study is moving towards online delivery, with a combination and integration of various media. With this brief overview I move my focus to development of distance education in the developing world.

3.2.2 Development of distance education in the developing world

Crossley and Guy (1991) observing the development of distance education in the PNG higher education sector stated that the most notable international development of the 1980s was the establishment of the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) initiative in 1988. The first COL newsletter stated that the organization had three overall goals.

... to promote the sharing of distance teaching materials, and to support the development of new course materials which meet particular needs in the various countries of the Commonwealth. To strengthen institutional capacities by providing staff training, fostering communications, establishing an information services network on distance education and supporting collaboration in evaluation and research. To assist distance education institutions to provide better services to students, improving study support systems, and facilitating the transfer of credit between Commonwealth institutions. (COL Newsletter cited by Crossley and Guy, 1991, pp. 105-106)

The growth and expansion of distance education and its acceptance as a tool for delivering educational services is global. Perry (1976) and Rumble and Harry (1982) highlighted the well-known international influence of the UK Open University and the spread of similar institutions throughout the developing countries in the 1980s. In India, the well known Indira Gandhi National Open University was established in 1985 and now has fourteen other open universities, and in Thailand the Sukhothai Thammathriat Open University has successfully grown to attract widespread attention. In terms of the size of a student population, the Open University of China is an example of a giant cited by Rumble (2001b) that dwarfs other institutions.

The South Pacific region itself is noted for work in the field of distance education. The regional University of the South Pacific in Fiji is recognised as a distance education provider in the region. This is because of its span of university centre network across the Pacific region. The UPNG through its Open College, which is the empirical site of this research, is considered as another large provider of education through the distance mode in the region.

The development of distance education discussed above is to demonstrate the inevitability of the use of distance education in the delivery of higher education around the world and its impact and influence on UPNGOC, which is my next focus of attention.

3.2.3 Development of distance education in PNG

Policies on education in PNG by governments past and present such as the PNG Philosophy of Education (Matane, 1986) and the National Higher Education Plan II, 2000-2004 (Commission

for Higher Education, 2000)¹⁴ emphasise the need for the use of distance education as a mode of delivering education at all levels complimenting conventional face-to-face education. More than just policies, feasibility studies as the one by Moore et.al (2001) on the use technology in delivering higher education have also been undertaken.

The intention to use distance education in PNG can be traced back to the period of colonial history. According to Van Trease (1991, p. 111)¹⁵ it was a problem of access and retention in the progress from primary to secondary school and on to tertiary level. Students were faced with a “bottleneck” situation the higher up they progressed. The College of Distance Education (CODE) was established in 1957 as a ‘pressure valve’. Through CODE children who were not able to proceed on to Secondary School, due to lack of space, could take High School lessons through the distance mode.

The situation in the tertiary level was no better with only two universities and a few colleges in the country to cater for an increasing output of students from the lower level at the time of independence. The situation has not improved much as will be shown by the exponential growth of student enrolment in the UPNGOC programs in *Figure 4* and *Figure 5* below. The pressure to offer education at tertiary level was not unique to PNG. Holmberg (1995) authoritatively posited in his review of the theory and practice of distance education that offering university level studies through distance education had taken a firm hold and was practised in all parts of the world to provide study opportunities to those who could not – or did not want – take part in classroom teaching. Reflecting this view in the PNG situation, it is more a case of ‘those who cannot’ and not ‘those who do not want’ as the statistics presented below amply show.

To further substantiate this assertion, Holmberg (ibid pp. 9-10) pointed to a comparative study of international distance education carried out at the FernUniversitat in 1986. This study listed some 1,500 distance-teaching institutions, a number of distance teaching organisations that do work similar to that of universities and university distance education within a dual-mode framework university. The latter being predominant in Australia. As presented in the forgoing sections of this chapter, PNG was no exception to the development of this global trend. The PNG National Government proactively initiated policies by way of a White Paper on higher education, research, science and technology (Commission for Higher Education, 2000) to explore and exploit the potential of distance education to compliment the conventional mode to offering higher education in the country.

¹⁴ There has been a delayed revision of the NHEP to guide the higher education sector in PNG to 2010 and beyond.

¹⁵ This reference provides statistics of school enrolment and progression from lower level to the tertiary for the period 1970-1980.

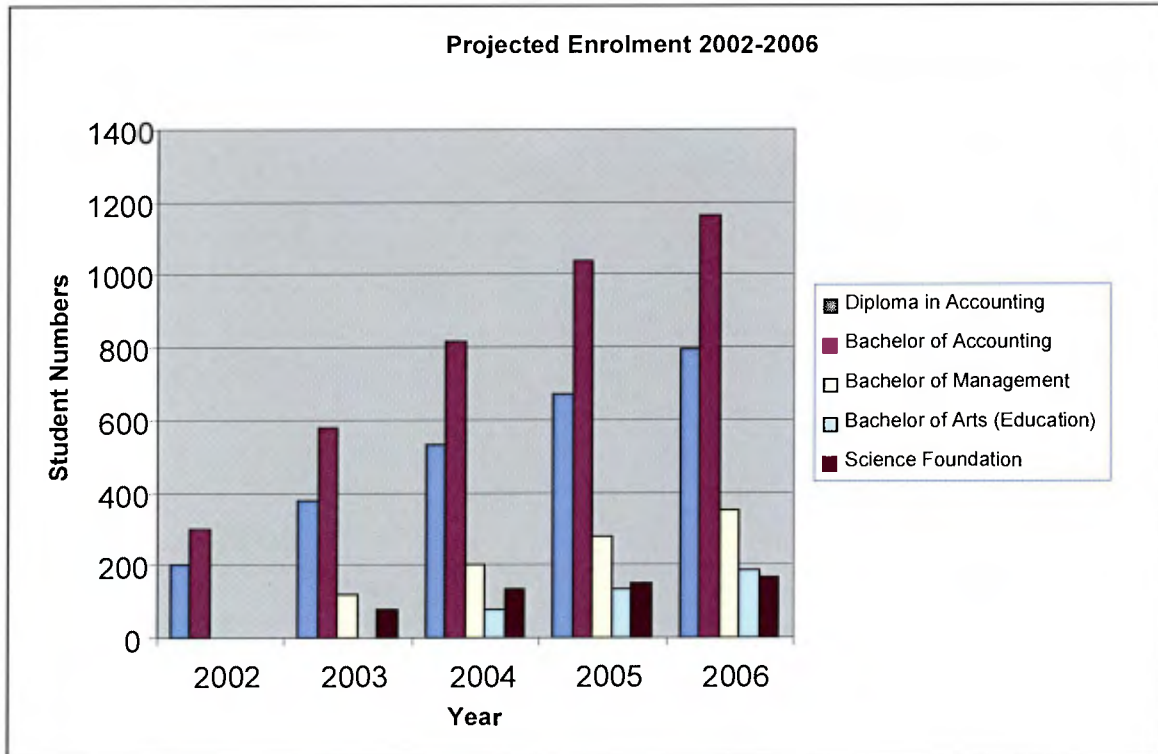
Component Five of the National Higher Education Plan (Commission for Higher Education, 2000) specifically gave directives for the mode of distance, open and flexible education to be used in the delivery of higher education in PNG. A review of the previous higher education policies was undertaken that subsequently produced the National Higher Education Plan II 2000-2004. This policy document covered a whole range of issues in higher education, research, science and technology. Chapter four of the plan entails the eight major components and sub-components (Commission for Higher Education, 2000, pp. 100-122). Component five specifically covers distance and flexible learning and is summarised as follows.¹⁶

The plan among other directives signalled the end in the offering of adult matriculation [university bridging] program through institutions of higher education (IHE) and the use of the IHE resources at present invested in offering adult matriculation into short continuing education courses, certificates, diplomas and degrees. The plan also noted that existing opportunities for students to enrol in higher education courses and programs, both by on-campus and distance modes, were inadequate to meet demand. Among the factors, it was also noted in the plan that demands for higher education enrolment was influenced by two key issues. First, quantitative factors, in which selections from Grade 10 students for enrolment in upper secondary rose from 2,800 students in 1997 to 3,482 in 1998, an increase of 24.4% (Commission for Higher Education, 2000, p. 100). Secondly, the effect of major educational projects in the school system aimed at improving the quality of curriculum and teaching.

Recently, at the UPNG-OC the projected and actual enrolment figures in the diploma and degree programs offered through the distance mode that started in 2002 reveal a steady increase in enrolments for the diploma and degree programs (Haihuie, Rangou and Mannan, 2010). In the two bar charts below, *Figure 4* shows the projection of enrolment for 2002 to 2006. To evaluate this projection *Figure 5* shows the actual course enrolment from 2004 to 2007 by program.

¹⁶ The other 7 components are 1) legislation, structure and coordination 2) academic programs 3) access, equity and output 4) accreditation and quality assurance 6) resources 7) institutional governance and management 8) research, science and technology.

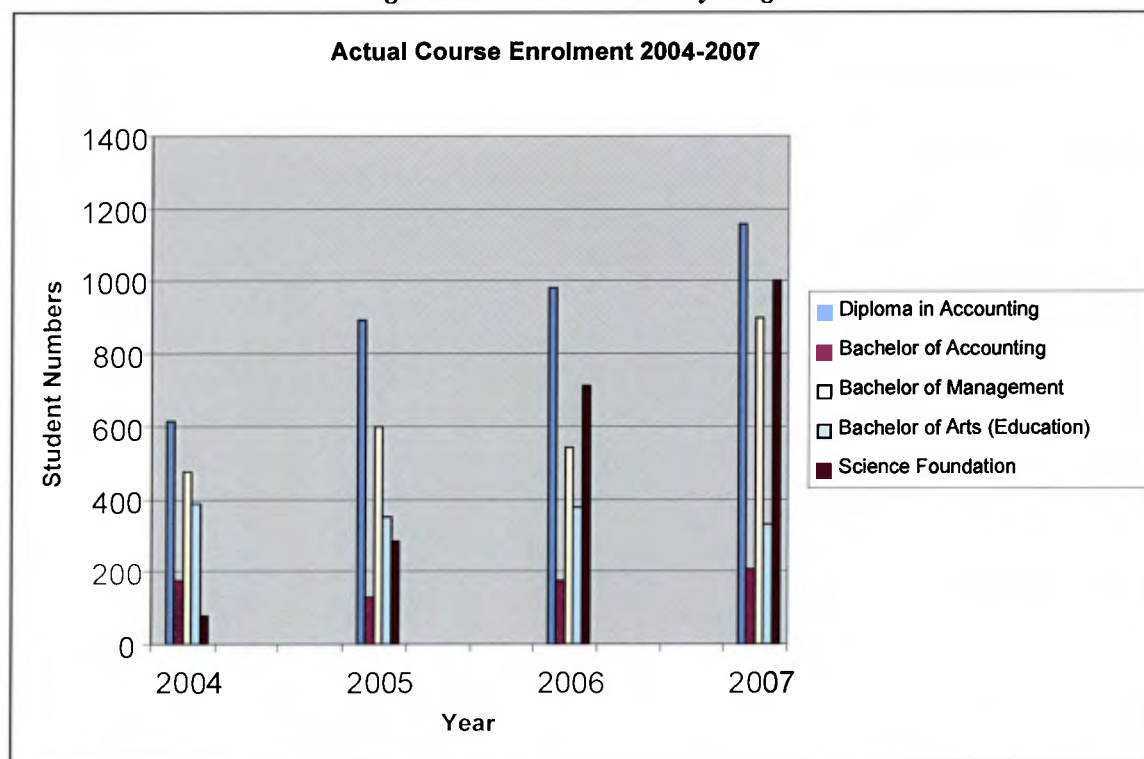
Figure 4: Diploma Degree Projection



(Haihuie et al 2010 p.206)

The next bar chart shows the actual enrolment at UPNG-OC between 2004 and 2007.

Figure 5: Actual Enrolment by Program



(Haihuie et al 2010 p.207)

In view of this alarming statistics¹⁷ in the previous decade and the steady increase in enrolment at present, alternative modes of delivery and in particular distance education and other flexible learning modes was advocated for enrolment expansion in higher education courses and programs. As can be clearly seen by way of comparison of the projected and actual enrolments in the graphs in Figure 4 and Figure 5 the projected enrolment for the Diploma in Accounting program was underestimated. By 2007 this program offered by distance mode is the single largest in terms of student enrolment. A number of conclusions can be drawn but the obvious is that the upper secondary sector of education in PNG has expanded with an increased output of eligible students meeting university entry requirement. However, due to inadequate bed spaces and lecture rooms for face-to-face studies on campus an increased number of students are now enrolled at UPNG through the Open College's distance program.

The above developments in demand for higher education justify the articulation of Sub-Component 10 of Component 5 in the NHEP II 2000-2004 that proposed the establishment of a Distance and Flexible Education Committee (DFEC). The DFEC, was tasked to have coordinative oversight of policy in this area.

¹⁷ Enrolment figures for 2008 was not available from UPNG computer services for an updated enrolment figures and by 2009 I had to submit the manuscript of this book chapter for peer-review and eventual publication in 2010.

Having noted the contextual background of Component 5 of the national higher education plan, I examine in detail the ten sub-components. These statements can be interpreted as recommendations made for implementation [see PNG NHEP II]. Five out of these ten sub-components (5.3, 5.4, 5.6, 5.8, 5.9), intended with the objective to alleviate concerns relating to access and inadequate space at the university level were articulated as follows (Commission for Higher Education, 2000, pp. 101-122):

5.3 Establishment of a national HE budget policy to provide adequate support and recognition in public IHEs and in provincial study centres for all HE courses being offered by distance or other flexible learning modes

5.4 Cessation of offering by public IHEs of matriculation and entry level programs by distance education with such programs to be available from CODE, private and other providers thus allowing IHE resources to be focused on offering more HE courses and programs by distance or other flexible learning modes

5.6 Review under CHE guidelines by each public IHE of which programs could be structured for offering in several modes including an initial component through on-campus study and subsequent component/s by distance or other flexible learning modes

5.8 Strengthening of learning and access resources in provincial study centres through the use of sustainable technology, by links with employers and enterprises, and by vertical integration with other levels of learning and training involved in providing courses offered by distance or other flexible learning modes

5.9 Establishment of non-salary incentives to actively encourage young professionals to accept rural appointments and to study for higher awards by distance or other flexible learning modes.

(Commission for Higher Education, 2000, pp. 101-122)

The higher education plan as an official policy guideline is expected to be interpreted and implemented by IHEs and other government agencies. While there are a number of public and private education and training providers at the tertiary level, in this research I examine the implementation of government policy and will focus on the UPNGOC. The UPNG is a dual mode university and by far the largest provider of university education in the country.

3.2.4 Development of distance education at UPNG-OC

UPNGOC's distance education system is one resembling an 'industry-like' [in]efficient correspondence teaching using text based print media. Printed materials are mass-produced with the objective of individualised learning and independent study for students in remote and isolated locations throughout the country. Other communication technologies such as telephone and fax, radio, television and email are also used for student support and other logistic errands.

The issue of learner autonomy and independent study and individualisation discussed by distance education researchers such as Jung (2001) whose study is focused on web-based instruction

exposes concerns that are pertinent to distance education in general. Learner autonomy raises the issues of power relations in pedagogy between source/custodian/transmitter of knowledge and the recipient/acquirer of knowledge as argued by Jarvis (2006, pp. 201-211). The facilitator of knowledge creation and transmission is the teacher. In this section, a review of the development of distance education at the UPNGOC is undertaken.

Van Trease (1991) reviewed the Extension Studies Department at UPNG and noted that when established in 1974 the distance education program was based on the University of New England model from Australia. Under the New England model, academic departments in the Social Sciences, Humanities and the Sciences were required to enrol both internal and external students in their respective subject disciplines. The management and administrative functions of distance education was handled by the Extension Studies Department in conjunction with the Central Student Administration Division of the University. All matters pertaining to academic in nature such as curriculum content and syllabus, evaluation and assessment was the responsibility of the faculties and its academic staff. This arrangement ensured maintenance of academic standards and credibility of the program and authority of the qualification awarded by the institution. It was a pedagogic strategy to dispel the perception based on an assumption that distance education is inferior to conventional face-to-face teaching and ensured that both modes of delivery were on par and the qualification awarded had the same academic value.

What is interesting to note about the observation made by Van Trease (1991) in the adoption of a successful model from Australia in 1974 is that this action can be viewed as a form of pedagogic transaction between an expert and a novice, and this pedagogic relations continues even to the present time of my research. I will demonstrate the evidence of this pedagogic relation between an expert/knower and novice/acquirer in Chapter 9 of my data analysis from the institution perspective categories of pedagogic design and knowledge transfer. I am here referring specifically to my analytic description of the UPNGOC distance learning resources in *Section 9.2.1* and the embodiment of salient knowledge-authority attributes in the production of learning resources.

PNG adopted distance education practices based on successful models in Australia. Post-secondary education at University level offered through distance education was undertaken at the PNG University of Technology and UPNG through its Extension Studies Department that now had been renamed the Open College. At one time, these were the only two universities offering programmes of study through the distance mode. In the non-university sector, other tertiary institutions such as the Christian Leaders Training College also offered some of its

programs in Theology through distance education. At present, a number of other institutions of higher education driven by demand as discussed earlier offer programs through the distance mode. But where is the genesis of all these present development?

The impetus for the development of University education in PNG can be traced back to the United Nations commissioned Foot Report (Foot, 1962). The Trust Territories of Papua and New Guinea were governed by Australia as mandated by the United Nations and the mission led by Sir Hugh Foot was evaluative in nature and concerned with the progress of 'development' of the indigenous population. Among the terms of reference was for the Foot Mission to enquire into the progress made on University education in the Territory. Consequent to the Foot Report was the establishment of the Currie Commission by the colonial government.

The Currie Commission Report (Currie, Gunther and Spate, 1964) provided the basis for the establishment of the University, stating explicitly that the UPNG would teach both internally and externally. The Currie Commission Report stated that, "...if suitable potential students cannot go to the university then the university must go to them..." (Currie, Gunther and Spate, 1964, p. 146). Subsequently, this External Studies Department was written in as the fourth of the five "Objects of the University" in the University of Papua New Guinea Ordinance, 1965-1973.

In 1974 another report by Gris (1974) with significant parts of it relating to distance education was published. The 'Report of the Committee of Enquiry into University Development' commonly known as the Gris Report after its chairman went further than the Currie Report spelling out in considerable detail the rationale, programs, organisational structure and budgeting arrangements required for the establishment of distance education program at UPNG. Any new initiative will require resources and in regard to costs Rumble and Kaye (1981, p. 269), stated that, 'There is pressing need for suitable cost functions to be developed to enable planners, decision-makers and accountants to forecast budgetary requirements with a reasonable degree of accuracy.' The result of failing to undertake this diligently can be detrimental to the operations of the distance education program.

It is noted that there was a short time-lapse between the publication of the Gris Report and the establishment of the Department of Extension Studies. The delay in the establishment of the distance education program had to do with operational authority, delegated and/or assumed political and financial power, which we are reminded by Perraton (1993) that must be adequately addressed for the successful functioning of a distance education program. Perraton (ibid) identified a number of fundamental aspects that are necessary components for a distance

education system. In a distance education model these include; structure, method of distance education, and type of technology.

A significant change in UPNG's adopted model of distance education was the change from an Extension Studies Department based on the University of New England model to the Institute of Distance Education based on the University of Queensland model (Markowitz, 1994b). At this juncture of transition to what is now the UPNG-OC, Markowitz urged stakeholders in distance education at UPNG to reflect and take on a new approach in light of the limitations of the University of New England model being used.

Today, UPNG appears to be in transition to another model, with distance education being a special academic teaching responsibility focused on one department. ... Most visibly, this change is marked by the recent origin of the Institute of Distance and Continuing Education. More subtly, whether or not there is significant change depends on what the Deans and staff of the faculties, the Director and staff of the Institute, and the University Administration choose to make of the opportunities presented. If the goal is seen as the education of students and not necessarily the duplication of conventional education practices, it will enable the Institute to use educational technology and university centres in new ways. If the intent is to go beyond tutored correspondence courses, it is necessary to be aware of the inherent limitations of the New England model ... (Markowitz, 1994b, p. 11)

The choice for an appropriate model of distance education in PNG as can be seen was from those used by universities in Australia. The model was dual-mode in which programs on offer through the conventional mode on-campus was simultaneously available through distance mode for off-campus students. This model has been in operation in Australian universities where dual mode education has been successfully practiced for more than thirty years (Hope, 2005). In 2000 and 2001 UPNG planned to expand its degree and diploma course offerings in a big way through the Capacity Building in Distance Education Project (Haihuie, Rangou and Mannan, 2010) under this dual-mode model. While the Open College saw exponential growth in student enrolment as shown in Figures 4 and 5, problems began to emerge. In brief summary, the problems related to lack of university management support for the distance program, resistance from some academic staff and concerns about additional workload resulting in poor turn-around of assessable students' work and stagnation of new course/program development and review of existing courses.

In 2009 the UPNG Council requested an independent external review of the Open College distance education program by international experts. The concern by the UPNG Council was justifiable in that distance students were accepted and 'disowned' by the university and these

students were not getting value for money as full fee paying students. Furthermore, unofficial 2011 enrolment statistics from the twenty-five Open College study centres in PNG and the Solomon Islands showed that there were more than 11,000 students studying at UPNG through the distance mode compared to less than 4,000 students studying on-campus. A review of the distance education program at UPNG was undertaken in 2010 by Lockwood and Koul (2010) to address these serious concerns.

The Lockwood and Koul Report (2010) was a major review that left no stones unturned with wide consultations. The recommendations for improvement covered the whole spectrum from systems and operations, academic quality assurance, financial accountability and transparency, pedagogical issues of student support, and importantly for university management to take full ownership of the distance program with the objective of reinstating quality and credibility of the distance education program in the Open College operations. The executive summary of the report among other brief points stated the following.

Our abiding image is of an Open College striving, against the odds, to provide a service to tens of thousands of off-campus students, but being failed by the very centres that should be supporting them, and also of senior staff within the Open College failing to find a way forward. It is a situation compounded by a practice in which the University accepts off-campus students but exhibits no ownership or pride in them. In hundreds of working visits to similar universities, and many formal reviews of departments and institutions, we have never observed so many quality failures within an institution, nor as much of indifference to off-campus students. This is an immensely disturbing situation. (Lockwood and Koul, 2010, p. 3)

It is a fortunate coincidence that the Open College Review by Lockwood and Koul (2010) was undertaken as my research was drawing to a close and some of my findings relate to their recommendations as I will show in my analysis.

I had stated earlier that the development of distance education in PNG was inevitable considering its development and impact as shown elsewhere in the world especially from dominant Western influenced establishments such as the United Nations. Further, the problem of demand for access to the limited availability of space at the higher-level education sector forced the government to look at alternative modes of delivery that were proven to be successful elsewhere to complement the conventional mode and ease pressure on the emerging Western introduced education system. The Open College Review Report (2010) and the implementation of its recommendations will certainly address the pedagogical issues explored in my analysis in Chapters 8 and 9.

Taking into account of the issues raised in the review of the literature, I pose several but related questions. That is, has PNG in its endeavour to alleviate the mounting pressure to make University level education available to more citizens paused to examine the suitability of the media to be used and its implications for pedagogic practices in the distance education system taken into account of the students' local culture and way of doing things? This question is raised in relation to text-based print-media used as the medium of communication. Further, the majority of distance learners or if not all participants in this research are adults in employment and have a cultural attachment to the traditional communal way of teaching and acquisition of knowledge in the students social and cultural context in which the pedagogic transactions are taking place. Would a constructivist approach based on a model of 'sociocultural pedagogy'¹⁸ (Teemant *et al.*, 2005) be more appropriate for delivering learning instruction and information resources than an instructivist approach? What about the use of radio technology that uses audio as a medium of communication that would blend in well with a predominantly local oral culture? This issue of the absence of a reading culture is evident as will be shown in my data analysis. Is the absence of a reading culture and the transmission of learning instructions and resources in the English language, silencing and excluding distance students to partake in the pedagogic transactions, hence excluded from mainstream society?

3.3 Conclusion

In this Chapter I have told the story of the development of distance education in PNG and in particular the UPNGOC to contextualise my research site. At the UPNGOC, print media communication technology is used to deliver learning instructions. In the light of this I have put forward in this chapter that the adoption and use of distance education to complement the on-campus face-to-face mode in the PNG higher education sector was inevitable. The inevitability in the development of distance education and the choice of print media was a result of two main reasons. The first reason being that of experience and with it the existing models from outside of PNG, and in particular Australia as the colonising power that influenced the development and use of distance education pedagogic practices upon PNG. In *Sub-section 3.2.4* I pointed out the colonising strategy in the United Nations report that if students did not come to the university, then the university must go out to them.

The second reason as unveiled in my story was that of economic rationality on the assumption that distance education is cost-effective compared to conventional education in a developing

¹⁸ My use of sociocultural refers to social as human interaction within a culture or defined way of life. Culture is a slippery concept as I have explored and found out in Chapter 2. and also the concept of social.

country context considering the demand for university education and the incapacity of the conventional mode to adequately meet this demand. I used projected and actual enrolment statistics of the Open College (Haihuie, Rangou and Mannan, 2010) to exemplify this situation of demand and lack of space in higher education institutions. While these were presented as the reasons for the development of distance education, pedagogic issues relating to learning practices of distance students and the appropriateness of pedagogic approach and its relevance to students' local culture were also raised. This is in view of the debates between instructivist and constructivist models of instructional design in distance education.

Toward the end I reflected on issues relating to the pedagogic practices of learning in distance education. Distance education as a field should focus on the important questions related to learning at a distance: impact on learning practices; how to engage students in a learning community; the changing nature of social presence from a print-based environment to on-line learning; what is important in collaboration and interaction at a distance; and a number of other critical questions. To ignore these questions and to simply focus on the policies and opinion relating to systems and technologies adopted from "outside" would still invoke the question on the relevance of adopted international best practice in distance education pedagogy and its [in]appropriateness and [in]sensitivity to the local socio-cultural context.

4 Chapter Four

Adult Distance Student Learning Practices

As a single parent, I am the bread-winner and a student - Lulu

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I told the story of the development of distance education in PNG to contextualise my research. The purpose in this chapter is to provide an understanding of adult students' learning practices, which is one of the focuses of my research. In the terms defined by Dowling and Brown (2010, p. 146) my attempt here is to identify and state the *problematic* through exploration of existing empirical research reported in the literature. Specifically, I focus on the learning practices of collaboration and interaction in distance learning environments of text-based print-media and this is in contrast to the work of Juwah (2006) and other researchers and practioners on web-based online learning environment.

The broad statement that guides my research is: Pedagogic practices are socially and culturally situated. In what forms does this social/cultural [re]production manifest through in the practices of distance teaching and learning at the UPNGOC? The current pedagogic practices have been adapted/borrowed from Western models, an anecdote apparently to colonisation, but do these practices take into account of the local social and cultural contexts of the students? Furthermore, is education and the pedagogic discourses geared toward an objective of liberation and empowerment for the knowledge acquirer or is it a form of repressive imprisonment perpetuating the hegemony and cultural ideology of the coloniser? In other words, whose knowledge and way of transmission and acquisition is it, and through whose kaleidoscope do PNG students perceive and acquire the knowledge and construct meaning. Is the pedagogic process top-down authoritative or collaborative?

There are two dimensions to this interest, the first is the label 'formal' and the other 'non-formal' or in other words is deemed to be *official* because it comes from an institutionalised source of knowledge-authority and what is unofficial and 'invisible' as I will elaborate later. In the formal and with the rapid growth and expansion of information and communication technology (ICT) use in distance education, Dennen, Darabi and Smith (2007) pointed out that the community of researchers in this field are understandably shifting research interest in the learning practices in this environment compared to traditional print-media correspondence-style learning environments. As learning via the internet becomes more prevalent there is correspondingly an 'increasing need to research various aspects of learning experience in an online setting' (ibid p. 65). The online environment is not the empirical site for my research. However, it may inform

this research on aspects of collaboration and interaction as a site or arena of sociocultural production in practices of distance learning.

I begin with an examination of the nature of adult learning leading to the notion of collaboration and interaction in distance learning practices. I will then examine the indigenous practices of teaching and knowing and how this intersects with contemporary practices. The contemporary environments include correspondence style print-media and as a contrast, online, but not as a comparative analysis of the two forms of media.¹⁹ I will then explore literature on the instructional design models of instructivist and constructivist approaches to frame the officially prescribed institutional practice in the delivery of distance learning instructions and resources.

4.2 The Nature of Adult Learning

There is no single universal theory on the practices of learning. In distance education the learning practices of adults is said to be situated and context specific (Laurillard, 1978). The emerging theories of how adults learn (as distinct from how children learn) were subsumed into the term 'andragogy' by Knowles (1984b). The term refers to the principles of adult learning, as a contrast to the term 'pedagogy'; which describes the principles of child or adolescent learning. Sources such as Kidd (1973), Knowles (1978; 1984a; 1984b), Whitbourne and Weinstock (1979) and Kimmel (1980) reviewed the principles and scope of adult learning theories. One essential idea that has emerged from such sources is that adults do not learn; think (or even read) in any single or simple way. Newton (1977, p. 116) depicts the adult learner as 'an autonomous, experience-laden, goal-seeking, "now" oriented, problem-centred individual'.

A key feature of adult learning approaches can be summarised as: 'it allows the learner to select the content and processes of learning; content and process are based on individual needs and interests' (Meyer, 1975, p. 117) and this is explicitly captured by Evans (1994b) from his extensive research projects involving adult distance students, '... that around the world, millions of adults do commit their leisure time to learning, and an increasing proportion of these adults, especially women, complete most of their studies in their private worlds of home' (Evans, 1994b, p. 97). A review of adult career and life stages notes one of the andragogical principles and Newton (1977) provides a direct linkage and support for studying the career and life stage needs of adults, namely:

¹⁹ For this kind of analysis the work of Diana Laurillard such as her book *Rethinking University Teaching* is intellectually engaging, in particular pedagogical categories for classifying media.

'the adult's readiness for learning is inherent in his societal role as worker, parent, spouse, organization member and the like. Since need is basic to want and readiness, the requirements and demands of the adult's present situation and aspiring roles in real life must dominate and supersede all other considerations in andragogy.' (Newton, 1977, p. 362)

The above life-stage needs of adults are quite evident in the motivations for learning by students at UPNGOC as will be shown in my data analysis. Another guide to important priorities in designing meaningful learning experiences is provided by Peterson's (1979) review, of the research literature on learning by adult students. This review concluded that only three major demographic variables — age, level of educational attainment and residence — were highly relevant for educational planning. These factors support the argument that the needs and experience-based concepts of andragogy offer useful insights into the learning need patterns of adults, in a way summarised by Lowe;

'...the implications of andragogy for education are obvious. We might best summarize them by advising adult educators to spend as much time studying the rhythm of mental, physical and emotional development of their students as do child psychologists and pedagogues in the primary school.' (Lowe, 1975, p. 51):

This proposition raises the issue of instructional design for distance educators on whether meaning-making should be geared toward instruction or construction approaches considering Wlodkowski's (1999) view of adults in a learning situation who have a self-concept of being responsible for their own lives. I will examine this toward the end of this review but first let us look at collaboration in learning.

4.2.1 Collaboration

Collaboration in a learning community is taken as the collective action or interaction comprising all those with a stake in making this educational process work effectively. Kennedy and Duffy (2004) in their study identified key participants as administrative staff, teaching staff, technical support staff, librarians and students. These collaborative participants are identified within an institutionalised and formal structure categorized as the *official recontextualisation field* (Bernstein, 2000). Because of the nature of students' learning-culture of, '*anywhere and anytime*' in correspondence style (Keegan, 1990; Nipper, 1989) and web-based (Holliman and Scanlon, 2005) 'deviant students' collaborate and interact with 'collaborators' outside of the formal and institutionalised structure of the provider institution, categorised as *pedagogic recontextualisation field* (Bernstein, 2000; Greg, 2000). The *framing* of pedagogic practice has impacts on collaborative interaction whether by minimising or enhancing learning outcomes

determined by *instructional discourse* over *regulative discourse*. In the description of *framing*, the *instructional discourse* is always embedded in the *regulative discourse* and the *regulative discourse* is the dominant discourse (Bernstein, 2000, p. 13). It has been observed that the absence of face-to-face supervision and reliance on learner initiative often leads to procrastination and reduced performance, especially among students inclined toward procrastinating (Tuckman, 2005). Therefore, the way learning activities is structured for collaboration and facilitated in the *instructional discourse* is essential to enhance learning for students studying through the distance mode. The concern is more than procrastination and relates to the issue of *evaluation* of the pedagogic discourse to create what is termed as a *pedagogic relation* (Dowling, 2009).

4.2.2 Interaction

Collaboration and interaction in distance learning environments is also theoretically analysed through Moore's (1973; 1997) theoretical construct of *transactional distance*. The proposition put forward in *transactional distance* by Moore (2006, p. 123) is his introduction of 'the concept of dialogue which is an essential key to understanding the teaching-learning process in distance education.' Moore (ibid) had developed elaborate models to explain the dynamics of adult learning groups, and suggested that interaction between teachers and students is not in itself sufficient to optimise learning, because interactions can be manipulated by instructors - and sometimes students can manipulate interactions - in negative and destructive ways as well as in positive and constructive ways. The use of the term, dialogue, in preference to, collaboration or interaction, places a focus more specifically on the ways in which verbal exchanges can be engaged in a solely constructive and positive direction. Feedback by the lecturer on assessable work submitted by the learner is one important means of establishing dialogue between lecturer and student thus creating a *pedagogic relation* between transmitter and acquirer and this was a pedagogical concern that emerged in my analysis of data.

In formal distance learning contexts including online learning, interaction occurs through collaboration between the students, the institution, the lecturer and other students (Morgan and Wang, 2008) but my contention is that collaboration and interaction can occur with members in the wider community outside of the formal parameters defined by the UPNGOC. There is compelling evidence of this practice (Simpson, 2000) by adult distance students in PNG, as I will show in my data analysis. Current literature examined evades me of such learning practices except in the Australian Outback educational context where Green (2006) found and reported that a member of the 'wider community' is one of the close adult parent. In reference to this

isolation of the student and the use of technology, Kennedy and Duffy (2004, p. 210) noted that 'the essential ingredient for successful distance education, however, is not the technology: it is collaboration between the key participants using that technology. Unlike in a conventional face-to-face situation, where the students and teachers are physically present in a fixed location at a given time, students studying by distance mode strategize through their acts of dialogue and communication in a *collaborative* way to manage their learning. This enables co-construction of meaning and acquisition of new knowledge in the learning process as self-directed independent learners to empower themselves and enhance/consolidate their social position. This activity might be undertaken either consciously or unconsciously due to both the spatial and temporal/authoritative distance (Moore, 2007a).

A distinction is made between collaboration and interaction, although both are actions defined as practices of adult distance students' learning. The act to collaborate precedes interaction. Thus, collaboration is a prerequisite to interaction. In other words, the inertia of two or more elements to collaborate defines and gives meaning to interaction that Moore (1989b) among other distance educators identifies as being of three types, learner-content, learner-instructor and learner-learner. Ashley and Orenstein (1985, p. 95) use sociological concepts to explain that interaction of simple reality produces a more complex and shared reality which in Durkheim's (Ashley and Orenstein, 1985, p. 95) view of the universe involves a number of levels of reality: the mathematical, the physical, the chemical, the biological, the psychological, and the social. Hence, in this respect collaboration is a complex and shared reality of more than one reality. This is the interconnectedness between the social and physical as I have shown about man's relationship to the crocodile in Chapter 2.

Those whom distance students collaborate with in their study by distance mode and process of learning goes beyond the formal institutionalised structure to include family, (immediate and extended), tribe members and colleagues that the student might seek support from and interact with for both affective and cognitive reasons. In some instances *Wantoks* might be obliged to lend support to the students' learning for vested communal interests. This practice of learning is a situated activity (Laurillard, 1978).

This action is undertaken to enhance their process of learning in understanding new information received and processing this to create a shared meaning. According to Cowie (2000) and Sivan (1986) this shared meaning is said to be socially constructed through collaboration in distance education learning environments.

Educational writers commonly state who the major players in a formal distance learning course are, but they rarely indicate that it is the collaboration of all these individuals that is the key to successful distance learning. Porter (1997) acknowledges the importance of collaboration amongst students as paramount in the creation of an effective learning environment. She adds that collaboration with technical support personnel is also vital, but there is more to it than that. Thomas et al (1998) take this a stage further by identifying the role of tutors, students, academics and administrators in supporting students learning through distance mode. Wallace (2002) found a staff development model to be effective in introducing online learning and reports that this model brought together academics, professional staff and instructional designers. This led him to argue that there should be a stronger recognition that collaboration in distance teaching and learning also has to take into account all those involved in providing and making use of the course including those whom the students interact with outside of the formal academic institutional structure as collaborators and invisible capital that support the students' learning. Through collaboration there is social presence in the learning environment as would in a conventional face-to-face context.

Shin's (2002, p. 123) useful review of literature, to place in context her exploration of 'social presence' in distance education, differentiates and categorises those taking part in collaboration as recruited here in the way she had analysed. By this categorisation of collaborators, teachers are depicted by Sammons (1990) as epistemological sounding boards, cultural mediators between students and institutions by Cook (1989), Grace (1994), and Kelly and Shapshot (1987); by Henderson (1979) as care-givers; and as resource persons by a number of distance education researchers such as Beaudoin (1990) and Gunawardena (1992a); labelled as subject experts and guardians of knowledge by Boot and Hodgson (1987); and Coughlan (1980) identify them as learning consultants. Peer students, on the other hand, play the role of collaborators, facilitating knowledge acquisition and revision (Gunawardena and Zittle, 1997; Jonassen, 1995), and of moral supporters on the basis of empathetic understanding put forward by Boot and Hodgson (1987) and Kirkup and Primmer (1990). Institutions are described as treasuries of learning resources and student support services by a number of theorists and researchers (Dillon, Gunawardena and Parker, 1992; Gunawardena, 1992b; Sewart, Keegan and Holmberg, 1983; Stewart, 1998; Tait, 1996).

Summarising from the literature cited above, there are three types of interaction consequent to collaboration alluded to earlier: (i) learner-learner, (ii) learner-instructor and (iii) learner-content (Moore, 1989a). However, one could argue that making available course syllabi and

instructional materials through distance mode does not replicate the complex social learning environment that students participate in, as in the case of an adult student in text-based print-media environments such as my empirical site. This is reaffirmed by Norman's statement in 1993 (cited by Blocher, 2005, p. 271) that '... many of the important parts of human activity come about through our social interactions and shared knowledge and beliefs, not just the activity within the individuals' head sitting behind a computer screen' as in the analogy of a panopticon (see reference to Dowling). Collaboration and interactive practices of learning also occur beyond the institution outside of a framing determined by space and time, except that this might not be deemed as 'official pedagogy' sanctioned by an institutional authority, which I define as *invisible pedagogy*. This will become evident through my analysis in Chapter 8 on adult students learning practices. I will argue that students collaborate and interact in the management of their learning beyond the above three types.

Conspicuously, not included in any of the three categories in the above literature is this non-formal collaboration and interactive partners in the learning process. These collaborators and interaction partners are outside of the formal institutionalised system and are "invisible capital". These include work colleagues, family and clan/tribe members and those who share the same social interest with whom the distant student might interact consciously or subconsciously to enhance and support their study through the distance mode. This *invisible* group of collaboration and interaction partners in distance learning requires further investigation and is a key trajectory of my research. This trajectory to explore non-formal practices in my proposition will bring out the unseen indigenous ways in which knowledge transmission and acquisition takes place and how the social is produced in this pedagogic arena.

4.2.3 Collaboration and Interaction in Print Media based Learning Environments

Distance education environments are fast changing from a paper-based correspondence style operation to internet and web-based teaching and learning. While environments might change my point of contention is that, the basic social character of the adult distance student is complex and requires an in-depth analysis to interpret and understand how students organise their learning as reflected in the differences of the student's social and cultural profile and the medium through which learning instructions and resources are delivered.

There is a certain degree of assumption that because print-media communication technology is defined as correspondence based, one-way transmission and not facilitating two-way interactive communication (Nipper, 1989), collaboration with others is minimal for the distance student in

such a learning environment. Furthermore, Duffy and Judy (1992) pointed out the disadvantages of print-media as lacking depth as a teaching vehicle, lack of timely interactivity between teacher and student, and the concern of isolation for the student. A number of studies reported in the literature suggest otherwise that even in the present electronic age, print media has not and will not vanish and all distance programs are not delivered online. In this respect, active learning models appropriate for self-instruction as suggested by Lockwood (1994) can be considered. These models are 'tutorial-in-print', 'reflective action guide' and 'dialogue' (ibid, p. 90. See also Rowntree (1973, 1992) for first two and Evans and Nation (1989) for the third model).

I concur with the authors of the third model, 'dialogue' who argued strongly for 'students to be actively engaged in constructing meaning for themselves rather than being the mere receptacles of information supplied by the teacher' (ibid, p. 93) in that 'dialogue involves the idea that humans in communication are engaged actively in the making and exchange of meanings, it is not merely about the *transmission* [original emphasis] of messages' (Evans and Nation, 1989, p. 37)

Kennedy and Duffy (2004) report of their conscious educational decision to adopt a model combining both online and printed materials to facilitate collaboration reflecting the lifestyle and work environment of their almost 1000 adult nursing students in sixteen countries. They were convinced that this model 'had the potential to reduce or eliminate the isolation that some observers allude to as being the experience of distance students'(ibid p. 204). Furthermore, they acknowledged the collaboration between teachers and students but further suggest that collaboration must involve more than these two groups and the use of printed learning resources facilitated this as observed and reported in their study.

In another study on delivery system preferences of adult learners, Hodes (1993) concluded that, delivery systems with no set time and requiring fixed location such as a computer laboratory have been shown to favour course completion among adult students. Video and computer based courses and their equipment requirements were perceived as barriers. Hodes (1993, p. 7) predicted that for the foreseeable future, print-based distance courses would continue their popularity due to learner preferences and technology gaps. This will lead to development of hybrid formats and techniques to increase student-lecturer collaboration and interaction. This prediction illuminates the fact that while multimedia use seems to be the current trend, what is analysed as institutionalised rigidity restricts the student's learning to a fixed location where there is a computer with an electricity supply but it is acknowledged it might be a redundant

issue considering that in the industrialised world handheld mobile communication technology is being introduced that is fast making its way into the non-industrialised world.

In a developing country context Osuji (2005) is adamant that for Nigeria, in spite of advances in electronic media taking place elsewhere in the world ‘the print media is a very necessary medium’ (p. 67) due to constraints such as inconsistent power supply. Even in the developed world Moore (1986) 20 years ago predicted in the USA ‘that the printed word – the study guide and the correspondence assignment – will remain the most important medium for home study’ (p. 1). This prediction was based on the analysis that the print medium has the ability to give the distance student a sense of excitement and the provision of social space for students to explore more widely outside the course and use their own experience with others to support their study. The fact that distance students using print media feel isolated prompts some of them to engage and interact with others in their immediate social and cultural surrounding.

Learning then goes outside of the institutionalised setting with institutionalised collaborators and becomes situated and context specific to give meaning to the learner through the collaborative and interaction partners they choose to engage within their local setting. In this section I explored literature to show that print-media will still be around and the strengths and limitations of this communication medium in facilitating collaboration and interaction. This leads me to explore pedagogic actions of instruction and construction in making meaning in a distance education pedagogic context.

4.2.4 Instruct or Construct: Meaning-Making in Distance Education Pedagogy

Exchanges, on this long-standing issue, of instructive teaching or constructive meaning-making tend to be cast in the language of constructivism or socio-constructivism. Constructivism emphasises the student’s active role of constructing knowledge in contrast to the student’s passive reception of instruction offered to them by the lecturer. Current use of the term constructivism as a rationale underlying curriculum and teaching method suggests that dissension in the field can be dichotomised as two competing views on how students best learn and on the desirable goals of learning. From one point of view, the student is seen as an active constructor of knowledge and understanding (Tenenbaum *et al.*, 2001); a major goal of constructivist curriculum then is the opportunity for active construction of knowledge. On the other side, students are seen as dependent on another’s instruction in the important knowledge and skills that will help them better understand concepts in new knowledge acquisition (Clark, 1994; Kirschner, Sweller and Clark, 2006).

The above antagonists to a constructivist curriculum argue that despite the considerable advocacy of learning designs that comprise minimal guidance, they see no research evidence that supports the superiority of these techniques over others. They write: “insofar as there is any evidence from controlled studies, it almost uniformly supports direct, strong instructional guidance rather than constructivist-based minimal guidance during the instruction of novice to intermediate learners” (Kirschner, Sweller and Clark, 2006, p. 83). They suggest “not only is unguided instruction normally less effective, there is evidence that it may have negative results when students acquire misconceptions or incomplete and/or disorganised knowledge” (ibid p. 83).

Moore’s (1991) view of constructivism for adult learning is that distance education has different settings from the conventional classroom due not only to the physical distance between an instructor and learners but also to the difference in designs of instruction in distance learning curricular. Keller (1983) reminds us that the instructional design model used can motivate or demotivate a distance learner such as Lulu that I will show in Chapter 8. Lefoe (1998, p. 454) takes note of the fact that there may be diverse views with the use of the term constructivism but essentially the users tend to share two beliefs. Firstly, learning is an active process of constructing rather than acquiring knowledge and second, instruction is a process of supporting that construction rather than communicating knowledge. This is evidenced with current advances in mobile learning guides for students (Macdonald, 2010) and the research and pedagogic implications for mobile technologies and handheld devices (Ng, 2011). While this seems to be the fashionable trend we need to be aware to of pedagogic structures, agency and practices of mobile learning (Pachler, Bachmair and Cook, 2010).

In their study Herrington and Standen (2000), report of transforming a multimedia program from an instructivist to a constructivist model based on the theory of situated learning as a theoretical framework for instructional design. They found that this transformation introduced into the learning environment elements such as; an authentic context, an authentic activity, multiple perspectives, expert opinion, collaboration, with opportunities for articulation and reflection. In their experience, online discussion groups are characterised as being discussion oriented, project-based, inquiry-focused and collaborative. This conclusion corresponds to the findings of Chen (1997, p. 34) who noted “sound distance education is the result of effective communication and instruction and adherence to coherent instructional principles.” The observations noted in the above literature are inclined toward a constructivist approach in instructional design. The

limitation I note is that, neither of them focused on users or students themselves nor their practices of learning through a personally intimate and subjectivist approach outside of the domineering ambit of the provider institution.

The text-based print media used at the UPNG-OC has been subject to scrutiny by the participants in Guy's (1994) research. It was observed that participants had become more perceptive about issues surrounding distance education and were aware of the way the provider institution controlled the production of knowledge through the instructional design model used. A number of participants pointed out in their journals that they would like to have a role in knowledge production ranging from consultative or *collaborative* roles, to outright control and questioned the role of text in their professional development as teachers. According to Guy's (1994) interpretation;

The construction of text reinforces teachers' views of knowledge and professional development as a closed model in which knowledge is handed down from an authority figure and to be consumed unquestioningly. They are not presented with other models of knowledge production nor are they encouraged to use their own voices. This is an effective mechanism by which the dominant culture, framed within the Institute, strengthens and promotes its own interests (Guy, p. 131).

This situation of text-based print media as observed by Guy (1994) is still in use although the instructional design model has been modified as reported in a recent case study (Haihuie, Rangou and Mannan, 2010). The model of instructional design is a didactic conversational approach in the students' study guide. The philosophical assumptions underlying instructional design models on whether students should be instructed or guided through self-discovery is subject to contestation. Through my data analysis and discussion in Chapter 9 this issue of instructivist versus constructivist pedagogy is explored to further my argument toward a collaborative and constructivist pedagogic practice that is rooted in the students' indigenous forms of social organisation. In the next section I briefly scan these two opposing positions to foreground the basis of my analysis and discussion.

4.2.4.1 Instructivist versus Constructivist Instructional Design

Is it the instructivist or constructivist instructional design model that produces better learning outcomes and effective transfer of knowledge to 'create that desired citizen', is the question posed by some educational instructors such as Gagne, Briggs and Wager (1974). This polarisation of instructivist versus constructivist can be attributed to the theoretical contributions of Dewey and Vygotsky (Popkewitz, 1989). The opposing theoretical polarisation of instructivist

and constructivist pedagogies relates to the social imagery of liberal thought, which rhetorically divided the governing of the state from civil society. Popkewitz (ibid) elaborates on this.

Political philosophy and social theory makes it seem that certain rights and obligations remained beyond the reach of formal government power. The discussion is embodied in the distinctions of political thought that separate society from individual, ontology from epistemology, mind from body, the state from civil society and economy (the entrepreneurial man) and culture from politics. The separation of state from civil society (the public from private) is embedded in policies about the decentralization of school decision-making, school as markets, as well as pedagogical theories about voice, empowerment and emancipation that separate the social and historical from the individual. (Popkewitz, p. 541)

Contemporary pedagogies in distance education have defined the dispositions of student and instructor as a site of change that inscribe distinctions that separate mind and body (private) from the social and historical (public).

The difficulty of accepting this imaginary binary of state/civil society is that such postulation obscures the complex webs that cross social and political institutions in the governing of the self. Given the sociocultural diversity of the adult distance student participants in PNG, I hold the perception that there is no clear demarcation between state and civic society being that the 'new citizen' is administered through multiple institutions of the state and society. To be educated or schooled through the use of an instructivist or constructivist method merely constitutes one of the most explicit of this governing project in a formal institution but I argue that this is not, and should not be the only approach.

On one side, the constructivist model learning activities are student initiated around learner-centred topics and activities. Furthermore, it is defined as a "play-based progressive" curriculum with personal, social development goals (Katz, 1999). The curriculum design and methods are developmentally appropriate and is learner-centred, encouraging students to construct their own knowledge in an informal or unstructured 'classroom' organisation, with an emphasis on process-oriented activities.

On the other side is the instructivist model, where learning activities are teacher-initiated and teacher-directed. The teacher determines the topics and activities and the curriculum is didactic or 'traditional' school style. The goal in this model is for mastery of basic academic skills and according to Katz (1999), uses developmentally inappropriate curriculum and methods. The 'core knowledge' is systematically presented in formal or structured 'classroom' organisation style with an emphasis on product oriented learning activities.

The emphasis in constructivist design is the design of learning environments conducive to knowledge construction as opposed to the design of instruction sequences. Among advocates for a constructivist pedagogy in distance education are Tenenbaum, Naidu, Jegede and Austin (2001) and Jonassen (1995) who put forward that constructivist-learning environments in distance education should emphasise three processes which are knowledge construction, authentic learning contexts and collaboration both among learners and with a teacher who functions as a mentor and a coach in an egalitarian setting.

A study by Gold (2001) on the use of constructivist approach found that teachers exposed to an online course using constructivist methods, significantly changed their attitudes toward online instruction, seeing it as more participatory and interactive than face-to-face instruction. Empirical research in different socio-cultural context such as that of Zhong and Shen (2002) on technologically integrated classroom practice concluded that 'the traditionally Chinese notion of teaching and the role of the teacher in the classroom need to be redefined to allow for learner-centred multimedia language classroom to emerge' (Zhong and Shen, 2002, p. 39). In the USA a quantitative research by Baylor (2001) on the presence of instructive and constructive agents in pre-service teacher training found that the agents did not impact trainee teacher's performance, but it did impact affective measures, such as change in perspective and attitudes regarding instructional design. They concluded that perhaps the constructivist agent was a key factor relating to the most change in perspective given that it is a relatively less-common approach to instructional planning for novices. Findings from other studies (Herrington and Standen, 2000; Huang, 2002) also give weight to constructivism for instructional design of distance teaching and learning curriculum resources.

Guy (1994) in his research and analysis described the didactic instructivist approach deployed at the predecessor to the UPNGOC as 'dead text with no life', that did not allow for consultative or *collaborative* roles for the students (p. 131). This is a negative description of text-based print media at the micro practice level but raises theoretical debates about the notion of independent-learning and self-directed study. I have examined this debate in another part of this thesis but capture in brief the contesting issues to draw this review of literature on adult distance students learning to a close.

The idea of 'independent study' is attributed to Wedemeyer (Keegan, 1996, p. 66) who 'undertook the uphill struggle to promote non-traditional education programs in the highly structured university scene'. Wedemeyer has been criticised by Peters (2004) on the use of this

concept at the British Open University as “nothing more than the distribution of standardised packages of knowledge, allowing little room for independent student thought.” His criticism that the Open University, while ‘relatively successful in ... transmitting knowledge’ falls short ‘in developing students as independent and critical thinkers’ has been quickly refuted by a number of authors. Among these rebuttals is that from Moore (2004, p. 321), who points out that from the (mistaken) assumption that Wedemeyer held a mechanistic view of learning and teaching, it is not a big step to conclude that, given his role among the OU’s planners, the system set up by the British was bound to be a mechanistic teaching system. Overlook the tutorial component of the OU system and you end up with a conclusion that is wrong, based on an assumption that is also wrong. The fact that the OU is *not* a mechanistic system can be traced, in part at least, to views about the learner and the process of learning that are considerably more subtle and balanced than those that Peters suggests. Wedemeyer ‘... tried to help these learners see their own immediate reality as a learning opportunity’ and develop the mind’s ability to be innovative and creator of knowledge and not just a consumer of knowledge.

The above view of creating and acquiring new knowledge in a learning environment is no different to indigenous practices among Pacific Islanders prior to contact with the outside world. Hemara (2000) in his argument for inclusion of indigenous pedagogic practices noted that;

While current thinking places children at the centre of learning, a traditional Maori perspective seems to locate students and teachers in the same place. The processes of learning were reciprocal, both teachers and students learnt from each other. Teaching/learning, experience and experimentation were co-operative ventures in which everyone involved learnt something new. (Hemara, 2000, p. 8)

The above statement on Maori traditional child rearing and teaching and learning practices could inform and contribute positively to today’s learning environments. In the same vein of argument I will show that pedagogy practices are strongly communal oriented. It is worth noting that ancient indigenous conventions in education are sometimes replicated in what is currently termed as best practice.

4.3 Conclusion

What is evident from this review is that, while collaboration and interaction are embraced as practices that would enhance teaching and learning, the focus of the research studies cited were undertaken in Bernstein’s (2000) terminology of *strong framing* or the rigid confines of a formal institutionalised setting, as a structure imposing upon the student its dominant forms of culture and practices of knowing through a *top-down authoritative* approach. My research to investigate

the learning practices of collaboration and interaction in this context as well as beyond the institution, seeks to frame out the relationships, contradictions and deviance between the institution prescribed pedagogic principles and the adult distance students' actual practices of learning in their local sociocultural context.

A stance taken and supported by both opinionated (Osuji, 2005) and empirically practice-based report such as that by Kennedy and Duffy (2004) suggest that while use of web-based ICT is on the rise, notably in the industrialised world, one-way text-based print media will still be used as a medium of communication in distance education practice. Hence, the focus of my research on collaboration and interaction as social practices of learning in a correspondence style distance learning environment. The issue is how these forms of pedagogic practices produces and reproduce social hierarchies and order in society. The analysis of findings will add to this growing body of knowledge in the literature on pedagogic discourse in distance education. In the next chapter I attempt a theoretical framing of distance education pedagogy.

5 Chapter Five

A Theoretical Framework

Practice has a logic which is not that of the logician - Pierre Bourdieu

5.1 Introduction

In my previous three chapters, I contextualised my research by exploring relevant literature on the culture and cultural reality of practice, the story of the development of distance education in PNG and *adult* distance students learning practices which is one of my central focuses. The practice of *collaboration* is one focus of this study as stated in my previous chapters. In Chapter 2, I presented a social and cultural overview to re-examine the modes of distance pedagogical practices at UPNG-OC to localise universally privileged pedagogic practices. The theoretical implication is that institutions of higher education, such as the UPNG-OC, are sites not only of pedagogic practices but embedded in them are spaces or arenas for the social and cultural [re]production in which social actors in pedagogic transactions [re]produce their own social space drawing from indigenous forms of social and cultural capital. This chapter examines the pedagogic practices in distance education as socially and culturally situated and the theoretical framework explored here underpins this research.

My research study builds on three theoretical works of Bernstein, Bourdieu and Moore to inform an exploration on PNG adult distance learners' pedagogical practices when they interact with the institutional printed materials. Bernstein's (1996; 2000; 2004) theory of pedagogic discourse and Bourdieu's (1990; 1977) theory of practice will guide my distance education research story and underpin my methodology.

On a personal note, I was eager for an opportunity to at least make some reference to the work of Moore (1997; 2007 1993) and his theory of transactional distance, but this will not underpin my data analysis for reasons I will expound.

After exhaustive literature searches, it emerged that Bernstein's concepts of classification and framing have been widely applied in the educational literature, the concepts' applicability in distance learning studies are emerging (Jóhannsdóttir, 2008; Robertson, 2006), so its application in my study to build up existing knowledge and ideas, will be a personal challenge after an identifiable gap in the literature.

To put my idea of distance education pedagogy as a sociocultural activity in perspective, I will start with Moore's theory.

5.2 Moore's Theory of Transactional Distance

The concepts of framing and classification relate to Moore's (1972, 1997) theory of transactional distance in distance education pedagogy. This is specifically the learner-instructor and learner-learner activity of collaboration and interaction that might seem restricted in interpreting and understanding what is actually going on out there in the "invisible world" of the distance learners. This theory seems to suggest for a measure of the outcome of variables, in that "if the amount of dialogue increases, transactional distance decreases" (Moore and Kearsley, 1996, p. 200), which I depart from because I am not interested in measuring learning outcomes, but I want to understand the dynamics of the pedagogic transactions infused by the social and cultural [re]positioning of the actors.

Moore's (1972; 1973; 1997) theory of transactional distance developed since 1972 defines *distance* as a psychological and communications gap that is a function of the interplay among structure, dialogue, and autonomy. The theory posits that high structure and low dialogue result in greater transactional distance and more responsibility on the part of the learner to be autonomous in order to succeed (Moore and Kearsley, 1996). Moore and Kearsley (1996) noted that success in distance teaching is determined by the extent to which the instructor and the institution are able to provide appropriate structure and the appropriate quantity and quality of dialogue between instructor and learner, taking into account the extent of the learner's autonomy.

For my research the theory of *transactional distance* seems more inclined toward a psychology school of thought which deviates from my intention of placing and interpreting pedagogic actions as sociocultural in orientation. That is, cognition occurs in sociocultural spaces, and not in a vacuum.

Critiques of this theory such as Gorsky and Caspi (2005) have refuted it on the basis of its application from a theory with a philosophical grounding that disintegrates on practical application. They concluded in their review of research studies based on the theory of transactional distance that;

... the basic propositions of transactional distance theory were neither supported nor validated by empirical research findings. Furthermore, it was found that the theory may be reduced to a single proposition (as the amount of dialogue increases, transactional distance decreases) and that this proposition may be constructed as a tautology). (Gorsky and Caspi, 2005, p. 1)

They went to qualify the debunking of this theory by making a critical distinction that, either upholds or shatters a theory.

Transactional distance theory was accepted philosophically and logically since its core proposition (as the amount of dialogue increases, transactional distance decreases) has high face validity and seems both obvious as well as intuitively correct. Indeed the philosophical impact of Moore's theory remains. Unfortunately however, the movement from abstract, formal philosophical definitions to concrete, operational ones caused ambiguity, at best, and collapse of the theory at worst. (Gorsky and Caspi, 2005, p. 11)

While I acknowledge that the theory of transactional distance is the most cited (see Lee, Driscoll and Nelson, 2004, who noted 105 citations in journals) and its psychological basis of analyzing learning, I interpret and apply the term *distance* to be re-contextualised as a sociological concept. For me, the spatial *distance* is not just a psychological and communication gap but one that is socially and culturally rooted. Researchers in distance education pedagogy such as Hamilton (2009) in reviewing the learning theories of Bruner strongly suggest for the use of narratives that I draw on in my approach for data analysis underpinned by theoretical frameworks in sociology. In Hamilton's (2009, p. 120) words the narrative mode is a more open, story-telling discourse that pays homage to human agency, human intention, and [un]happy endings rather than to causal networks, their empirical outcomes and factor analysis.

It will be obvious for my audience to wonder about my use of a sociological lens to see the pedagogic practices of distance education in the PNG context instead of a theoretical framework in the area of distance education. I state that the distinct social and cultural diversity of the participants in this research and the empirical context grounded in my previous chapters influenced my decision to see pedagogy as a social and cultural activity. I have given a synoptic overview of the emerging theories in distance education in Chapter 3 and learning practices of adults in distance education in Chapter 4. Prominent among the theorisation pertaining to distance learning seems inclined toward a psychology school of thought and language and literacy ideology. My theoretical interest deviates from these based on the premise that pedagogic activities are socially and cultural situated with social order and pedagogic interactions.

In my analysis of data, I take a sociological position in the interpretation of the term *distance* drawing from Bourdieu's Theory of Practice (1977; Bourdieu, 1990) and Bernstein's Theory of Pedagogic Discourse (1990; 1996; 2000) and in particular his pedagogic device of framing and classification that I look at next.

5.3 Bernstein's Theory of Pedagogic Discourse

The theoretical framework from Bernstein (1996; 2000; 2004) I recruit here is his theory of pedagogic discourse. This theoretical framework is useful in generating concepts to interpret and understand how distance educators; lecturers, instructional designers interpret pedagogic design (curriculum), transfer knowledge (pedagogy) and the administration of the program (evaluation) but also how the acquirers or distance students engage in learning in distance education pedagogy.

The theory of pedagogic discourse consists of two discourses, which are the discourse of pedagogic skills and their relation to each other, and discourse of social order and social production in a pedagogic site or social arena, which I have reconceptualised as the distance education market place. The discourse that creates specialist skills for distance teaching and instructional design is termed instructional discourse in Bernstein's language and the discourse that defines social conduct and hierarchy of knowledge-authority positions in the pedagogic relations is defined as the regulative discourse. In drawing a distinction between these two discourses Bernstein stated that the regulative discourse is the dominant discourse over the instructional discourse. That is, the instructional discourse is always embedded in the regulative discourse, and the regulative discourse is the dominant discourse (Bernstein, 2000, p. 13). Bernstein went on to explain that a set of rules reinforces both of the instructional and regulative discourses of pedagogic practices. The instructional discourse is underpinned by the rules of selection, sequencing, pacing and evaluation of the curriculum and the regulative discourse on the other hand is underpinned by rules of hierarchy and order.

There was a third set of rules that Bernstein (2004) identified which underpinned the two discourses. These are rules of criteria, which define what is regarded as legitimate or illegitimate practices of learning in the pedagogic relationship. The significant point in Bernstein's (2004, p. 197) theoretical argument is that the inner logic of any pedagogic practice consists of the relationship basically between these three fundamental rules and that all the modalities of pedagogic practices are generated from the same set of fundamental rules and vary according to their values of classification and framing.

Classification

By Bernstein's (2000, pp. 6-11) definition, classification embodies power relations and is concerned with the strength of the boundaries of the degree of insulation between the categories,

agents, actors or discourses. Classification defined by the degree of insulation is therefore a principle of the social division of labour that creates specialized agents, categories and discourses. The degree of insulation between categories regulates the classification values and there can be either weak or strong classification. While classification translates power relations in a pedagogic site, framing is underpinned by the principle of control, which regulates relations within a context. In a distance education pedagogic site the evaluation/assessment is a control mechanism that regulates the pedagogic relations in what critiques of distance would label as a weak frame.

Framing

On the other hand, framing determines the locus of control over the selection, sequencing and pacing of the instructional discourse (Bernstein, 2000, pp. 11-14). It is this element of framing that has interesting implication for my research in a distance education pedagogic site which I will show in my data analysis in Chapters 8 and 9.

Bernstein (2000) states that where framing is strong, the locus of control lies with the transmitter and when framing is weak, the locus of control lies with the acquirer. Does an adult distance learner have more control than the transmitter in a distance education pedagogic relationship is a question to ponder about leading to my data analysis?

In general, where framing is strong, there is visible pedagogic practice, the rules of instructional and regulative discourse are explicit, and the transmitter has explicit control over the selection, pacing and criteria. Where framing is weak, pedagogic practice is likely to be invisible and the acquirer has more apparent control, the rules of regulative and instructional discourse are implicit and largely unknown to the acquirer.

Critiques of distance education have used Bernstein's pedagogic device of framing to argue that a distance education pedagogic site exemplifies an archetype of weak-framing.

Analogically Dowling (2009) uses the 'panopticon' (see Foucault, 1977) to critique that distance learning environment in general and 'computer mediated communication (CMC) pedagogic practice in particular might be construed as the archetype of *weak framing*' (Dowling, 2009, p. 80). He notes that as with the teacher-lurker in the CMC environment, this can work only where the prisoner already possesses the principles of evaluation of their behaviour and that would not be a pedagogic situation, in Bernstein's terms, it would entail no transmission. In Dowling's

construct, a *pedagogic relation* would not be in place because there is no mechanism whereby the author (teacher-lurker, warder in the tower) seeks to maintain control over principles of evaluation. The introduction of, say, a reward and/or punishment regime to complement the panopticon technology will facilitate a pedagogic relation.

Here is an application of the pedagogic device of framing in a particular teaching and learning environment. Contrary to the perception of distance education as an archetype of weak framing, empirical practices reveal otherwise. Transmission is strongly framed and the acquirers deploy acquisition strategies through alliance formation with visible and invisible social capital in their pedagogic tasks. As will be shown in Chapter 9 students express concern about administrative flaws inhibiting them to comply to study schedules and assessment due dates which evidences the dominance of the regulative discourse over the instructional discourse. The transmitter enforces the regulative discourse through the control mechanism of evaluation/assessment. With or without the panopticon technology to complement the incentives of reward or punishment, acquirers adhere to the pedagogic rules governing strong framing.

With the current trends in research on collaboration and interaction in a setting of an online pedagogic environment (Kennedy and Duffy, 2004; Wilson and Whitelock, 1998) the challenge then is to include strategies to create a *pedagogic relation*. In what ways would the *pedagogic relation* be introduced and maintained in invisible pedagogic practices beyond the authoritative limits of the knowledge transmitter, if the presence of *framing* is to be present or maintained in the pedagogic relation.

Whether the classificatory principle is weak or strong indicates how one context differs from another, thus providing the key to the distinguishing feature of the context. Bernstein (1996; 2000) goes on to qualify that the strength or weakness can orientate the speaker to what is expected in the pedagogic context. Recognition rules according to Bernstein (1996) are the means by which the knowledge acquirer is able to recognize the speciality of the context which the learner is in. Recognition rules orientate one to the speciality of the context, it helps one to determine what the context demands. In a learning context, unless a distance learner has this rule, one will not be able to read the context and will remain silent or ask inappropriate questions (Bernstein, 1996 p. 31).

Strong classification gives rise to clear contextual specialties and identities. The context is clearly spelt out, and the knowledge acquirer can thus recognize the context or read the text. Weak classification, on the other hand, gives rise to ambiguities in contextual recognition. The

acquirer is given more room to make up what the context could have been instead of having it clearly spelt out. Realization rules, on the other hand, determine how the acquirer constructs meanings and how the learner makes these meanings public. Different framing values act selectively on realization rules and so, on the production of different texts. However, recognition rules and realization rules constitute the ground rules needed for one to meaningfully recontextualise or to demonstrate successful orientation in a given context.

Following on from Bernstein's theory of pedagogic discourse, my research use the set of internal rules together with their classification and framing relations to understand how lecturers and instructional designers interpret and apply in practice when preparing distance learning resources for self-directed individual learning. The recognition and realisation rules in framing and classification are used to determine the extent to which lecturers and instructional designers possessed the appropriate contextual orientation necessary for them to distinguish the particular learning needs of the invisible, and isolated adult distance learner (*ososom*) with regard to practices of collaboration and interaction with the distance learning resources and the significant others around them.

The other of Bernstein's concept is that of recontextualisation that is relevant in casting the distance education pedagogic site as one of binary oppositions in a pedagogic site; the dominant institution and the novice acquirer.

5.3.1 Bernstein's Concept of Recontextualisation

Bernstein's (2000, pp. 33 see also the dynamics of recontextualisation fields on pages 56-57) recontextualisation rules deals with the actions in a specific field of which he outlines three. The first field is where *new* [original emphasis] knowledge is constructed and positioned, and the second is the field of recontextualisation where discourses from the field of production are selected, appropriated and repositioned to become 'educational' knowledge or official knowledge. The third is the field of reproduction where the actual pedagogic practices take place. These three rules and their associated fields constitute an arena of conflict and struggle in which social groups and individuals attempt to dominate how educational knowledge is constructed, 'stored' and transmitted. Putting this in another way, Bernstein (2000, pp. 36-37) from a structural point of view of pedagogic device brings out a similarity between the religious field and education whereby in the religious field there is the prophet, priest and laity and in the pedagogic field there is the producers, reproducers and acquirers of knowledge in that order. In Bernstein's rules of the pedagogic device we also have three positions that provide analogues to

the prophets, priests and laity. “The ‘prophets’ are the producers of the knowledge, the ‘priests’ are the recontextualisers or reproducers, and the ‘laity’ are the acquirers” (Bernstein, 2000, p. 37).

Groups attempt to appropriate Bernstein’s pedagogic device to impose their rule by the construction of particular code modalities. Thus, the device or apparatus becomes the focus of challenge, resistance and conflict. The focus of the challenge is what goes on in this *distance* or sociocultural space between the ORP and the PRF. The distinction is that the ORF is created and selected by the state and its selected agents and ministries. On the other hand the PRF consist of pedagogues in schools and colleges, specialised journals and private research foundations. If the PRF can have an effect on pedagogic discourse independently of the ORF, then there is both some autonomy *and* [original emphasis] struggle of pedagogic discourse and its practices. But if there is only the ORF, then there is no autonomy (Bernstein, 2000, p. 33). There are limitations of the state in the recontextualisation procedures of higher education. Bernstein states that in the case of higher education, there is no ORF for the construction of an official higher education discourse but there is strong indirect regulation on the recontextualisation process by state agencies.²⁰

Bernstein’s (1996; 2000) concept of recontextualisation defines the nature of collaboration and social interaction that characterises given teaching-learning contexts. In the mode of distance teaching-learning the interaction is theorised by Moore (1997) as the ‘transactional distance’ focussing on the pedagogic relationship between the transmitter and acquirer. I have already stated elsewhere about this theory of *transactional distance* that it is more inclined toward a psychology school of thought which, deviates from my intention of placing and interpreting pedagogic actions as sociocultural in orientation. That is, cognition occurs in sociocultural spaces, and not in a vacuum. In yet other interpretations, Morais, Neves and Pires call this collaborative interaction as ‘...a consequence of power and control relations between subjects, discourses and spaces’ (Morais, Neves and Pires, 2004, p. 76). They elaborate that, classification relating to power and framing which is about control are conceptual instruments used to characterise the *how* [original emphasis] of pedagogic practice both instructionally and regulatively.

Bernstein’s earlier contribution to sociology was through his code theory used to examine class structure in society. According to Bernstein (1971), forms of spoken language in the process of children’s learning, initiate, generalise and reinforce special types of relationship with the environment and thus, create for the individual, particular forms of significance. Bernstein

²⁰ Here Bernstein cites the UK Higher Education Funding Council Executive as that indirect regulative authority.

distinguishes two types of social class communication codes representing working class and middle class children. The *restricted code* and *elaborated code* used symbolised the children's social identity. The general applicability of this code theory is that both codes are context dependent with the restricted code being pluralistic and the elaborated code universalistic.

The notion of social reproduction has been codified in terms of *classification* and *framing* where classification conceptualises relations of power that regulate relations between contexts or categories. These concepts have been widely used to analyse educational contexts and practices and their relations to the dispositions (or coding orientation) brought to education by different social groups.

The application of code theory is obvious in highly stratified societies with defined class structures in which the way a person talks 'speaks' about his or her social identity [aristocracy, merchants, working class, etc.] but may prove problematic to recontextualise this theory in 'simple' egalitarian societies such as my research context. In such societies other forms of symbolic coding is utilised. Apart from this observation relating to my empirical site, the code theory did attract controversy and was labelled as a deficit theory (Danzig, 1995 see also; Sadovnik, 1995) which alleged that Bernstein was arguing that the language of children coming from working class background was deficient. Despite this controversy, Bernstein did show that the elaborated code as a cultural capital of the middle class is the dominant code of schooling, and resonates with identity and class formation in different social settings utilising in Bourdieu's language different forms of *capital*. In reference to these theoretical frameworks I posit that in distance learning practices *social capital* is a key resource for the adult student in the management of their learning.

5.4 Bourdieu's Notion of Capital

In this section I examine the concept *capital* as was used by Bourdieu. The recruitment of *capital* is to ground the conceptualisation of the social activity and view *capital* as a resource that social agents acquire and expend in the 'social arena' to construct and reconstruct their identity and find their own social space. With a sociological orientation in educational research, Bourdieu's concept of *capital* is widely used. His other concepts of *field* and *habitus*, and the concept of capital are useful metaphors to create a dialogue between the individual in the empirical field and society as a theoretical object to interrogate the problematic.

Bourdieu introduces and applies symbolic capital to analyse the social world as a 'market place'. The 'distance education market place' as it is structured and organised is defined by the

differences in the creation, accumulation and distribution of *capital* which is clearly evident in my data analysis later. He states that, "Everything points to the concentration of a symbolic capital of recognised authority which, though it has been ignored by all the existing theories of state, appears as the conditions or, at minimum, the correlate of all other forms of concentration, insofar as they endure at all" (Bourdieu, 1998a, p. 47)

In his postulation symbolic capital is any property (any form of capital whether physical, economic, cultural or social) that agents use. Social agents endowed with categories of perception, which cause them to know it and recognise it, to give it value, perceive capital. He cites the concept of "honour" as an example in Mediterranean societies as a typical form of symbolic capital. That is, the concept 'exist only through repute...through the representation that others have of it to the extent that they share a set of beliefs liable to cause them to perceive and appreciate certain patterns of conduct as honourable or dishonourable' (Bourdieu, 1998a, p. 47).

Many authors argue that communities in developing societies lack the social capital networks and associations found in many developed societies, but this underestimates the nature of social capital building in traditional societies (Woolcock, 1998)²¹. These forms of social capital are an example of "banking" in circumstances where conventional banking and credit facilities are not present. Indeed, as a number of commentators have shown, the rate of return on this investment in social capital can be much higher than investment in any other economic activity, as distributive relationships may establish forms of interpersonal obligations that are permanent and cannot easily be discharged. Many communities have such relationships to varying degrees. In PNG, for example, the Moka cycles, whereby pigs are raised for communal feasts are found widely through the Highlands region, and the ability to organise and coordinate such events is a major way in which "bikmen" achieve social status (Godelier and Strathern, 1991).

The value of capital is defined by the social position and direction of the agent in their respective fields of practice such as politics, economics or academia. To be more precise, Bourdieu explains that;

...symbolic capital is the form taken by any species of capital whenever it is perceived through categories of perception that are the product of the embodiment of divisions or oppositions inscribed in the structure which possesses the means of imposition and inculcation of the durable principles of vision and

²¹ Reference is also cited in an article under the title, "Social capital and economic development: Toward a theoretical synthesis and policy framework" Theory and Society, Springer Netherlands, Volume 27, Number 2 / April, 1998 pp. 151-208

division that conform to its own structure, is the par excellence of the concentration and exercises of symbolic power. (Bourdieu, 1998a, p. 47).

The value [quantity and quality] and ownership of the capital enables the production of say *identity* and *difference* giving social order. Education is one field that inculcate social reproduction as I have explained above and will become more evident through the exploration of my data about the spouses collaboration and interaction in the management of distance learning.

The concept of capital is an enabling tool. Social agents construct the social world through cognitive structure that may be applied to all things of the world and in particular to social structures²².

Bourdieu's application of capital is different to the Marxist notion of economic capital. My recruitment of the Bourdieuan concept of capital are the forms of social, cultural and symbolic capital that agents may utilise. In societies the state makes a decisive contribution to the production and reproduction of the instruments of constructing social reality. The following statement by Bourdieu brings to bear the role of educational institutions in modern society.

*As organizational and structure regulator of practices, the state exerts an on-going action formative of durable dispositions through the whole range of constraints and through the corporeal and mental discipline it uniformly imposes upon all agents. Furthermore, it imposes and inculcates all the fundamental principles of classification, based on sex, age, "skill", etc. And it lies at the basis of symbolic efficacy of all rites of institution, such as those underlying the family for example, or those that operate through the routine functioning of the school system as the site of "consecration" where lasting and often irrevocable differences are instituted between those chosen and the excluded... (Bourdieu, 1998b, p. 54 see also *The Field of Cultural Production*, 1993).*

Through different languages, Bourdieu and Bernstein both conceptualised theoretical frameworks that construct and analyse class and identity [re]production in society. Bernstein's work on sociolinguistics and code theory provided a tool to understand social class formation and maintenance through the different modalities of communication differentially valued in schools and the modes of practice and relations with each different community.

5.4.1 Social Capital

The concept of *capital* and in particular *social capital* in the last century had come to widespread usage. The popularisation of the concept is attributed to Putman (1993; 1995) who

²² In comparison to Bourdieu, Cassirer called these principles a vision and divison "symbolic forms" and Durkeheim "forms of classification" and classification is also used in Bernstein's language.

pushed *social capital* into mainstream political discourse. When analysing the decline in civic engagement, this would bring the historical journey of the concept back again to the beginning of the 20th Century when Dewey had made use of *social capital* to advocate civic education. References to *social capital* in the academic literature were a few prior to the 1990s but now the study of *social capital* has broadened beyond the academic community. Public domain search engines such as Yahoo! and Google evidences the term's recruitment and widespread usage. In the context of my research, I need a clear and unambiguous definition.

Bourdieu (1986, p. 51) offered his concept of *social capital*, where he expanded the notion of capital beyond its economic conception which were symbolised as economic, cultural and social capital. *Social Capital* in Bourdieu's use is '...the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition' – or in other words, to members in a group – which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively owned capital.

Social capital in this sense consists of group membership and social network, and the volume of social capital possessed by a given agent depends on the size of the network of connections that one can effectively mobilise. A point to qualify is that such a network of connections is not a 'state given' but is 'the product of investment strategies, individual or collective, consciously or subconsciously, aimed at establishing or reproducing social relationships that are directly usable in the short or long term'(1986, p. 52).

Membership in groups and involvement in social networks can be utilised in efforts to improve social positions of the actors. Bourdieu grounded social capital in the resources and opportunities accruing to people through collaborative memberships. Coleman (1988) on the other hand used the term to describe the advantages that emerge from social ties. For Bourdieu, social capital was defined by status, whilst for Coleman is defined by its function.

To draw the discussion of social capital in this section to a close, the essence is social trust, norms of reciprocity related to what I am focussing throughout my thesis as *collaboration* for interaction. The networks and civic engagement are key sources of social capital, that impact positively on democratisation and effectiveness of institutions. Related to social capital is cultural capital.

5.4.2 Cultural Capital

Cultural capital is Bourdieu's significant contribution to critical theory, and to contemporary understanding of studies in education. Apart from his other forms of capital, cultural capital according to Schuller et.al (2000) is the most developed and is used to explain how cultural judgement of the dominant group is presented as universal and selectively endowed, allowing it to legitimise its domination.

The concept of cultural capital is linked to the concepts of *fields* and *habitus*. These three concepts have been continually developed throughout all of Bourdieu's work. A field can be any structure of social relations (King, 2005). What is of significance is that it is a state of struggle for positions within that field and is constituted by conflict created when individuals or groups endeavour to establish what comprises valuable and legitimate capital within that space.

Therefore, one type of cultural capital can at the same time be both legitimate and illegitimate, depending on the field in which it is located. It can be seen therefore, that the legitimisation of a particular type of cultural capital is completely arbitrary. The power to arbitrarily determine what constitutes legitimate cultural capital within a specific field is derived from symbolic capital.

The problematic in the applicability to my research with the concept of cultural capital is that it was developed and used to explain the social class difference in the French education system, a highly stratified society, and as stated earlier, with a distinct class system. For the majority of indigenous PNG societies there was an absence of distinct hereditary class structure. This form of social organisation does exist in some such as the New Guinea Island societies where one of the UPNG-OC study centres participating in this research is situated. In the current transformation process from a 'simple society' to the 'modern society' context there is beginning to emerge a 'modern elite' with their creation and accumulation of social and cultural capital in the form of prior education and an accumulation of financial capital acquired through business transaction beside the *wantok* and *wanwok* social networks²³ as a form of social capital giving emergence to local class formation [emergence of neo-colonialism, where the dominant group is not foreign but locally evolving such as the educated elites]. This then leads me to pose a question, whose interest is distance education serving?

²³ Wantok and wanwok. The former defines speakers of the same 'language' same place of origin and the later defines shared professional interest and work.

Bernstein (1996; 2000) introduced the concepts of *framing* and *classification* and *official recontextualisation field (ORF)* and *pedagogic recontextualisation field (PRF)* (Bernstein, 1996, see p. 32 in; Bernstein, 2000) to elaborate the socialisation process.

5.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have explored three possible theoretical frameworks to generate theoretical concepts to underpin my empirical research in pedagogy of distance education.

I acknowledge Moore's (1973; Moore, 1993) established theory of transactional distance guiding many researchers in distance education pedagogy. I recast the main features of Moore's theory; structure and dialogue, to be situated in the multiple sociocultural contexts as in my empirical setting. For instance, I am interested in communication, but through what form, through who's language and medium of communication have posed challenges for my research problem.

Considering the issues exposed and discussed in my previous chapters and the sets of empirical data for analysis I have decided that Bernstein's theory of pedagogic discourse and Bourdieu's theory of practice are useful theoretical frameworks for this research. In particular the pedagogic device of framing and classification and notions of capital would form a powerful double stimulation to guide my analysis and generate a conceptual language for interpreting distance education pedagogic practices in PNG between the dominant institution as the transmitter and the novice learner as the acquirer.

6 Chapter Six

Methodology

The Melanesian Wantok Way: Communal and Reciprocity
- Adapted (Narokobi, 1980)

6.1 Introduction

This is a qualitative research, although researchers have long debated about the relative value of qualitative and quantitative inquiry (Patton, 1990). Qualitative research uses a naturalistic approach that seeks to understand phenomena in context-specific settings. Quantitative research, uses experimental methods and quantitative measures to test hypothetical generalisations. Each represents a fundamentally different inquiry paradigm, and researcher actions are based on the underlying assumptions of each paradigm.

Qualitative research, broadly defined, means "any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p. 17). Where quantitative researchers seek causal determination, prediction, and generalisation of findings, qualitative researchers instead seek illumination, understanding, and extrapolation to similar situations.

My choice for a qualitative approach is to do with the context in which the empirical is situated and 'in order to understand any human phenomenon we must investigate it as a part of the context within which it lies' (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994, p. 68). There is a great deal of linguistic, cultural, and social diversity in PNG (Sillitoe, 1998). One of the implications of this research will be in bringing to the fore some of the implications that the sociocultural and linguistic diversity has for distance learning in PNG. To put it another way, there are serious questions about the relationship between the pedagogic practices and assumptions of the UPNG-OC and the actual learning practices of the adult students. This issue of difference arises from the extreme indigenous linguistic and cultural diversity within PNG, and from the specific forms of social and cultural organisation, which are dominant among indigenous people of the country.

The key question that I seek to address is in what ways do distance students manage their learning beyond the formal instructions from the institution? What are the social and cultural capitals they deploy to create their own social space and maintain a self-identity? My research approach is through participant observation in which the participants and I co-construct the meaning of our learning practices, through semi-structured interviews, observations and personal

one-to-one discussions. This is due to the general failure of questionnaires and structured ‘..“conventional” [original quotes] interviews to provide sufficiently detailed accounts’ (Gibson, 2006, pp. no p. nos, online source). It centres on a personal and intimate involvement on my part as a researcher working in collaboration with participants to frame some of the research questions, observe and reflect on our own experiences and practices as distance learners and analyse and interpret these to create a shared meaning of the ‘unobserved’ actions. In examining student learning through computer-mediated communication an observation made is that, ‘A better understanding of learners’ planning, monitoring and evaluating of learning would help teachers and researchers develop online learning activities which are more suitable for the learners’ (Young, 2002, p. 2), and this resonates with the focus of my research in distance students’ use of text-based print-media prepared by lecturers and instructional designers prior to knowing who their students are . In this context what then is my approach for data collection?

6.2 The Approach: The Wantok Way of Doing Things

The interpretivist approach rejects quantitative and statistical means to make generalisations and create meaning. Statistical calculations and figures may ignore the subjective reality of even the minority and the marginalised in distance education research (Evans, 1994a; Evans, 1995b; Morgan, 1993; Reed, 2005). For instance, in the context of this research in PNG, there are 800 or more indigenous ‘living’ languages that are ‘codes’ of interpreting the students ‘lived world’. Each speaker of an indigenous language in his or her own ‘unique codes’, views the world in his or her own subjective way. Furthermore, science’s mechanistic and reductionist view of nature which, by definition, defines life in measurable terms rather than inner experience, excludes the notions of choice, freedom, individuality, and moral responsibility, regarding the universe as a living organism rather than as a machine (Nesfield-Cookson cited by Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, p. 17).

The concern by most qualitative researchers of the ‘interpretive’ nature of social action is the ways in which social participants construct meaning. The interest is in examining these meaning-making processes in which theories and concepts tend to arise from the enquiry and they tend to come after data collection rather than before it (Hammersley, 2006; Robson, 1993; Strauss and Corbin, 1994) though it is doubtful that a researcher undertakes research without a ‘hunch’ to find out what is going on? (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994). On the other hand a quantitative approach is associated with positivist forms of enquiry, which are concerned with the search for facts through experimental research. In other words, theories are formulated prior to data collection with a data analysis that will lead to rejection or acceptance of the theory.

In deciding to do this research I take into account the ideas of Evans (1995a) who argues in a convincing and persuasive way that the quality of any development in distance education 'is absolutely dependent on its usefulness to the students concerned ... and (should be) informed by research with students' (Evans, 1995b, p. 68). Research with students in which information is gathered from questionnaires or interviews, tends to be presented as normal, and unproblematic practice in distance education literature (Potter, 1998; Rekkedal, 1998; Woodley, 1998). As I have described above, in at least some distance education contexts there are challenges to be faced in undertaking such research. To critically reflect and improve knowledge transmission for learning at a distance, practices that are localised and subjective in nature is the objective of my investigation. My argument is that if research is to be of benefit to all stakeholders including learners, teachers and the institution, then local practices and indigenous forms of knowledge and social organisation must be accommodated for the outcome of the project to inform distance education practice in PNG. This cannot be adequately done through a survey or questionnaire alone.

One key method for data collection will be through participant observation. Historically, participant observation was developed and refined by cultural anthropologist in ethnographic studies such as Malinowski and Mead (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994), interestingly both being major influences in anthropology that undertook fieldwork in PNG. My research is not ethnography but my methodology is informed by ethnographic traditions of data collection including participant observation.

Through participant observation I 'seek to become some kind of a member' (Robson, 1993, p. 194) and not researcher as the *other* to the observed group to enable us, researcher and researched, to co-construct what can be described as 'intersubjective knowledge' (Gibson, 2006, pp. no p. nos, online source). By registering from London, since 2006 in four distance learning course units at UPNGOC, I undertook what Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) define as an *immersion exercise* into the *culture* of distance students, at least in the first course taken. Furthermore, this involved not only a physical presence and sharing of life experiences, but also entry into their social and 'symbolic' world through learning their social conventions and habits, their use of language and non-verbal communication, and so on. As an observer I intended to establish the role of 'facilitator' in *the Wantok Study Group* and continue to study as a distance student in the span of this research project. This however did not go according to plan and is highlighted as a limitation in my Conclusion Chapter.

The interpretivist and participant observation approach has an objective for a deeper understanding of the social activity of the participants to create a shared in-depth and subjective meaning in contrast to explaining objective causes for the curves on a graph or a figure in a table. The approach is focused on the micro concepts of the individual perspective, personal constructs, negotiated meanings and definitions of social situations. To accomplish this objective I used participant observation approach to collect data.

6.2.1 Participant Observation

According to Cohen et al (2007, p. 260) the subject matter of the world in which the educational researcher is interested is composed of people and is essentially meaningful to them. That world is subjectively structured, possessing particular meanings for its inhabitants in a way that I had demonstrated through my Sausewian example in Chapter 2. The task of the educational researcher is very often to explain the means by which an orderly social world is established and maintained in terms of its shared meanings. I want to justify my use of participant observation as an approach for undertaking this qualitative research. The issue raised is that of robustness as an approach and the techniques used to elicit trustworthy data.

Robson (1993) mentions three different types to distinguish the levels of participant observation. These are *the complete participant*, *marginal participant*, and *observer as participant* (Robson, 1993, pp. 196-198). Participant as observer is the approach I am using to collect data. In this approach I as the observer make it clear to the student participants that I will be a distant student and observer from the beginning of my research. The observer then tries to establish close relationships with members of the group which is the reason for my establishment of the *Wantok Study Group*. In Robson's (1993, p. 197) elaboration, this stance means that as well as observing through participating in my learning activities, I can ask members of the *Wantok Study Group* to explain various aspects of what is going on. It is important to get the trust of the members because of their position or the personal qualities such as openness or interest in the ways of the group.

The distinction between participation and observation is based on the closeness of the researcher to the subject matter, which for me is distance education pedagogy with observation involving external evaluation and recording of events without me interfering. In my approach, participation represents an internal view in which I record views from within the *Wantok Study Group* by acting overtly as a member in order to experience the actuality of the events. I then juxtapose this data with that of the lecturers and IDs on the other side of the pedagogic transaction.

Patton (2002) mentions one of the key advantages of participant observation is its ability to facilitate the collection of 'rich information' that is frequently not available from other sources such as a questionnaire in survey approaches. My use of participant observation is to supplement, inform or contradict theorised research methodology such as that of Guy (1994) and Kaeley (1980; Kaeley, 1984) in PNG and it can greatly enhance the available knowledge on a subject as a result. Furthermore, Cohen et.al (2007 see also Bailey 1994 p.243-4) state other inherent advantages in the participant observation approach. Two of these are first; observation studies are superior to experiments and surveys when data being collected is more than verbal behaviour. Secondly, through observation researchers are able to discern on-going behaviour as it occurs and are able to make appropriate notes about its salient features.

I argue that through participant observation approach I can be able to elicit authentic and genuine information that has not been filtered or amended by the research participants as can occur in relation to interview or questionnaire data and, as such, provides unique insights into the subjective viewpoint of the participants in this research (Spradely, 1997). For example, I would never had known through a questionnaire response that in Waranduo's home at the Kinienen study centre, his younger sister is also a distance student, his wife helps with his note-taking for his essay assignments and there is a small whiteboard in the house for the whole family to engage in the management of his learning. The pedagogic implication being that, learning is a collective family orientation, embedded in the traditional Melanesian venues of the *Kumainge* and *Rhambu* in which every member of the tribal community is involved. According to Berg (2003) participant observation also provides richer information than interviews or questionnaires because it can take into account non-verbal interaction and behaviour in the example I refer to. Because of this, the approach can be a valuable method of researching the influence or intersection of local indigenous PNG social structures or events on individuals and groups in their contemporary pedagogic practices. There is also the possibility that unexpected and unanticipated events will occur during the course of the observation, hence, its value in accessing unique data.

Another equally important feature of this approach is that, even with more active participation by me, the subjects of the research may not realise that they are being observed as it is not uncommon for the researcher to obscure their identity by posing as a member of the group or as someone who would naturally come into contact with them. For this and the related issue of research ethics, I disclosed my researcher identity in full to student participants by being a

member of the *Wantok Study Group* and disclosed the same to lecturers and instructional designer as an insider researcher.

I must mention that there however are limitations of the participant observation approach. From my experience of travelling to three different locations in PNG it was costly and time-consuming, both in terms of the actual observations and in preparing and analysing the large amount of data in the form of observation notes and semi-structured interview. Authorities like Jorgenson (1993) does warn about this by pointing out that it is a less cost-effective means of conducting research. A second limitation is that it tends to involve the observation of only a few examples of a particular subject behaviour or event. In my case, this was only fifteen adult students most of who were enrolled in the management program through distance mode and six lecturers and tutor/mentors and four instructional designers. Therefore, in Spradley's (1997) view there is a limit to the extent to which the findings are amenable to generalisation that I must state is not the objective of my study. A further criticism that Jorgenson (1993) point out is that participant observation be as inherently subjective as it not only focuses on a single (or limited number) of particular observations but that the recording of the resultant data is subject to the interpretation of the researcher. That is, researchers are sometimes not free from value judgments. Accordingly, there is a possibility of conscious or unconscious bias which is inconsistent with its appearance, particularly in relation to observation rather than participation, of an objective and scientific research method.

This criticism is of relevance in relation to participation because my role of a distance student living in London and studying at UPNG and that I am still a staff of the institution I am researching. In events that unfold I am not a mere passive and neutral recipient of information but might be unconsciously contributing to the shape and content of the interview data from students and staff alike at UPNG-OC (Spradely, 1997). The final criticism of participant observation that needs to be addressed is particularly pertinent to participation by the researcher and the issue of deception and ethical responsibility (Robson, 1993). Spradley (1997) reminds me that the practice of deception on research subjects is one that needs to be considered carefully when weighing the balance of the strengths and limitations of this research method. I have disclosed to all participants in this research the rationale of my research and to be neutral as possible and assured them not to disclose interview data in a way that will bring them into disrepute.

I will show in other sections of this chapter and my analysis chapters, the cultural diversity of PNG impacting upon my participants, which makes it pertinent for me to be a participant

observer and disclose my researcher role. For a critic I am perceived as an insider researcher because of my multiple social identities; two of which are as a staff of the UPNGOC and a Melanesian raises this obvious concern. I had set out to dispel this by being a distant student through the *Wantok Study Group*, which enabled me to make the *invisible* become *visible* of the adult distance students world. I am mindful of Robson's (1993, p. 197) warning that; "Maintaining the dual role of observer and participator is not easy, and acceptance [of me] will be heavily dependent on the nature of the group and the interaction of particular features of me as the observer with the group." My intimate way of engaging with the student participants is through this *Wantok Study Group* and by being a member, I am a participant as well as an observer to collect interview data and importantly observations notes from visitations and interaction with participants.

6.2.2 Wantok Study Group

This research, apart from setting out to uncover 'local micro practices' of learning also sets an objective to re-conceptualise a research methodology. That is, for a 'locally constructed research method' through collaborative reflective action by the researcher and the participants. This strategy proposes a paradigm shift in the positioning of the researcher as the 'knower' and the researched as the 'passive subordinate' that seem to be the norm in many research projects dealing with human beings. The re-positioning of the researcher and participants as 'equals' is done through an intervention strategy or '*data collection device*' with the establishment of a community I label as a *Wantok Study Group*²⁴. The concept *Wantok* propagates a common vested interest of studying as distance learners and places an emphasis on the idea of equality and mutuality in the creation, ownership and distribution of knowledge. The method and the process of data collection are designed for the researcher and the researched to co-construct and empower all stakeholders through critical reflection, questioning and interrogating individual learning practices in the group. The 'new knowledge' emanating from this collaborative effort, which might also be labelled as action research, is to make meaning of both the research methodology and the subsequent findings to be mutually owned for the benefit of all. The beneficiaries include not only the researcher, but the co-participants, the institution and other distance education researchers and practitioners. The method challenges traditional indigenous assumptions of knowledge creation by supposedly "creator deities", and the ownership and

²⁴ More than just being speakers of the same language, *wantok* or *wantok system* identifies a group of people with shared cultural values and identity and hailing from the same state or region. The PNG/Melanesian *wantok system* is akin to a community of practice in sharing a common interest. It is defined by the percept and theme of co-constructing knowledge in this research. Knowledge being co-constructed and mutually owned and is founded on the idea of reciprocity in human social relationships.

distribution of the knowledge by an initiated elite group who claim exclusive ownership of knowledge in traditional PNG/Melanesia indigenous societies (Meggitt cited in Douglas, 2002).

My research is not explicitly stated as ‘action research’ as in the original coining of the term and its use by Lewin (cited in Robson, 1993) which involves spiral cycles of planning, acting, observing and reflecting. My central focus is on the learning practices of students as a social activity and the teaching aspect, which I have been involved in, will also be included. I am enquiring into ‘another’ social practice to observe, interpret and understand what is going on in the invisible world of the learners, hence the caution to label my approach as action research.

An attempt to reduce the ‘spatial distance’ and ‘temporal distance’ in the research design is not only a theoretical argument but also the physical geography of PNG poses problems for data collection from the participants. The geographical diversity presents its own problems and this concern summarised by Waiko (1998, p. 8) was that, in distance education while other countries worry about the ‘tyranny of distance’, PNG’s problem is the ‘tyranny of terrain’. The many isolated islands [over 100 inhabited], rugged and impassable mountains and ravines where students live and study is also problematic, adding to the social and cultural diversity, to planning and undertaking this research. In the next section I discuss the specificity of data collection.

6.3 Data Collection Techniques

Using participant observation for qualitative research is for many the method of choice (Patton, 1990). It is also the method of data collection, which draws most heavily upon the various skills of the qualitative researcher. As noted by Denzin and Lincoln (2003b) participant observation simultaneously combines a number of techniques for data collection. This includes ‘...document analysis, interviewing of respondents and informants, direct participation and observation and introspection, in addition, gaining access to the setting we want to begin studying often requires tact and persistence’ (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994, pp. 69-70).

6.3.1 Questionnaire

Apart from the intimate dialogue and engagement with and between members of the *Wantok Study Group* a number of other instruments were also developed and used. A questionnaire was designed and used [Appendix 2] for the recruitment of participants [Appendix 1], wherein students were requested for their biographical data, to state their reason for choosing to study by distance mode and their reflection of positive and negative experiences in their learning so far as

adult students. However, to achieve the objectives of this research, a questionnaire alone was considered inadequate to get a deeper understanding of the adult learners' 'unseen motivation and behaviour', and borrowing the words from Gibson (2006) which is the '...key challenge for researchers involved in examining social action of any kind involves finding ways to make the invisible visible'(p. no page nos). Other instruments included in-depth interview using semi-structured open-ended questions [Appendix 6], informal discussions, observation of learners meeting and interaction at the three UPNGOC study centres [Appendix 7] and doing an analysis of policy documents and printed learning resources. The research is a five year project that began in 2006 and ending in 2010/2011.

While acknowledging the usefulness of the other instruments for data collection including my descriptive analysis of the learning resources as artefact, the in-depth interview and observation are considered as significant tools to understanding the deeper meanings of the social and cultural context of the participants (Mishler, 1991; Seidman, 2006). In the words of Johnson (2002, p. 106) '...in-depth interview seeks *deep* information and understanding...held by real life members or participants in some everyday activity, event or place [and] the interviewer seeks to achieve the same level of knowledge and understanding as the members or participants'. Deep understanding goes beyond common-sense explanations for and other understandings of a cultural form, activity, event, place, or artefact. In-depth interviewing is an irremediably commonsensical (or intersubjective) enterprise. Furthermore, deep understandings can reveal how our common-sense assumptions, practices and ways of talking partly constitute our interests and also how we understand them whilst allowing us to grasp and articulate the multiple views of, perspectives on, and meanings of some adult learning practices in distance education. An example of such learning practice of collaboration and interaction is the role of the spouse in the adult students' management of learning that I will show in my analysis.

6.3.2 Pilot Study

A pilot study was undertaken to test the semi-structured, in-depth interview technique using open ended questions around the theme of 'collaboration and interaction' in distance learning practice. A participant for this pilot study was a UK citizen with distance learning experiences enrolled in a UK university. The technique of observation was also piloted in a one-hour 'snapshot' of participants and support staff activities at the Kusambuk study centre to get a practice of note-taking in that one-hour snapshot. The notes from this observation, it was hoped, reflected a microcosm of the diversity of the socio-cultural context in which the learners are situated in this research and the ways in which they collaborate and interact with the institution, staff and peers.

Data from this pilot study was analysed using a qualitative process of coding and thematic analysis as a trial for my detailed data analysis later in addition to my experience of interview and observation.

6.3.3 Semi-structured Interview

Complementing the semi-structured in-depth interview technique discussed above, I also observed distance learners in their 'natural socio-cultural setting' being defined as the Open College study centre, their work place and family home environment. The use of in-depth interview, document analysis and visitations and observation as a multiple-method of data collection has a main advantage. Robson (1993, p. 290) states that this 'is commonly cited as permitting *triangulation*' although my preference is trustworthiness of data instead of triangulation. From another perspective the use of multiple techniques facilitates for Glaser and Strauss' (1967) *constant comparative method* of data analysis when working in a team of researchers, it nevertheless suits my purposes for interpreting and understanding learning practices of adult students through various techniques over a period of time as has been in my project. Observing the student collaboration and interactions and other social behaviour at the UPNG-OC study centres allowed me 'to experience activities [of the participants] directly, to get the feel of what events are like, and to record [my] own perceptions' (Spradley, 1980, p. 51) about what is going on. Spradley (ibid, p. 51) further notes that 'the ethnographer can hardly ever become a complete participant in a social situation...' but by using a number of techniques I can reduce the proximity to the truth of what is going on in this social world of the adult distance learner.

The semi-structured interview with all the participants; students, lecturers and instructional designers took about one hour. After introduction and securing consent the questions as shown in Appendix 6 were put to the interviewee. Questions that needed further clarification was explained and responses that needed further probing and follow-up questions and prompting if needed to was the way in which almost all the interviews were conducted with each different category of participants. Notes were kept for record of a record of date, time and venue and the transcription of the interviews was done at the IOE upon return from the fieldwork.

In this section I discussed about the questionnaire, semi-structured interview and observation as techniques used in soliciting data. The techniques used and the participants involved are summarised in Appendix 9. From the propositions, relationships and contradictions that emerged

from the initial analysis and discussion, further interrogation through interview and questionnaire was undertaken.

6.3.4 Observation and Artefact Description

One key method for data collection in this research is through passive and active observation. The passive observation was done at all the three study centres. In the lahara session, I participated and observed distance learners actions of collaboration. I listened to what they said before, during and after the teaching sessions. During the tutorial session observations, I was aware of the observer effect, that is whether my presence in a different role as researcher made some of the participants behaved differently, especially given my role as a staff of the UPNGOC.

The other technique and source of data was from the UPNGOC produced distance learning resources as artefact. These sets of learning materials contain the instructions and body of knowledge for students to engage and interact with. I am interested in how students interact with the distance learning resources in their patterns of study. My use of the term artefact encompasses official university documents including the distance learning resources and students' academic records.

6.4 Participants and Issues of Ethics

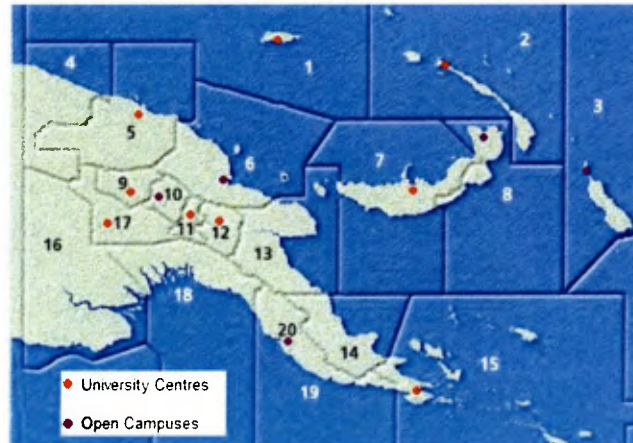
6.4.1 Research Sites and Participant Recruitment

My initial group of participants were fourteen students in three UPNGOC study centres recruited through voluntary participation. Although open invitation was sent to six study centres, students volunteered from only three.

I sent out 30 invitation letters in July 2006 to six UPNGOC study centres inviting students to join my *Wantok Study Group* [see Appendix 1]. The selection of study centres was not indiscriminate as I wanted representative participants from the four main regions of PNG, aside from Port Moresby which is cosmopolitan and has a country-wide representation of the population. Twelve students from three study centres volunteered and later in the course of engaging with these participants three more were selected purposively to get more female representation. This brought the number of female participants up to three in a total of fifteen. As my research matured and exposure to literature on discourses of pedagogy lecturers, tutor/mentors and instructional designers were recruited to give a more nuanced and holistic story of distance education pedagogic practices in the PNG context.

In addition to students, I also interviewed four lecturers, two tutor/mentors, four instructional designers and observed the centre director and staff of the three study centres of Kusambuk, Kinienen and Huahama. The UPNG-OC has five open campuses and sixteen provincial university centres as shown in the map below. In addition to these, there are five privately operated franchise study centres and the Honiara open campus in the Solomon Islands.

Figure 6: UPNG-OC Study Centres



As an ‘insider’ researcher there was concern about the perception of my researcher role and trustworthiness of the data as pointed out as a criticism of the participant observation approach. For the students it was an issue about the social positioning of me being perceived as *the* researcher from the University of London and the students as simply being the ‘researched subjects’.

The other two groups of participants are the lecturers and tutor/mentors and instructional designers. At first two lecturers out of a total of four in the strand in which the students were enrolled were invited to be participants. For the depth and breadth of data two more lecturers from another strand were recruited and interviewed in 2010. In addition to the lecturers, through an opportunistic approach two tutor/mentors in Kinienen and Kusambuk study centres were interviewed. Out of a total of five instructional designers at the UPNG-OC four were interviewed. All participants, their study centre or location and their role function is summarised in Table 3.

Table 3 List of Participants

Participant	Pseudonym	Study Centre/Location	Role-Function
Students	Andy	Kusambuk	Forester
	Asena	Kusambuk	Accountant
	Edith	Kusambuk	Teacher
	Biem	Kusambuk	Forester
	Nick	Kiniemen	LLG Manager
	Reisi	Kiniemen	School Leaver/unemployed
	Emel	Kiniemen	Clergy
	Kastem	Kiniemen	Customs Manager
	Waranduo	Kiniemen	Rural Development Officer
	Philip	Huahama	Self-employed Businessman
	Ilaks	Huahama	Police Officer
	Jokon	Huahama	Rural Development Officer
	Kent	Huahama	Hospital Manager
	Warra	Huahama	Communication Engineer
Lulu	Kusambuk	Clerical Assistant	
Lecturers and Tutor/Mentors	Duonava	Main Campus	Lecturer
	King	Main Campus	Lecturer
	Kuma	Main Campus	Lecturer
	Paul	Main Campus	Lecturer
	Flo	Kiniemen	Tutor/Mentor
	Pomnats	Kusambuk	Tutor/Mentor
Instructional Designers	Jenny	UPNG-OC	Instructional Designer
	Nicole	UPNG-OC	Instructional Designer
	Eva	UPNG-OC	Instructional Designer
	Moses	UPNG-OC	Instructional Designer

An important part of the context for this research is the role of social researchers in the region, particularly from anthropology. Much of social anthropological research, particularly its earlier variants by those such as Malinowski and Mead has come in for strong ethical criticism. The legacy of the colonialist tendency in such research, which treated the cultures and cultural practices being investigated as implicitly ‘inferior’ or ‘backward’, is an important and unfortunate context for my project and my hesitance to use the term ethnography that might be inferred to have classical anthropological connotations. Clearly, this research is aiming to avoid the traps of such research and to create a more sensitive and nuanced research approach that avoids the ironisation of meaning-making practices of the people who will participate in it. My approach uses ethnographic techniques for data collection, which might be labelled by some as quasi-ethnography (Goetz and LeCompte, 1984) but I must be explicit and reiterate that my research is not ethnography or even educational ethnography.

6.4.2 Ethical Responsibility

Considering the cultural and social context in which the research is taking place, confidentiality and ethical issues of prudent, non-invasive research was important. Regarding this, every effort was made to assimilate and conduct field research with respect, compassion and empathy while

attempting to establish relationships that were beneficial for all involved, especially distance students who were not familiar with giving interviews or speaking with a recording device present and showed signs of nervousness.

When interviews were undertaken the participants were informed of the nature, aim and objectives of this research while also being asked to sign consent forms [Appendix 5]. If at any time the interviewee wished to stop the interview process or strike out portions of the interview, their requests were honoured. Ethical considerations were carefully considered prior to the research as per the ethical policy of the Institute of Education. Care was taken throughout the research to ensure participants were fully aware of their rights and understood what the research entitled.

Confidentiality of the research participants was maintained through a number of ways. Firstly, in transcribing the interviews and sorting data electronically, no information on names or locations was included and pseudonyms were used. The codes for the student participants were kept in a locked filing cabinet in my office on campus to which only I have the key. Additionally, care was taken that no contextual clues that could be linked to the identity of the research participant were given. All the participants selected for the research were given new names.

Cultural issues, and expectations were handled with diligence and care. Females for instance were never interviewed alone; I made arrangements with a female staff colleague to be present during female interviews. Caution was taken that the interview process did not offend the participants or cause them any undue signs of distress. For some students in the study centres family members and work colleagues were present in the interview.

The tactful approach used in selecting participants for this research reflects the prevailing power differentials that may exist between the participants and me as the researcher (Mishler, 1991). Failure to account for this may work against my objective to pursue this research as one of collaboration to co-construct meaning. The alternative qualitative paradigm to the traditional method assumes that 'rapport established with the research participants through open and honest exchange is essential to indwelling and to achieving useful study outcomes' (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994, p. 71). More than that, as an indigenous Pacific Islander researching among my own people the 'meaning' made through such approach, I believe, should be co-owned by the researcher and researched. Related to this view is the moral and ethical issue of copyright. Is what I finally produce [the PhD thesis] exclusively mine and my research institution's or should

it reflect the collaborative aspect of the research project? With regard to copyright an indigenous Australian, Janke (1996, p. 14) asks;

Whilst there is a strong argument for interviewees and contributors to be joint owners of copyright of resulting work, what about the communal interests of the group who are the indigenous owners of a story? (Janke, 1996, p. 14)

Torres (cited by Heiss, 2000) noted that there is no secret that over the last two hundred years Indigenous Australians and Pacific Islanders have provided volumes of information for PhDs, research theses [notables include Mead and Malinowski], governmental reviews etc, but few have ever benefited personally in terms of financial or academic gain, saying;

This situation is in part due to the fact that many people who have provided specialised information to academics and others have not been seen as co-authors, writers or owners of the information or the copyright holders. (Heiss, 2000 in Torres p.25)]

While I am not an ‘outsider’, my status as an indigenous ‘insider’ to the educational institution I am researching presents a number of issues: the ways in which the research is presented to the researched and the ways in which I can ‘distance’ myself from my interpretations of the students’ cultures to be able to see and interpret ‘from the students’ point of view’ avoiding influences of personal bias as an institutional staff. Specific ethical issues that arise from this dilemma include informed consent, approaches to gaining access, participant anonymity, and confidentiality, which I believe has been adequately attended to.

6.2.2.1 Distancing Researcher and Researched

There is some tension within interpretivist research using participant observation technique between maintaining distance from those being researched in order to avoid the problems of ‘going native’ (Brewer, 2000) and the desire to understand ‘from the researchee’s point of view; researchers may need to maintain some distance from those being studied (Adelman, 1980), in order to maintain some objectivity, but it is equally important that the researcher become accepted into the community being studied, establish rapport with people and gain their trust. Adelman (1980, p. 169) and Wilson (1977, p. 254) both emphasis the need to establish rapport while at the same time avoid being identified with particular factions and groups. As a middle-level management staff undertaking this research at the UPNGOC, the warning by Adelman (1980, p. 173) is particularly appropriate. However, the participants have been informed that with this approach of my research, the objective is that, it may directly help the participants in their course of study and for the long term, the findings may help inform local pedagogic

practices of distance education in the PNG. I have emphasised my experiences as a distance learning student to build rapport with the participants in an attempt to minimize the otherwise potentially damaging perception of the 'researcher as other'.

The profiles of the learners are more than just the label of 'students' placed on them in the pedagogic discourse. Hammersley (2006) made an important point that with the changes in the use of ethnography as a method from its classic anthropological context to other social situations there is a tendency 'to treat people as if their behaviour in the situations we study is entirely a product of those situation, rather than who they are and what they do elsewhere' (Hammersley, 2006, p. 5). Their profiles within this specific situation of learning practices as adult distance education students presents a challenge to have observational data about the rest of their lives to provide further insight to the human participants being studied with them being labelled as 'student' or 'distance learner'. The label should not hinder me as the researcher to 'see' the participants in their other social roles such as Wolcott's (1973) strategy to see the 'man' in the school principal's office.

A number of authors in distance education literature (Evans, 1994a; Gunawardena and Boverie, 1993; Rowntree, 1992) mention that in a distance education setting, the characteristic of the students is complex. In this research, the participants would already have had some education and training with a formal educational qualification, are mature adults, in full time paid employment and have families and come from one of the at least 800 different indigenous language groups. For many, if not all, the English language used as the medium of instruction is not the mother tongue, but a third or even fourth language. Additionally, participants are also widely dispersed in a geographically diverse country.

6.4.3 Dissemination of Information to Participants

Communication with the student participants was undertaken at intervals after participant recruitment and receiving of the first questionnaire response and through data collection and analysis. Communication with lecturers and instructional designers was through email. A follow-up question was sent to all participants in relation to the level of dialogue and interaction with the lecturers. Some students kept in touch with me by email, others by phone, and the most remote and isolated member of our *Wantok Study Group* corresponded to me by a letter. All these interactions led up to my visitation for observation and interview at the end of 2007 and the years that followed to the present.

The Melanesian communalist concept of reciprocity was adhered to, after the completion of the data collection, I gave each participant a London souvenir pen for his or her time and contribution and that the thesis is a co-product through mutual collaboration and interaction. In the beginning of 2010 I send each of the student participants a postcard from London, updating them on the progress of “our” research project and stating that if there was a need I will contact them again. I plan to write an article to the local newspaper thanking the participants in the three study centres for their involvement and informing them of the results of the research findings in due course to formally exit from my empirical site.

6.4.4 Limitations and Constraints

The primary constraints to this research included time (due to unforeseen circumstances), availability and accessibility to some participants, initial suspiciousness, and anxiety of participants, and budgetary issues. The unforeseen circumstances dictated the way in which other constraints affected my research. Upon personal observations some participants, despite having the information sheets and consent forms explained, were still suspicious and anxious that some of the information will be used against them in the future, especially with regard to putting their study or job into jeopardy. This may have affected the flow of information especially in the interview with students as well as staff. I will expand on this in the next subsection on *Power Differentials* between the interviewer (me as the researcher) and the interviewees (my research participants).

When designing my research proposal I would have preferred to visit more adult distance students in their own study environment for data collection. This wish had to be dismissed due to geographical distribution of the students in terms of transportation costs, journey schedules, personal commitments, and reiterating what was stated by Waiko (1998, p. 8) the ‘tyranny of terrain’.

6.4.5 The Effect of Power Differentials in Interview

I have clearly stated in this chapter and elsewhere in my thesis that my position as an insider researcher has implications for trustworthiness or reliability of the data and in particular the interview data for this research. The concern with the value and reliability of interview data is closely linked to the notion of power in the interview situation as alluded to by a number of qualitative researchers including Mishler (1991) in the last decade and Johnson (2002) on in-depth interviewing and a guide by Seidman (2006) for interviewing in qualitative research in the last decade.

I as the interviewer am responsible for considering the dynamics of the situation with regard to my research topic and the technique and technology used to conduct the interview. The anxiety I mention here may have been related to the *Hawthorne Effect* (Jones, 1992) that point out as a limitation in my Conclusion Chapter. I was aware as Kvale (2009, p. 362) suggests, 'the interview is not usually a reciprocal interaction between two equal participants', no matter how much I told all participants that I am a researcher and to the student participants that I was a student like them. The power differentials will always be there and I acknowledge that a host of other influences may have influenced the exchanges between the participants and me.

This was a concern and I acknowledge this as a limitation to the validity of the interview data. I am reminded by Cohen et.al (2007) that,

The notion of power is significant in the interview situation, for the interview is not simply a data collection situation but a social and frequently a political situation. Literally the word 'inter-view' is a view between people, mutually, not the interviewer extracting data, one-way, from the interviewee. Power can reside with interviewer and interviewee alike. (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, p. 151).

The power that resides in me as the researcher is that I am not only doctoral student researcher from the IOE, University of London but I am also a senior management staff of the UPNG and the Open College. It is clear to notice the power differentials and I think of the *Hawthorne Effect* like Jones (1992) not only between me as the lecturer in my knowledge-authority position and students but also the lecturers in the School. As a management staff I am involved in performance appraisals that determine promotions and contract renewals. Similarly, the instructional designers are my subordinate staff and the responses to questions each of the categories of participants gave me as individuals in the interview may have been influenced by this power positions. This is a limitation and I acknowledge that the interview is a shared, negotiated and dynamic social moment and can bring to question the trustworthiness or reliability of my interview data.

6.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed the methodological aspects of my research and putting forward that the project is framed around the theme of collaboration through the research approach of participant observation. The socio-cultural context of the student participants at the UPNG-OC was discussed followed by a rationale for the research approach through and the use of *Wantok Study Group* as a device to collect data using qualitative research techniques. I also explained

that this *Wantok Study Group* device might also be seen as an intervention strategy more than just for data collection. It was also a device of bridging the *distance* between the researchee and the researcher.

In this research-design defined as hermeneutics or interpretivist using participant observation approach, the data collection techniques are informed by an ethnographic research tradition. My research is not ethnography or even educational ethnography but might be loosely labelled as *quasi-educational-ethnography* with modification to Goetz and LeCompte's (1984, p. 18) *quazi-ethnography* and Walford's (2008) framing of *educational ethnography*. Thus, a variety of qualitative techniques were used to collect data from two perspectives. These were the students and the institution with an emphasis on semi-structured in-depth interview, observation and artefact description. The research was planned in three phases with certain activities overlapping over a five-year period (2006-2010/2011).

7 Chapter Seven

Organising Qualitative Data

*I as the researcher am left wondering which of the witnesses is telling the truth
and whether a single "truth" really exists (Robson, 1993)*

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents my approach to the analysis of this qualitative data. Miles and Huberman (1994) state that there is no fixed method of analysing qualitative data but the treatment applied must stand up to scrutiny. In types of qualitative analysis Miles and Huberman put forward that there are four basic groupings;

- the characteristics of the language
- the discovery of regularities
- the comprehension of the meaning of text or action; and
- reflection

The process of qualitative data analysis takes many forms, but in the words of Maykut and Morehouse (1994, p. 121), 'it is fundamentally a nonmathematical analytical procedure that involves examining the meaning of peoples words and actions. Qualitative research findings are inductively derived from this data' through a heuristic approach as put forward by Seidel (1998). This approach is when researchers use unreconstructed logic to get at what is really real - the quality, meaning, context, or image of reality in what people actually do, not what they say they do (as on questionnaires) relates to the concept of *Espoused Theory/Theory in use* (Argyris and Schön, 1974). Let me explain this in another way. I have a case of 'data-overload' and want to make sense of this data by going from codes to themes and then down to a few categories and in my treatment of data I have three categories. Through this I am informed by Baist (2003) that a category, however, cannot be created in isolation from the other categories I want to use in the analysis. According to Basit (2003, p. 144), 'When we devise a category, we are making decisions about how to organise the data in ways which are useful for the analysis, and we have to take some account of how this category will 'fit' into this wider analytic context... Codes are links between locations in the data and sets of concepts or ideas, and they are in that sense heuristic devices, which enable the researcher to go beyond the data' (see also Coffey and Atkinson, 1996).

My analysis of findings is guided by Bourdieu's (1977; 1986; 1990) theory of practice and Bernstein's (1996; 2000; 2004) theory of pedagogic discourse. In Bourdieu's terms I use capital

as the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition' – or in other words, to members in a group – which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively-owned capital. In the distance education context, this is the interdependence of individuals in a Melanesian *Wantok* system collaborating to interact in distance education pedagogy. From Bourdieu, my analysis is guided by the pedagogic structures of curriculum that I label as *pedagogic design*, pedagogy as *transfer of knowledge* and *learning practices* and administrative functions that encompass *evaluation/assessment*, which is the control mechanism in a pedagogic relation.

When events in distance education pedagogy are retold from different points of view, I as the researcher am left wondering which of the witnesses is telling the truth and whether a single “truth” really exists (Robson, 1993). I take a stance that truths are situated, according to the worldview of the individual social actor from their respective sociocultural reality. These same questions about truth or trustworthiness might be asked about contested events in social research. When multiple sources relate different and sometimes conflicting accounts of an episode, how do we decide who is “right”? Is it possible that they all are right?

These questions may appear fundamentally incompatible, for they imply different perspectives about the meaning of truth and objective reality. These two perspectives, and the forms of analysis they imply, have traditionally divided social scientists in several fields. The *positivist* approach maintains that a true explanation or cause of an event or social pattern can be found and tested by scientific standards of verification. The *interpretivist* approach does not seek an objective truth so much as to unravel patterns of subjective understanding. The latter assumes that all versions of the truth are shaped by the viewers' perceptions and understanding of their world. In the case of a contested event with many different versions, my job as the analyst is to uncover what these versions reveal about the people who tell them, their positions in the social structure of their communities, and their cultural influence and understandings.

To interpret and understand what is going on in the social world of the adult distance learner in PNG, the following approaches for analysis will be used. These are thematic analysis of narratives through coded data by themes and categorisation of the emerging themes into main categories. I first discuss heuristic approach to analysis.

7.2 Heuristic Approach to Coding and Categorization

Thematic analysis will not provide absolute answers to a specific problem, but enable me to understand the conditions behind the specific problem and make me realise that the essence of that problem, and its resolution, lie in its assumptions; the very assumptions that enable the existence of that problem (Silverman, 2005). By enabling me to make these assumptions explicit, thematic analysis aims at allowing me to view the problem from a higher stance and to gain a comprehensive view of the problem and the participants in relation to that problem. Themes and their relationships are meant to provide a higher awareness of the ‘unseen’ or hidden motivations of the distance learning practices to enable me to interpret the problem I am investigating. By observing and recording the observed pedagogic practices, how do I code, categorise and make meaning of the un-observed motivations and intentions of the learner, the lecturer and the instructional designer? Put it another way, the observed and recorded pedagogic practices as a form of social activity among the stakeholders will be coded and conceptual categories devised to give meaning to the unobservable social interactions and relationships in the pedagogic discourses of distance education in relation to the participant’s sociocultural context.

Firstly, Seidel (1998) puts forward the idea that code words in qualitative data analysis (QDA) are primarily heuristic tools. He is not talking about code words, per se. Code words are not inherently objectivist or heuristic. Rather, these are terms that describe how we think about, and make use of, code words in QDA (see Richards, 2005).

Secondly, he is not talking about an either/or distinction. In any given research project some code words might be more objective and others more heuristic. Further, some code words might be used for both purposes, depending on researchers’ analytic style and purpose; they might gravitate toward one or the other.

The tradition in QDA is primarily to treat code words as heuristic tools rather than objective representations of facts. A tendency to treat code words objectively is, at best, problematic and I opt to describe my analysis as a description using rich and thick narratives from the participants and linking that to theoretical ideas as defined by Gibson and Brown (2009, pp. 127-144) in the identification of codes and themes and linking this to hypothesis.

7.3 Pedagogic Orientation and Narrative Description

Through *narratives* the participants in my empirical context will be given an ‘active voice’ through the *thick descriptions* of units of narrative data (Elliot, 2005; Geertz, 1973b) to create a

dialogue between the empirical and my theoretical propositions. I present this using the model in *Figure 7* below with the learner as a *wanpis* [individual] being at the centre of focus and *wantoks* [others] that may influence ones' learning practice. These practices I argue are centred round a way of life/culture or *pasin* where the participants are situated. My interest are the social activities occurring in the overlapping areas. The objective in the analysis is to interpret the relationships of collaboration and interaction as a social activity in distance teaching/learning practices – *what is going on, how is it going on, who is involved and why are the collaborations going on in these overlapping areas?*

The participant observation approach I used to gather data about adult distance students learning practices relies on case stories gathered and analysed through heuristic approaches (Pole, 2003; Polya, 1985; Seidel, 1998). In this way as I have already stated in my methodology, the story on distance education pedagogic practices being constructed is a collaborative and a collective story, *which is our story* [wantok] not only me as the researcher/dominant other [wanpis] and the participants as powerless/voiceless object. I use a heuristic approach to qualitative data analysis and this in many ways is related to educational ethnography. The argument put forward by Pole (2003) is that ethnography is a distinctive approach for educational research and he argues that the last decade has seen ethnography come of age, not only as a way of doing research, but also as a way of theorising and making sense of the world. By noting this argument in my data analysis I am also conscious of my role as an 'insider' researcher, in relation to the notions of emic and etic perspectives (see also Denzin and Lincoln, 2003a) in ethnographic research. Emic perspective is the ethnographic research approach to the way the members of the given culture perceive their world. The emic perspective is usually the main focus of ethnography and in my research the focus cultural group is the adult distance students at the UPNGOC and their practices of learning through collaboration and interaction. The other perspective that I avoid positioning myself in is the etic perspective. Etic is the ethnographic research approach to the way non-members (outsiders) perceive and interpret behaviours and phenomena associated with a given culture.

The data was collected through observations at three UPNG-OC study centres, observation and personal discussion with members in the *Wantok Study Group*, and in-depth semi-structured interviews with individual distance students, lecturers and instructional designers. The research approach allows students to tell their own stories in a reasonable and recursive way, a method used by Richmond (2002) in his study of literacy in adult education, Evans (1994a) in his many narrative style of analysis of adult distance students, and Guy (1994) with teachers studying

through distance mode at the then Institute of Distance and Continuing Education (forerunner to the present Open College). In Figure 7 I show the intersections of the different stakeholders with the student being the centre of focus.

Figure 7: Collaboration and Interaction in Adult Distance Learning

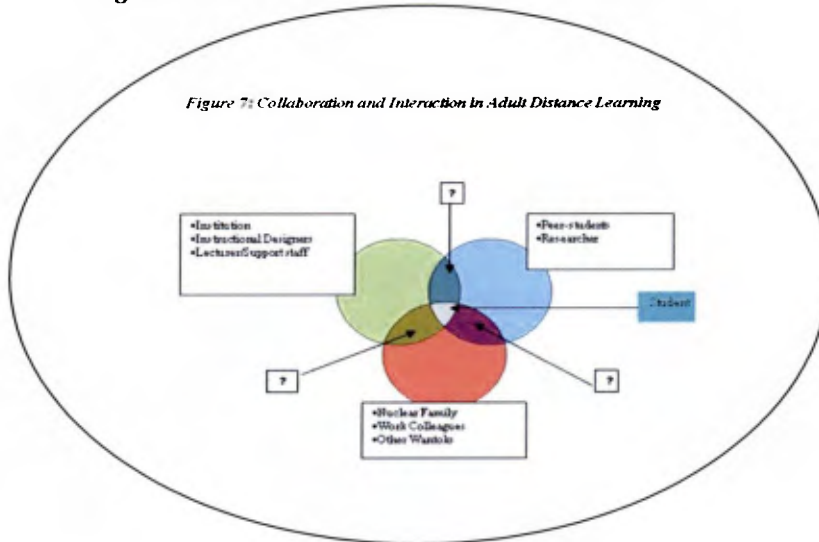


Figure 7 represents the three circles inside a bigger circle depicting the student/learner within the local (represented by smaller circles) and the bigger circle representing the wider society and all the potential influences.

The meanings will be constructed about the relationships and contradictions in the overlapping areas, indicated with question marks through coding and categorization of emerging themes through the method of constant comparison (Glaser, 1965). In the initial stages of collecting data, I attempted to code and analyse the data with the intention of generating grounded theoretical models and concepts (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Hammersley and Atkinson., 1995) to contribute to the debate on the adult learning practices with my interpretation and understanding from the empirical context I have worked in. By stating this, it is not the intention of my research and analysis to prove relationships, as I believe this to be inappropriate in regard to the empirical context I am researching in. However, using participant narratives through a detailed analysis of the data interwoven into a distance teaching and learning story in PNG, I intend to highlight the most significant issues and patterns in the social relationships that seem to affect and impact upon distance student's ways of knowing from the tensions, contradiction and relationship in the pedagogic transactions.

The issue of making generalizations has no bearing on my approach of data analysis as other researchers can relate my analysis to their own unique and subjective circumstances. The simultaneous and combined use of thematic and narrative analysis in adult and distance education allows for the participants' 'voice to be heard' or to understand what 'it is really like' to be engaged in distance education from the students' 'window' (Altrichter, Evans and Morgan, 1991, p. 9) highlighting the richness, depth and diversity of the data being interrogated (Richer and Spencer, 1994). To understand what is going on in this social arena I introduce the twin concepts of *ososom* and *osisim* that I use to describe the pedagogic orientation of the distance students at the UPNGOC.

7.4 Ososom and Osisim: The Orientation of Distance Students

The question in mind with this examination is whether the learning practices labelled as *invisible*, in the pedagogic recontextualisation field is in deviance to the official policies and norms of the institution and the official recontextualisation field in relation to the social and cultural attributes of the stakeholders. Further, do these policies and norms set by UPNGOC for the delivery of learning belong to the age of modernism²⁵, now considered dead or to the age of post-modernism²⁶ in which our lives are now shaped. In other words by looking at what emerges from the data being analysed I am asking whether the *invisible* practices of collaboration and interaction in learning by adult students are enrolled into the project of another or whether they enrol themselves into their own project. Where in these pedagogic practices does authority and control ultimately reside in the pedagogic relations between the institution and the student? I use a *triple-bubble* imaginary figure to frame and explore this pedagogic arena.

*Ososom*²⁷ and *osisim*²⁸ are placed as the third bubble in the *triple-bubble* structure of the number of sites in the 'distance education market place' in the Figure 8. It is the epiphenomenon within the wider distance education pedagogic context. *Ososom* and *osisim* describes the distance students' disposition of the social and cultural orientation between the principles of distance teaching and learning prescribed by the institution in contrast to the actual teaching and learning practices undertaken by the stakeholders. In Chapter 5 I made reference to the theoretical constructs of *official recontextualisation field* and *pedagogic recontextualisation field* in Bernstein's (2000) work to explain this. The separation between the lecturer-student and student-students, is the experience of "*out-of-site* and *out-of-sight* and hence, *out of mind*". *Ososom* is

²⁵ Cultural changes in the 19th and 20th centuries mostly in Western societies

²⁶ The effect of globalization and a new civil society, civil order hence a 'new' citizen.

²⁷ Out-of-site-out-of-sight-out-of-mind

²⁸ On-site-in-sight-in-mind

not only the simple description of the geographical separation but, in a pedagogic sense, theoretically defines the social and cultural ‘space’ or social and cultural separation between the institution with its lecturer and the student. *Ososom* is the objectification of weak framing (Bernstein, 2000) and raises a number of issues relating to teaching and learning, evaluation and the absence or presence of a pedagogic relation in distance teaching and learning. The institutions’ prescribed principles of teaching and learning it is assumed do not always conform to the actual practices deployed by the student nor the lecturer. This can also be labelled as *invisible* pedagogy and use of *invisible* social and cultural capital in pedagogic transactions. The temporal distance is that social and cultural space between the institution, lecturer and the students.

The *triple-bubble* framework is more complex as a framework for analysing what goes on in the students’ world. In Bourdieu’s language each individual occupies a social space that is multidimensional and the distance student is defined by the social and cultural capital expressed through social relations. In Bourdieu and Wacquant’s (1992) elaboration of multidimensionality;

...we push aside mundane representations to construct the objective structures (spaces of positions), the distribution of socially efficient resources that define the external constraints bearing on interactions and representations. Second, we reintroduce the immediate, lived experience of agents in order to explicate the categories of perception and appreciation (dispositions) that structure their action from inside. (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 11)

The figure has a third inner bubble; this bubble is an orientation and a ‘sibling of twins’, *ososom* and *osisim*. The *ososom* and *osisim* ‘texts’ are defined as that space between institutional prescribed pedagogic principles and the actual pedagogic discourses, of what the actors actually do in their act of teaching and learning. It is put forward that through an understanding of the activities in *ososom* and *osisim* one would explicate the subjectivities of the adult distance students learning practices. To explicate and understand *how* and *why* distance students learn in the way they do I divide and present my analysis at two levels. The first is that of the institution and its claim to the position of *knowledge-authority* and how this knowledge is disseminated supposedly through a *top-down authoritative* approach. In the second level of analysis I examine and discuss what students actually do by drawing from the observed empirical data to relate to analytic theoretical concepts, or that, which is unobservable. I focus my analysis of the *what*, *how* and *why* it is going on in the dispositional orientation of the students.

My analysis is at two levels, the institution and then the student, framed in the structure-agency contestation. By interrogating the UPNG-OC’s learning resources as artefact, I am looking for

the embodiment of institutional-authority symbols in the learning resources, which construct a position in the pedagogic relationship. This also relates to the way in which the academic content is organised and transmitted to the acquirer. The structure and method of transmission of this pedagogic discourse seems to present a *top-down authoritative* approach as I will show in the analysis.

At the second level, the students' practices of learning are analysed. The institutional policies and prescribed principles of instruction through the authorial voice of the institution is contrasted against the students' actual activity of collaboration and interaction to acquire new knowledge. Through narratives, participants' voices are recruited into the discussion as thick descriptions of data to demonstrate the subjective approach of this research. Furthermore, it is to empower the participants in the research to be 'equal in position' to co-construct meaning. Let me explain the rationale for the organization of my analysis in this way.

The analysis and discussion of this research in my analysis chapter moves from a general introduction of my research area and the research design and methodological issues to a framework of analyzing qualitative data. My structure broadly follows the outline set out by Dowling and Brown (*Brown and Dowling, 1998; 2010*) in *Doing Research/Reading Research Re-Interrogating Education*. In also using this approach Whiteman (2007, p. 44) stated that Brown and Dowling present the process of research as involving a 'language of description' from a series of localizing and specializing moves in relation to the empirical and theoretical domains. This is the theorization of research activity they term as *constructive description* and through this approach research is understood to be coherent, systematic and a reflexive mode of interrogation. The approach helps to make explicit a particular way of engaging with and moving between referencing previous work in the same area and the empirical data collected throughout the research process.

In the field of distance education, while noting the above, I subscribe to the position of Evans (1995b) and Morgan (1991) who stress that social science researchers when attempting to find out about a social phenomenon in the distant student's world, intimate personal contact with participants would reveal realities of close approximation. I use the twin dispositional concepts of *ososom* and *osisim* in the distance education market place to thematically analyse the pedagogic practices. By simply using questionnaires and survey techniques only to collect data would do injustice to a deeper penetration and understanding of the students' world. It is intended that through the dispositional concepts of *ososom* and *osisim* the description will provide an intimate and subjective way to understanding the transactions taking place, as

prescribed by a dominant structure of the institution and the actual practices of the students. That is, to understand what the lecturers, instructional designers and students say they do in interviews and questionnaire responses and what they actually do in the production of learning resources and the students' actions of learning, and the reasons *why* they do it.

7.5 Coding and Thematising

The volume and sources of data collected required a systematic way of treatment for analysis. In the process, analysis for me meant bringing together all the sets of data collected, taking stock of what was on hand, review and examine the data and collect more data. I initially started with a questionnaire for student participant recruitment at the end of 2006 and conducted my most recent interviews with two lecturers in January 2010. In between this period of time, data was collected using a number of techniques. This information on data collected over the period of this research project was compiled at the end of 2009 and is summarized and updated in Table 4.

Table 4: Techniques and Data Sources

Technique and Source	Quantity	Treatment
Artefact Description	1 Printed Materials	Social Semiotics, constructive description, Analysis of learning instructions
Questionnaire	15 transcripts	Coding and Thematisation
Follow-up Questionnaire	2 transcripts	Coding and Thematisation
Journal/Diary	Personal record of distance study experience 9 months of diary entry	Coding and Thematisation
Observation Notes	8 transcripts	Coding and Thematisation
Interviews	12 transcripts	Coding and Thematisation

To help manage and code the data, I used NVivo (computer assisted qualitative data analysis software). I acknowledge that I obtained incomplete data from the student participants in my follow-up questionnaire as shown in the Table 4.

All transcripts were initially saved as Rich Text Format (RTF) and then moved into separate files in the Nvivo programme. Nvivo uses the term 'project' for these files. Altogether four groups of projects (one for each of the groups of the participants) were created. All transcripts were then read on the computer screen and coded. The steps involved in the coding process are provided below:

Step 1: This is called open coding (Strauss and Corbin, 1994) and produces numerous open codes. Single words, phrases and even lengthy discourses were highlighted when they showed some form of behaviour, thought, feeling, view, opinion or theme. Letters and mnemonics were

assigned for these words and phrases. Nvivo has a term known as free nodes for these codes. A set of codes that had some similarity were put together into a category. The functions in Nvivo programme can be later used to link these free nodes into what is called “trees”, which are the main groups into which these free codes (nodes) can be linked.

Step 2: After the free nodes were created, they were then linked to different trees depending on the similarities each of the codes had.

Formatting the data using NVivo was a procedure to merely allocate passages from the transcribed data to topics. The data I coded on NVivo came from the seventeen questionnaire responses, 12 interview transcripts and two sets of observation notes. The rest of the data informed my intimate understanding of the culture of studying by distance mode and a significant component of this included the volume of nine months of diary notes. This nine months and a lahara session I attended in 2007 was an immersion exercise into the student’s world of distance learning. One month (April 2006) of this set of diary notes is included in Appendix 11 to inform the audience of this thesis of my researcher experiences and reflections as an adult distance learner.

I relied on the guidance from Richards (2005) who stated that coding data usually involves little interpretation. According to her, “You are putting the data ‘where they belong’ a sort of data disposal” (Richards, 2005, p. 92). The challenge encountered in the coding process was about consistency with the descriptions given to the codes for the passages being referenced to avoid ambiguity. The clearer and explicit the descriptions were the better informed I was in the next exercise of data reduction and data retention when moving from Free Nodes to Tree Nodes using the NVivo software application.

The NVivo screenshot image in Figure 8 below shows what was initially more than thirty Free Nodes reduced down to a total of only thirteen.

Figure 8: Screen shot image of Codes in Tree Node. The thirteen most referenced codes

Name	Sources	References	Created On	Created By	Modified On	Modified By
Pedagogic Design	13	78	07/01/2010 17:01	S	24/03/2010 15:40	S
Learning	25	60	20/03/2010 13:34	S	24/03/2010 18:08	S
Culture	12	49	20/03/2010 13:39	S	24/03/2010 15:14	S
Teaching	12	47	20/03/2010 14:25	S	24/03/2010 13:41	S
Collaboration and interaction	20	46	20/03/2010 14:29	S	24/03/2010 15:17	S
Career Development	16	33	12/12/2009 17:31	S	24/03/2010 15:22	S
Additional media for learning res	10	28	07/01/2010 22:33	S	24/03/2010 15:23	S
Flexibility of Study	16	25	12/12/2009 17:49	S	24/03/2010 15:10	S
Social Benefit	11	22	12/12/2009 20:15	S	24/03/2010 13:47	S
Problems in learning	10	21	20/03/2010 15:18	S	24/03/2010 14:56	S
Administrative Organisation	13	17	12/12/2009 19:51	S	23/03/2010 10:58	S
Patterns of Study	6	11	07/01/2010 17:11	S	23/03/2010 10:50	S
Skill	6	9	20/03/2010 13:37	S	24/03/2010 14:50	S

The thirteen codes with the most number of references per source emerged from the data on distance education pedagogic practices. The same information from the screenshot is represented in the table below.

Table 5: Codes by the Most Number of References per Source

Codes	Number of References	Number of Sources
Pedagogic Design	78	13
Learning	68	25
Culture	49	12
Teaching	47	12
Collaboration and Interaction	46	20
Career Development	33	16
Additional media for learning resource	28	10
Flexibility of Study	25	16
Social Benefit	22	11
Problems in Learning	21	10
Administrative Organisation	17	13
Patterns of Study	11	6
Skill	9	6

These thirteen codes in *Table 5* from the Free Nodes are quantified in order of rank by the most number of references per source/s. I should qualify that this enquiry is qualitative and the use of a quantitative technique here complements the examination and organising of the coded data for the exercise of data treatment, retention and reduction. The description for each of these codes was done during the process of data coding. An elaborated description per code is included in Appendix 8.

7.6 Pedagogic Themes to Main and Sub-Categories

The description of coding and thematisation described above is deemed as a prerequisite for the next stage of categorization derived from the quantification of the codes by topic. The quantification exercise enhanced my examination of the coded data to identify possible patterns or trends as guided by Gibson and Brown (2009) and Richards (2005) to interpret and understand the discourses of distance education pedagogy.

This process of quantifying qualitative data seems at odd with the *modus operandi* for research framed in a qualitative approach and specific to the idea of grounded theory. A common misperception of grounded theory is that a theory emerges from the data. I do agree that a theory does emerge from the data but this need to be qualified in that a theory is only a human construct. Therefore, a sound theory that stands to the test of rigorous scrutiny reflects the intellect of the human mind that went into organizing, treating and presenting the data in a way to tell a coherent and convincing story. This is the position taken by Richards (2005, p. 68) citing Turner's words in that, "... we goad the data into speaking. It's all in the handling."

Richards (2005) goes on to qualify her stance against the thinking of "emerging theory" by stating that theory is a human construct, because a theory is not like an underground reservoir of oil waiting to emerge when you drill down to it. The researcher discovers theories, or threads in the data by good exploration and enquiry. By handling the data records sensitively, managing them carefully and exploring them skilfully, the researcher "emerges" ideas, categories, concepts, theories, hunches and ways of relating them. Out of such processes come bigger ideas, and by hard work, these loose threads can be woven into something more like a fabric, of good explanations and predictions.

This guidance from Richards (2005) on "how to" and "what it takes" to work with data led me to reflect on the literature that had been reviewed and the data being examined to devise three main pedagogic constructs in distance education followed by the main categories and sub-categories which are presented in the Table 6.

Table 6: List of Main Pedagogic Categories and Sub-Categories

Distance Education Pedagogic Practices	Themes and Sub-Themes	
Pedagogic design (Curriculum)	Institution Prescribed Pedagogic Design	Style Manual and Cognitive Load Theory
		Novice adherent and radical expert
	Problems with Pedagogic Format and Structure	Didactic one-way instruction
		Visual printed text hence reading intensive, one way instructivist
		Absence of other media (audio, video)
	Additional media for pedagogic transactions	New technology
Cultural sensitivity		
Learning practices at a distance (Pedagogies)	Culture	Cultural influences on learning
		Relevance to traditional ways
		Maintenance of sociocultural identity
	Collaboration and interaction	Student to student
		Student to lecturer
		Student to family
		Student to others in community
	Career Development	Facilitates Professional Role
		Aspiration for promotion
	Motivation for DE study	Breath of subject
		Want to know more
	Social Benefit	Apply knowledge to community
		Bring change to work organisation
		Country's need for educated population
	Flexibility of Study	Family cohesion
		Earn and learn
		Application of theory to practice
	Problems in learning	Late or lack of feedback
		Competition between work and study
	Patterns of study	Study after hours
		Use work environment as resource
	Skill	Reading skills
		Cooperation and group work
		English language writing skills
Transfer of Knowledge		Administrative organisation to facilitating

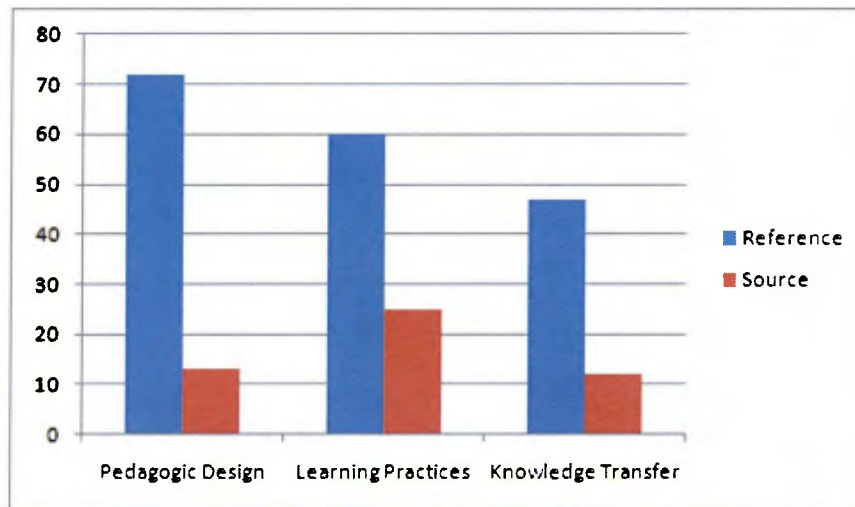
(Evaluation/Assessment)	Administrative organisation	interaction
		Teaching
	Instructing knowledge versus facilitating for construction of meaning	Group work and assignment
		Individual and exam
		Use of new media

The three categories of Pedagogic Design, Learning Practices and Transfer of Knowledge set out to tell a holistic story of pedagogic transactions in distance education at the UPNGOC. In this pedagogic site, there are on-going transactions by the stakeholders.

In the early stages of my research (2006/2007) and thinking ahead about codes and themes for analysis the initial ideas I had were too broad to narrow down my focus relating specifically to answering my main research questions. This is shown in the Code Book I developed in 2007 (see Appendix 8). As can be seen in Table 6, these were reduced to a manageable scope as shown in the second part of Appendix 8 with my development of codes and operational descriptions to guide and define the themes and sub-themes. For the purposes of reliability check these descriptions were given to my supervisor from what I was working on using NVivo. This process of working with qualitative data was not straight forward but required going back forth over the data, the coding system and the broader themes and categories that was emerging (Gibson and Brown, 2009).

My analysis and discussion in Chapters 8 and 9 will be structured under the three pedagogic categories that emerged through the coding and thematisation process using NVivo. The three main categories mentioned above are presented in the column graph below and ranked in order of the number of references per category.

Figure 9: The Main Pedagogic Categories by Reference and Source



The three main categories of *pedagogic design*, *learning practices* and *knowledge transfer* by reference and source presented in the column graph above responds to two of the four important structural features highlighted by Gibson and Brown (2009) for the presentation of qualitative research in a dissertation or thesis. These are first, the reasons for the analysis, which is to interpret and understand the teaching and learning practices for adult distance students from the different sources of data available and secondly, what the process was in the analysis of the data? The graph and the information it presents is the synthesis of the reasons and process of my analysis of teaching and transfer of knowledge actions of the institution and the management of learning by students.

For analysis and discussion of the distance education pedagogic discourses the main categories of pedagogic design, learning practices and knowledge transfer were further expanded down to sub-categories using the themes that emerged when coding data onto Free Nodes. The number of codes in the Free Nodes was too many with many overlaps and repetitions. Through the process of data reduction, thirteen codes capturing pedagogic practices were coded in Tree Nodes in NVivo. The table below presents these three main categories and themes showing the number of references and sources that emerged in the process.

Table 7: Main categories and themes by Total Number of References and Sources

Categories	Themes	References	Sources
Pedagogic Design (Curriculum)		72	13
	<i>Additional Media</i>	17	9
	<i>Problems with Pedagogic design/structure</i>	13	2
	<i>Technology</i>	12	7
Knowledge Transfer (Evaluation/Assessment)		47	12
	<i>Administrative Organisation</i>	17	9
	<i>Technology</i>	12	7
Learning Practices (Pedagogies)		60	25
	<i>Culture</i>	49	12
	<i>Collaboration and Interaction</i>	46	20
	<i>Career Development</i>	33	16
	<i>Flexibility of Study</i>	25	16
	<i>Problems in Learning</i>	21	10
	<i>Patterns of Study</i>	15	7
	<i>Skill</i>	9	6
	<i>Social Benefit</i>	6	5
	<i>Motivation</i>	3	2

The above table summarizes the data under three categories and their related sub-themes. This serves as the basis of my analysis and discussion of pedagogic practices at the UPNGOC as a micro site of the social arena in which the social is [re]produced through forms of capital at the social actors' disposition.

7.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed my framework of data analysis. I state that my analysis is heuristic given the pedagogic text of three main stakeholders and a number of factors including institutionalized pedagogic principles, culture and the dynamics of the social actors in the pedagogic transactions. Figure 8 was used to explain this. I then presented the process that was taken to treat and present the data as summarized in the number of tables and a screenshot image from NVivo ending with operational definitions of the codes and the pedagogic constructs with the three main categories, of Pedagogic Design, Knowledge Transfer and Learning Practices and their and sub-categories.

The significant contribution of this process of data organization in my thesis was that it enabled me to construct a coherent story about distance education pedagogy in my stated empirical setting. As Richardson (2000) put it, distance learning is an imprecise phrase with a range of meanings but through a systematic way of treating and organizing the wide range and volume of data using NVivo I was able to reduce my focus down to a key number of themes and three main categories.

In Chapters 8 and 9 I analyse my findings by pedagogic themes.

8 Chapter Eight

Analysis of Findings on Learning Practices

While current thinking places children at the centre of learning, a traditional Māori perspective seems to locate students and teachers in the same place. (Hemara, 2000, p. 8)

8.1 Introduction

In this Chapter I will explore and analyse learning practices from the position of the knowledge-acquirer. In my attempt to answer the main research questions and related sub-questions I draw data from questionnaire, interview and observation notes coming predominantly from the student participants to explore pedagogic issues relating to the category of learning practices.

What is of particular interest is the students' subjective social and cultural reality and how this intersects in the contest and negotiation for knowledge acquisition in the distance education pedagogic site. In particular the focus will be on the intersections and contestations between the students' local/indigenous values, forms of social organisation and sociocultural obligations in juxtaposition to the pedagogic requirements prescribed by the dominant educational institution which is the custodian of official knowledge. In this contest and negotiations for knowledge transactions adult distance students devise strategies to manage their learning. Hence, I start with adult distance students' patterns of study in the context of their respective sociocultural context. In the practices of collaboration and interaction there is the pedagogic issue of, knowledge-authority by the lecturers and alliance-formation by adult distance students in PNG to acquire the valued commodity of knowledge.

My main research question is: *What are the pedagogic practices involving adult distance education students using the medium of print-media in PNG?* The two of the sub-research questions, which were framed to explore adult distance students learning practices, are;

1. *With whom do distance students collaborate to interact with and why?*
2. *How do adult distance students organise their studies and manage their learning?*

As adult distance students their pedagogic orientation is that of *ososom*, a description of the students' learning orientation that takes place outside of a physical university site in their *invisible* world.

8.2 Patterns of Study

The first theme in the category of learning practices to be explored is *patterns of study*, in that adult students' way of learning is not homogenous using print-media. Use of print-media is dominant in distance education (Gujjar and Malik, 2007) specifically in developing countries like PNG.

The isolation and self-directed nature of learning in a distance mode environment is one of the pedagogic interests in my research. Students were asked about how they engage with the distance learning resources, consisting of three books. The findings from the interview and observation data reveal that not all students study in the same way, in a similar pattern of time and preference of place to study. Some students look at the course outline first to be guided by the course schedule, others go straight to the assessment section and many do not read all the suggested readings provided by the lecturer in the resource book.

I should mention that in the now abandoned trimester system the total suggested study hours was 30 hours per term in a 10-week term. This was when UPNG was using the trimester system of three, 10-week terms. This impacted negatively on the logistics of course material production and distribution to its network of study centres around the country. For the benefit of distance students UPNG made a decision to revert back to a two 15-week per semester system.

8.2.2 Engagement with Printed Learning Resources

Nick works as a local level government manager and is married with three children. He perceives all the three books in the pack of learning resources as equally important. Nick stated:

I look at the study guide line first and then the resource book. The resource book is also important, and I don't look at one as less important, so I look at both. [Interview, Nick 2008].

In addition to the set of distance learning resources, Nick utilises other sources of information in the public domain such as newspapers and radio to complement his distance learning resources. Lulu brings in another reason for the usefulness of the printed materials for a distance student who is also in fulltime employment.

The learning materials are quite good for someone that is a working person and who is a mother. It helps in a manner that the materials that have been compiled by the Open College, the University is very good, is very handy. Instead of us going down to the library to get all those information we normally use the resource book which is almost the same as a library, so it really helps.

Especially the materials are very handy. [Interview, Lulu 2009]

Kent is married with three children, a manager in the hospital and engages actively in his community. When asked how he manages his learning using the printed learning resources he told me, it was determination, discipline and management of time.

... the most useful book is the resource book. The resource book where you can go back and read more, read more back and then see the examples and all these things and you find a little bit more you can go deep into it. And then the other which... it compliments each other very well, but the resource book I think was a little bit more gives you a background of what you want to really get through. [Interview, Kent 2009].

Kent finds the resource book more useful. When the issue of the large volume of reading that some students have difficulty in covering was mentioned, Kent stated;

...the important thing is the very start of it, the very start of it, but to improve there's so many ways ... You just sweat yourself out, the hard way, but we have to now go to the smartest way ah, just read... [Interview, Kent 2009].

Undertaking studies through distance mode requires discipline to do the readings in the way Kent describes above. Kent studies at night and in his office, to go through the distance learning resources diligently, describing it as if the lecturer was talking to him.

The above is an example of students in all three study centres narrating that they engage with and use the print-based distance learning resources in various ways to acquire the knowledge from the provider institution. However, there are some who do not use the learning resources, and in particular the resource book containing the readings prescribed by the lecturer at the provider institution. Biem is one example. He seems driven by achieving assessment outcomes in the way he manages his learning with the use of the course materials.

The assignments when they are due. And then using that timeframe I work out my study schedule because you know I am working so I do my studies in the night. So if the assignments are due like at the end of weeks six or seven then you get sufficient time for me to organize myself. So I basically look at the assignments and then later on the topics. Topics that are relevant to the subject itself and then I focus my studies based on those. [Interview, Biem 2009]

For Biem, any other topics not related to assessment are considered of lesser importance for him to spend time. Biem continues:

But any other topics which are you know minor but part of the program I also look at the notes but I basically focus on the topics which are more relevant to the subject itself and then that's how I arrange my studies. I don't like to read

through all the documents ah, the important topics which I think can help me out in my studies that I only look at those areas. [Interview, Biem 2009]

The resource book is most daunting with a large volume of twenty articles covering each unit in the study guide. Lecturers mentioned about the absence of a reading culture among PNG students which implies the absence of other mediums of communication such as audio and video.

The interview data from Philip shows his appreciation of ways in which the distance learning instructions and knowledge content is structured.

I mean for myself the document itself, the three documents that I see, I don't see any problems. I think I understand them very well like I said only the resource book is too big to read but the whole set of materials, they are okay. It's only that if we meet some problems then where we contact lecturers, those are the problem areas. Sometimes when we call they are not there or when we come to make appointment they have other things so where it says if you have any problems, you know we are there to help you, you know that does not happen. (Interview, Philip 2009)

Philip goes on to elaborate:

...the study guide and the resource book are very useful, it gives a guide on how the programme is set out and it is set in a way that for a student who is working alone, I mean for me, I think it's quite good. It helps you to be able to work on particular units and then you can be able to complete a particular unit at a certain given time so you can submit your assignments and all that. I think it's quite good, in a way it's all pre-set. (Interview, Philip 2009)

While Philip accepts the pedagogic design of presenting the knowledge content in the learning resources, one other student want to verify and compare the knowledge being transmitted from other sources.

This is evidenced in Lulu's search for a second opinion of the knowledge being transmitted by the lecturer through the distance learning resources.

When I feel that I want to get a second opinion from another author, I use the library. I get sources from the library itself. [Interview, Lulu 2009]

Lulu's action of seeking a second opinion is culturally un-Melanesian. Lewis (1975) mentioned about a member of the Gnau community disputing the oratory of the tribal elder but because of the culturally inherent knowledge-authority positioning, the brother of the deceased cannot question or challenge the elder in public. Furthermore, Lulu's action contradicts Guy et al (1996) research finding that distance students in PNG do not question the authenticity of knowledge nor question the authority of its source.

Students value and use the printed learning materials in a range of ways but basically restricted to the set sent from the UPNGOC. The structure and content has to be clear to the learners and this will allow them to exert some control over how they learn. Smith and Smith (2006) also found that it is only sometimes that students went beyond the recommended text. Distance learners can feel extremely isolated and a feeling of control is a great boost to self-confidence. If this is not present Lulu displays a level of agency to confirm the knowledge from a second source to either accept or reject the transmitted knowledge from the UPNGOC.

8.2.3 When and where adult distance students study

Some students prefer to study exclusively at home while others study both at home and in their work office. Kent narrated about the challenges in the management of his learning.

...I had to study at the same time I had to go to elections. ...how can you campaign go then and then you know, how many kilometres from here all the way to go to the electorate. You know then a lot of cost involved, but I had to come back again, I had to sit down and in the night time after the election campaigns, at least I had to give an hour. That was how disciplined I was. And then I had come back and then do and submit my assignments on time, at the same time I had to do my exams as well. [Interview, Kent 2009].

Kent goes further to explain that;

... I mean it's the very hard way I had to sit down till day break almost five times a week. [Interview, Kent 2009].

As working adults, time is of essence in the management of their learning. Lulu stated that;

Normally, I do my studies after hours. That's when I finish work at 4 o'clock, I probably stay for an hour and a half in the office up until half 5 and then I get home and go to sleep. When I do sleep I normally get up at 10 pm and stay up until 1 or 2 in the morning when it's quiet. [Interview, Lulu 2009].

The narratives of Kent and Lulu above illuminate how adult distance students manage their learning and their patterns of study in regard to place and time of study. Spaces in both their work and home are used. In their motivation to learn and acquire new knowledge, the management of time seems important to adequately cover the learning resources according to the schedule set by the lecturer.

8.3 Flexibility of Study

My research findings reveals that almost all the fifteen students in this research thought studying by distance mode was convenient to them. I begin with some excerpts from the initial

questionnaire responses relating to their job/career and about the implications of social and financial cost. Also, the adult distance learners did not have to quit employment to attend fulltime on-campus studies. Beside this main reason, there were other related reasons such as earning a salary while studying, it was cost effective to earn-and-learn and they did not have to be separated from their families. But the pedagogical significance of study by distance mode is of interest in this section of my analysis. Why study by distance mode as opposed to on-campus face-to-face study and is there a pedagogical difference in studying by distance and what is this difference in regard to the knowledge transmission and acquisition process? A number of students did reflect on this pedagogical issue apart from just convenience of flexibility in studying by distance mode.

Warra stated:

Distance mode was the way to go as I could not leave my employment. Besides that it allowed me to study at my own pace adapting to availability of money and time [QR Warra, 2007].

Similarly Ilaks state his reasons:

I chose to study through the distance mode because the opportunity is right at the door step and saves a lot of associated costs. It also does not impact much on my work because I still attend to work commitments as well as family matters while studying [QR Ilaks, 2007].

According to Jokon, the positive aspect in learning about management is the flexibility of studying by distance mode and at the same time you earn while you learn.

The study by distance mode provided me flexibility; that is, it gave me the opportunity to take course units whenever time and money permitted, and I didn't have to leave my job and family. UPNG just met my need to obtain a quality degree without leaving home and altering schedules" [QR Jokon, 2007].

Warra, Ilaks and Jokon are all in employment. Philip in contrast is self-employed and run his own business on the periphery of the town which borders his tribal land. Financially, his business operations make it impossible for him to attend fulltime studies. Philip stated:

I chose to study by distance mode because I have work to do and I can't sit in a classroom all day. This arrangement is convenient for me [QR Philip, 2007].

Waranduo stated that:

Since I was employed in the Public Service, it was the best option for me to study through the distance mode, so that I can do my duties as required and do my

studies at the same time. I have now got used to it after studying for one year (2006) [QR, Waranduo 2007].

Emel further stated :

...I chose to study through distance mode because it is accessible for me; easy to reach, contact and cost saving. Especially, I mean in particular for Kinienen Open Campus – the study centre is accessible to me. [Observation and Discussion with Emel, March 2008]

The above responses from my data, critics might dismiss as obvious that one would expect from any adult, who is in employment and studying by distance mode. Such criticisms for dismissal is my interest in this section, the sociocultural labelling of “adult” and “employed” that raises pedagogical issues in the differentiation of adult learning to university students with no work experience – or andragogy versus pedagogy (Knowles, 1984a) that was examined in Chapter Four on adult students’ learning practices.

An examination of data excerpts from Kastem and Kent will further demonstrate the social position and the role function they perform in their respective work organisation inhibiting them from undertaking full time on-campus studies.

Kastem stated his reasons for studying the management program by distance mode.

I was selected by the Commission to attend the course and at the same time it was my personal desire to pursue studies. Secondly, my work commitment did not permit me to go into study on full time basis. Apart from those two primary reasons, I found it more flexible and very assisting as a working student. [QR and personal discussion Kastem, March 2008]

While some of the students above find it flexible with managing their studies, in that with distance education you can learn anytime and anywhere, Kastem is conscious of effective time management to balance between his studies and his other social commitments.

I have also learned to manage my time effectively in doing two different activities apart from other commitments such as family, church, and community social commitments. [QR and personal discussion Kastem, March 2008]

Biem’s decision to study by distance mode seems to have been determined by existing policy of his employer. He explains:

I decided to study through the distance mode because I am in full-time employment and my employer just won’t accept full time studies, but can support through external studies. And as such I am studying through the external mode [QR, Biem 2007].

Lulu explains:

... and the only reason for studying through the distance mode is because it is convenient for me as a single parent who is also the bread-winner for the family. [QR, Lulu 2007].

Kent articulates this issue of working and studying and to be with the family succinctly.

I think it is because of the time, they know that time is given ah then at the same time I tell them that I am studying through external mode and which is helping us and at the same time I need to achieve something and at the same time we need to, this way of studying is good because I am here with you and am responsible with the kids and not separated from you. The wife and the family we are together, the teaching and learning is happening at the same time and we can't be separated. At least I am still at work and living with them and studying so you support and I will go through this program and pass it. [Interview, Kent 2009]

The interview excerpt from Kent about studying by distance mode exemplifies my argument of the relationship between sociocultural reality and pedagogic practice. Kent has a multiple set of sociocultural identities as a husband, a father, aspiring politician and holds a managerial position at his workplace, and learning about management through the distance mode. Flexible mode of distance study is convenient to Kent with his multiple set of social identities including his connection to his traditional society.

The motivation that it is convenient to study by distance mode is also related to a pedagogical issue of knowledge construction and acquisition by applying theory to practice. In his questionnaire response Kent stated that apart from his other social obligations he found working and studying convenient to his learning because he can; “*Learn theory at the same time apply practically at the work place the skills learned.*” [QR Response, Kent 2009].

Kastem stated:

The work environment I had gave a lot of learning basis to my studies which was done at my own pace. Others find that they do not have the time to put into study as an extra commitment apart from the work commitment they already have. [Interview, Kastem 2008]

Similar to Kent, Kastem also finds his work organisation a useful resource for pedagogical reasons in the construction of meaning by applying theory to practice, which I will show further on.

This research finding supports the literature, in as much as the student participants in this research are adults and most have families. A social commitment such as family obligation and

cohesion that Kent mentions is critical in the way adult distance students organise and manage their learning. This supports one of the findings of Ashby (cited by Arafeh, 2004) and Woodley (2004) that distance learners are usually married or with children, living in isolated or in urban areas, and have jobs. However, one of their findings stated that most were women, and this conflicts with a male dominated country like PNG, where only a small number of women are beginning to take up distance education even though the flexibility attribute of distance education should be an advantage to enhance more female enrolment to remain home and study.

8.4 Problems of Learning

The research findings highlight a cultural factor, which is an impediment to the adult distance learners in PNG, based on the unique Wantok reciprocity system, mentioned in Chapter 1. Biem was unable to sit his final examinations, because he was obligated to play host to four Wantoks from his rural village who made an unannounced trip to visit him in the urban society. The interview excerpt below shows the dilemma that Biem is in. He either had to concentrate on his university studies or forgo this to attend to his traditional village-society obligation.

Biem stated:

That's right. I in-fact did not sit for the exam. Let me recall first. Ol i kam and yes, okay... they came in for a short period but it's the first time that they travelled into city to visit me. Those four short days that they were with me, you know I tried to balance whether I come to school or you know attend to them and I decided to attend to them. That is why I did not sit for one of my exams. [Interview, Biem 2009].

In Biem's management of learning we see traditional social obligations interfering into his studies. If Biem had not played well to his traditional custom obligated role as host to his Wantoks who had arrived without notice to visit him for the first time, he risked being ostracised and disconnected to his social identity in the traditional village society. Education capital seems to be of less value in comparison to the social capital when Biem relocates from his present sociocultural context to another. He must therefore maintain and build up his social capital while contesting to acquire the education capital through distance learning.

The above experience illustrates a conflicting aspect of the *Wantok system* where members of the extended family from the village coming without notice as a distraction to Biem's study schedule. There is no research on the impact of the unique PNG 'Wantok System' on adult distance learner's practices, and thus this research finding is filling a gap in the literature.

Here is Andy's experience with regard to the arrival of Wantoks as he tries to pursue his studies. Andy is from the ... Province and access to the urban city by his *Wantoks* and relatives is easy. His extended family and *Wantoks* turn up to his house in the city normally without notice because in a traditional communal village society, his house is theirs and theirs is his. The idea of giving notice and arriving seems to be foreign compared to local/indigenous social relations in traditional PNG/Melanesian societies. Andy defines this as the '*strong force of extended family*' in Melanesia. In his explanation he says, '*...you know in PNG we have the extended family, they are also, you cannot isolate, you know at this stage of time, maybe our children I think they might, but for us now that strong force of extended family is there*' [Interview, Andy 2009]

This is a difficult challenge for urban society based working professionals in PNG pursuing studies by distance mode. They cannot pretend and deny the connections to their tribal roots because members of the traditional village or clan will force it upon them to acknowledge and accept their dual identity. In Andy's experience the members of his village community '*..cannot even say I am coming but they are already there cooking and you can't get rid of them [laughs]*.' [Interview, Andy 2009]. Andy therefore has to balance between his work, university studies and wider sociocultural obligations.

The experiences of Biem and Andy further demonstrates the interference of the indigenous traditional ways intersecting in a "disruptive" way the distance learning practices when the student's social identities is transcending between two worlds. It is a tension for adult distance students' identity caught in between the urban and the village based rural/subsistence traditional societies. University education and salaried employment is the pull-factor to the urban society and a fear for loss of the students' social and cultural capital in indigenous traditions is the push-factor out from the urban society for students to maintain connections to their rural and communal village society while managing their distance learning.

The findings reveals that the adult distance students in this study highlighted flaws and expressed their dissatisfaction in the handling of their learning queries, and there is a call for policy change in the current administrative set up:

....to constant delays in answering student queries, return of marked papers and results is just frustrating and de-motivating...administration needs to address this problem. Many students have left. [QR Jokon, 2007]

Jokon highlights some factors that may impede not only his learning progression but the stressful situation that may lead to de-motivation and eventually dropping out of the distance mode

programme. These responses support Dzakiria and Christopher (2004) who found that adult distance learners are more likely to have problems about learning than traditional students and student support services should be improved. Despite the need for improvement Gupta and Gupta's (1999) study indicated that distance mode student support services have a low status on the whole. Tait (1996) stated that the student support services is probably the most difficult to manage in distance learning. Gupta and Gupta (1999) further found that the main drawback to the distance learning system in India is weak student support services. With all these concern Simpson (2000) argues that student's queries should be answered as and when required and information needed by the students should be supplied to them because adult students conceive learning differently. This relates to the six conceptions of learning identified by Marton and Saljo (1997) described as a nested hierarchy. The list has increasing the quantity of information as number one and changing as a person as the sixth.

Reisi stated;

....delay of course materials before and after semester starts. We start late but rush in order to keep up. Delay in course results which we need in order to calculate our points to apply to be a full time student on the main campus. [QR RK, 2007].

Waranduo further expressed that;

.....with the late arrival of test papers, I never sat for a test last year, but only sat for the exam. QR Waranduo, 2007].

The late arrival of course materials affected learning according to schedules set by the UPNG-OC. Kastem in a chorus-like way stated the same;

....late arrival of course materials...mostly we receive our materials in March and not February as usual. This has resulted in me rushing through the course materials to catch up with time... QR Kastem, 2007]

The findings of this research echoes richly in the distance learning literature. Singh's (1995) study have shown that complaints from distance students about non receipt of study materials on time as some of the students would receive the same a few days before the commencement of examinations. Sahoo (1993) reported that irregular dispatch of printed material created problems for students, and this is indicative of the PNG distance students' experience.

Another problem of learning relates to the issue of language comprehension. Lulu stated that:

.....with the printed material study book sometimes I always believe that English is our third language and some we will always get that all muddled up and we'll always refer back to the dictionary for the things we don't understand and it takes a lot of time and effort. [Interview, Lulu 2009]

This finding shows the uniqueness of this PNG distance learner, in PNG the English language has become the official medium of instruction in education, however, for the majority of students, English is their third or fourth language. Litteral (1993) reported that PNG has over 435 languages used for initial education which is a unique situation. This shows that the interpretation of the language of instruction can be a barrier to conceptual understanding and contextual reality. Leung (2008) reflected on Bishops finding in 1979 that in PNG learning difficulties in mathematics are commonly attributed to English language instruction. Thaman (2009) concurs that the current curriculum in most Pacific Island countries is culturally undemocratic since it fails to consider learner's cultural diversity, notably in the areas of language, teaching and learning.

Other problems encountered by students were not directly academic related. For Nick it was the impact of financial stress on his study.

Course fees were a major one. As a self-sponsored student it is very difficult to continue paying my fees. Some semesters and Lahara has to be skipped due to financial constraints. [Interview, Nick 2008]

My research observation notes of student financial situation impeding their learning:

Large group of students (over 50) came for lahara registration. One student approached me to defer her registration due to tuition fee problem, she did not have enough money. She was a teacher and told me that, 'I really want to do lahara but I do not have enough money.'

Comment: Family support, very strong sense of family/communal support/financial constraint. [Lahara registration Observation Note, UPNG-OC HQ, January 2008]

The accompaniment by the female student's husband, children plus another adult male relative further illustrates the heavy involvement that family members play in supporting their *wantoks'* distance learning in PNG. This seems to be a common practice of the utilisation of *invisible social capital* as a strategy to acquire the valuable commodity of official knowledge or education capital from the university but to acquire this education capital the student will need money.

This interview and observation data supports the findings of Dzakiria and Christopher (2004) who pointed to financial costs of study as one of the contributing factor which result in higher

dropout rate. Threlkeld and Brzoska (1994) identified the financial costs of study was a factor in reducing student's motivation to pursue with their chosen distance mode course.

8.5 Motivation

My research findings show that university qualification and the knowledge that comes with it is a key motivating reason for learning. We can see that one of the key motivating reasons students undertake university level study by distance mode is to acquire education capital embodied in the form of a university qualification. There seem to be two reasons for this - to achieve a qualification that would enable them to enter sectors of employment that would otherwise be closed to them (a desire for gaining social capital), or to achieve specific skills to help them to undertake particular roles in a given field in society.

Reisi's reasons for study by distance mode seems to be motivated by the fact that she felt 'left-out' from mainstream education or the popularized label of "school drop-out". Her peers made it to fulltime on-campus studies through the conventional mode at UPNG and she felt left out by the education system because of the selection process. She comments:

I completed my grade 12 education. I saw it was an opportunity since I was not accepted to be a full time student after grade 12 in 2005 due to admission numbers. I ...missed out. (she starts crying)[QR and personal discussion, Reisi March 2008]

The motivation for Reisi to study by distance model is that she felt excluded from the school system, and decided to continue via distance education. Some students had other motivations.

Biem stated:

To seek employment in another field or the private sector [Interview, Biem 2009].

According Nick, his motivation for study was to keep apprised with the changes in his work organisation. Nick stated:

Ever since the reform came to being which I was totally part of it, it took ENB Provincial Administration 10 years to restructure its public sector. I found it different due to the changes in the administration, economic, social, technology sectors that I have to adapt to. The changing environment has prompted me to study to meet the requirements under these changes. [Interview, Nick, 2008].

Biem further added:

...this is an opportunity that's given to us so you have to take it and ah whether you complete it now or it takes you how many years but you must complete it. Because like I said it will help you out in the end and any other job that you want to do. It is a commitment that they must make, the interest they have they must be able to attend classes, do all the assignments whatever, the commitment that they must show to achieve what they want. Otherwise there's no point coming here and then you giving up in the end, no. Why waste your resources and later on give up in the end? [Interview, Biem, 2009].

Like Nick above, Ilaks stated:

Finally, I wanted to keep pace with daily changes in management. [Interview, Ilaks 2009].

My research findings in the above show that there are social and economic values attached to distance study at university that will eventually lead to the acquisition of symbolic capital. This is in the form of a university degree for those students that are defined, and borrowing from Foucault's language, (Foucault, 1972; Foucault, 1980) to have been *normalised* to be admitted to a particular class or group of people. Their motivation to study would influence their action/s of learning as put forward by Beaty (2003) mostly among students in paid employment.

8.5.1 Career Development

My findings highlight the relationship between the students' work/career and the job/role functions they perform and their motivation to study. I will draw examples from a number of students in all three study centres to show this relationship. But there are also a few other students who are not in employment or doing a non-salaried job such as Emel and Reisi whose motivations for study do not seem to be directly related to career advancement, as one would expect for those students in a salaried job.

The findings reveals that PNG adult distance learners are motivated to embark on a distance learning programme predominantly for career enhancement, related work improvement performance, or because learners are living and working in 'inaccessible terrain' bear similarities to the findings of Cannon et al (2001).

Biem who is the oldest member of our *Wantok Study Group* from ... Province lives and work in an urban society. There were a number of reasons that motivated him to study for a degree.

The career in Forestry is a career that does not provide that opportunity for professional/trained foresters to engage in another profession. If you graduate with a Diploma or Degree in Forestry Science you will end your career or die as

a Forestry man in the bush or in a Forestry Office. It does not provide that link where when you are done with Forestry you can be able to use that same knowledge and qualifications to get employed in another profession. The only places you will end up is in the timber industry, or in some related field in the mining industries or as employees of NGO'S that are against forestry development. [QR, Biem 2007]

Apart from the possibility of a career change, Biem also thought that the specific knowledge in management would empower his capacity to make interventions in the policy area of his work organisation. It seems that Biem's motivation to study is futuristic in that he plans for a career change from forestry to another field. A career change when close to retirement age within the PNG public service is doubtful. Biem states that the immediate need is for the qualification and the new knowledge of management that comes with it to enhance job performance in the current organization he is working in if he is given an opportunity by way of promotion. *The qualification that I obtain from this study can be able to assist me in performing administrative and managerial responsibilities should I be given an opportunity, either with my current employment or another [QR, Biem 2007].*

Biem further stated the specific utilisation and application of management knowledge to his job in the policy area of his work organisation. His motive is to review existing policy in his work organization and implement some policy changes using the new knowledge he has acquired. With the management knowledge acquired, Biem intends to, "... carry out a review of the current Forest Policy and to see whether we are actually achieving the goals and objectives using the current Policy which is some seventeen years old and has never been reviewed" [QR Biem, 2007].

Warra at the Huahama study centre relates his reason for study to his work and advancement in career. He is employed as an engineer with the national telephone company. Warra states his motivation:

The reason why I decided to study was to improve myself in managerial aspects of my work. I realized that my educational level was a handicap and that highly qualified people were being employed into the organization I work for and to compete and to secure my job I had to improve my level of education or [stand the risk of being] be left behind. [QR Warra, 2007].

Similar to Biem, we also see here Warra's motivation for university study is career related. To be competitive with others and for job security, study at university and the qualification attained will ensure that Warra has that required capital to remain employed and reposition himself to move up the organisation's structure through promotion.

There is another student in Huahama who enrolled in conventional university studies in the past but withdrew. Ilaks, an ex-conventional university student now employed as a police officer narrated to me his educational history and about his motivations for taking up university studies now in adult life.

My highest qualification is grade 12 and between 1990 and 1991 I undertook accountancy and business studies at the university but did not complete my studies due to personal reasons [QR Ilaks, Huahama 2007].

While the above are all adult male students I shift attention to one of the female students in our *Wantok Study Group*. Lulu is one of the three female student participants in this research. She was recruited purposively because in my initial invitation only two females volunteered among the male dominated group.

Lulu had previously worked in the airline industry and resigned because she had reached the highest level that her educational qualification could qualify her to climb in the company strata. Prior to being employed as a clerical administrative assistant while simultaneously pursuing studies by distance mode, Lulu worked as a shop manageress in a fast food outlet. She told me that her previous job had long working hours and the pay was low.

She further states:

Because I completed grade 10 only and have done other short courses and training here and there I thought doing this management program would help if I wanted to find another job." [QR, Lulu January 2008].

Waranduo has been employed for over ten years. Waranduo holds a diploma in tropical agriculture. Waranduo completed secondary education in his home province and went to an agricultural college for training in rural development. Upon completion he took up his job as a rural development officer. He stated that;

I work as a Rural Development Officer doing agriculture and livestock extension work in the rural communities of ...As the Officer in Charge of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries extension I supervise four other officers in my area of responsibility. While going to the Certificate in Middle Management course I discovered the need to further my studies for the degree course to strengthen my competency in the work place (2006) [QR, Waranduo 2007].

In the above Waranduo states the reason for his enrolment in the management programme. He wants to gain competency in his area of work to undertake agriculture extension services. In my interview with him he also expressed the high value of a university qualification in what could

be interpreted as improving his social positioning and authority to perform his job as a rural development officer. In my field notes the following was recorded.

Waranduo is enthusiastic and determined to complete his studies through the distance mode. One phrase he uttered illustrates this drive and motivation, 'mipela ... no toktok long certificate na diploma, mipela toktok long degree na igo antap.' [We ... do not talk about Certificates and Diploma, we talk about degree and above]. [Field note from discussion at ..., March 2008].

Related to the motivation for study in general is the students perception of knowledge acquired and the corresponding accolades of the university qualification and its value as a sociocultural capital that students could utilize. This utilization can be for personal/family social mobility or/and to bring about socioeconomic change to the wider community.

From the research findings above for; Biem, Lulu, Warra, Ilaks, and Waranduo, it seems that for adult distance students in formal salaried employment the motivation for study in general relates to their desire for career development/advancement. The new knowledge they acquire would enhance their job-role functions, position them for job promotion and with it economic rewards of increased salary. The value of education and the motive for study seems to be for utilitarian reasons. In other words, education and the motivation to learn and acquire new knowledge is a means to an end, the end being to advance one's social positioning with the use of the new knowledge and educational qualification as a form of capital. The knowledge acquired and the symbol of qualification is not only about position and authority but a "key" to open doors. That is, you have it to be in it, and without this "key" you are out of the modern cash economy society. There is a correlation of this research finding to Evans' (2003) definition of adults in distance education as learning for a living. That is, you learn to live and for most of the participants in this research they earn and learn and reposition themselves for career advancement.

The research findings suggest a link between education and a university qualification as a form of capital that students can utilize to advance their social mobility and reposition themselves in society. This positioning is either in their specific work organisation or generally in society. Some need skills from the knowledge transmitted by the UPNG-OC for application in their work organisation while for others education is for social value and prestige that is attached to the university qualification.

8.6 Pedagogical Transactions is Culturally Situated

The research findings further reveal the powerful constraints of PNG cultural values on the distance students such as Kent using the printed learning resources. Kent likens the lecturer at the UPNG-OC to the tribal elder by stating that the tribal chief:

“...has the authority there. He told all those stories, genealogy everything is there so it's like this and that so they can't dispute on that because it's the tribal chief talking.” [Interview, Kent 2009].

Kent's comparison by way of analogy with the tribal chief to the lecturer mirrors the institutionalised authority of knowledge-authority position the lecturers have. From his lower position in the pedagogic relationship and as a student 'listening' to the lecturer 'speaking' to him, Kent asked, “*So how can they [knowledge-seeking students] dispute the chief [lecturer]?*” Comparing the hierarchies of knowledge-authority in his tribal society Kent asserts that:

..... everyone will just have to listen and accept it. Everything, land, river, mountains and everything the chief mentioned it so it belongs to the clan he mentioned. [Interview, Kent 2009].

The only dispute and challenge against this institutionalised knowledge of clan and tribal genealogy and land use rights can come from a chief of equal standing in the knowledge-authority position.

Only if the other chief gets up and challenge the orating chief, then it might require mediators for arbitration. [Interview, Kent 2009].

In the above interview excerpts we can see that from Kent's experience of interaction and engagement with the printed learning resources to acquire the valued commodity of university knowledge is a situation of student \neq lecturer because the lecturer claims institutionalised authority to be the legitimate transmitter of 'official knowledge'. Kent applies his traditional way of learning to the contemporary context by reading all the learning resources as if it were his initiated tribal chief was orating for all members of the community [young and old] to listen.

Philip emphasises the religious/cultural ideology and this process of acculturation compounded with the indigenous PNG cultural view of knowledge and its source may have clouded their conceptualisation of knowledge and the authenticity of its source in this pedagogic practice of storytelling. Philip expounds on this shifting perception and value of knowledge by stating that teaching and learning is a balancing act between the traditional and the contemporary pedagogies adopted from outside. As an example Philip states that;

We are still practising a lot of our traditional ways of doing this ah... like the Mokas and the pig killing and I mean frankly everything. It didn't change so much. But we in ... we still maintain our traditional ways We try and amalgamate everything and then like I said a little earlier, we try to make the best out of it by not throwing away one. We try and fit in and make the best out of what we do and we don't lose one. [Interview, Philip 2009]

While learner-content interaction is obvious for Philip, the salient intersection of hierarchies of knowledge-authority seems prevalent. This research finding on Philip's reflection's in balancing traditional culture and contemporary pedagogy site reveals this 'clash of cultures context' in which pedagogic transactions take place. But in a purely traditional practice of knowledge transmission Philip stated:

In the Highlands especially, knowledge is passed on like, women folk they pass on the knowledge to their daughters on how they should weave their bilum and everything else so women does the cooking, the planting, the gardening. Men in those times, they prefer the more sons than the girls the daughters so they would pass on their skills, fighting skills, how they prepare their bows and arrows, how they make their spears and you know how many pigs they would kill and you know they would pass on this to the sons. The son would acquire all that from the father and of course the girls from the mothers especially how people passed knowledge on from one generation to the next it just kept going. [Interview, Philip 2009]

Furthermore, Philip brings out an aspect of sociocultural reality in which pedagogic transactions are undertaken in his tribe.

But the people in our case like they were not physically stationed or based in one location, they were bit more like nomads if you like. They move from one location to the other because all this time they were fighting, there were all these tribal fights and they have tribal enemies all around and they would move from one location and then go and live in another location for one or two years and then they move one to another place. You know that's the kind of live they live and after doing all that they pass on whatever that their learned, they pass onto their sons so the sons acquired from the fathers and it just kept going. When the son grew up he automatically fitted into the society and doing what the fathers were doing.[Interview, Philip 2009]

Lulu manages her learning based on her cultural ways of doing things communally. Lulu stated that:

Like I said sometimes it is from mothers to daughters, but in most cases it is a community sort of involvement ah. They all gather together, they say or let's go together and do this, so we all get together to do things together, you know we mobilize together. [Interview, Lulu 2009]

For Lulu, the practice of learning 'is a community sort of involvement ah. They all gather together, they say or let's go together and do this, so we all get together to do things together, you know we mobilize together.' [Interview, Lulu 2009]. She elaborates furthermore on passing information, knowledge and skill on from one generation to the next which is by *imitation*. Here are her comments:

...what normally happens is if somebody has that skill, she just sits down and she says, this is how you do it and we have our own in front of us, whatever materials that is needed to make the particular item and so we actually sit down together and we all learn together, yah. So we normally do not have somebody that stands up and say okay, this is how you do it, this is how, no, they sit down together and we all work together. [Interview, Lulu 2009].

From Lulu's response, teaching and learning in her traditional village society is a communal activity where you *live-it-to-know-it* in the way she is managing her learning. Though she lives, work and study in an urban cash economy society, her connection to her traditional identity is through the way in which she manages her learning by applying the communal way of teaching and learning by involving the members of her village society. The members of her village society also benefit from the knowledge she is acquiring from the distance learning resources.

In order to make the pedagogic transactions meaningful, Kent links the process to his own indigenous pedagogy and Lulu relates to her village society ways of doing things. The finding of this study supports Lindstrom (1990) who states that the traditional cultural beliefs and social practices are still strong among PNG tribes and their pedagogic practices reflect their local forms of social structure.

I refer back to Chapter 2 where I made reference to observations made by anthropologist such as Malinowski (1922) to continue the argument that contemporary pedagogic practices are deeply embedded in indigenous sociocultural practices. Malinowski (1922) observed:

When a chief is present, no commoner dares to remain in a physically higher position; he has to bend his body or squat. Similarly, when the chief sits down, no one would dare to stand. The institution of definite chieftainship, to which are shown such extreme marks of deference, with a sort of rudimentary Court ceremonial, with insignia of rank and authority is so entirely foreign to the whole spirit of Melanesian tribal life, that at first sight it transports the Ethnographer into a different world. (Malinowski, 1922, p. 52)

One finding that clearly emerges from this analysis is the similarity of top-down authoritative pedagogic practices in both traditional contexts as evidenced in the literature and students' reference to their indigenous societies about knowledge and authority and the contemporary

pedagogic contexts evidencing structure and knowledge authority positions between lecturer at the dominant institution and the knowledge seeking students.

In more recent decades it was also observed that there are localised meanings from the interpretations of natural phenomena such as thunder and floods (Waldrip and Taylor, 1999) as I had amply demonstrated in Chapter 2 about the holistic view of indigenous pedagogy. The research findings gives new meaning to the learner to knowledge-content interaction, as PNG adult distance learners are interacting with the printed materials based on the passing down of traditional knowledge by 'academic' storytelling, hierarchy of knowledge-authority and communal oriented collaborative pedagogic practice. Learning is, living-it to know-it as demonstrated through Philip's reflection of his own tribal society and his current learning experience as a self-employed businessman learning by distance mode while pursuing other interests in life.

8.7 Social Benefit

Collaborative practices of learning involving adults in PNG have implications for wider social benefit. Harasim (1990) posits that collaborative learning theory is based on both social and intellectual interaction. Commenting on change by reflecting on the enrolment in distance education, Markowitz (1994a) highlighted that distance education pedagogy at UPNG is a social process, and thus education is easily linked to social goals. Collaborating to interact in the process of distance learning relies on participants sharing information, insights, personal experience and perspectives with the hope of gaining appreciation of others views and potentially creating new knowledge. There is a gap in the literature about the positive social benefit adult distance students' learning has on those in the wider community whom the distance students collaborate to interact with. My research findings shows that adult distance students' learning is of social benefit to those individuals and organisations that the student collaborate and interact with. Besides the immediate direct social benefit of adult distance learning, students also hold on to aspirations that their learning will have wider social benefit for society as a whole.

Lulu's learning and the knowledge being acquired is for the wider community benefit in the way she interacts with the women of her local community. That is, Lulu applies what she learns from the course with the women's group to construct her personal meaning about public policy management. The women's group simultaneously benefit from the ideas Lulu is contributing which she is acquiring from the course. As that 'pivotal-link' she is aware of the concern that a

lot of people in her village, especially the women are unaware and misinformed about changes within the PNG society. Lulu states:

It really help open up my understanding ah! There are a lot of things that is happening in the country that some of us are not aware of. And then after going through this course I have a lot to contribute to when I go back home [her village] to explain to the people back in the village that, there is a lot of things that our people need to really know and all these things have to come out from people like us who are educated and we know all these little things we can go back home and really help our people you know to progress. Because right now I believe a lot of our people are not aware of what is happening. [Interview, Lulu 2009]

Lulu undertakes this by tactfully utilizing traditional village society collaborative approaches of learning by doing things together in a communal and collective way as she balances her identity-location and dislocation because of the lack of knowledge and fluency in her mother-tongue. She continues:

Reflecting back to the indigenous ways, I mean once you get involved with community work or in a group that the whole village is participating, it becomes a lot easier because they recognize you as an educated person and because you have the ability to be involved with them, we can all sit around and you can be able to explain to them and like I said involving myself with the women's group here in ... is totally different from back at home. I'm also involved with our clan here that normally goes down to the village, I am one of the executives, so it helps in a lot of ways because they turn around and say, she's also studying at university, so it becomes a lot easier when I sit with them and try to explain to them, the problem that I have with them is speaking to them in language because I don't speak my mother-tongue not very good at it so I need to get someone to sit next to me to really explain. [Interview, Lulu 2009]

Lulu's learning of new knowledge about public policy management is for a wider social benefit.

Lulu further stated:

Yep, because at the moment I am working together with the women group around our area, that is a pilot program by Community Development in empowering women. So with this studies that I am doing I sit down and most of the time help them especially to come in areas regarding guidelines on policies so it really helps one way or the other especially to empower the women around the community who are not educated. [Interview, Lulu 2009].

Similarly Biem stated:

To use the knowledge to provide advice and leadership in my village and LLG area when I retire and go home. e.g. The village people need to be made aware of the functions of the three levels of Government, the National Government, the Provincial Government and the LLG, how development funds are channelled

and what types of development funds are expected to filter down to the LLG areas. [Interview, Biem 2009]

According to Jokon:

.....as PNG was developing, public sector management needed better qualified people, especially in public policy management to effectively and efficiently carry out duties to improve public sector performance. [QR, Jokon, 2007]

Philip stated that:

I am studying PPM as a distance student because I have an interest in politics in PNG. PNG need a well versed educated population to take the country forward. [QR, Philip, 2007]

Nick does the same in his practices of learning as an adult distance student.

'You know when I went through the Decentralization Policy course I learnt from it and at the work place I told them that there are some things that we need to fix up so that reform will be workable. I did talk to the Administrator to get some people to come in so that we put our ideas together and do something from the local level government to district and to the provincial level.' [Interview, Nick 2008].

My research findings in this section show that students are learning and applying the knowledge they acquire for the wider social benefit. Drawing from Bourdieu's (2004) notions of capital we see here the value of education as a capital. Knowledge, as the findings reveal is a cultural capital and refers to the credentials and cultural assets embodied in the adult distance student and their families. Here I use education capital to interpret the reproduction of social hierarchy in this distance education pedagogic site. That is, adult distance students in their practices of learning are endowed with education capital. This empowers them to maintain their elite university student position and the learning is rubbing-off on others in the wider community as a social benefit. As Lulu's learning practice illuminates, her current learning benefits members in her community. Lulu benefits with her collaboration and interaction and the members of the women group also benefit in her engagement with them. The same can also be extended to Nick and Biem's learning in which they benefit and their work organisation will also benefit. We see education and the valued commodity of knowledge as a utility for wider social benefit while in the process enabling the students to move from a non-elite position into elite positions of knowledge-authority in the course of their university study by distance mode.

8.8 Collaboration and Interaction

In this section I want to further advance my argument that the pedagogic practice of learning by distance mode is a socioculturally situated activity in which everyone living with or around you is engaged in pedagogic transactions. That is the tribal and communal form of pedagogy.

The lecturer communicates to distance students through the written word in the distance learning resources. A pedagogic distinction for collaboration and interaction that needs to be made before I start with the examination of data is that my application of social practices defines both cognitive²⁹ and affective³⁰ reasons for collaborating and interacting with others in their practices of learning.

8.8.1 Peer-Peer Interaction

Peer-peer interaction removes knowledge-authority structures and facilitates for collaborative and democratic learning although there may be classes within learners. Bates (1991) states that learners should do something with the learning material, they may need to demonstrate, that they have understood by working on their own and interacting with other students. This interaction between students are encouraged by lahara teaching sessions and the students independently seeking opportunities for interaction.

Nick sated:

...there are a few Advisors I approach. One is the Advisor for Planning and Research, our Advisor at [place mentioned], he went through this studies so I get some of his advice and books from him. There are some other people like the Manager for [organisation mentioned] I was just talking to him last time, he said go ahead and do your studies. These are the officers I speak to about what I am doing in this management program,.. The other Advisor for Human Resource is also approachable and also our Training Division. So apart from my Division these are some other people I come across to get some of the information. [Interview, Nick 2008].

Nick further elaborated that:

With that I turn to the other course participants, we sit down and we share, just like a group discussion. So we just sit around, we have lunch together and we talk about the subject and try to help each other by sharing of ideas and other materials. [Interview, Nick 2008].

Waranduo collaborates with his work colleague who is also a student and is his supervisor.

²⁹ Support provided for construction of meaning.

^{30[2]} Collaborating and interacting for social reasons of emotional and physical support

Waranduo stated:

...yes, he is my boss but we are students together. this one for instance is a group assignment it's both of ours [shows me marked assignment]. ...In that sense on group work, me and my boss, my boss is exposed to let's say in the bureaucratic level he is exposed to a lot of big things. Then when I work together with him I've learned a lot of things from him about management and all that. [Interview, Waranduo, 2008]

Notice here Waranduo's acknowledgement of collaborating with his superior and his boss being exposed to 'big things' which are ideas about management at the policy level and his superior at work is a peer in the learning context. Waranduo further stated:

...when we go in for classes, that's when we try to communicate as much as possible. But mostly in the lectures. My other assignment is about decentralization, so that's when other students talk and share ideas. The policeman there, [named], he does not know about decentralization, plus another [person named], he's a wantok, and there is another from [named place], [named person], from ... and there's even that [named student] from ..., Okay the two priests, [named students]. They are not up to date about decentralization, public enterprise and elements of public administration. All these concepts they are not exposed to them so when we go for mentoring sessions we guide them along. [Interview, Waranduo, 2008]

Emel stated:

First, is [student mentioned] as he is also a [job mentioned] and we are studying together. If not I wait for the tutoring time when we go to Kinienen to see the tutor and other students. [Interview, Emel, 2008]

Adults come to the pedagogic site endowed with life experiences. According to Knowles et.al (2005) adults come into an educational activity with both a greater volume and a different quality of experience from that of youths or even the lecturers. By virtue of simply having lived longer, they have accumulated more experience than they had as youths. It also means that for many kinds of learning, the richest resources for learning reside in the adult learners themselves. In the next data excerpt we see peer-peer interaction initiated by Lulu:

Lulu talks to the two students sitting in front of her. Biem departs and Lulu continue her discussion with four of the class mates. They are sharing ideas on the assignment and that she would need her study guide and resource books in her previous PPM courses to do the assignment. There are some relevant information in them and would come in handy. Other students agree on her idea
Comment: Lulu seems to initiate discussion among her peers. Why? Is it because she is the Secretary or does she have natural leadership qualities. Lahara Observation Notes, 2008

Interaction with peers in the management of learning in this section and with family members and wantoks in the next reflects the traditional Melanesian and Pacific Island society way of collaborative pedagogy. As will be shown in Chapter 9, lecturers such as King encourage collaborative work as a skill for later life as well to incorporate traditional way of communal collaborative learning. However, the practice of collaboration in an exam situation in the contemporary form of pedagogy is only for the individual and not to be taken by the group in a communal, *live-it-to-know-it* pedagogic approach. When the idea about peer-peer interaction was stretched about the indigenous communal collaborative group work approach in an examination, King applied the rules of strong framing to maintain the dominant position of the institution as the legitimate knowledge custodian and disseminator.

The advantage would be that ah...um... [long pause] it allows but then it also, its also I'd like to think, you know in an exam it forfeits the whole idea of, this my own view, it forfeits the whole idea of examination, an examination should be about ...an individual, I really don't think it should be about the group. [Interview, King 2008]

The research findings show that peer-peer enhances learning. This finding support the notion of andragogy and Knowles et.al (2005, p. 67) who stated that in contrast to children's and youths subject-centred orientation to learning (at least in school), adults are life-centred (or task-centred or problem-centred) in their orientation to learning. Adults are motivated to learn to the extent that they perceive that learning will help them perform tasks or deal with problems that they confront in their life situations like Waranduo and his supervisor at work and as peers in their learning practice.

8.8.2 Interaction with Family/Wantoks

Students form strategic alliance with family members in the management of their learning to acquire knowledge and do not learn individualistically. Members of the students' family and other *Wantoks* are an invisible form of social capital from the institution perspective and these are readily available for adult distance students to draw on.

According to Kastem:

... my wife supports, you know I was a grade 12 school leaver and she supports me very much seeing that this might have some financial benefit and I value my career and in fact my missus she realize the course I am doing is very beneficial to my job. [Interview, Kastem 2008]

Waranduo stated:

... very helpful, even the kids. They would after dinner, when I have books on the table they know that I have work to do and go to bed without disturbing me. They would watch TV only from 4-6pm. After six they have dinner, do their homework and go to bed and leave me alone. Currently, my three kids and my wife and currently my sister and I are doing studies at the Open Campus, she in CTCS program and me in management. [Interview, Waranduo 2008]

The interaction for Waranduo is that he gets affective support from his three children in that when they see his study materials on the table they do not disturb him. His wife and sister help him write out notes on the small whiteboard in the house, which he showed me during my visit to his home. My visitation for the weekend to where Waranduo lived and work and conduct of the interview was in the presence of the whole family. While Waranduo is the student at the UPNG-OC his learning involves the family, as would happen in a PNG traditional village society.

Nick, the third student at the Kinienen study centre also interacts with his wife to support him in his learning.

...yes, she's working and she's a teacher and you know she's supporting me. She's really supporting me in my studies. In the course she did I supported her and she completed her diploma and now it's her turn to support and it's no problem for her to support me. [Interview, Nick 2008]

Nick's interaction in his learning is not restricted to the support and interaction from his wife and brother only which I will show further on, but also his two elder children who are in secondary school.

... especially with my two elder ones [children] in high school. I finish my essay assignment and just leave it on the table for them to come and see it and read. I mean they don't understand but they just read only. [Interview, Nick 2008]

Nick's learning and student-activity task as in the above case with assignment is also disclosed to his children in a subtle way so learning involves the whole family. The table on which Nick leaves his assignment for the children to see is analogous to the *kumainge* I introduced in Chapter 2. At the Kusambuk study centre we see similar patterns of learning support for those students in a marriage relationship.

Andy states that the whole family collaborate to provide him affective support in his studies:

...they are very, very supportive in a way I do things sometimes we have one computer and I tell them I need to do bit of work and my children will give me time to use it. [Interview, Andy 2009]

Returning to schooling for Biem as a mature age student pose challenges about meeting academic standards/expected by the provider institution. This was the experience for Biem when he first started on the management program by distance mode. The interactions with his two sons for his essay assignments go to illustrate the pedagogic strategy of collaborative learning, not just with lecturers, peers and work colleagues but the significance of learning in the distance context with cognitive related pedagogic support from family members. Biem reflects on this collaborative practice with his grown-up children in the following.

Okay that's the assistance they give me. For my two kids, you know, I don't know how to write assignments, not assignments essays. They have a fair idea of how essays are done so when I first attended this course in 2004 I did an essay and it did not follow the format of an essay, so I went back and asked them and they told me, no, essay you do it this way. You structure it like this, so I am very grateful in my kids telling me how to write an essay, so you know that was the first time in 2004 but then after that then I was okay. [Interview, Biem 2009]

A cultural distinction that is of pedagogic interest I will pick up on later is the level of interaction by the student's spouse. In Biem's case of interaction with his wife he stated that:

... they do not disturb me, .. for my missus she's helpful by providing me food and like when I want to wake up in the night for studies, I used to tell her please at this time wake me up as I want to study. Okay that's the assistance she give me. [Interview, Biem 2009]

The above are two male students and in a marriage relationship, but there is also Lulu. She is a female student in our *Wantok Study Group* who is a single parent and has no spouse to collaborate and interact with in managing her learning. As such, Lulu collaborate and interacts and with her grown-up children and other relatives of the extended family who I will bring into the analysis later.

While collaboration and interaction with family seems common as shown in the above research findings, the kind and level of involvement from family members in the practices of distance learning does differ among the participants. Philip, does not interact at all with his immediate family members in the management of his learning. In contrast Kent at the same study centre says his wife and children play a supportive role in the way he manages his learning.

I think with the family, my wife is very, very supportive. When I am in the office studying, she makes sure that at 6:00 pm she makes sure that she cooks noodles with egg or kaukau [sweet potato] in there or something and puts it in a lunch box and bring it over and says to our kids, Dad is studying so take his food to

the office. They are very, very supportive and they've been supportive throughout. [Interview, Kent 2009]

While the kind of support from Kent's wife is not intellectual or cognitive in orientation Kent's reasoning for his family's affective support to him when he is studying after work in the office seems more to do with affective reasons of family cohesion. That is his individual effort in learning will actually be for their collective benefit and success in their social mobility later as a family unit. Further, he believes that the advantage of working and studying allows his family to be with him.

I think it is because of the time, they know that time is given ah then at the same time I tell them that I am studying through external mode and which is helping us and at the same time I need to achieve something and at the same time we need to, this way of studying is good because I am here with you and am responsible with the kids and not separated from you. The wife and the family we are together, the teaching and learning is happening at the same time and we can't be separated. At least I am still at work and living with them and studying so you support and I will go through this program and pass it. [Interview, Kent 2009]

The above observation of PNG students' collaboration and interaction could be interpreted as "universally normal" for learning in a distance education context anywhere around the world. However, the findings support Reay (2000) who in an exploratory attempt to extend Bourdieu's (2004) concept of capital, attempted to operationalize the concept of 'emotional capital' to investigate the affective role of mothers' emotional involvement in their children's education. Whilst recognising that cultural capital is primarily transmitted through the family, Reay noted the particular role of women and their direct influence on educational achievement. Reay (2000) found that women's 'emotional capital' qualities such as care and concern, love and affection, expenditure of time and attention were shown to directly influence dependents' schooling success.

That is, when a husband or wife is studying the spouse is obliged to render support by way of collaboration and interaction either for cognitive or affective reasons. While this may seem universal and common as a pedagogic practice in a distance education environment, there are three students' practices of collaboration and interaction that I want to examine in more detail to show a related cultural aspect of the students' sociocultural reality that intersects with their practice of learning as adult distance students. They are Lulu as a female, single-parent student in the Kusambuk study centre and Waranduo and Nick at the Kinienen study centre.

Three students at Kinienen, three at Kusambuk and one at Huahama show strong family member involvement in the way they manage their learning. The analysis of my findings on pedagogic design and learning instructions in Chapter 9 did not reveal any instructions directing students to interact with family members but here we see student agency as an education capital acquisition strategy to manage their learning.

What we see here is a difference between the UPNG-OC instruction for individual learning in contrast to the obvious collaborative interactions by students centred on the family/village/clan-oriented practices of learning. The tensions in this sort of learning practice will be clearer in my next section of analysis but let me examine a peculiar member of the *Wantok Study Group*, Lulu, at the Kusambuk study centre.

Lulu as a single parent went on to elaborate that she does rely on her immediate and extended family members working in the public policy management area of the PNG civil service to support her learning. Lulu draws on her readily available social capital to support her learning. Lulu told me:

I speak to relatives who are working in the area that I am studying, especially with the government departments so especially with those ... oh ah ..my son is also studying, he's just graduated with a diploma in accounting and he's also touched on an area regarding government and management so I also extract relevant information from my own son, my teenage son and from other relatives in positions of government bureaucracy. [Interview, Interview 2009]

Unlike the other students above who have a spouse, for Lulu, the other family members are a significant pedagogic resource.

The above cases from the interview data show the relationship of family-member involvement and in particular the role spouse and children play in the students' learning in all three UPNGOC study centres. The involvement of family members was also observed among other students' at the UPNGOC.

To show the strong influence of family in distance learning I go outside of the Wantok Study Group and through the two data extracts below show the communal collaboration of family to support distance students. The first extract is from my notes of observation at the reception area of the Kusambuk study centre.

Wednesday 10th October 2007

8:05 – Phone call, student asked secretary for exam time. There were two earlier phone calls, one about the exam timetable and the other about marked

assignments. The other caller was a mother enquiring on information about her son or daughter's enrolment and the entry test. The Secretary explained to the mother the entry requirements, fees and when the next entry test would be conducted. ? [Observation Note, Kusambuk study centre, October 2007]

Notice in the description of events in 8:05 am there were three phone calls to the Kusambuk study centre reception counter. One of the calls was made by a mother on behalf of her son or daughters' entry test for enrolment. The above observation was made in October 2007, and then in 2008 I was at the Front Office area of the UPNGOC headquarters for lahara registration. Below is my observation note of another case of distance students' learning support centred on the family/clan network.

Monday 7 January 2008

Later in the afternoon I saw her sitting outside on the pathway with her other family members, husband and children plus another adult male relative. She seemed to be from the ... region.

Comment: Family support, very strong sense of family/communal support. Education is not just an individual endeavour but a family affair. Wonder if they (especially husband) also helped/supported her with the learning? [Lahara registration Observation Note, UPNG-OC HQ, January 2008]

The accompaniment by the female student's husband, children plus another adult male relative further illustrates the strong role family members play in supporting distance students learning in PNG. This seems to be a common practice of the utilisation of invisible social capital as a strategy to acquire the valuable commodity of official knowledge and education capital from the university.

The findings reveal a family/clan or communal orientation to support learning in contrast to an individualistic orientation. I want to focus my analysis and advance my argument that learning support is culture-related with reference to the local forms of social organisation. I will focus on Waranduo and Nick at the Kinienen study centre to illuminate this cultural intersection into pedagogic relations for the transaction and acquisition of knowledge.

Both Nick and his wife undertook studies while in employment. His wife had already completed her in-service teacher training acquiring a diploma qualification with the support from Nick. Nick is the manager of a local level government and it is now his turn with reciprocal support from his wife.

I told them that I am taking another course again this semester so she said why not, take it, so she is really supportive.... [Nick Interview 2008]

The kind of support and interaction from family members is quite in-depth if as it were from the legitimate knowledge-authorities [lecturers] at the provider institution.

... because my wife is a teacher and maybe she is good in English so I say go through my English here and sometimes she does correction, especially grammatical error. I also work along with my elder brother he is also doing the PPM program. So I work along with him and we share ideas and sometimes we sit down and do our work together [Interview, Nick 2008].

Nick relies on his wife to proof-read his assignments for spelling and grammar so that the meaning of his argument in the essay assignment he constructs for assessment is conveyed without ambiguity of meaning due to poor English grammar and semantics. His two children in secondary school are also engaged and interact with him in his studies which Nick thinks is also good for them. Distance learning practices in Nick's case seem to be a 'family affair' similar to Waranduo below and defined by the action of family-member-reciprocity especially in the interactions with his wife and brother for affective and cognitive reasons.

Waranduo also gets support from his immediate family besides his work colleagues and peers. His wife and sister help him write out notes on the small whiteboard in the house as mentioned earlier for him to construct his essay assignments. Waranduo acknowledges that his immediate family plays a significant role in his studies as a distance student. Below is my observation of Waranduo's family support in his learning.

His wife is from local province where he is working. She is unemployed but manages the house and a small backyard banana garden. At times she and his younger sister help him out with notes for his essay assignments. [Field note from discussion at ..., 4 March 2008].

The findings reveal most male students in the Wantok Study Group get support from their wives and children. We note from Waranduo and Nick above that their wives contribute to their husband's learning that is cognitive related compared to the others. For instance, Biem's wife is not in formal employment but manages their home. Andy's wife on the other hand is a graduate accountant and in formal employment but does not provide any form of academic oriented learning support to her husband. When the same question about collaboration and interaction from spouse was put to Andy, his response is that there is no interaction with his spouse that is related to supporting his learning.

... give me time to do work, with you know I'll want to do my share of the family chores and they say no, you take the time and do your assignment and go to the library and no support in learning. [Interview, Andy 2009]

There is a difference in the level of collaboration and interaction between those students cited earlier in the cases above and Waranduo and Nick at the Kinienen study centre. I have already shown in the exploration of data that Waranduo's wife provides not only affective support but goes further to collaborate and interact with him on his essay assignments by taking notes for him. This kind of collaboration and interaction from a spouse is also evidenced in Nick's practices of learning at the Kinienen study centre where his wife proof-reads his essay assignment to correct his English. The wives support their husbands' management of learning by working on intellectual related learning tasks such as the construction of essay assignments in the case of both Waranduo and Nick. However, this is not the same with Andy's wife who is a university level graduate accountant. This difference will be expounded on as an emergence of local social culture related aspect of managing learning further on in my discussion of main findings.

The above stories support Simpson's (2000) finding in that support from partners and the like was more highly rated than support from tutors and students. He went on to qualify that, '...the most important single form of support for their students is outside institutional control (and may be largely ignored by institutions' (Simpson, 2000, p. 121). This is what we see above and also in the next section.

8.8.3 Interaction with Wider Community

Collaborating to learn we have seen involves peer-peer and learner-family interaction. This approach to learning is rooted in the Melanesian kinship of *Wantok*, *clan* and *tribe* exchanging in dialogues of stories and oratory to construct meaning (Evans and Nation, 1989) and extends to include members in the whole community. In this learning, dialogue involves the idea that humans in communication are engaged actively in the making and exchange of meanings, it is not merely about the transmission from the top down (Lockwood, 1994).

Ilaks stated that he interacts with other people in the town with knowledge and work experience in human resource management.

Basically, like the other human resource managers and company executives I would approach them to seek some advice or get the information from them apart from the lecturers that we have. And lecturers are only during the lahara we have the lecturers coming in to us for the various courses they are scheduled for the lahara session. Otherwise during the semesters these are the people like I said human resource managers in other companies that we know of. Just go and ask them, you know general questions that was you know, what they know about their jobs. Because they are more or less, whatever they tell us, they are more or

less related to the courses we are taking like when we were studying human resource management. [Interview, Ilaks 2009]

For Ilaks when teacher-learner interaction is diminished, drawing from his indigenous communal practices of knowledge transmission and acquisition, he is able to interact and collaborate with colleagues at work and others in the wider community who have knowledge and experience on human resource management. Note that Ilaks is from the coastal region working as a police officer in Huahama in the Highlands region.

A number of participants in all three study centres utilized their work environment as a resource to facilitate and enhance their learning of the concepts and theories presented in the course content. Nick for instance was in the thick of the Provincial Government reforms and was motivated to study and learn about implementing these government reforms by enrolling himself in the Management Program. To realize this Nick developed alliances and had the rapport and support of his superiors both at the public service administration and political levels. The following excerpt from the interview transcript with Nick highlights this practice.

Sh: ... What kind of support and interaction for your studies do you get from your work colleagues in the LLG that you are working in?

Nick: When I told them about my studies, they let me go and do my studies and especially the District Administrator and my LLG President support me.

Sh: District Administrator, you would call him as the superior, do you?

Nick: Yes, yes, he is my superior and I am next to him. Also the President. Sometimes, when there is a lot of schoolwork to do I tell them I have to go and they say go and at the political level it's the President.

[Interview, Nick 2008]

Nick's superiors knew that the reforms needed implementation by well-educated and competent officers and therefore supported him in his program of study. This building of alliances is perhaps for reciprocal reasons, that Nick's superior and president supports his learning in order that what he learns will be useful for the governments' implementation of the reform agenda. For Nick it was experiential-learning, that is applying what he was learning to implement changes and at the same time learning from his LLG work environment. In other words, he used his work organization as a *learning-resource* to consolidate and make meaning of the theoretical concepts in the study guide and resource books produced and sent from the provider institution.

Putting into practice what is learnt reinforces and internalizes new knowledge for distance students. The curriculum context from a global perspective is localized through reflective learning borrowing from what Lave and Wenger (1991) define as a community of practice. The work environment carves out a space for Kastem and his peer, Ivan, who are in the same

Management program to employ this strategy to manage their learning from a global to a localized application. According to Kastem;

We and some others from Training Services Department ... we found that whatever we learnt from the course itself helps in our work in projects such as budget planning [he points to a whiteboard in the room] and that is the budget planning we are doing now.[Interview, Kastem 2008].

Biem was also concerned about instituting change in the policy area of the work organization that he and Andy work in.

It [the PPM program] helped me out and we had to look at our own policy in the department and said hey...we have had this policy here for so many years, it has never been reviewed, its' never been monitored, you know we don't know how we've gone and whether we are achieving the targets or objectives of the organization? So at least it gave us an idea, at least we can tell our people, hey listen we need to improve on this, ...[Interview, Biem 2009]

It seems the way in which Biem manages his study by distance mode has an umbilical-cord type connection to his career as a forester and through *experiential-learning* utilizes his work organization as a resource for learning. This umbilical-cord connection to his work portrays work stations as systems of interaction as the setting of the role-drama of work. In doing so we are alerted to the value of the work stations as post for observing the formation of groups and the generation of social roles and sanctions. As adult students residing and studying in an urban society, Biem and Andy seem to have their feet in both worlds, the rural/traditional which is subsistence based and simultaneously urban/modern which is a highly stratified cash economy society.

Adult distance students learn by collaborating and interacting in different ways. Wlodkowski (1999) points to two basic assumptions in understanding adult collaboration and interaction: a) adults have a self-concept of being responsible for their own lives, they develop a deep psychological need to be seen and treated by others as being capable of self-direction and, b) adults become ready to learn those things they need to know or to cope effectively with their real-life situations, which is with their family, work organisation and others in the wider community. This aspect of collaborative learning was advanced by Simpson (2000). In advancing collaborative learning outside of the institution he noted two reasons why such support is important. As my stories of learning practices show above the reasons are relevant and applicable to Open College. Simpson's study evidences students rating of outside assistance more highly than internal support. Secondly such support can be very economical and cost effective considering the geography and terrain of PNG (Simpson, 2000, p. 120).

8.9 Discussing Summary of Findings

The four main key findings that emerge from adult distance students practices of learning are that:

- Students' pattern of study is framed around their adult life which is not homogenous among the participants.
- Students' motivation to study and acquire the education capital is to advance their career.
- Learning is of mutual social benefit to the student as well as the significant others whom they collaborated to interact with.
- Collaboration and interaction is deeply embedded around the local indigenous forms of social organisation.

It is not my objective here to make broad generalisations but I have in the above attempted to show the heterogeneity as opposed to homogeneity of social interaction in the adult distance students' learning practices. My analysis of findings reveals peculiarities and the subjective details about the way in which adult distance students manage their learning. I will focus on the first two key findings in brief and dwell in a bit more detail for the latter two.

My research reveals that all adult students do not study in the same way. Their pattern of study reflects the students' diverse social and cultural attributes and added to the flexible way of learning through the print medium of distance learning resources. My findings support Evans' (1994a) call for distance educators to understand adult students studying by distance mode and the way in which this category of student manage learning. Learning practices were thematised by Evans (1994a) as money: coping with the cost; sex: learning in gendered worlds; power: encounters with those in control; play/time: study as leisure or the loss of it and, age: learning in retirement. Houle's (1984) numerous studies on learning as a lifelong process found that his subjects used reading, travel, self-directed study, discussion groups, direct observation and other forms of learning to enrich their own lives and the lives of others. Moreover, Schuller and Watson (2009) mention the several paradoxes about learning that takes place in varied places, for different reasons in which learning sometimes has to be collective in communal settings and sometimes it is profoundly individual.

A key assumption about adults in distance learning is that the adult who choose to study by distance mode are already motivated (Sivan, 1986). Furthermore, Gagne and Driscoll (1988) state that as the act of learning continues over time, several factors influence motivation for adult

students to continue learning, such as the flexibility of the distance learning resources in print media enabling students in PNG to study anywhere at any time. The key motivation that this research finding highlights is the relationship to social mobility through career advancement. For the majority of students in the *Wantok Study Group* studying the management program by distance mode and the qualification from this study will provide them the education capital to secure their current jobs and reposition them to advance in their career. The way forward for adult distance students in PNG is to feel integrated and be a part of the rapidly developing cash economy society from what still is a predominantly a subsistence economy society.

The third key finding fills a gap in the distance education literature. The process of adults engaging in distance learning in PNG is of wider social benefit. That is, those individuals and organisations with whom the adult distance students collaborate to interact with in managing their learning also benefit as *learners* although they are not legitimate *students*. Examples of distance learning of wider social benefit are Lulu's interaction with the women's group in her community and Nick learning about public policy management coinciding with the provincial government reforms. The women learned from Lulu about government policy on gender empowerment through Lulu's learning interaction with them. Similarly, Nick's work organisation (LLG) benefitted simultaneously in the way he applied theory to practice. Nick learned from his work organisation and his work organisation benefitted at the same time from his learning.

The nuclear and extended family is the immediate social unit a distance student forms alliance and partnership with to contest for and negotiate in the pedagogic transactions with the lecturer at the provider institution to acquire that valued commodity of education capital. This alliance formation is by way of collaboration and interacting with an immediate member or members of the students' nuclear family. In the above observed practices of distance learning the findings show interactions for both affective and cognitive reasons between the student and their family members. I emphasise that the different levels and acts of collaboration and interaction is a manifestation of the social and cultural context of the students and their collaborators, brought about by the students' own agency.

The final key finding in my research encapsulates my two main research questions that relate to the premise of my thesis. Adult PNG distance students' practices of learning are socially and culturally situated. My research finding reveals that students draw on their *invisible social capital* in their *invisible world* (ososom) to manage their learning. These learning practices as I

have attempted to foreground in Chapter 2 is deeply embedded in traditional Melanesian forms of pedagogy and related to indigenous forms of social organisation.

The intrinsic reasons for a spouse interacting with the distance student by helping and providing support in the learning process might be expected as 'normal' in a husband and wife relationship. For social and economic reasons the spouse is the closest intimate partner the student gets support from which Reay (2000) defines as emotional capital. An in-depth examination framed around the local indigenous ways of how a tribal society in the different regions of PNG are organized reveals the order and hierarchy of social structure inherent in this given social-cultural context and its intersection into distance education pedagogic practices. This has relevance to the ways in which the student organizes and manage their learning and may lead to providing a deeper understanding of the strategies, alliances and collaboration between husband and wife and parent and children in the interactions to [re]construct their social distances/positions in different parts of traditional PNG/Melanesian societies.

Both Waranduo and Nick are adult male students living and working in the ...Province, Waranduo in a rural government station and Nick in another part of the same province and they are both married to women from the local community. The women's society has an institutionalized cultural practice of tracing genealogy and lineage through the women's line for purposes of inheritance and landownership. In other words, the woman is the 'head' of the family and has land and property owning rights. It is one of a number of matrilineal societies in PNG.

Nick being a Kinienen citizen does know the value of social status and prestige that new knowledge through an educational capital will bring. This will improve his wife's social position in the Kinienen society and for him, a possible job promotion. Waranduo in contrast is not from Kinienen but a 'foreigner' from another cultural region where property owning rights is through the male line. He is married to a local Kinienen woman and her collaboration and interaction in his learning may have unobservable aspirations for the improvement of her own social positioning through the success of her husband Waranduo's acquisition of official knowledge and educational capital. Here we see the clash and tension of three different cultures; that of a Western introduced educational system of knowledge custodianship, reproduction and dissemination; the Kinienen culture; and, Waranduo's culture from his indigenous language group. Rather than being subservient to his wife's culture and social structure, new knowledge acquired through study at UPNGOC and the attainment of educational capital is for his own social positioning.

Both spouses of Nick and Waranduo collaborate and interact with their husbands in their learning for new knowledge acquisition. Their collaboration and interactive efforts I interpret seems to be for their own social identity construction to position themselves among other property owning Kinienen women utilizing the prestige and value of education capital in the strata of indigenous Kinienen social structure where women hold power but not men.

The involvement of family in collaboration and interaction for learning reflects the way in which traditional PNG/Melanesian society was organised. That is teaching and learning centred around the family and clan units involving every member. You will now recall my live-it-to-know-it pedagogic construct through the discussion of my own Sausewia people in Chapter 2. The data above clearly evidences this Melanesian traditional culture of social organisation for knowledge transmission and acquisition intersecting with the contemporary pedagogic context of the UPNGOC. While I have shown that students in their practices of learning engage with content, instructor, peer and family members there are some who utilize their wider network of social capital. In the next section I want to briefly show that apart from the three types of collaboration and interaction prescribed by the provider institution students go beyond these three and the family to engage with the wider community in managing their learning.

The above cases from the interview data findings show the relationship of family-member involvement and in particular the role spouse and children play in the students' learning in all three UPNGOC study centres. The involvement of family members was also observed among other students' at the UPNGOC. The research finding shows that it is common for the students in this research to collaborate and interact with their nuclear family and a member of the extended family. I label this as the *invisible social capital* that students draw on to make up for the absence of the lecturer and other students. This learning strategy by the adult distance learner is to provide for the absence of social presence in distance education pedagogic transactions that researchers such as Gunawardena and Zittle (1997), Simpson (2000) and Tu and McIssac (2002), and Jolivette (2006) consider to be a critical pedagogic concern in distance learning environments.

8.10 Conclusion

The analysis of findings reveals that as adults in employment who are students pursue university studies by distance mode for reasons relating to career advancement. The data further reveals that although there are individual differences in the patterns of study, the common practice of collaboration and interaction involves the family. Students draw from this *invisible social capital*

including members of the wider community to support their learning. This goes to show a relationship of tribal communal forms of social organisation beginning with the smallest social unit of the students' nuclear family playing a significant role in the way members of the *Wantok Study Group* manage their learning.

I reconceptualised the term *distance* by stating that these *distances* are not just matters of geography or even time; the social, economic, spiritual, political, experiential and personal dimensions add many interwoven layers to the 'distancing' of the custodian of knowledge, the institution, and the lecturer from the distant *distance* students. Understanding something of these layers as I have attempted to show in my analysis of findings in this chapter will allow for some *distances* to be bridged by distance educators, rather than being avoided or ignored, and for others to be recognized as salient, if potentially problematic, features of pedagogic relations in distance education.

The analyses of findings in this chapter also reveal that to acquire knowledge students draw on their visible and invisible social capital to form alliance as a strategy for knowledge acquisition. Through these strategies I identified the intersection of local/indigenous forms and practices of social organisation and interaction with contemporary education pedagogic practices. Through the data I have shown how adult distance students in PNG due to the pedagogic orientation of *ososom* use the social and cultural capital within their local environment to transact in the distance education market place.

In this process most students in Kusambuk which is an urban society and a few in the other two study centres seem to transcend between contexts of sociocultural dualisms; rural≠urban, traditional≠modern, subsistence≠cash in their multiple social identity constructs of father, manger, single-parent, businessman and not just as adult distance students of the UPNGOC. In the pedagogic practices of distance education, some of the pedagogic issues concern understanding the *distances* between distance educators and the students, not just as static distances which can be measured in kilometres or miles. Evan's (1994a) conceptualized these as complex and fluid 'distances' in the lecturer-learner and "learner-others" pedagogic relationship. The findings has shed light to the micro and *invisible world* of the adult distance students using *invisible social capital* to manage their learning not as individuals but through the orientations of group and communal learning practices in their individual preferences of place and time.

9 Chapter Nine

Analysis of Findings on Pedagogic Design and Knowledge Transfer

So how can they dispute the chief? Only if the other chief gets up and challenge the orating chief, then it might require mediators for arbitration. [Interview, Kent, - 2009]

9.1 Introduction

In Chapter 8 I analysed and presented the findings in the main category of learning practices. In Chapter 9 I present findings from the other two main categories – pedagogic design of print-based distance learning resources and transfer of knowledge through the themes that emerged in my treatment and coding of data.

The main concern in my analysis of data in Chapter 9 is to analyse and present the findings on pedagogic design of the printed materials and knowledge transfer approaches and its link to the [re]production of social positions in the distance education pedagogic site. I will illustrate through thematic analysis of data about how the transmission of knowledge for learning by correspondence style distance mode is embedded within the pedagogic relations of knowledge custodianship by the dominant institution. By casting pedagogic transactions in distance education as a site of social production I aim to show in my analysis that; knowledge as a valued commodity is reproduced in the institution by lecturers and instructional designers in their positions of legitimate knowledge-authority and disseminated to the knowledge-seeking adult distance students.

In my attempt to answer my main research questions I draw data from my sets of questionnaire, interview and observation notes that were coded and thematised as shown in Chapter 7. The data is from instructional designers and lecturers and where relevant data from student participants are also used to illuminate a pedagogic issue. My focus is on the pedagogic design and the practices of dissemination that go to legitimise a body of knowledge as official knowledge and how these knowledge and its practices of transmission and acquisition is instructionally prescribed from the dominant position of the provider institution. In the pedagogic practices of pedagogic design and knowledge transfer I want to explore and show the hierarchy of knowledge-authority positioning between and within the different social actors in the pedagogic arena.

The main research question from the institution perspective I set out to explore in the analysis of findings are;

- 1) *What types of pedagogic strategies can be found in the learning materials and practices of the UPNGOC?*
- 2) *What kind of skills does the institution expect of distance students to have in order to manage their learning?*

The pedagogical methods put forward in distance teaching environment can make a difference in how much educational value an isolated distant student gets out from the course. Encouraging collaboration and interaction can help make the learning process more efficient and effective and facilitate for the absence of social presence.

9.2 Institution Prescribed Pedagogy

My research findings show that the novice instructional designers subscribe to pedagogic design principles prescribed by the institution. Moses and Eva, adherently conform to the UPNGOC prescribed pedagogic style guides and distance mode writing manuals. Their adherence to the institution-prescribed instructional design models illustrates this *prescriptive, top-down authoritative* and *instructivist* pedagogic approach in which a novice accepts and follows without questioning.

Eva recounts her induction experience as a novice instructional designer and the institution's guidelines for instructional design.

Eva: From my induction and all that, basically we talked about the ADDIE model to use in relating to how we work with our course content.

SH: What is it called RD model?

Eva: A..D..D..I..E [spelled]. ADDIE model is the analysis, development, design, implementation and at the end evaluation.

[Interview, Eva 2009].

In reflection of the views of the institution Eva described the current pedagogic model as constructivist in approach.

... its constructivist in a way that, the materials yah its clearly making it in a way where suppose if the students are, if the teacher is not available, it's in a dialogue form for them to see that ... like the teacher is talking to them ... [Interview, Eva 2009].

The ADDIE model mentioned here by Eva is a generic process of course development used by instructional designers. The five phases of *Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation* is a dynamic and flexible model that Jenny further on in her interpretation refer to as iterative. At the UPNG-OC this instructional design model is used for building effective training and performance support to lecturers and instructional designers.

Figure 10: The ADDIE Model

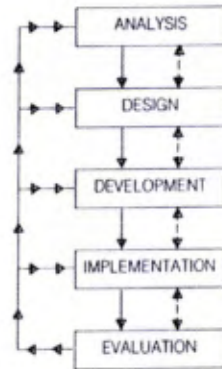


Figure 1. An ISD Model featuring the ADDIE processes

Source: Grafinger, Deborah J. 1988. *Basics of Instructional Systems Development*. INFO-LINE Issue 8803. Alexandria, VA: American Society for Training and Development

In the instructional design process this is the idea of receiving continual/formative feedback while distance learning materials are being produced. This ADDIE model according to Andrews and Goodson (1980) is user friendly for the UPNGOC as it attempts to save time and money by catching problems while they are easy to fix.

Eva makes specific references to models and tools of instructional design prescribed by the UPNG-OC, which imply her noviceness, therefore adhering to the institution prescribed pedagogic design models. As alluded earlier, this might relate to their lack of familiarity with the discourses of distance education pedagogy but from another perspective their behaviour of simply following instructions from a dominant custodian of knowledge reflects their own indigenous cultural context in the practices of knowledge transmission and acquisition. Moses explains about two tools that IDs use at the UPNGOC which were introduced to him during his induction; the FOG Index and Cognitive Load Theory.

I interpret this explanation from Moses as an indigenous pedagogic practice of memorisation and oral recital from a distance education instructional design textbook. His recital-like narration to me goes to illustrate a learning practice of memorising and recall in PNG's traditional oral culture. Moses in a recital explains the FOG Index used in instructional design.

SH: Just explain that FOG index? Is it FOG index?

Moses: Yah FOG index.

SH: What, you count the number of words in a paragraph?

Moses: Yah you count the number of words, the syllables, especially the syllables, the number of sentence and then you divide by the number of sentences the number of syllables being used. Like one word, like diagnosis, it is diag-nosis, that's three syllables. So you count how many words with more than two syllables, count it and then you divide it by the number of lines, then it must fall into a level where the student can, like it's a scale where it falls in. It gives you a, what can I say, gives you a ratio that falls into a scale. So that scale that's 87 up that's, it's not the level where the student can digest to understand the material.

SH: Is that too difficult?

Moses: Yah, it's too difficult so we haven't been really, I went through it but we haven't been utilizing that. That's what I, I've been going through materials...

SH: The other one you mentioned is the cognitive load theory. Explain to me what that is.

Moses: Cognitive load theory is more to do with how the brain as a receptor absorbs the things that are being presented to the 'would be' learner. Like I am considered as a 'would be' learner. The materials that are there is the thing that I have to digest. Okay it goes into more or less, you have the working memory, and then you have the long term memory, and all these and then you have what you have already known, these are known as schemas. So it's like what you know like say for example, you are brought up in a different environment with totally different set of schemas, which means that your understanding there and what you know already is quite different. So when you come into a particular environment where what is there which you are trying to learn will not be settling well in. Because what you know already is quite different from what is presented, so I mean it will take you time to digest those things. So that's to do with cognitive load theory. [Interview, Moses 2009].

Moses has the distance learner's *cultural distance* in mind, when exploring and discussing these pedagogic design tools. Moses mentions the Cognitive Load Theory and FOG Index that is in the style guide used by instructional designers at UPNGOC.

The fog index was developed by Robert Gunning (1952) and is commonly used to confirm that text can be read easily by the intended audience. The problematic that sparked my initial research interest brings in another dimension, that is, beside the readability of the text in the first instance and hearing it by word of mouth as a locally situated oral pedagogy.

Texts for a wide audience generally need a fog index of less than 12. Texts requiring near-universal understanding generally need an index of less than 8.

The Gunning fog index is calculated with the following algorithm:

Select a passage (such as one or more full paragraphs) of around 100 words. Do not omit any sentences;

1. Determine the average sentence length. (Divide the number of words by the number of sentences.);

2. Count the "complex" words—those with three or more syllables. Do not include proper nouns (for example, Djibouti), familiar jargon, or compound words. Do not include common suffixes (such as -es, -ed, or -ing) as a syllable;
3. Add the average sentence length and the percentage of complex words; and
4. Multiply the result by 0.4.

The complete formula is:

$$0.4 \left(\left(\frac{\text{words}}{\text{sentence}} \right) + 100 \left(\frac{\text{complex words}}{\text{words}} \right) \right)$$

While the fog index is a good sign of hard to read text, it has limits. Not all complex words are difficult and some short words are difficult or if the object of the signifier, such as “glacier”, is not present in the local physical environment. That is the tension for Nicole in designing the physics course as analysed in *Section 9.2.2*

The above cited narratives from the two novice IDs reflect their dependence on and adherence to the institution prescribed design models reflecting their own position as novice instructional designers. This research finding shows that within the group of instructional designers there are boundaries between “novice” and “expert” with the models and tools instructional designers at UPNGOC use to design and transfer knowledge to distance students.

The above instructional designers contrast to Jenny who is an experienced instructional designer. My research findings reveal that from Jenny’s perspective, the entire process of pedagogic design should be a collaborative process involving the lecturers, the instructional designers as well as the acquirers of knowledge. Some of the current practices in pedagogic design do need critical reflection and improvement. In her words:

... having being exposed to Instructional Designers theory emerging, I believe that I have uh..hm..some hm.. some issues that I think we have not done right...previously....and that means okay, what we have done previously is that, not previously but often...we always took a prescriptive kind of approach, the designers and the content experts. Try to assume what the learners out there need and then write just like a doctor prescribing a medication for the patient. You know, after the patients’ assessment they give medication, same here. So what I am thinking is that, that would be done better is to incorporate the ...uh...hm...User Designer approach. You know what that means?[Interview, Jenny 2008]

In contrast to Moses and Eva, Jenny who is the experienced instructional designer propagates a shift away from institution prescribed pedagogic practices, instead proposing to localize and indigenize distance education pedagogy. Jenny is thinking about a distance education pedagogic

design that is reflective of and sensitive to Melanesian way of teaching and learning prior to contemporary practice of learning in schools.

In the current practices of formatting the distance learning resources, the distance learners do not have an input. The approach, which Nicole takes in designing learning resources, further confirms Jenny's criticism of the approach as being prescriptive.

I more or less liaise with content experts with other academics here in the Schools in getting the materials laid out well for the students. And that enables me to have regular meetings with the content experts and take them through the different stages of course development that we have here which is based on our style manual. [Interview, Nicole 2008]

While the new instructional designers adhere to institutionalised principles and tools of distance teaching pedagogic design, Jenny from a critical perspective suggests that current practice should change to involve all stakeholders, especially the learners. Jenny's concern is not misplaced. The examination below of the learning resources in print-media show that the pedagogic approach is prescriptive and top-down authoritative.

9.2.1 Format and Structure

Unit 1, "Introduction to Public Administration" in the Study Guide for the course [named] evidences a didactic format of the learning resource with the knowledge content about public administration reproduced by Duonava and co-structured by Duonava and Ellie, with assistance from Australian consultant distance course writers for dissemination to UPNG-OC students. Duonava is one of the lecturers teaching management courses in the School of Business Administration. Ellie was an instructional designer who has left the employ of the university but worked with the lecturer in developing this course.

We can see the following; Unit Number and Title, Objectives (x3), reference for Reading 1 followed by the sub-topics. Unit 1 covers four pages of visual printed text.

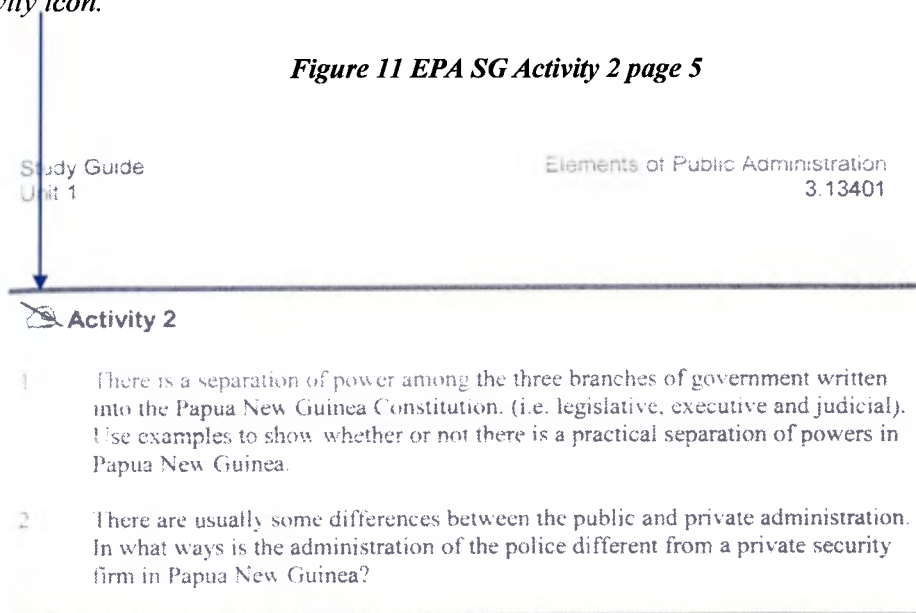
On *page 2*, there is one more sub-topic titled; *What is the constitutional framework of public administration in Papua New Guinea?* This sub-topic has the key concepts of legislature, executive, political executive, bureaucracy and judiciary written in bold font. On *page 3* Duonava presents the third and last sub-topic titled; *What is the history of public administration* of Unit 1. The instructional design model used by Duonava and Ellie is didactic as one would find in a reference text-book with a footnote referencing the source of the document on the history of administration. On *page 4* Duonava concludes the sub-topic with *Student Activity 1*

depicted by a student activity icon listing the six questions below for students to work on to evaluate and reinforce what they have learnt in this unit of study.

1. *Define public administration. What are the problems associated with defining public administration?*
2. *List three functions of public administration in Papua New Guinea?*
3. *How are the activities of public administration determined by the constitution?*
4. *What is the constitution and what are the three branches of government?*
5. *What did ancient Chinese thinkers have to say about public administration?*
6. *What is 'new public administration' and what is its main focus?*

Elements of Public Administration - Study Guide page 4

Student Activity 2 for Unit 1 is on page 5 which is shown in the Figure below depicted again by an *Activity icon*.



5

In *Activity 2* for students, Duonava has devised two long-answer or essay type questions designed for students to reinforce the knowledge being transmitted by re-articulating the three branches of government in PNG and the separation of powers to demonstrate that they have acquired this knowledge by stating the differences between public and private administration. All these student activity questions have suggested answers provided at the end pages of the Study Guide. Being a typical correspondence style distance education course, learning instructions, knowledge content, student activities and readings as additional resources for learning are all in printed text.

From the above examination of the learning resource it seems obvious that contrary to Duonava's desire for a collaborative and constructivist approach to pedagogic transactions, and Jenny's idea of involving students, the transmission format is didactic, linear and *top-down authoritative* and *instructivist*. If there is any evidence of reciprocal learning for Duonava from the adult students, then it is perhaps through interaction with the answers in the written assignments, tests and final exams. Student-lecturer interaction during lahara session of 2008/2009 I attended with two members of the *Wantok Study Group*, Biem and Lulu with King as the lecturer was observed to be minimal. Even in the face-to-face the pedagogic style was lecturer-centred, top-down authoritative and instructivist with little or no opportunity for student to lecturer interaction.

In the pedagogic design process Duonava argues that the concern about level of language comprehension by distance students stated by Moses and Nicole in designing learning resources should not be an excuse to allow for loss of meaning that is intended to be transferred to students. Duonava stated:

But at the same time we are not, at no time belittling the volume or the content of the information we'd like to give. I mean if it is something that has several dimensions to it, we'll have to explain those several dimensions. You cannot use that cultural factor to you know, cut off many other dimensions in function that it is unnecessary. Okay the content of the knowledge must at least be captured. I know in the process this is what I've experienced with the instructional designers is that in the process of converting, we do cut off some essential components of certain theories and so forth, that is true but I think there must be a certain limit to it. I mean, you are prepared to go minimum to cut off certain bits, which we think may not be that relevant, but if it is the core in a theory that has to be left there. [Interview, Duonava 2009]

In trying to reconcile and balance the tensions between foreign language use and construction of local meaning, instructional designers and the lecturers have a challenging task at hand to convey the meaning of a concept which does not exist in the local physical as well as the sociocultural environment for the out-of-site students. Exploring the lecturers' and IDs' thinking about what they say they do in pedagogic design and by examining the actual production of distance learning resources reveals intentions that do not necessarily translate to actual practices. The findings indicate that Duonava wants a *reciprocal, collaborative* and *constructivist* approach to pedagogic design but what he produces in the course outline as examined is *didactic, linear format, top-down authoritative* and *instructivist*.

The analysis of findings on pedagogic design from the institution, lecturers and instructional designers does not provide us a holistic view or the complete cycle of the pedagogic design

process. At this juncture of the analysis, the adult distance students' perception of and engagement with the learning resources is brought into my analysis. Most students do not seem to critique or have objections with the way in which the distance learning resources are structured and presented. This conceivably reflects the lower position in the knowledge-authority relations in the distance education pedagogic site that the students are in.

The study guide for the course examined above uses a standard didactic pedagogic design model and this serves as a template for most, if not all the distance education courses at UPNGOC except for a few courses in the science discipline that bring "life" with audio and video text complementing the medium of printed text.

9.2.2 Problems with Pedagogic Design

Lulu prefers learning on her own and is critical of the printed materials:

The whole materials, the book again which is totally wrong for someone like me an adult, I feel like I am like going back to high school again and in most cases I give up attending mentoring sessions. [Interview, Lulu 2009]

We see from Lulu her criticisms of the way in which knowledge is packaged and transferred. The findings reveals that the materials does not meet the needs of all distance learners and calls for differentiation to suit differing learning styles and abilities to maximising distance learning. This is evidenced in her search for a 'second opinion' of the knowledge being transmitted by the lecturer through the distance learning resources that we saw in Chapter 8.

Lulu is not alone in her critical reflections of the pedagogic design of the distance learning resources. One particular problem emerging from the research findings, identified by both students and lecturers about the design and set of learning materials is the large volume of reading compiled in the resource book, which some students do not read.

Murphy and Calway (2008) considered self-direction which is one crucial characteristic of adult learning. This relates to Knowles (1984a) and Knowles et.al (2005) four crucial assumptions that characterise adult learners, which provide a framework around which instructional designers can develop the printed materials. Taking into account the profile of adults will enhance adult distance learner motivation for them to continue in distance mode learning. Self-direction is a recurring theme in the literature with regard to adult learners who choose to study by distance mode, an important consideration for instructional designers as they produce the print materials relating to the distance mode course.

Further analysis of the research findings reveals that Jenny who is the experienced instructional designer who has academic qualifications and ten years of work experience propagates a shift away from adopted pedagogic practices and instead proposes to localise and indigenise distance education pedagogy that is reflective of and sensitive to our Melanesian way of life.

I think we have not being sensitive enough. ... We are more or less, we think like at times, that the Western norms and Western practice is the way to go. Whilst raising these issues and I've also read around these things, I now begin to think there could be a better approach, there could be a better approach or there could be a Melanesian way of learning. Yah, there is also diversity in the Melanesian Way. Yeh, so ... and I would like from my perspective as an Instructional Designer if I have to take a new approach like engaging the learners, in the design process, you see what I mean earlier on, and then being part of what I do from the beginning, I think I believe its reflective of how our society is based, because we do things together, yah? [Interview, Jenny 2008].

What is the significance of collaboration in distance education pedagogic design? We see Jenny advocating a local pedagogy as she designs the printed materials incorporating traditional or indigenous knowledge and ways of communal pedagogic styles to enhance the transfer of knowledge. According to Ryan (2008) education in PNG tends to reflect the curriculum of the West and that this education can provide hope and strengthen culture but it can also help to destroy both hope and culture. Jenny's proposition here entails a co-constructivist approach to pedagogic practice involving lecturer and students in the pedagogic design process. That is, the pedagogic design should facilitate for meaning to be co-constructed for the benefit of all, the transmitter as well as the acquirer.

Jenny continues to explain:

"Okay user designer approach is engaging the learners, and the designers and the content experts all working together to emerge this thing, like it's an iterative uh..hm.. learning practice." [Interview, Jenny 2008].

Jenny seems opposed towards the practice of the institution prescribing everything, both the knowledge content and the style of teaching and learning to the students without the students having a choice. The students in Jenny's view do not have any authority and choice in the content and style of delivery, this authority resides exclusively with the provider institution as I have established in the introduction of this analysis. Jenny feels that this top-down authoritative pedagogic approach should change.

'Because the learners have no say in, in what is being prescribed for them or what is being set for them and they don't have any, any authority to determine what kind of learning so they don't have a choice.' [Interview, Jenny 2008].

In this lecturer-student relationship, bestowed with institutional authority, the lecturer is the dominant agent and is the gatekeeper to what Apple (2000) labels as official knowledge and the pedagogic models of transmitting this knowledge which is top-down authoritative and strongly framed in Bernstein's (2000) theoretical interpretation. There are a number of other pedagogic issues that can be discerned from Jenny's comment.

Jenny goes further to expound on her idea of *doing things together* which she contends is also in harmony with the natural physical environment and Melanesian cosmology.

... there's no classroom, it's all oral, oral based, oral based complimented by maybe landmark, you know it brings me to a point where how we live in harmony with the nature. I am wondering if these learning materials do fit into their context. It's interesting! [Interview, Jenny 2008].

The findings of the research continue to reveal this deep pedagogical relationship between indigenous passing down of knowledge within every aspect of instructional design of the printed materials. Jenny's response reveals her ideas about phenomena in the natural physical environment that can be linked to the pedagogic design approaches for adult distance students in the PNG sociocultural context. Her response is indicative of her not wishing to diminish the value of our indigenous PNG/Melanesian conceptualisations of pedagogy.

The view expressed by Jenny above underpins my discussion [see my chapter 2 on Melanesian cosmology of an indigenous Melanesian hamlet] of teaching and learning being a holistic approach in which the spiritual value placed by indigenous Melanesians on the natural physical environment is intimately linked to the social world in indigenous pedagogic transactions. This Melanesian cosmology, casts the materialistic and spiritualistic as two complimentary parts of a whole that are intricately linked, one cannot exist without the other. With this reference to my *live-it-to-know-it* idea of pedagogy introduced in Chapter 2, I next want to demonstrate Jenny's concern for localizing and indigenising both pedagogic design practice and the concepts that define knowledge being transmitted through the actual process of writing a UPNG course for delivery by distance mode. The lecturers and tutor/mentors interviewed for this research are in the social sciences but in the interview excerpt below, Nicole recounts her negotiations with a lecturer in the designing of a science course in physics for delivery by distance mode.

Nicole: ... like if a content is been put in there or an example trying to explain the concept, we try to use something that's relevant to our culture like I'll give you an example. Let's take in Physics I just completed, the academic put

glaciers, we don't have glaciers in PNG so we would have something that would be much similar to replace the word glaciers.

SH: Is it a concept?

Nicole: Glaciers as in [and spells the word]

SH: Oh glaciers

Nicole: Yah glaciers. So I ask the academic we should replace something else for that word because we don't have that in our country.

SH: Our physical environment is different.

Nicole: He came up with something like, a mountain with small stones and big stones, and I told him please come up with something that's a bit similar and he mentioned the concept he was trying to get across was erosion.

SH: Erosion?

Nicole: Yah, erosion taking place, he had to explain again. He mentioned that, he had that word because there was no better substitute there. He went on further explaining what he was trying to get across.

SH: It's like trying to tell somebody in the tropics like our part of the world about what snow is.

Nicole: Yah, that paragraph had to be changed a bit because he had to do more explanation on that.

[Interview, Nicole 2009]

Nicole's instructional design experience with a science lecturer above exemplifies Jenny's pedagogical issue of localising knowledge concepts and the practices of knowledge transmission. This design experience shows the struggle to transmit knowledge for ease of comprehension and meaning-making by PNG adult distance students. Here we see the science lecturer and Nicole trying to transfer to the distance learner knowledge about glacier movement causing erosion in a physics course. This is a natural phenomenon that occurs in environmental conditions of snow but the general knowledge is that erosion also occurs in PNG due to other natural forces such as water and wind. We see here Nicole and the science lecturer "struggling" to use a foreign language to transfer this knowledge of erosion caused by snow, which is also unfamiliar to the PNG distance student. The natural phenomenon of erosion is a specific knowledge of the physical environment but to generally localise and indigenise intangible concepts existing in a foreign language considered as "official knowledge" is not as easy in contrary to Jenny's suggestion. This might be a reason for the novice IDs adhering to the guidelines of style manual and FOG Index pedagogic design tools prescribed by the UPNGOC in their designing of distance learning resources.

Despite the professional attempt to replace the keyword 'glacier' with 'erosion', the above finding shows the complexity of designing the printed materials for a culturally diverse profile of adult distance learners. Pauka and Treagust (2000) probed the village elders for their understanding of some scientific concepts, which included 'erosion'. Their findings indicated a variety of explanations from the different village elders; some explained 'erosion' as traditional

way of knowing the spirits, magic spells and sorcery. For example, one elder stated ‘that without the use of magic spells, the sand remain in one place and not get eroded’. Some elders used their Christian knowledge to explain the concept, basing it as a punishment by God because people have turned away from God, and the sand on the beach erodes away. Some elders used personal experience and scientific knowledge, some village elders stated that only tidal waves caused by the wind erode the soil on the beach (Pauka and Treagust, 2000, p. no page no.). In my Sausewian village the word ‘erosion’ would be interpreted as avenge by the creator deity because we humans have disturbed and destroyed the deity’s habitat. We see here the diverse conceptualisations of the natural phenomena such as erosion, which is problematic for distance education pedagogic design.

The research findings show that at least one distance student is calling for evaluating and revising of the pedagogic design approach by taking into account of their learner profile as ‘adult’ distance student. According to Hemmings and Battersby (1989) the design process begins with the selection of a textbook. This decision is crucial as the textbook is the major, and for some students the only resource material available. Thus, the manner in which course information is presented, explained, reinforced and tested determines how effective a textbook will be in meeting the needs and demands of the learner. In considering this Lockwood (1998) presented a number of pedagogic design models to cater for all categories of distance learners that was exposed in my literature review.

The single mode of visual printed text media transmits all the information for students to engage with to construct meaning in their learning. The issue in this approach of pedagogic transactions is whether students through the reading-only communication mode can construct their own meaning or are simple passive acquirers of other peoples’ meaning reproduced by the lecturers as authentic knowledge disseminated from the UPNGOC. To interpret and understand this pedagogical issue about knowledge, its custodianship and dissemination for acquisition I reflect on Sumner’s (2000) study who raised the critical question about distance education pedagogic practices. Sumner asked if distance education is designed to serve the self or serve the system.

The research findings seems to answer a part of Sumner’s (2000) question, in that with the strongly framed domineering instructivist pedagogic approach we see here, distance education pedagogic practices at UPNGOC is serving the system. Of the instructional designers interviewed, Jenny contends that the current pedagogic design model at the UPNGOC is *top-down authoritative* and *prescriptive* in which the distance learners had no control in the way their learning is designed. Likewise, other instructional designers conform to the institution

prescribed principles of pedagogic design and have no choice to determine their own pedagogic design approaches like communal-pedagogy that is locally relevant. Related to issues of pedagogic design is revision and currency of cutting-edge knowledge being transferred in the production of learning resources. Again Lulu stated:

What I have actually noticed is that I believe that most of the materials for this distance learning haven't been updated. With the latest progress, with development and all that I see that there is a lot of changes taking place so I wonder whether the materials are really updated or they just repeat the same materials over and over. [Interview, Lulu 2009]

The problems of instructional design in this research findings confirm Reigeluth's (1983) findings that showed a relationship between instructional design and motivations for distance students learning. It is true that a distance educator cannot totally control an adult distance learner's interest to learn; however, it is reasonable to assume that poor instruction can demotivate an otherwise motivated adult student as we can see here in Lulu's case. Similarly, Jenny's concern of insensitivity to indigenous pedagogic practices of involving every member of the community in the teaching and learning enterprise illustrates the absence of agency in the instructional design process in that the current models and approaches were adopted from proven practices elsewhere and this practice is yet to be localised.

9.3 Skill

My research findings from the interview data shows that English as the language of instruction appears to be another issue responsible for lack of understanding of the knowledge transferred through the print materials for distance learners from a predominantly oral tradition; with limited reading culture and restricted or no access to libraries or other reading resources. Cavanagh (1997) among others have raised concern about adult learning, media and culture. The typical prose-intensive style of print in distance learning materials makes heavy demands on learners who are often unpractised readers and writers in both their mother tongue and official language of instruction according to Creed et al (2005). Reading is an obvious learning skill in this learning environment and the lecturer instructs the distance students as follows:

Note that you will not be at a disadvantage in this course if you live in a very remote area of PNG. [course name]... has been designed to allow students to pass by simply reading the materials, carrying out the learning activities, and completing the assignment and the examination. [Artefact Description, ...[course name] Course Outline].

Paul teaches both internal and external students and contrary to the above instruction is wary of PNG students' ability, interest and intensiveness of reading. The lack of reading skills among PNG distance students at university level in Paul's view is culture related. According to Paul:

Reading skills and their learning culture, I think PNG students seriously lacks a reading culture. The books that I read at 7th and 8th grade, people in grade 12 would not do it. None of them can read a book from cover to cover. There is a serious lack of reading culture. It's something that is maybe beyond us [Interview, Paul 2010].

Paul's detection of the distance students' lack of reading to acquire knowledge being transferred is evidence of local cultural practices of knowledge transactions intersecting into contemporary pedagogic practice. That is, the prevailing absence of reading books in a traditional PNG/Melanesian society is intersecting into the contemporary pedagogic arrangement when students like Biem are not covering the large volume of reading contained in the resource book. Duonava also raises the view about the absence of a reading culture:

The immediate problem is that the students are not able to read, reading culture is not here in PNG, alright we have difficulties with reading. I jokingly tell students, before they start reading the first page, there are all sorts of things happening, you know you have people visiting, tambus [in-laws] coming and going and children crying and family obligations all those so they have difficulties in that. [Interview, Duonava 2009].

A related issue that Paul raises suggest that the absence of a reading culture among university students in PNG might not be related exclusively to traditional cultural practices of communication and interaction but the general absence of books, libraries and other forms of media for information storage and retrieval. Pedagogic transactions in traditional societies and even to the present time in some parts of PNG, used other mediums such as story-telling, dance and songs, paintings and carvings. Paul further stated:

... so PNG as you know we don't have a reading culture. Especially the younger generation, our generation fine. I am having difficulty with my kids to even read a book. There are no libraries, schools don't have books so they are not growing up with a reading culture. No matter how well we do this the students will always require constant assistance, that's the way I see it. [Interview, Paul 2010].

Lecturers and instructional designers are aware of the need for improvement in the students reading comprehension.

Nicole stated:

From the evaluations I have sighted students hardly read the resource book. They say it's too demanding and have no time to read and they don't read all the readings that have been identified so we might move up to the thing Jenny introduced was ... that is breaking up bigger reading into little junks but then we are told not to distort or manipulate any reading that we extract from any sources. [interview, Nicole 2009].

Duonava concurs:

I fully concur with that, I fully concur with it. I mean the big thick book sometimes, it is frightening. [Interview, Duonava 2009]

Duonava further elaborates:

Well the students themselves you know, two things that defeat them by that big thick book, I know because every time when I ask them, they say they are defeated by that big thick book and sometimes it's almost like they are trying to read the big thick book. Our method of presentation has to change. [Interview, Duonava 2009]

By recognising the skill of reading as a weakness, which is an important skill for distance students' learning in this pedagogic context, Duonava suggests an intervention pedagogic strategy to improve the design of the learning resources. To make students read, lecturers working with instructional designers may need to format and structure the learning resources in such a way to 'force' students to read.

So over the years I've found one way you know when they are structuring the study guide in particular, we'll have to ensure that the reading activities are reinforcing to the readings. What happens now they, traditionally they would read and then they will answer the questions at the end so it's almost like questions become a test but I urge them to use the activity questions in the study guide as presented and bring it out and simply use those activity questions as a pointer towards reading. So well that's it, that's one I've found, traditionally you know they would read the entire unit and then they will attempt the evaluation questions as a self-test. Now I'm reversing them and say use the questions as a guide to read so you have to answer the questions so when you are answering the questions what happens? You read because you are looking for the answers and without realizing it you've just read the whole chapter. [Interview, Duonava 2009].

Duonava's suggestion in this pedagogic strategy is to direct students through the study guide to do the reading related activities while concurrently reading, not doing the activities after reading.

So if you are able to somewhere reorient that activity so make it clearer that they don't need to do the activities last, you know they can do the activities concurrently with the reading itself, that would help out. That's very much in the layout of structure, the format and presentation. [Interview, Duonava 2009].

The absence of a reading culture affects the PNG students' reading skill to acquire knowledge. In the light of the above pedagogic concerns, Duonava thinks that the lecturers including himself and instructional designers need to rethink the present practice of overloading distance students with the large volume of reading. This change of pedagogic approach suggested by Duonava also hints at the use of additional communication technology such as audio-tapes and video beside book-based printed text as resources for transmission of knowledge. This is another theme that emerged in this research finding to be examined in *Section 9.5*.

Equal in importance to the skill of reading to extract knowledge is the writing skill. In one lecturer's view students' need peer-peer interaction to improve their writing skill. King stated:

I seriously think that students need to give their work, before submitting their work, give their work to others, and that is not only to the ones in the same class but others elsewhere attending other programs, may be not only to students but to the centres, people who have already graduated and who are in the field and who can make an assessment and get a fair comment so that they can be able to readjust their work. And so they can be able to communicate the intended meaning, and I mean this is how things happen even for us academics as well and so I think this is a practice that we should allow to rub off on our students as well. [Interview, King 2008]

To communicate the intended meaning in their assignments, students need to improve their writing skill. King suggests that this can be done through alliance formation among peers for a collaborative approach to learning. King however raises concern that a traditional Melanesian communal group approach to learning seems to diminish in the contemporary pedagogic site.

That's one of the reasons why I strongly emphasis on that idea of you know giving your work to somebody so that you should be able to get some feedback from which you can be able to improve and one of the things about our students, our students attitude towards their learning is that they really want to stick to themselves, they do not want to really open up. Because then it opens up their weaknesses as well. And that's something I notice among students, our students in particular, from the PNG point of view if you like. There is a tendency on the part of students to as much as possible keep their work to themselves, they'd rather keep it to themselves and not expose it to other students. [Interview, King 2008]

Reflecting on this observation King further stated:

Now I really do not know the reasons why they do that but one of those reasons likely is that they do not want to be ridiculed by other students, that this guy is a university student and yet his ability to communicate is poor his wordings are wrong, ... structure of the English is faulty and so on and so forth which I think is ... a wrong attitude towards education. [Interview, King 2008].

King's observation that students shy away at sharing their work with each other contradicts what has been a norm of learning in the traditional PNG society as well as in the contemporary context for collaboration and imitation to teach and learn from each other. King's observation supports the finding by Demerath (2001) who observed that high school students in Manus ridiculed to the extent of chastising peers who imitated others in their learning in a conventional setting. The observation by King about students learning practices is to do with the limitations of the skills of reading and writing using the English Language.

Here we see the expectation that a comprehension of the English Language is essential to take part in distance education pedagogic transactions. English Language, like any other language is a tool for communication and an adequate knowledge and understanding of the English language skills would be an advantage to the adult distance learner. English is the language of instruction and the knowledge content is transmitted in English. Knowledge can be conceptualised in other languages as well but King's thinking that students might be ridiculed because they do not speak and write proper English, can be misconstrued to mean that knowing English is to be knowledgeable.

This research finding confirms the concern of adult distance students' learning skills in the South Pacific by Chand (2007) that distance students need to collaborate in their distance learning practices and some face-to-face interaction with lecturer is needed to enhance learning by distance mode.

9.4 Teaching (Lahara)

Evans (1994a) stated that in distance education most lecturers have transmitted their lectures well in advance of knowing who their students are. The only time lecturers interact with distance students in a face-to-face situation is during the lahara session.

In relation to the pedagogic design for knowledge transmission I wanted to know lecturers experience about student-lecturer interaction and the level of engagement in teaching. With regard to distance students' interaction in his teaching, Kuma stated:

No and don't mistake me. A cultural situation comes here. Papua New Guineans of course culturally I mean it's more of a structured country. So you don't get that sort of challenges even in the conventional classroom. We hardly get any student asking questions or raising questions, they are hardly asking questions. [Interview, Kuma, 2010]

Is this lack of questioning and analytic critiquing by students to the lecturer who is the knowledge-expert and transmitter of knowledge a cultural phenomenon or is it a practical problem that is embedded in the way in which the learning instructions are structured and presented to students and lecturers? Kuma states that this absence of students asking questions seems common to both distance and face-to-face students in his teaching experience. This observation by Kuma concurs with the findings of a study by Guy et al (1996) on the conceptualisation, orientation and management of knowledge by matriculation students in the former IDCE (forerunner to the Open College). Furthermore, the studies by Lindstrom (1990) of local knowledge systems in the South Pacific also show that knowledge and its source is not questioned and challenged. Findings showed that PNG adult matriculation students in the 1996 study did not question the knowledge or the authority of its source.

Duonava's lahara teaching experience further reveals that when this imagined social structure of knowledge-authority position is removed there is more interaction between students themselves. Students freely engage in discussions contributing to their learning process. As a lecturer in the Management Strand, Duonava teaches both distance and face-to-face students. The experience Duonava reflects here is his teaching experience during a lahara session at one study centre. There is also a cultural habit or pastime of betelnut chewing by students that Duonava recognizes and in his interpretation this stimulates students in active interaction.

Exactly, in fact you could easily say that even if we go out for teaching in lahara, much of the discussion, let's assume that we are having a break and you would find that almost much of the discussions that couldn't come out in class I think because of the culture of respect is unlike in the Western culture the student can shoot off at any time to ask a question or interrupt at any time, interject at any time to raise a question, in a Melanesian context, when an instructor is talking they all wait, so they don't raise anything but the moment they begin to chew betelnut or exchange coffee then the whole thing begins to come out and it's almost like... and I am beginning to put the puzzle together. Oh okay I can see now where it fits. The culture is playing a lot in the learning here. [Interview, Duonava 2009].

The student's cultural practice of respect for the elders and the guru with knowledge in traditional society intersects here and is reproduced in the contemporary pedagogic site. This is the same as "a structured country" which Kuma described above about the student's timidity to ask questions and interact with lecturers. What the tribal elder or the lecturer transmits has institutionalised authority and that is not subject to questioning or should not be challenged as was observed among the Gnaou by Lewis (1975). There is a symbolic boundary of social structure between the expert transferring the knowledge and the novice acquiring that knowledge

in the social context of the lahara teaching session described above by Duonava. He mentions that *'the moment they begin to chew betelnut or exchange coffee then the whole thing begins to come out...'*. [Interview, Duonava 2009]. That is, the presence of authority structure seems to inhibit interaction and learning in the lahara teaching.

The chewing of betelnut by students in their meetings and interaction among peers and others (which I had also observed among student participants in Kinienen and Kusambuk study centres) and recognized by Duonava signals for a closer examination of the role of *betelnut chewing* in adult distance students' learning practices. This is a salient action by the students and is rooted in the student's indigenous culture. The lecturer acknowledges this as a way of active engagement and interaction when the imagined hierarchical social structure in the lecturer-student relationship is removed.

The above findings on teaching relates to lahara sessions. Facilitating distance students learning throughout the semester is done by the tutor/mentors in the respective study centres. This "teaching" varies among tutor/mentors. According to one of the tutor/mentors:

We are not supposed to teach. There are two of us. We just come and be with the students in the room and if they have any questions they ask and we discuss. I mean I have to read the materials and be familiar with the course too you know.
[Interview, Flo 2008]

Flo's approach to mentoring adult distance students we can see is for students to initiate discussion on conceptual ideas and knowledge in the course materials. She reads the materials as well but plays a facilitating role for students to initiate interactions instead of teaching.

In contrast to Flo, the tutor/mentor at Kusambuk deploys a *top-down authoritative* approach. Some adult students resist this mentoring approach. Lulu stated:

Sometimes what the tutor/mentor does or whoever is mentoring, he goes through the book just like tutoring, and his starting from notes 1 and 2 going right through, then it makes you feel that, you know, you are wasting your time because you are reading your own materials and you are understanding it from a different angle and he comes and he reads the book to you paragraph by paragraph. Yah so according to me that is not how we are supposed to learn [with emphasis on learn] from the book. We are supposed to teach ourselves at home and only what we don't understand, then we can ask. [Interview, Lulu 2009].

In their andragogical model, Knowles et.al (2005, p. 66) suggest that; "As adult educators ...[we should].. make efforts to create learning experiences in which adults are helped to make

the transition from dependent to self-directing learners' (p.66) This presents a serious problem in adult education: The minute adults walk into an activity labelled "education," "training," or anything synonymous, they hark back to their conditioning in their previous school experience, put on their dance hats of dependency, fold their arms, sit back, and say "teach me." This assumption of required dependency and the facilitators' subsequent treatment of adult students as children creates a conflict as we saw in Lulu's criticism of tutor/mentoring to transfer knowledge. What would be the pedagogic implications if additional media was used for distance teaching at UPNG-OC?

9.5 Additional Media for Teaching

Print-based media is the current medium of communication in use at the UPNGOC. The substantive issue here is not the technology or the related cost but the pedagogic underpinnings in the use of these technologies to facilitate improved transmission and acquisition of knowledge. In relation to use of technology I am reminded of Bates (1995a) who stated that use of technology will not make poor teaching better, it usually makes it worse.

Pedagogic considerations relate to enhancing student learning and its relevance to the local oral culture. For instance, McLoughlin (1999) traced the development of distance learning for indigenous Australian learners, and accounted for the cultural issues that impacted on the design of learning tasks and the associated avenues for communication provided to distance learners. He found that, culturally responsive design was ensured by the adoption of an epistemology and pedagogy based on Lave and Wenger's (1991) community of practice model. McLoughlin (1999, p. 231) pointed out that in designing instruction, there is typically a tension between the need to ensure flexibility and access to learners of "multiple cultures", while at the same time taking into account the need for localisation and a requirement to accommodate a particular set of learners' cognitive styles and preferences. The micro cultural level of the distance students is considered in relation to participatory structures, task design, goal orientation and development of communicative processes that are intended to support the learning needs of adult distance students in PNG.

My research findings reveal that there is a need for new and other forms of culturally sensitive and appropriate communication technology for transfer of knowledge to supplement the print-media in the PNG sociocultural context.

Participants in the research were asked about their perception in the use of additional media technology to complement the current medium of print-media. All of the four instructional

designers interviewed held the view that additional media should be incorporated into the design of distance education learning resources.

Jenny's statement reflects this desire from an instructional designer perspective:

Most of the courses now don't have that, they don't have audio tapes, and I think it could enhance learning to incorporate ... the audio aspects of the content and visual as well through maybe CD ROMs ... [Interview, Jenny 2008]

Moses also shares the same view to Jenny but raises the issue of financial cost that might hinder students from acquiring the additional media equipment for use to enhance their learning.

... from my own opinion, it will greatly enhance. It will enhance distance learning but then again, we don't know if that particular student there is able to use all those particular material. Probably at the moment, currently the realities of PNG now is poverty is one thing. I don't know if that particular student will be able to utilize, I mean if given an audio tape and a DVD, will he be able to use those materials. Does he have the particular device to utilize those materials, that's my question there. Otherwise I believe most students they are able to listen or see to really learn. [Interview, Moses 2009]

The issue of cost for new technology for distance teaching and learning raised by Moses is a common concern and a socioeconomic reality for students in PNG. The country's demographic situation is that 85% of the population are rural-based and engaged in subsistence economy as a means of sustenance compared to the 25% participating in the modern cash economy (National Department of Education, 1999 September) of more than ten years ago compared to an up to date data on education from a UNESCO source (UNESCO, 2010/2011).

Use of new forms of communication technology in distance, open and flexible education is now defined as the use of 4th and 5th generation interactive communication technology (Taylor, 1999; 1995) advancing away from Nipper's (1989) third generation distance learning and computer conferencing model.

The other two instructional designers, Nicole and Eva concur with Jenny and Moses. Nicole said, "...before we are so restricted to the print media and ...confining ourselves, we should try to move to other teaching aids." [Interview, Nicole 2009]. Eva raised a related concern with the use of technology. The concern is for staff to be technology literate.

Right now the main thing about getting into technology is, we have to be literate in technology. Mainly, first thing how to use the computer. With all the money I have and we can play around with, we can start courses getting students to know

the computers and then from there we can link it gradually into probably e-learning ... [Interview, Eva 2009]

In a case study (Haihuie, 2000) undertaken at the former IDCE (forerunner to the Open College) some staff were apprehensive about introducing new technology. It is not surprising to note that one instructional designer raises the concern about the use of new technology due to technology-illiteracy of staff. The analysis of the case study was defined as “fear” of technology inhibiting new ideas for enhancing distance education pedagogic transactions.

My research finding does show that IDs want to see an inclusion of additional media for packaging and transmission of learning resources. Moses substantiates his suggestion for additional communication media with a substantive pedagogic argument about the impact of additional media for knowledge transfer in which the distance students in addition to reading will be, “able to listen and see to really learn” [Interview, Moses, 2009]. A study on the use of new technology other than the print media done by Denen et.al (2007) was about the relative perceived importance of particular instructor actions on performance and satisfaction by students. The findings in this study showed that the instructors believe that learner performance is more likely tied to instructor actions. These actions are focused on course content and provide both proactive (models, expectations) and reactive (feedback) information to learners about their ability to demonstrate knowledge of course material.

Beside this view about the introduction and use of additional communication media from the instructional designers, let us turn to the distance students and their perception about use of other forms of media to enhance their learning?

In further advancement to the beneficial pedagogic implication mentioned by Moses, Biem also thinks that the traditional ways of seeing and hearing to transfer and acquire knowledge would certainly help his learning.

“We are sitting and we are listening to it or we are also seeing it and they explain it and it will help very much in our learning instead of quietly reading and tiring your brain down. I think it is worth trying those different technologies out. [Interview, Biem 2009].

Similarly Ilaks stated that;

... that will be very much appreciated because, apart from the writing when you see something in pictures, it will be more information as well, you know like as the saying goes. ... eh... pictures speak louder than words. So you know when you see things you can be able to ... [not clear]. Because sometimes [not clear]. But once it is supported with the written material then it becomes very

comprehensive and so it also enhances your level of understanding. [Interview, Ilaks, 2009]

Philip highlights an important consideration about the differences in student's preference for media to support their learning.

... if it comes with a video tape or CD or something that go along with the books that are written. It helps very much from our kind of understanding ah. Understanding and it gives more explanation and some of the students, it depends on an individual, some may prefer to read books and then work on their assignments. Others they will prefer the CDs or the video tapes out of that so for optional, optionally I think it's' good to package it all in so that it helps the students. I mean everyone else is not the same, I may have a different way of doing things than you or anyone else so in order to package the whole and put it together with CDs and all that I think will help some students be able to understand what they are doing. [Interview, Philip 2009]

In the last part of his reflection above Philip makes a critical point about pedagogic contexts in general but about learning in particular. That is, the idea of 'difference' by stating that 'everyone is not the same' goes to illustrate the fact that there is an abundance of literature on the many theories of learning. The point I pick out from this about learning reiterate my argument that practices of learning deployed by adult distance students in managing their learning is relative to the sociocultural reality of the learner. Just as much as practices of collaboration and interaction that differs among students, use of additional technology might enrich the learning experience for some while for others, the socioeconomic position of affordability that Moses raised might be of real concern to some distance students in PNG. Some students prefer reading only, others as the findings suggest if given an option, would like to read, listen and see to learn. Listening and seeing and then doing has been the indigenous way of knowledge transmission deeply embedded in traditional Melanesian forms of communal and *live-it-to-know-it* pedagogy.

Pedagogic design, skills for knowledge acquisition and additional technology for knowledge transfer are themes that emerged in the data. The knowledge-authority positioning by lecturers and instructional designers and the contest and negotiation for knowledge acquisition occur within the framework of an organisation. Administrative functions in supporting distance teaching and learning was another theme that emerged in my research findings. Certain administrative functions either facilitate and enhance or inhibit student-lecturer interaction.

9.6 Administrative Organisation

Moore and Kearsley (1996) believe that a systems approach is helpful to understanding distance education as a field of study and is essential to its successful practice. The system includes

learning, teaching, communication, design, management and even less obvious components such as history and institutional philosophy. Within the component of management is administrative function and a lack of sound understanding to operationalize this can be detrimental to distance education pedagogic transactions.

Administrative functions to support distance students were a concern raised by both academic staff and student participants. The findings also reveal concerns from academic staff related to the administration and coordination of the distance education program activities such as logistics to conduct lahara sessions in regional study centres and final exam coordination. The most common concern from the students was pedagogical issues of the lack of, delay and sometimes no feedback and interaction from lecturers and poor management of students' academic records.

Academic records of student participants examined revealed inconsistent and inaccurate record of students' final grades. Most students in the *Wantok Study Group* experienced this and as a participant observer, I went through the procedural requirements of paying the set tuition fees to enrol in four course units and completed all course requirements. Three of these course units were done from London while the fourth was taken in a lahara session in 2008 with two members of the *Wantok Study Group*. Like the other members of the *Wantok Study Group*, my academic record show only two out of the four courses I had successfully completed. For ethical reasons, academic transcripts of the student participants will not be disclosed. One of four course units I had done has "NG" for not graded while the third course does not appear at all on my academic record [Appendix 10]. I am highlighting this experience as an example of data derived from student experiences in all three study centres and the error in management of records can have negative pedagogic implications.

Biem raised concern about the mismanagement of academic records:

...there is inefficiency in maintaining an effective record system on all matters concerning the administration and management of the external study program. I registered again to do [course name stated] in the 2nd semester of this year because the records kept imply that I did not submit my assignments and examination so I scored an F grade in both subjects, regardless of my submission of copies of assignments as evidence to the coordinators of the programme. I studied these two subjects in the 2nd semester of 2004. My attempt to get this anomaly sorted out was a waste so I have to register and do them again. [Interview, Biem 2009]

In addition to distance student record management and tracking of assignments students also raised concerns about other the administrative functions of course material dispatch.

Waranduo stated:

Late arrival of course materials from UPNG for Open Campuses. Mostly we receive our materials in March and not February as usual. This has resulted in us rushing through the course materials to catch up with time. [QR Waranduo - 2007]

Kastem further added:

One negative experience that needs addressing is the supply of materials, which sometimes is delayed. [QR, Kastem - 2007]

Biem, Waranduo and Kastem are examples of student concerns relating to the administration and student support services in their study by distance mode. In the light of the above concerns, Kent begins to question the legitimacy and authority of the UPNGOC due to administrative errors that affects the distance teaching and learning schedules.

For Kent, poor administrative organisation was de-motivating and discouraging but he persevered because he needed the education capital from the UPNG-OC as *the* custodian of official knowledge to better his social positioning. This knowledge and educational qualification would enable Kent like all the other students to be included and participate in the emerging cash economy society of PNG which otherwise would be shut out for them. In a startled way Kent narrated to me his personal experience about the poor administrative organisation:

Why? It frustrated me and I don't like that. Not only in terms of the assignment itself but the transcript. ..[after long pause]. How can you say that of my transcript? If the [official mentioned] has said that he has ...the blessings of the [high authority]. With the seal of the University give him the paper meeting the requirements through the external studies, that you now have this course, whatever [in an angry tone]. And yet there is no transcript. I had to fly down two times. I had to go into and see [name mentioned], I went to see Duonava, I've written letters, I've sent emails, I've seen [name mentioned] for about I think for about I don't know 8, 9, 10 times [again with a tone of anger]. And then yet I don't have transcript, and then how can I encourage others that this is a good program, which you struggle you sweat your guts you've gone through so many struggles to come out ah..., it's a trial and error case so yet you have to go. And then yet, they tell you that oh because it is an administrative problem, where is that administrative problem? And then even spending our own money two times and then accommodation, you just imagine the cost, not only in terms of monetary terms but the cost that is involved, the time and other things so which is one of the very frustrating areas they have to pass bucks around, no, no you have to call the coordinator for transcript, no, no its with the external internal.....[personal label] this is very frustrating. Even to date, I even don't have a transcript. [Interview, Kent 2009]

The anger and frustration due to poor administrative organisation is evident and this research findings echoes Creed et al (2005) who highlighted poor management at regional level in a

Pakistan distance education programme. This finding also point to the supporting function of study centres put forward by Mills (1996) to support distance teaching. The concern about administrative function raised by Kent summarises a common feeling about the absence of effective distance student support.

9.6.1 Evaluation/Assessment

Apart from the self-evaluation activity for students analysed in *Sub-Section 9.2.1* above, there are assessable components of the work that I want to expose and analysis here. On page 7 of the course outline, details of the assessment is shown (Table 8):

Table 8: Assessment Schedule

Assessment	Due Date	Value	Return Date
Test	Week 8	30%	Week 12
Assignments (Major Paper)	Week 9	30%	Week 13
Final Examination	Week 15	40%	

This further confirms my observation notes during the lahara session:

..there will be only four weeks of teaching and interaction with two tests and the final week for examination. A change to the assessment portfolio was announced. Internal component will weigh 60% and the final exam will carry 40%. [Observation notes, Lahara Session, 2008]

The questions/assignments at the end of the printed course material were to be answered and submitted by a set date. Most of the questions are essay assignments and needed substantial knowledge of the study unit.

On pages 7 to 14 of the Course Outline, the students are informed on issues pertaining to the assessment policy. The topics covered include, calculation of grade point average (A-F); examination, assignment information, assignment items of test, major paper and essay topics, marking criteria and test and examinations samples.

The sit-in test consists of two parts. Part A is multiple choice and Part B is short answer questions. The essay assignment is referred to as the major paper in Table 8, which sets three essay questions starting with the following wordings: *critically discuss this statement, critically verify this statement, discuss this statement*; and, *explanations should also identify and justify the application of management practices of the private sector by the public sector.*

Students are also informed about referencing and acknowledgement of source used directing students to the distance learner support guide titled, *First Things First*, produced by the UPNGOC. Calculation of the grade point average is also shown to students in how their final grade for the course is calculated.

Feedback

The PNG adult distance students' practices of learning are strongly framed meaning students must hand in assignments on time that meets the academic standard prescribed by the transmitter. These assignments are evaluated by the tutors, with the necessary written feedback comments and returned to the student by a prescribed duration to demonstrate learners' mastery of their module component. This feedback help learners to assess their work and get the relevant directions to help them progress to their next distance learning stage in terms of preparation to meet the rigorous tests and final examination.

The finding show that although feedback is critical to assessment/evaluation and provides students with information about their progress as they interact with the printed materials, however, at times students such as Waranduo received returned assignments with no succinct feedback:

...out of the eight courses I have done, only one I have received the marked assignments. The other seven there has been no feedback. Feedback will be helpful. ... Those with comments are very very helpful. Especially with examinations you stick around the areas in which you wrote in the assignments for exam questions. If the assignments come back with comments you make improvements in preparation for the examinations. I have copies of assignments with comments on them. [Interview, Waranduo 2008]

With those assignments that Waranduo received feedback from the lecturer he stated:

...what he had written here is very helpful when the exam comes. Because some of those questions were along those lines and I think I did my exam well. [Interview, Waranduo 2008]

Biem stated:

...the university gave me fail (F) because the course coordinators did not provide marks for assignments, tests or examinations. I have written to them giving copies of my assignments while tests and examinations not given because they were never given back to me.so now I am left with money spent for nothing with a waste of my precious time and ending up getting F grading for not doing anything wrong by me. It noted I have done all my assignments, test and examination for these courses. [interview, Biem 2009]

In view of the spatial barriers in distance education the feedback mechanism is essential. The success of any distance education programme is dependent not only on the prompt delivery of the print materials but immediate turnaround of assignments.

Related to student record management that Biem stated above is the lack of accurate tracking of assignments and tests. Waranduo showed frustration regarding late arrival of his assignments and stated:

Submission of assignments through the Open Campus has resulted in either late arrival of assignments for marking at UPNG or misplacing of assignments for marking by staff resulting in students scoring poor marks. My assignments never arrived at UPNG for marking by the tutor. [QR, Waranduo - 2007]

This research finding highlights the delay or failure to meet deadlines for assignments and test as a consequence of the late dispatch of learning resources. This research finding support Gupta and Gupta's (1999) findings that effective student support services are the backbone for a successful distance education program.

Ilaks expresses the same feeling of his peers and refers to the motivational aspect of interactive transactions in distance education pedagogy:

... there are times we are so desperate to know the results of the courses especially, the marked assignments, how we are progressing, we want to know how we are progressing but most times you find it they hardly get these things on time for us to see. You know when you talk about motivated, when somebody see's that he is scoring good marks, you know that motivates him, but to keep us in suspense you know sometimes I think I may not be doing well and you become demoralised. [Interview, Ilaks 2009]

This response indicates the importance of prompt feedback especially for the geographically isolated distance learners who are impaired by the lack of face-to-face contact with the institution, and may not have access to reliable communications technology. Dzakiria's and Christopher's (2004) study shows that distance students who do not receive timely feedback on their assignments led to frustration.

In light of the above administrative organisation concerns impacting feedback and interaction, Jokon who also had similar experiences proposed to break the insulation of boundaries of classification from his novice student-position by suggesting a restructure of the way things are done at the dominant provider institution. The instructional discourse and regulative discourse is within the purview of the transmitter but Jokon's suggestion challenges this boundary:

As a suggestion, re-structuring, modifying or rearranging current administrative structure and maybe student input, it may greatly help. [QR, Jokon -Huahama]

From the students' concern and in particular Kent's frustrations and Jokon's suggestion in the above excerpt we can see a destabilising motive to the knowledge-authority position of the UPNGOC. The UPNGOC does undertake periodic reviews of its operation. Such reviews are undertaken internally as a formative evaluation of practice as well as review by independent external consultants. In early 2010 two distance education experts, undertook a review of the distance education system at the UPNG-OC describing their findings as an "immensely disturbing situation compounded by a practice in which the University accepts off-campus students but exhibits no 'ownership' or pride in them" (Lockwood and Koul, 2010, p. 3).

The UPNGOC management is aware of these concerns raised by students and the challenge to its claim of legitimate knowledge-authority. Moses stated:

The only general observation is we did an evaluation report last time and the most problems that students are complaining about student support services, I don't know what I can do. That's what I wanted to say and it is here, that's the first draft [shows me the evaluation report] [Interview, Moses 2009].

Moses shed light for improvement of learning support for adult distance students in the pedagogic arena and states in the above that student support is an area for further improvement. In light of the above research findings we need to reflect back to my story on the development of distance education in PNG. In Chapter 3 we saw the colonising agenda from a Western establishment, the United Nations directive to the colonial government to establish a university for the colony. One of the objects in the charter for the establishment of UPNG in 1969 was for the implied inclusion of distance education in the statement, "if students cannot come to the University, then the University must go out to the students" in the Foot Report (1962). The lack of and inefficient pedagogic learning student support to enhance feedback and interaction for off-campus students who cannot come to the University suggest a weakening of institutional framing. The shortcoming in meeting the aspirations of the 1962 United Nation directive statement for the establishment of what is now the UPNGOC reflects a weakening of what is supposed to be a strong frame and classification between the novice acquirer and the disseminator's claim as the legitimate custodian of official knowledge. The concerns relating to administrative functions bring to question the reputation of the distance education program at the UPNGOC and its education capital the adult distance students strive to acquire.

9.7 Discussing Summary of Findings

This chapter presented the research finding relating to pedagogic design for transfer of knowledge by lecturers and instructional designers. The research findings were presented under six themes; institution prescribed pedagogic principles, skills expected by the institution for students to have to undertake distance mode studies, teaching in a lahara, additional media for transferring knowledge, and the administrative organisation within which distance teaching and learning is undertaken. I will not summarise all the findings by theme, but present four key findings relating to pedagogic design and knowledge transfer in distance education pedagogy. These are:

- Lecturers and instructional designers format and structure distance learning resources subscribing to institutionalised pedagogic principles which is didactic and instructivist reflecting a prescriptive and top-down authoritative pedagogic approach.
- Reading and writing skills in the English language has serious pedagogic implications for transfer of knowledge.
- Transfer of knowledge requires additional media to accommodate ‘seeing’ and ‘hearing’ mediums of communication.
- Flaws in the administrative functions of the organisation inhibit feedback and interaction between student and lecturer.

Studies conducted by Sivan (1986) and Keller (1983), attribute learner motivation to the role instructional designers and instructors play in the design, development, and delivery of instructional materials. Consequently, the instructional design process can have a significant impact on how well learners will do in their learning endeavours and their persistence to remain in an educational program. For this reason, at the UPNGOC it is important that lecturers, instructional designers and administrators appreciate the impact of feedback and interaction on adult distance learners and how this is taken into account in the pedagogic design for transfer of knowledge. This will facilitate for collaborative and interactive pedagogy as opposed to instructivist and top-down authoritative which seems to be the current practice.

In view of Lulu’s criticism of being taught like a high school student, Wlodkowski (1999) posits that adults may arrive at distance learning with a positive attitude and high motivation, but these attributes can diminish if teaching through the print materials is not found to be meaningful and rewarding for the adult learner. I concur with Wlodkowski (1999) by stating that there is a need to make adult goals, interests and perspectives a central theme of any distance learning design

intended for an adult student population in the PNG distance education context. A learning experience delivered in an engaging format is intrinsically motivating because it increases the range of conscious connections to those interests, applications and purposes that are important and relate to adult learners. To further expand on Lulu's criticism of the format of the printed learning resources, Qureshi (2001) place emphasise on the need for concrete and immediate learning goals when writing about adult learners as individuals who know what is important to them and are frustrated when others impose their ideas of what is important.

Ability to read and comprehend in the English Language is a requisite skill for adult distance students. Literacy and language ideology is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, it is pertinent to reflect as a summary that because of the medium of communication and language of instruction the research findings have pedagogic implications in the designing of the learning resources and the students' engagement with the printed text. Lecturers and instructional designers like Nicole face challenges in transferring knowledge without distorting meaning but at the same time facilitate for ease of student interpretation and understanding. A pedagogic strategy to overcome these challenges is to utilise additional media such as radio and video in the pedagogic design and knowledge transmission process.

The current medium of communication and the language of instruction inhibit effective transfer of knowledge. In other words, the text-based print media and the language of communication are insensitive to the PNG distance learners' local oral and visual culture and pedagogies of knowledge transmission. In Chapter 4 I found that use of new communication technologies in developing countries to enhance collaboration and interaction has challenges (Usun, 2004). Even in some developed countries it is a one of gradual application rather than a revolution as found by Kirkup and Kirkwood (2005). In consideration of this I put forward the pedagogic idea that doing things together in a group or communally oriented pedagogic task through imitation and listening from the tribal elder's oratory to learn is, and has been a strong feature of communal based Pacific Island societies. From the research findings and taking into account of issues such as cost and technological literacy there is an overwhelming desire for inclusion of additional technology that has audio and video to improve distance education pedagogic transactions. This finding is from both instructional designers as well as students.

These research findings has immediate implications for distance education policy and practice at the UPNGOC. Student narratives raising concerns about the lack of feedback on assignments and tests, late arrival of course materials with consequential impact on learning and meeting schedules point to serious flaws in the administrative functions of the provider institution. This

brings to question the classificatory categories in a distance education pedagogic relationship bearing weight to the suggestion by Dowling (2009) that distance education pedagogy is an archetype of weak framing.

A recent review of the UPNGOC by Lockwood and Koul (2010) highlight the significance of assessable work produced by students in the pedagogic relationship. If there is no feedback and interaction, and students are not evaluated on their learning there is no pedagogic relationship implying weak framing (Bernstein, 2000). In the regulative discourse enforced by the provider institution, a student is expected to work through the study materials and then respond to the related assignment and test, which serves as a feedback to the lecturer. The response serves to demonstrate the adult distance learners' intellectual ability to realise course objectives and tells the lecturer how well the student has understood the knowledge contend being transferred. It is desirable for marked assignments and test to be returned to the student in the shortest practicable time (Simpson, 2000). The interaction and feedback to students through their assessable work is important. Learning may not be enhanced with a simple tick or a cross but with detailed comments and advice that reinforces acceptable answers, correct unacceptable responses indicating how the response could have been improved and importantly explain the reason for the awarded mark. Assessment related pedagogic tasks are not rituals to be observed, nor hurdles to be cleared by adult distance learners; they are an integral part of the pedagogic process that creates a pedagogic relationship between the knowledge-expert lecturer and the knowledge-seeking learner (Lockwood and Koul, 2010).

When the UPNGOC as the provider institution is weak in enforcing the regulative discourse in a pedagogic site there is little or no pedagogic relationship. The research finding illuminates the short-comings of what Peters (1983) and Holmberg (1989) define as an industrial-like process of pedagogy for massification of university education. The application of an industrial model for education production brings to the fore criticisms by antagonist of learning in distance education such as Clark (1994) and Kirschner et al (2006) that "quality" of learning is not the same through the use of a medium of communication technology to transfer learning instructions and knowledge. The industrial-process like pedagogic model is not new but the challenge is that of a paradigm shift in distance education pedagogic practice advocated by Evans and Nation (2000) to change university teaching and Laurillard's (2002) call to rethink university teaching which some academics and administrators seem resistant to adopting.

Pedagogic practices have shifted from a fixed space and time transactions between one lecturer and students to the addition/inclusion of more actors in the pedagogic site. Such additions

include instructional designers, use of technology in knowledge/instruction dissemination and interaction and logistic support personnel to operate the administrative functions. It is evident from the above research findings that the delay in dispatch of course materials led to students missing assessment deadlines which consequently led to the delay of their assessment results. Like in an industrial process of production, one weak-link or breakdown affect the entire production process. What is compelling from the findings is the disrepute to destabilise the position of authority and custodian of official knowledge claim by the UPNGOC. I must make a distinction that students are not critiquing the subject matter of management knowledge in their process of learning, but are questioning the administrative ability and functions of the knowledge custodian, the UPNGOC, and this can relate to issues of trustworthiness and authenticity of the knowledge being reproduced and disseminated and the value of the educational capital awarded to the adult distance student upon successful completion of studies.

9.8 Conclusion

Drawing from the interview, questionnaire and artefact description data of staff, students and the UPNGOC produced learning resources, I have in this chapter explored the findings of this research under two distance education pedagogic categories: pedagogic design and transfer of knowledge.

Within the domains of the institution, there are also contests and negotiations to take positions in the hierarchical strata of the organisation. This was quite evident in the pedagogic design practices between the newly recruited and experienced instructional designers as well as one of the lecturers. Duonava constructs his *knowledge-expert* position with an educational qualification in his subject area of teaching from an overseas university. It can be said that from the analysis, knowledge-authority relationship between an inanimate entity, the UPNGOC and the animate entities, lecturers and instructional designers, is interdependent. The lecturers and instructional designers draw their knowledge-expert and quality assurance positions from the institutionalised authority of the UPNGOC. They have acquired this education capital from universities outside of PNG, which is conceived to be higher up in the hierarchy of knowledge-authority positioning, to further empower them to construct their positions in the distance education pedagogic site as an arena for social production. The construction and maintenance of these pedagogic positions also reflects the traditional forms of social organisation as I had shown in my analysis. As the research findings show, the institutions' integrity can be brought into question by weakness and failures in the administrative functions of the UPNGOC. The model of distance education is an industrial-like process for production and delivery of higher

education. If there is a fault in one section of the process, it affects the entire pedagogic process of knowledge transmission and acquisition.

It is important, therefore, when designing distance learning course materials for delivery by print media, learner strategies of collaboration and interaction be a prominent consideration in the overall pedagogic design process.

10 Chapter Ten

Summary and Conclusion

*Pedagogic actions and transactions in distance education
are always socially and culturally situated. - Unknown author
and*

*While others aim to reach the moon ...
we must aim to reach the village". -- Julius Nyerere*

10.1 Introduction

My focus in this chapter is to briefly summarise the findings, and to highlight the theoretical, research, pedagogical, policy and practice implications. Furthermore, I will look at how my research contributes to knowledge, particularly with regard to *social* and *cultural distances* in distance education pedagogic transactions. Finally, I will reflect on the strengths and limitations of this study and suggest pointers for further research in this area.

The purpose of this thesis is to explore PNG adult distance students learning practices as they interact with the print media technology. Data was collected from participants at three UPNGOC study centres. A variety of techniques were used to collect the data to answer the research questions I had set out to explore through a sociocultural framing of pedagogic practices. The interview data proved productive as they provided me with sufficient rich narrative data to draw conclusions. The interview data was coded heuristically, with the emergence of three main pedagogic categories from a range of themes from the coded data. The study adopted a type of *quasi educational ethnographic* focus concentrating upon the ‘insider’s perspective’ (Miles and Huberman, 1994) within a specific PNG context though there may be the potential for others working in similar areas to explore meaning, gain insights or judge for themselves, how applicable the findings from this study are to their own research contexts.

The premise of my thesis is that distance education pedagogic transactions are defined as social activities hence; the pedagogic practices are socioculturally situated. In this pedagogic site as a social arena, participants draw on different forms of capital; symbolic, cultural and social capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977) to engage in the pedagogic transactions. The learners’ motivation is to acquire the education capital to enhance their social mobility in a transforming PNG society that is predominantly subsistence based to a cash economy. From the institutional perspective and in Bernstein’s (2000) pedagogic device of framing, the lecturers and instructional designers design, transfer and regulate the knowledge dissemination process. Extending from this theoretical framework, I introduced the twin concepts of *ososom* and *osisim* to reconceptualise this orientation in the distance education pedagogic site.

10.2 Summary of Main Findings

I addressed the main findings by taking into account the main research question: *What are the pedagogic practices involving adult distance education students using the medium of print-media in PNG?* And, the following sub-questions: *with who do the learners collaborate and interact with and why? How do students organise their studies and manage their learning? How do the students learn things in other context? For example, how do their local communities 'teach' their members to do things? What kind of pedagogic strategies can be found in the course materials? And what skills are necessary for engaging in the pedagogic transactions?*

Adult distance students in PNG draw from indigenous forms of pedagogy to manage their learning and acquire the valued commodity of knowledge. The *Wantok System* or the strong Melanesian ways of collaboration and interaction of interdependence is present in the learning practices. Distance learning therefore has a wider social benefit not only for the enrolled UPNGOC student but also those with whom the student collaborate and interact with to learn benefit from the knowledge in the process of its acquisition.

Most of the learning instruction and knowledge content is transmitted in writing and this printed form of communication was absent in pre-contact societies. Students are more familiar with oral storytelling and seeing things and taking part in activities to construct meaning. Against this contextual background of the learner, the pedagogic design (curriculum) is strongly framed on top-down authoritative principles for transfer of knowledge. However, administrative flaws that were observed impede lecturer-student interaction, hence weakening the frame.

The findings in this thesis illuminates the ways in which custodianship and dissemination of official university reproduced knowledge viewed as a highly valued commodity constructs hierarchies of knowledge-authority positions in the pedagogic transactions and the perpetuation of knowledge-power hegemony (Foucault, 1980) in a pedagogic relationship. Putting this simply, the UPNGOC distance education pedagogic site is an arena of social and cultural [re]production. The transactions in this distance education pedagogic site as I had observed and analysed has certain implications.

10.3 Implications of Main Findings

The implications of my main findings relate to theory of distance education, implications for research in distance education and policy and practice for distance education at the UPNG-OC.

10.3.1 Theoretical

The visible and the invisible. The first implication is to the understanding of distance education pedagogy and how the valued commodity of university knowledge is transmitted by the UPNGOC and the strategies students deploy to learn and acquire this knowledge. Researchers such as Shank (2006) and Dennen, Darabi and Smith (2007) and others have focussed on the pedagogy of distance education exploring the lecturer-learner-lecturer relationships focussing on the visible pedagogy (*osisim*) that utilizes the institution prescribed types of pedagogic interaction of learner-content, learner-instructor and learner-learner. My interest follows that of Simpson (2000) about what goes on beyond these three types of interaction outside of the institutional setting.

Thus, the findings in this research contribute to the literature base on the pedagogy of distance education in PNG. The findings in my study clearly show that beyond these three types, there is the *invisible pedagogy* embedded in tribal-communal and indigenous pedagogies of collaboration and interaction. Through the application of Bernstein's (2000) notion of recontextualisation of ORF and PRF and his pedagogic device of framing and classification in a distance education pedagogic site the *invisible pedagogy* might imply weak framing. The institution has little control over the way in which adult distance students manage their learning. There is weak framing when the institution has limited control over, when and how students manage their learning. As we have seen the institution does maintain its position of custodian of official knowledge and has control over; the mode of communication through print media and the English language, sequencing, pace and the criteria of evaluation through assessment. Other than these control strategies by the dominant institution much of the pedagogic actions related to learning is under the control of the knowledge acquirer using their indigenous ways of social organisation in knowledge transmission and acquisition.

10.3.2 Pedagogical

A significant pedagogic implication from the findings of this research relates to feedback from distance students' submitted assignments and tests. In the theme of administrative organisation, data reveals that there is delay in the arrival of course materials which consequently affect submission schedules and overall learning relating to theoretical implications on the idea of framing. The control and maintenance of regulative discourse for evaluation in a pedagogic relationship is the responsibility of the transmitter. As such assessment related pedagogic tasks are not just rituals to be observed and hurdles to be overcome by distance students in a similar

way a novice is expected to do in a cultural rite of passage. The assessment related pedagogic tasks are an integral part of the distance education pedagogic process. The adult distance learner is expected to work through the distance learning resources and then respond to the questions in the assignments and tests. This response from the student in the pedagogic orientation of *ososom* serves as a feedback for interaction with the lecturer and the instructional designer. Assessment related pedagogic task and the responses from the learner also serve to demonstrate the distance students' ability to realise the course objectives and verify the transmission of a body of knowledge.

The tension between institution prescribed policy and actual pedagogic practices affects learning and student support. The implication of this research findings support the recommendations in a review relating to distance student support undertaken by Lockwood and Koul (2010). There are serious flaws in the administrative organisation to facilitate effective lecturer-student-lecturer interaction.

The research finding also has practical implications for the urgent need for additional communication media and relevant training for the institution's distance mode stakeholders. These media can consider including audio and visual technology for transmission of distance learning resources and bring 'life' to complement the 'dead' print-media used at present. Further, these additional technologies will provide richness to the pedagogic transactions and is deemed to be appropriate and accommodative of the mediums of communication in PNG students' indigenous pedagogies of oral storytelling, visual images of artefact, totemic symbols and dance and paintings that were and are still used to transfer knowledge from one generation to the next.

This study highlights the importance of collaboration and interaction if adult distance learners are to acquire the educational capital and compete fairly in the cash economy of a PNG society in transition from traditional subsistence to modern cash economy. Facilitating for collaboration and interaction by staff of the provider institution and significant others labelled as *invisible social capital* is critically important for the adult distance student in the PNG context where pedagogic practices in the contemporary context seems deeply rooted in indigenous Melanesian pedagogies of storytelling, memorisation-recall-narration, imitation, at times enshrined in mythology and centred on the communal/group aspect as opposed to individualistic.

The research finding reveals a call for UPNGOC not to dismiss the importance of indigenous ways of social organisation to enhance collaboration and interaction as important elements of pedagogy in distance education.

10.3.3 Policy and Practice

In Chapter 3 I presented the story of the development of distance education in PNG with a focus on the UPNGOC. From this review we know that it is overall PNG National Government Policy through the National Higher Education Plan (Commission for Higher Education, 2000) and other supporting policy directives such as PNG National Higher Education Policy and Implementation Strategy (Commission for Higher Education, 2000)³¹ for distance education to complement the conventional mode to deliver education in PNG. In 2008 a report was prepared for the Commonwealth of Learning (Abrioux, 2008) making specific recommendation for a structural framework for higher education open and distance learning in PNG. In the report was a proposal for an open university suggesting three models to choose from. At the institutional level UPNGOC's distance education programme is guided by the UPNG Strategic Plan (UPNG, 2001) and the UPNG-OC Strategic Business Plan (UPNG, 2002). These overall policies direct lecturers and instructional designers to deliver university education through distance mode enabling social inclusion for those adults and other learners who are not able to attend full-time study on campus.

It is in PNG's interest as well as the implementation agency, UPNG, to ensure that if eligible students cannot come to the university, then the university must go out to them as recommended in the United Nations Report (Foot, 1962) and the Currie Commission Report (Currie, 1964). The significant issue is about improving the operational system so that once students are enrolled, they are supported in their learning to minimise procrastination and reduce attrition because adult distance learners are multidimensional (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).

By focussing on adults, the concept of andragogy (Knowles, 1978) became obvious and the pedagogic issue of teaching adult students which should be guided through facilitation for them to construct their own meaning. Researchers interested in adult distance education such as Evans (1994a) put forward that in terms of cognitive process, existing stocks of knowledge, skills and values, previous experiences, worldly responsibilities, their ages and so forth has an impact on their learning. Thus, the UPNGOC should review further training for all stakeholders in distance education as well as general andragogy and distance teaching techniques.

Beside training to improve pedagogic practices there is need for development of policy for funding and scholarships or subsidies for students studying through the distance mode. This has

³¹ Most of these National Governments Reports are out of date. There was a succeeding National Higher Educational Plan to the one I cited here NHEP II (2000-2004), which I was not able to access. The latest Government Report was prepared in 2008 for the Commonwealth of Learning.

broader implications for the Office of Higher Education which was also highlighted by Moore et.al (2001) feasibility study.

10.4 Limitations

In Chapter 6 I presented the design of my research method which among other aspects made mention of the sites for data collection, the techniques for data collection and the selection of participants. There were however limitations. This section discusses limitations that became apparent during the progress of my research. For example, gender imbalance in the student and lecturer participants, only three out of the more than twenty Open College study centres were used and the change in the rationale and interaction schedule for members of the *Wantok Study Group* with me as the lecturer/researcher. While there are other limitations that my audience may raise issue with, I will discuss the major limitations highlighted here.

My invitation to recruit student participants was on voluntary basis. Only three are females out of the total fifteen students. This is a major limitation in consideration of the fact that both the UPNG Strategic Plan (2001) and the Open College Business Plan (2002) have clearly articulated policy statements for gender balance in the recruitment of potential students for course enrolment through the distance mode of studies at UPNG. Of the three female participants there was no data from one female.

The availability of data from more female student participants would have added a balanced richness to the stories of learning practices from both gender perspectives. It is very relevant for PNG and Evans (1988) noted this kind of imbalance more than twenty years ago in his articulation stating that, “In this sense both women and men are bound equally and differently by the traditional gender structures of society; although for most men the traditional circumstances suit them nicely.” (Evans, 1988, p. 6). The gender imbalance in the student sample is a major limitation of this research and implies the male-dominant role of traditional PNG society. This will be an exciting topic for future research.

One study centre, the Buka Open Campus in the Autonomous Region of Bouganville, had experienced ten years of civil unrest on the island as a result of mining and environmental destruction. Students from Bouganville as well as tutor/mentors at the Buka Open Campus would have added further richness to the data for this research. Their stories of teaching and learning and in particular their motivations and their patterns of study in a region recovering from a civil war would have contributed illuminating insights for distance education discourses.

Although my invitation letters for student volunteers was sent, no student responded to volunteer.

The third is not in the strict sense a limitation but the deviation from the idea for me to use the *Wantok Study Group* as an intervention strategy which did not go according to original plan. My original thinking was that as an insider researcher, the study group would be used by me to tutor and mentor distance students allowing me to facilitate for intensive and collaborative learning practices of learner-content, learner-lecturer and learner-learner interactions. Students would be required to keep journals of their learning practices and experiences and I will regularly facilitate and guide them through. Students will share these with others and would have formed one main source of data. I had planned to use this data to interrogate and analyse what was going on in the invisible world of the distance learners to understand their practices of learning in the PNG context. This intervention strategy for data collection was not feasible due to a number of factors. These included geographical distances, costs of telephone communication and lack of email access for most student participants and the fact that I was most of the time based at the IOE in London.

Finally, the use of the English Language as the medium of instruction kept recurring in the course of this research. Data from students' practices of learning, the lecturers and instructional designers approaches to structuring and development of courses materials required English comprehension skills to enhance distance education pedagogic practices. This was not given much attention in this research. This is an obvious direction for future research in the PNG distance education context I discuss in the next section.

10.5 Future Research

The findings echoed the voices of students' who at times seem to have insufficient grasp of the English language as they interact with the print materials.

One area for future research relates to English Language skills as a tool for enhancing effective transfer of knowledge and distance student learning. Although language and literacy ideology was not a focus of my research, through the process of data collection and analysis it became evident in relation to one of my research questions on skills distance students needed to undertake learning. In order to manage their learning effectively, distance students need good English skills, especially reading. This particular cultural challenge of more than 800 indigenous languages in PNG was pointed out in my literature review and methodology chapters. To deliver education in such a culturally diverse context poses challenges and dilemmas. The dilemma is

whether we forgo our individual cultural identity and way of viewing and interpreting the lived-world through our indigenous languages and embrace a homogenous culture of a single language for the sake of a “modern” PNG national identity. In other words, PNG is at the crossroads of transition from 800 nation-states (linguistically/culturally speaking) to becoming a homogenous entity using a state defined curriculum and national language of instruction to realize the aspirations for a homogenous national society to achieve “development”.

In an effort to maintain an indigenous culture and to reach those who live in rural areas, presenting courses in local languages makes sense.³² If learning instructions and content are available only in a foreign language such as English and presented only in printed text it might be beneficial to improve the students’ comprehension skills of this language as well as utilising other mediums of communication such as audio and video with translation or *Tok Pisin* sub-titles if the transmitted knowledge is in audio and video for ease of comprehension by learners. This is conducive to what has been and still is a predominantly oral, aural and visual culture of pedagogic practices prior to contact with the outside world introducing pedagogic strategies and modes of communication in the contemporary context.

10.6 Original Contribution to Knowledge

This study began with a personal note at the beginning of Chapter 1. It began as my personal interest to find out more about pedagogic practices involving adult distance learners at UPNG. During the research, a group-oriented communal approach to learning deeply embedded in indigenous Melanesian culture to acquire the valued commodity of institutionalised knowledge emerged as a major finding for my study. The research has contributed to knowledge in the following ways: It has provided information on strategies and alliance formation patterns in distance learning based on local indigenous pedagogies of tribal and communal orientated ways of social organisation. This is a social oriented strategy to engage in distance education pedagogic transactions supporting the idea that strategies to construct meaning from the learning resources sent from an *invisible knowledge-expert in a far-away institution (ososom)* is relative to the learners’ local sociocultural context.

This learning practice contradict the learning instructions from the provider institution that the adult distance learner can be self-directed and study on their own with the limited learning resources provided through the print media. Furthermore, the institution prescribed pedagogic principles of knowledge transmission and acquisition is framed on the instructional design model

³² However, I am reminded about the use of Swahili project in Tanzania that faced major problems and was abandoned. They discovered the costs were prohibitive with few teaching and training materials – especially at higher levels – available in Swahili.

of prescriptive and top-down authoritative model instructing PNG adult distance students to interact in one of the three types of; learner-lecturer, learner-content and learner-learner interaction. My research findings revealed that while some adhere to this instruction, many go beyond the three prescribed types. In this binary opposition of the dominant institution with the knowledge-authority experts prescribing knowledge and the ways of acquiring it, novice learners utilise their own indigenous ways of learning, illuminating tensions and contestations in the hierarchy of knowledge-authority positioning in this PNG distance education pedagogic site.

To gain an in-depth understanding of the adult distance students' invisible pedagogic strategies of knowledge acquisition a localised research methodology based on tribal and communal forms of social organisation in the form of a *Wantok Study Group* was established. I pursued this approach because of my *insider researcher* identity to gain access to the research site in a neutral way for data collection. This research methodology and approach for data collection, I argue is a new way to research in distance education in PNG. This thesis therefore is a product of communal collaboration, based on tribal forms of kinship in that the new knowledge is for the mutual benefit of all; researcher and researchee, and institution and learner.

To date, the research findings in this thesis have made a valuable contribution and builds up on existing literature. The contribution is to the following broad areas in the literature on distance education pedagogy in PNG; the research methodology in distance education, pedagogy of distance education and sociology of education.

As discussed earlier, there are limitations and one of this is the small participant sample that restricts making broad generalisations of the findings in this research. However, one can use the known facts such as the socio-cultural diversity and the communal way of doing things or learning practices in tribal-based societies as a starting point from which to draw inferences and extrapolate knowledge transmission and acquisition in contexts with no schools and teachers as we know it in the contemporary context.

10.7 Some afterthoughts

By reconceptualising the term distance to mean social and cultural distances/spaces in distance education pedagogic practices my initial theoretical ideas were based on the Vygotsky's (1990) psychology oriented cultural-historical orientations to interpret the aspect of learning in pedagogy. This changed when I conceptualised learning as a sociocultural activity and that meaning-making and transfer and acquisition of knowledge practices were activities situated in the participants' social and cultural environment. I decided to use the theory of practice

associated with Bourdieu (1986) and his notions of capital deployed in pedagogic transactions. In trying to grasp the theoretical underpinnings of the contest and negotiations between the institution and the student I found Bernstein's notion of recontextualisation and the pedagogic device of framing and classification useful to make a sense of my empirical. During the journey I experimented with other theoretical ideas. These included Moore's (2007b) theory of transactional distance that I have abandoned. I stuck to Bernstein's (2000) official recontextualisation field and pedagogic recontextualisation field that I reframed as *ososom* and *osisim* for my interpretation of pedagogic activities in a distance education environment. His pedagogic device of framing and classification were useful and so were Bourdieu's (1986) theory of capital in social [re]production to analyse my data.

This research work has convinced me of the multidimensionality of all stakeholders; lecturers, instructional designers, the adult students and the significant others with whom adult distance students collaborated and interacted with. During the tail end of my research project and in the final stages of the seemingly never-ending write-up I have realised myself not only as a researcher but importantly as a student and the importance of collective subjects in pedagogic activities.

I would like to take that as a future research challenge to explore the concept of collective subjects, or communal/group approaches to learning in distance education in relation to the concept of relational agency expanding from Bourdieu's (1986) concept of social capital in the PNG/Melanesian context. I think it might be worthwhile examining the potential for developing the ideas in indigenous pedagogies for supporting agency of people of all ages, and cultural diversity living and working together in communities.

10.8 Final words

The research journey I have undertaken in this thesis started with my curiosity about distance students wanting to hear by word of mouth and see me in person to believe the same message that was communicated to them through another form of media. That is, general administrative notices and course materials with learning instructions and knowledge content for the remote and unseen distant student on an island or a valley obscured by rugged mountain terrain somewhere in PNG. The students' motivation is to relocate and up-lift their quality of life through education. My job and that of other lecturers and instructional designers as educators is to facilitate this transition for the students enrolled in the distance program at the UPNGOC.

Researching the experience of the adult distance students, lecturers and instructional designers required me, not just to visit the students in their locations but also to take a journey into the theoretical world of academia. By taking this journey I became acquainted with theories and concepts relating to the sociocultural world and activity theory through the theory of practice (Bourdieu, 1977). I now realize that although the print-media technology is an important communication tool it is only a medium of connecting these social and cultural divide that exist in society. For the adult distance students the distance programme was connecting the world of academia and the world of practice. My focus turned to the nature and importance of the relationship of these worlds and the importance of cultivating their relationship for developing better practices in distance education and society. Through this research I have developed my understanding of the importance of interrelationship of theories and practice and realized that education is not a one-way route from academia to the world of practice but practical social activity is founded on alliances and interconnectedness. For the PNG distance students, this seems to be deeply rooted in their local indigenous culture of *Wantok*, *Wanpis* and *Pasin* (collective, individual and culture). The importance of collaboration and interaction as practice in the construction of theoretical knowledge or meaning is no less important than forming collaborative alliances to acquire this reproduced knowledge.

I have learned to look at the distance education pedagogic site as an arena of social and cultural [re]production with the objective of progressive social mobility. Print-media seems 'dead' and need to be complemented with audio and video communication technology to give 'life' to the pedagogic transactions. In working on this thesis I have maintained my vision to blend privileged distance education pedagogic practices adopted from 'outside' with that from local indigenous pedagogies emerging through my research.

This final chapter concludes the current study, but also begins a new chapter for further PNG-Melanesian distance learning research stories.

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APPENDIX 1: Student Participant Recruitment Letter

63 St. Barnabas Road
London E17 8JZ UK

Phone: 020 8509 3951
Email: haihuie@yahoo.co.uk

11 July 2006

Letter of Invitation – Wantok Study Group

If you are interested in joining a weekly study group by email discussion which is called, ‘Wantok Study Group’ please give your name to the Open Campus Director. With the help of your Open Campus Director two of you will be selected to join the group and I will make contact with you by email.

To join the ‘Wantok Study Group’ you should;

1. Be a currently registered student in the Bachelor of Business – Public Policy Management program.
2. Have a current email address and be familiar with internet use in sending and receiving emails and at times with attachments. The email access could be at your place of work, at the Open Campus computer laboratory or private.
3. Be willing to interact with other ‘wantok distance students’ by participating in and sharing experiences and ideas about study by distance mode with a specific focus on the course unit you have registered for this semester. Other group members will be from Kokopo, Madang and Mount Hagen.

Let me introduce myself to you. Up to September 2005 I was a staff of the Open College and am now living and studying in London, United Kingdom. Before joining Open College I was a high school teacher. While at the Open College I have been involved in management therefore I have decided to enrol in the management program as a distance student, probably the most distant student in UPNG’s distance education history but equally important is my research project to find out how adult university students manage their learning by distance mode, how they view knowledge and creation of new knowledge and why they have chosen to study by distance mode?

I hope that my interaction with fellow students in the ‘Wantok Study Group’ will give me some answers to these questions which will be shared with members in the group.

If you are interested give your name to the Open Campus and Director. I will contact any two of you by email as soon as I confirm your names with him.

Yours Sincerely

Samuel Haihuie
IoE, University of London

APPENDIX 2: Questionnaire

Institute of Education
University of London
School of CLC
20 Bedford Way
London WC1H 0AL
United Kingdom
Email: haihuie@yahoo.co.uk

Date: 11 December 2006

Dear Student

Thank you for volunteering and agreeing to take part in this research project on distance learning.

This study is undertaken as a part of my PhD studies at the Institute of Education, University of London.

The study sets out to find out how adult distance education students learn and find out how and why they learn in a distance education context. I intend to interpret and understand the way distance education students in Papua New Guinea undertake their studies through distance mode. The interpretations in this research should help inform us, students as well as providers of study by distance education in Papua New Guinea, on the learning practices of distance education learners. This understanding may lead to adoption of pedagogic practices including student support services appropriate to our local PNG context and possibly undertake further research in future on specific issues that emerge.

I am using the Participant Observation approach to collect data and as such I am also enrolled in the Bachelor of Management (PPM) program at UPNG as a distance student while studying and living in London.

I believe that our shared experiences as distance learners in this project will benefit us to have an informed understanding of distance education practices in different social and cultural contexts.

Thank you again for agreeing to take part in this research project and may I request you to keep this letter in a folder for my future discussion with you.

Yours sincerely

Samuel Haihuie
Researcher

Instructions for the Student Questionnaire

Name of University and study centre if applicable : _____

This questionnaire asks you to tell me a bit about yourself and for you to express yourself freely of your decision to and experience of studying through the mode of distance education in brief.

There are two parts in this questionnaire. Part A aims to find out as much about you as an adult distance learner and Part B aims to identify the main reason for your decision to study by distance education. In Part B, I am asking you to make a brief statement on your experience so far as a student studying through the distance mode. It should be just one aspect and this could be either a positive or a negative experience. Based on this initial response I will meet you in person for an in-depth interview and further discussion later on in this research project.

* * * * *

PART A: Personal Details

Fill in details or put a tick (✓) where applicable to you.

1. Name: _____ Student ID Number: _____

2. Gender (✓): Male ___ Female ___ 3. Age. ___ 4. Home Province: _____

5. Marital Status (✓): Never married ___ Married ___ Divorced ___ Widow/er ___

6. Last highest level of education and qualification: _____

7. Number of Dependents including spouse: _____

8. Contact Details:

(a) Postal address: _____

(b) Telephone: _____

(c) Email address (if available): _____

7. Employment Status (✓): _____ in employment
_____ Self-employed
_____ unemployed

8. If you are in formal employment or self-employed what is the nature of the work you do?

APPENDIX 3: Letter of Interview Request to Instructional Designers

67 Dunloe Avenue
London N17 6LB UK

Phone: 07942582473
Email: haihuie@yahoo.co.uk

15 November 2008

To: Below Listed Instructional Designers – UPNG Open College

1. Jenny
2. Nicole

Dear Jenny and Nicole

Subject: Request Interview on Distance Learning Instructional Design for My Research Project

Greetings once again from the IOE, University of London.

You are aware of my ongoing doctoral research on the topic of *Adult Distance Students Learning Practices in Papua New Guinea* since 2006..

I have successfully upgraded on 6 October 2008 from MPhil to PhD and need to collect further data through observations and interview with my participants. One trajectory of my research focus is on how the provider institution develops and produces learning instructions and resources for distance learning. As such I am interested in your role as Instructional Designers at the Open College working with academics to produce these sets of materials for delivery of courses by distance mode.

The focus of my interview will be centered on the issue of institutionally prescribed pedagogic principles of distance teaching and learning against the contexts of the students' social and cultural situatedness.

I am writing to the two of you of my travel to PNG during the months of January and February 2009. May I request in advance to get an appointment to interview the two of you separately while I am there in January and February?

See you in the New Year.

Yours sincerely

Samuel Haihuie
Research Student – IOE, University of London

Sighted:

Dr. Will Gibson – Supervisor

APPENDIX 4: Letter of Interview Request to Lecturers

Faculty of Culture and Pedagogy

Department of Language, Curriculum and Communication

INSERT PROPER IOE LETTER HEAD HERE OR USE ORIGINAL LETTER

22 January 2010

Lecturer
School of Business Administration
University of Papua New Guinea

Dear Lecturer

Subject: Request Appointment for Interview for Research Project

Belated Happy New Year and greetings from London.

I am at the stage of data analysis in my PhD research project on Adult Distance Students Learning Practices at the UPNG Open College. One noticeable issue with my data is the small participant sample of only two lecturers and one tutor/mentor from the Management Strand I have interviewed in my data collection. My supervisor and I are of the view that I need to expand the scope of lecturers to include some more from the Accounting Strand which is the other fully externalised program offered by distance mode at UPNG. This will give me a greater breadth and depth of empirical data to work with.

In that you are one of the lecturers and also the Strand Leader engaged in teaching by distance mode at UPNG I request to interview you about distance education pedagogy in the delivery of the Accounting Program.

If you can nominate a date and time that is of your convenience to you between the 3rd to 12th February I can meet with you for the interview. This should not take more than two hours.

I thank you in advance for making time available to my request.

Yours sincerely

Samuel Haihuie
Doctoral Research Student
Email haihuie@yahoo.co.uk

Sighted :

Dr William Gibson - Supervisor

APPENDIX 5: Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

Dear Participant

In my letter of introduction I have explained to you about the purpose of this research. I believe you are in an informed position to participate as a volunteer.

Let me state that the information you provide in this questionnaire and the subsequent interview will be held in confidence and used for the purposes of this research only.

If you agree to take part in this pilot study may I request you to sign this **consent form** to agree that you volunteer to participate by your free will? Furthermore, you are given an option to decide whether I should use your name in full, just the initials in my thesis.

Thank you

Samuel Haihuie

I, _____ agree to take part in this pilot study.

Furthermore [tick one box]

- Agree for my for my full name to be used

- Only for my initials to be used

- Use a pseudonym in substitute of my name

Signed

Date

APPENDIX 6: Semi-structured Interview Question Schedule

Open-ended Semi-Structured Interview Questions For Students

General Bio-data of participants and two questions relating to experiences and reasons for studying through the distance mode has been asked through the questionnaire.

Learning Resources (Lecturer & Institution)

1. I want to ask you about your experiences of learning as a distance student. When you receive your course materials what do you normally do?
2. What is your view about the learning instructions and resource materials in the pack?
3. If you came across any concepts or issues of difficulty whom do you approach for help and why?

Study Centre and Support Staff

4. What is the kind and level of support you get from the Open College study centre?

Informal Collaboration and Interaction

5. How and in what ways do your work colleagues play a role in your study by distance mode?
6. What kind of support do you get from your immediate family members?
7. And what other members in the community and in what ways do you find them helpful in your studies?

Revised Questions At Tutorial with Will Gibson

1. Briefly describe how you go about using the learning resources sent out to you by the UPNG Open College?
What do you like about the learning materials? What do you find useful and why? What do you see as the problems in the learning materials?
When you receive your course materials, what do you first do with it?
Is the course meeting your initial expectations? If so in what ways?
What particular challenges do you face as a learner in this course?
2. Out of the 3 books sent to you, which one do you find most useful and why?
How do you study? What is your pattern of work? Do you work in a particular way in the course as a distance student?
3. In the absence of a tutor, whom do you talk to about your learning? **Do you think a tutor would be beneficial to you and in what ways?**
4. How helpful are your family members or others in the community around you concerning your studies as a distant student? **What role do family and other members in the community play in supporting your studies?**
5. Would you like to comment about other forms of media such as audio and video as a compliment to the printed text used by the UPNG Open College?
6. **Can you tell me about our early educational experience, formal education in comparison to other forms of teaching? [may require talking around and prompting]**

Open-ended Semi-Structured Interview Questions For Lecturers

The interview is not focussed on the knowledge content or subject matter but the pedagogic transactions between the lecturer and the students.

1. As a lecturer what do you have in mind when you prepare your course materials for teaching by distance mode?
2. Adult Students – Prior Learning. How valuable or relevant are these factors in the way you design your distance teaching? **What is the relevance of the social cultural context, give examples? How do you evaluate the work of DE students in comparison to face to face students? Eg. Their level of critique, literacy, organizational skills etc. What could be done pedagogically to improve the learning experience of DE students?**
3. Do the distance students question, critique or challenge what you present to them? If so in what ways do they do that?
4. How do you think the design (format & structure) of course content as presented to the students could be improved?
5. Do you think the format and structure is sensitive to an accommodative of PNG/Melanesian social and cultural context of teaching and learning? **[talking around and prompting may be required]**

*What skills do you expect students to have before undertaking university level studies by distance mode? Why?

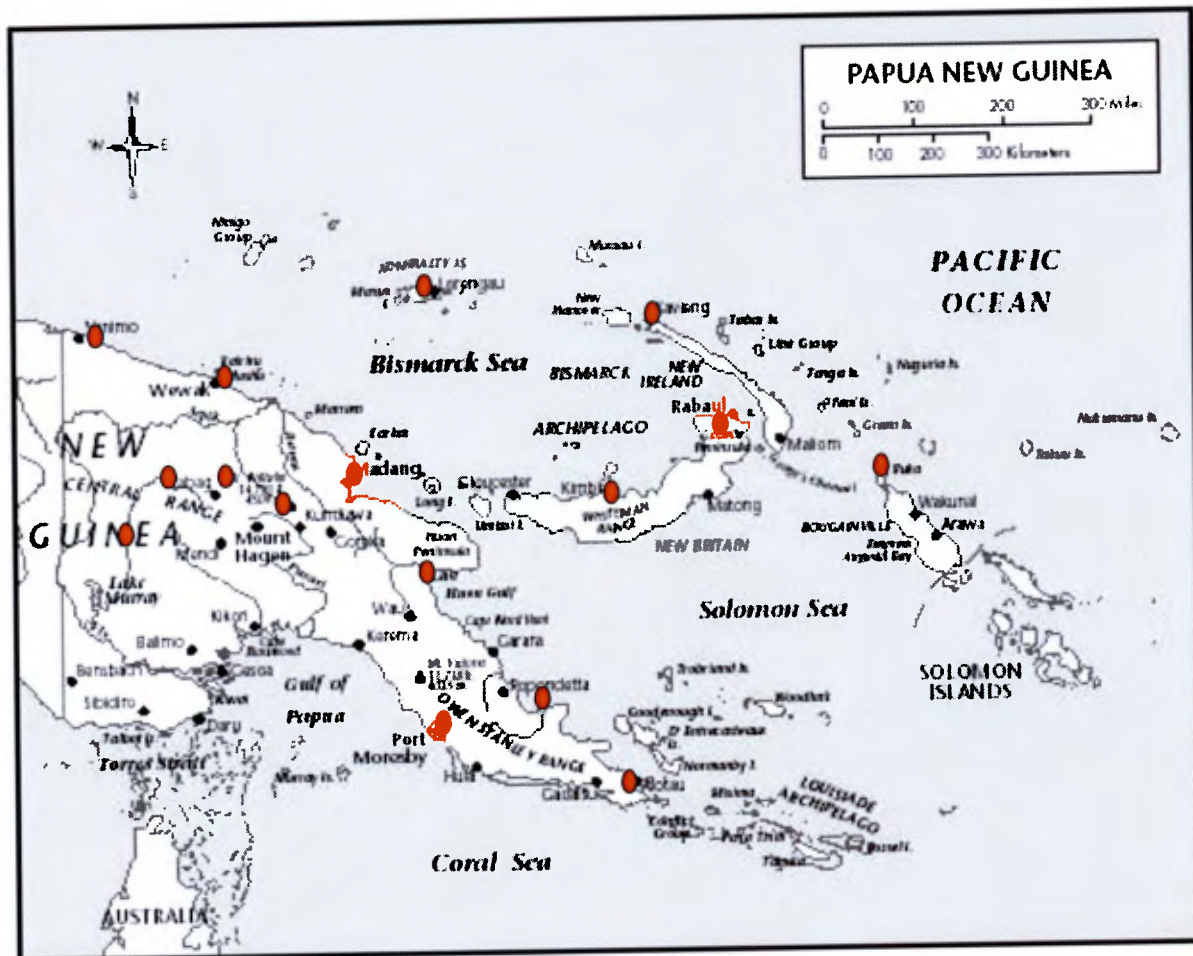
Open-ended Semi-Structured Interview Questions For Instructional Designers

1. Describe to me in brief your job as an Instructional Designer?
What is the distance education pedagogic model of the UPNG Open College?
Have you been given an explanation of why distance learning at UPNG takes the form it does?
What do you think are the positive aspects of this design model? Give examples?
Do you see any potential problems with the model? If so can you think of using this ways you might respond to those problems as an instructional designer?
2. Why do you consider the instructional design model the UPNG Open College uses as the most appropriate model? What do you see the negative or positive aspect of using this instructional design models?
3. Do you consider our students' local social and cultural context in the design and structure of distance learning resources? How important to you is it to understand the students' local social cultural context in the design of the learning materials? [Give prompts for examples]
4. Icons. There are the reading and activity icons that you use. What about other icons such as 'group work' 'listening' 'seeing' and 'thinking'? Ask how they think about the design?
5. In your view, how could the Open College improve on its instructional design process?
6. If money was of no object, what would you do differently in terms of design [eg. Using technology, running workshops etc.].

Do you think the format and structure is sensitive to and accommodative of PNG/Melanesian social and cultural context of teaching and learning? [will require talk around and prompting]

APPENDIX 7: PNG Map of Participant Location

Location of participants



UPNG Open College has 12 study centres and the participants in this research are located in *Port Moresby (7)*, *Mt. Hagen (5)* and *Kokopo (5)*.

APPENDIX 8: The Code Book

Initial Codes and Categories from 2007 Heuristic Coding of Distance Student's Learning Practices

Adult student (post secondary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social & cultural background • Prior education • Employment • Marital status • Geographical Location • Ambition and motivation
Learning Approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individualistic • Communalistic • Collaborative • Imitation • Top down authoritative • Myth enshrined view of knowledge
Institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course material & design (instruction and structure) • Learning resources • Institutional support • Institutional authority • Institutional policy • Assessment & evaluation
Learning Resources & Approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructive • Constructive • Authoritative • Collaborative & Interactive
Peers (fellow students)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer support cognitive • Peer support affective • Peer collaboration & interaction • Peer mentoring
Lecturer (Academic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecturer support • Lecturer collaboration & interaction • Lecturer feedback • Lecturer affective support • Lecturer cognitive support • Knowledge and authority
Family (spouse, children, other family members)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive family support • Affective family support (role model) • Prestige reasons • Economic reasons
Work Colleagues & Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing productivity • Cognitive reasons • Affective need
Wider Social/Cultural Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religious • Politics • Economic

The categorization of pedagogic practices is modified from Flanders Interaction Analysis (Robson, 1993 See Flanders 1970 p. 34). Flanders developed the Interaction Analysis System to observe and then code and categorize teacher student interaction in a conventional face-to-face classroom context within a fixed time frame.

Category A. Collaboration and Interaction as Distance Students' Practices of Learning – categories of collaboration and interaction. Not fixed to a fixed time and location interaction is beyond the institutional space.

1. *Learner- institution.* Students' communication (meeting, dialogue, reading) with lecturer, course materials, centre staff
2. *Student-lecturer.* Interaction with lecturer via assignments and exams, tutorials.
3. *Student-centre staff.* Students' meeting and interaction with staff at study centres
4. *Learner-other learners.* Students' meeting, talking and sharing ideas with fellow students.
5. *Learner-family.* Students' interaction with family members [spouse, children, siblings, parents] in the study
6. *Learners-work colleagues.* Student's involvement and application of some of the knowledge acquired at the workplace and collaboration and interaction with work colleagues.
7. *Learner-others.* Students' engagement with members of the wider community, public and private sector employers, church members.
8. *Learner-public domain media.* Students' access to radio, newspapers, television.

Category B. Resources as a Concept of Capital [social and cultural] that Students Use

1. *Nuclear Family.* Spouse, children, sibling, parent.
2. *Professional Work Colleagues.* Superior, subordinate or colleague at the same level at the work place. Social capital within local proximity.
3. *Members of the Wider Community.* Wider social network as a capital.
4. *Cultural Capital.* Institutionally prescribed formal learning resources; course outline, study guide, resource book, lecturers, peers and Open College staff. 'Informal resources' newspapers , radio stations and other sources of information.

Category C. Reasons for Collaborating and Interaction

1. *Cognitive.* Academic related and purpose is to increase present stage of knowledge or internalize meaning of what is learned.
2. *Affective.* Seeking moral and emotional support and encouragement.

3. *Affective/Cognitive*. Students collaborate and interact with others for both affective and cognitive reasons.

Category D. Strategic Reasons for collaboration.

1. *Knowledge Acquisition*. To acquire new knowledge. To be in the know.
2. *Economic/Improved Conditions*. Career advancement.
3. *Prestige/Social Status*. For self and family pride. To get job promotion.

Category F. Institution-Student Collaboration and Interaction

1. *Top-down authoritative*. Instructivist and authoritative mode of transmission that is teacher/institution centred and transmitted.
2. *Collaborative*. Participatory and egalitarian and community of practice approach, reciprocity.
3. *Imitation*. Acquiring by imitating, reflective and proactive application and work environments.
4. *Myth-enshrined*. The unthinkable source knowledge. Not to be questioned for consumption only.

Category G. Student Activity of Collaboration and Interaction

1. *Resistance/submissive*. Resistance against or submissive to institutional authority
2. *Mutual/Solitary*. Students learning actions are either mutual or solitary
3. *Individual-wanpis/Collective-wantok*. Learning activities individual based or collective.
5. *Identity/difference*. National identity or individual difference [obvious in PNG's cultural setting]
6. *Global/Local*. The identify deconstruction and reconstruction of the student. To maintain an indigenous identity or be a part of the 'global' PNG.

Category H. Actions of Learning

1. *Individualistic/communalistic*. Individual and self-directed or communal and group effort.
2. *Lecturer Centred/Student Centred*. Directed opposed to independent self-directed.
3. *Strength of framing and classification*. Who controls what.

[Empty box]

Category I. Learning/Teaching Disposition

1. Ososom. A general pedagogic situation of *distance*. The separation by space [and maybe time] between lecturer, student and other students. *Out-of-site, out-of-sight, out-of-mind*. But is more than just the spatial *distance*, it is also the social and cultural *distance* separating the learner from the lecturer and the institution.

2. Osisim. The temporal *distance*. While the student is in a conventional face-to-face situation the social and cultural distance is still there. *On-site, in-sight, in-mind*, however, the social cultural *distance* is what need be bridged between the knowledge transmitter and acquirer.

Codes and Operational Description from 2009/2010

Code	Description
Pedagogic Design	This code refers to the how the distance learning resources are being structured and presented. The form of dialogue used, relevance and sensitivity of course content to local culture to cater for student learning needs. Also refers to the media being used that which can be used in future. Also refers to presentation of pedagogic instructions being either instructivist or constructivist and if this style this is adherently conforming to the institution prescribed pedagogic principles or deviant from it, the experience and confidence of lecturers and instructional designers in thinking about pedagogic transactions that go into the design of presenting the learning resources.
Learning	All activities and practices relating to learning. Refers to the way in which students manage their learning. Refers to whom they collaborate and interact with. Refers also to student's actions relating to assessment and evaluation of what is being learnt, skills needed for learning. Refers to approaches to learning as an individual or collectively in pairs or groups.
Culture	Refers to cultural factors in DE pedagogy. The language of instruction. Formats and structure accommodating cultural ways of doing things, relate pedagogic practices to local and traditional ways of transmission of knowledge. Refers to balancing learning while at the same time being accommodative of sociocultural obligations.
Teaching	Refers to all actions and descriptions relating to teaching, This might do with the style of instruction, the use of media activities the lecturers, tutors and mentors are engaged in with distance students.
Collaboration and Interaction	Refers to approaches to learning through interacting and collaborating with others; students, lecturers, family members and others in the community.
Career Development	Refers to the motivation for student to study by distance mode is for career development, acquire professional skills, participate effectively in government and public service business, Refers also to aspirations for promotion, review and implementation of new approaches to policies and procedures in the work organisation.
Additional media for learning resource	Use additional media such as audio, video for transmitting learning resources, internet for access to information and email for facilitating communication and interaction.
Flexibility of Study	Refers to flexible approach to study by distance mode. Refers to learning and earning, family cohesion, use of work environment as a learning resource, apply theoretical immediately to practice. Refers to cost effectiveness of study by distance and study at own pace and time.
Social Benefit	The question being invoked with this code is that what are the social benefits for the individual student studying by distance mode? It refers to benefits derived from study to the improvement to the quality of life. The social benefit brought by learning and acquiring new knowledge could be direct and personal to the student and the immediate nuclear family and extended members of family including the wider community. Concrete examples of social benefit is passing on the knowledge and engaging with community to bring about some tangible benefit to the well being of the members of the community.
Problems in Learning	Refers mostly to affective problems students face in learning. While cognitive aspects might be involved this code is specific to administrative and logistic support that is available to minimise challenges and hindrances to learning. Cognitive related problems might include limited or lack of interaction, late or delayed return of assignments and test as feedback. Problems relating to affective might be isolation and no person to share thoughts and ideas with relating to what is being learnt, late receiving of feedback from the lecturer.

Administrative Organization	This refers to all administrative and logistic support provided by the institution. Quality of administrative organisation with regard to academic related issues such as handling of course material disbursement, assignment, test and exams. Also refers to non-academic organisation such as registration, student records and counselling and welfare issues of distance students.
Patterns of Study	Refers to the approaches students take in managing their learning. When do they do their studies? Where do they do their study? How do they adhere and keep to the schedule send from the institution?
Skill	Refers to skills of all stakeholders in this distance education venture. Refers to Skills needed by the skills for learning by distance mode. Refers to the skills needed by the lecturers to teach students at a distance. The skills needed by the IDs to format and structure distance learning resources.

APPENDIX 9: Participants and Data

Participants involved in data collection activities

Student Name	Study Centre	Questionnaire	Email Contact	Phone Contact	Observation	Peer-Group Discussion	Interview
Andy	Kusambuk	X	X	X	X	X	X
Asena	Kusambuk	X	X	X		X	
Edith	Kusambuk	X	X				
Biem	Kusambuk	X	X	X	X	X	X
Participant Observer	London	Researcher	Researcher	Researcher	Researcher	Researcher	Researcher
Nick	Kinienen	X			X	X	X
Reisi	Kinienen	X			X		
Emel	Kinienen	X		X	X	X	X
Kastem	Kinienen	X			X	X	X
Waranduo	Kinienen	X		X	X	X	X
Philip	Huahama	X		X	X		X
Ilaks	Huahama	X					X
Jokon	Huahama	X		X			X
Kent	Huahama	X					X
Wairra	Huahama	X	X				X
Lulu	Kusambuk	X	X	X	X		X
Staff Name/Designat							
Pomnats (Tutor/mentor)	Kusambuk		X	X	X		X
Duonava (Lecturer)	UPNG		X				X
King (Lecturer)	UPNG				X		X
Flo (Tutor/mentor)	Kinienen		X	X	X		X
Paul (Lecturer)	UPNG		X	X			X
Kuma (Lecturer)	UPNG		X				X
Jenny (ID)	UPNG		X				X
Eva (ID)	UPNG		X	X			X
Nicole (ID)	UPNG		X	X			X
Moses (ID)	UPNG		X	X			X

APPENDIX 10: Academic Transcript: Samuel Haihuie



Student Academic Transcript

STUDENT ID : 85027703
STUDENT NAME : Haihuie, Samuel

Term	Year	Program	Course No.	Course Name	Grade	CP
1	1985	FBA	13100	Introduction to Geography	D*	3.00
1	1985	FBA	24101	Literature & Society	B	3.00
1	1985	FBA	51113	Say It With Figures	B	3.00
2	1985	FBA	03105	Economics I	W	3.00
2	1985	FBA	04101	Foundation English	B	3.00
2	1985	FBA	06102	Introduction to National History	B	3.00
2	1985	FBA	15100	Introduction to Politics	W	3.00
2	1985	FBA	19100	Introduction to Psychology	B	3.00
2	1985	FBA	28100	Communication & Language	C	3.00
2	1985	FBA	51112	World History	B	3.00
1	1986	BED	04151	Practical English Writing I	B	3.00
1	1986	BED	06111	Png Social History: Introduction to Contemporary	C	3.00
1	1986	BED	15100	Introduction to Politics	B	3.00
1	1986	BED	15101	PNG Politics	C	3.00
2	1986	BED	03105	Economics I	D*	3.00
2	1986	BED	04141	Structure Of Modern English	C	3.00
2	1986	BED	06104	Introduction to Pacific History	C	3.00
2	1986	BED	12101	Study Of Society	B	3.00
2	1986	BED	14124	Basic Studies In Education	B	3.00
1	1988	BED	04232	Structure Of Modern English II	C	3.00
1	1988	BED	14230	Learn Dev School & Soc A	C	3.00
1	1988	BED	14240	Teaching Theory & Prac.(Linguistics)	B	3.00
1	1988	BED	14250	Teaching, Theory & Practice(Soc.Sci)	B	3.00
2	1988	BED	14231	Learn Dev School Society B	B	6.00
2	1988	BED	14241	Teaching Adv. Theory & Prac. (Language)	A	3.00
2	1988	BED	14251	Teaching, Adv. Theory & Practice(Soc.Sci)	A	3.00
1	1991	BEDH	14201	Education & Society	A	3.00
1	1991	BEDH	14210	Research Methods	B	3.00
1	1991	BEDH	14499	Education Seminar	A	6.00
1	1991	BEDH	14490	Research Methods (Education)	A	6.00
1	2006	BBM	3.13401	Elements of Public Administration	→NG.	3.00
2	2006	BBM	3.23402	Development Administration	A	3.00

GPA : _____

Note: GPA is always calculated on results for the current year only.

APPENDIX 11: Personal Diary April 2006

Record of Distance Learning Experience – April 2006

Theme: Interaction	Record of Experience	Coding
<p>Spatial distance</p> <p>Mentoring</p> <p>Authority Social cultural</p>	<p>Event # 1. 07.04.06 Course materials arrived by EMS today, 5 weeks late into the semester. Course materials were given to my family by James Waliap to bring with them but mistakenly forgot and left it behind. This was not accepted by me of my wife and son's negligence when this was essentially related to my research. <i>Was excited any how and showed the course materials to my family including Michah a distant relative doing PhD studies up in Glasgow. While it is for my doctoral research I am kind of feeling elated that if I finish the program I will also have a degree in management from UPNG. Should have covered Units 1, 2, & 3 and start in Unit 4 now. I had a quick glance through the course outline and the study. The resource book I thought was too much reading when I had my doctoral research work to worry about. Unit 1 was <i>Introduction to public administration</i> and Unit 4 <i>The Policy Development Process</i>. I like the course and the topics covered.</i> Reflection: Why was I in the mood of excitement and showing the course materials off to my family? What about the design and look of the CM. Now looking at it as a student do I see if with a different lens? Actions I had taken study wise; brief glance at the three books and glanced at the course outline in particular. Check the printing/publication dates of the course materials. Why has the publication dates got to do with my study of the course? Is it inside information and my conflicting role as a manager in the Open College/as provider of distance education that is surfacing unconsciously? Would other distance learners bother about the currency of the course materials? Checked the due dates of the first assignment and test date. Why am I worried about assessment? Does this course really matter if it was not for research purposes for doctoral studies?</p> <p>Event # 2. 07.04.06 Sent an email to course coordinator with copy to my supervisor, Dr. Wil Gibson, that I have started on my course. No response from UPNG but my supervisor did acknowledge</p>	<p>Family support Affective</p> <p>Relevance Bias</p> <p>Respect Interaction</p> <p>Other competing</p>

<p>Time management Balance act</p>	<p>requesting to see the materials.</p> <p>Dear Mr Aloï</p> <p>This is to advise you of my enrolment for the course Elements of Public Administration for Semester 1 2006 but you might already have seen my name on the registration list. My course materials reached me on Tuesday this week which is Week 5 of the semester!</p> <p>My doctoral research is on distance education student learning styles and their motivations for studying by distance mode. Thus my signing up for this course as a participant observer for data collection. Data collection will be among fellow students in the PPM program studying through the distance mode. My registration this semester is a sort of orientation and immersion exercise for me. This will help me to develop my interview questions for trial with open learning students here in the UK.</p>	<p>interests</p>
<p>Communication</p>	<p>As a matter of research ethics and to avoid issues of bias in the data collected, it is requested that I be treated just like any other PPM student this semester and in later semesters if I continue. I might not end up collecting my data in Papua New Guinea at all.</p> <p>Am copying this email to Dr William Gibson, my supervisor for his information. Talk to you later.</p> <p>Samuel Haihuie</p> <p>Reflection: This is my first effort, as a distance student, to make contact with the lecturer, whose name is stated in the course outline as the coordinator of the course and the person to make contact if in need of assistance. Even though I have worked with Daniel as a colleague at UPNG, I now realize that I am a student and he is a lecturer, therefore I have to address him formally with the title of 'Mr' in my email. This formality felt a bit awkward for me, but a lecturer is assumed to be someone who knows the subject matter I am studying therefore I see him as the one with the knowledge that I lack. My lacking of that knowledge makes me feel less knowledgeable</p>	<p>Power relations</p>

<p>Encouragement Support</p> <p>Family</p>	<p>(a weaker position I suppose) than the lecturer therefore this situation makes me feel 'lower' than the lecturer.</p> <p>Learning is a social and interactive activity between the student and the teacher but if the teacher does not respond to the initial contact the student is trying to establish what becomes of the learners expectation from the DE provider, motivation, interest whether somebody cares about my study and learning or not etc. These are real issues that confront distance learners the world over.</p> <p><u>Event # 3. 10.04.06</u></p> <p>Hi Sam,</p> <p>This is good. Could we have a look through the materials together some time? I would be interested to see them.</p> <p>We should make an appointment some time. I can't do this week, and next week I am on holiday, so it would have to be the first week of term.</p> <p>Hope you are well,</p> <p>Will</p> <p>Reflection: It is a good feeling with the initial support and encouragement from my research study supervisor, Will Gibson. Actually, at first I addressed both my supervisors with their academic titles of 'Dr' but Paul told me 'that was not necessary [I don't know if this is only at the IoE or UK wide] as we address each other by first name.' This is different to my experience at UPNG where a lecturer's academic credential is 'always' added to the prefix of his/her name. Eg. Dr 'this' or Professor 'that'. Even though I have told my supervisors about my research and data collection method to be a 'participant observer' in my project, Will's interest to look through the course materials made me had mixed feelings. Is it the styles of layout and presentation, or the academic content of the subject matter that he is interested in? I know that the course materials won the COL 2004 Excellence Award in the print media category. Not as a distant student but as a staff of the UPNG Open College I am happy to 'show off' the course materials to Will after the first week of the term as he has indicated by his email.</p>	<p>Labels/Titles Relationships positions</p> <p>Quick glance/skimming Surface study</p> <p>Need to talk to someone</p>
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<p>Assessment</p>	<p>I had schemed through the study guide on the units covering policy development process and governance and public management. I really did not feel like doing the activities and the readings.</p> <p>Event # 4. 16.04.06 Did not do any study at all this week. Did not have a look at the course materials for more than a week.</p> <p>Reflection: Reasons being family obligations, Micah and sister visiting from Scotland to send sister off to PNG. Other commitment relating to PhD work. Check the course outline only to see when the assignment was due and wrote down the beginning dates for each week. The essence being that I would know my work plan and balance between my other activities and in control of myself and my studies. Read through the notes in the SG units 1-3. The SG referred to Readings 1 & 2 but was not interested in the readings as yet. Why? Is it the late receipt of the course materials? Or just anxious to see what is in the course outline? The need and urge to talk to someone, just to discuss with someone [course coordinator, Open College staff or another student] out aloud is strong in my thoughts. Is my mind conditioned/indoctrinated by my earlier experience of schooling/education in a conventional face-to-face context that is the result of my thinking? Wrote down the due dates of the test and essay on stick on pad and stuck it on the wall in front of my study table to remind myself. Test is due next week. Need to contact Assessment Coordinator.</p>	<p>Lack of motivation</p>
<p>Lack of focus</p>	<p>Event # 5. 16.04.06 <i>Under pressure of assessment. Have to write the essay and prepare for test but felt the need to talk with somebody, lecturer or another student. Yuambari asked why I was doing the course at UPNG and if I was serious in completing it for a degree.</i></p> <p>Reflection: Grumbled out aloud to myself but maybe also for family to hear of the fact that the test was due next week and I was not doing much studies. Yuambari (my son) responded by posing the question whether 'I was serious in passing the course' to which I responded, 'yes', I need to know about management and public administration. What would the response be from other students studying by DE? Have the feeling of confidence about the essay topics but doubt and am not sure if I will have the time to thoroughly read up the materials. Going through the CO twice is sufficient. Because of the fact that I had received my CM late I went through 3 units in just in one day without doing the prescribed</p>	<p>interaction</p>
<p>Communication Interaction</p>	<p>Reflection: Grumbled out aloud to myself but maybe also for family to hear of the fact that the test was due next week and I was not doing much studies. Yuambari (my son) responded by posing the question whether 'I was serious in passing the course' to which I responded, 'yes', I need to know about management and public administration. What would the response be from other students studying by DE? Have the feeling of confidence about the essay topics but doubt and am not sure if I will have the time to thoroughly read up the materials. Going through the CO twice is sufficient. Because of the fact that I had received my CM late I went through 3 units in just in one day without doing the prescribed</p>	<p>Lack of motivation</p>

activities. I have not critically examined the pedagogic style used in the course materials. Does it facilitate and allow for adequate interaction between the learner and the absent teacher? To do the readings in the Resource Book is on the back burner for me, I just want to get through with the activities in the study guide.

Event # 6. 23.04.06

Did not do any EPA work at whole of this week although Unit 5 on Public expenditure is scheduled for this week.

Reflection: Typical of studying by DE, no teacher, no contact no work. Have to realize that the books are 'the absent teacher'.

Event # 7. 25.04.06

Reading through and updating my journal. Need to reflect on self and other research and ask questions

Event # 7. 27.04.06

Meet with my supervisor to show him the materials. Received email advise from Brian that my test had been sent to Dr. Gibson for invigilation. The script to be returned by scanned email or post. I would prefer both. Suggest to Will to take the test next Tuesday.

Reflection: Some communication is taking place with the Open College via email. The meeting with Will in a way pushes me on as a distant student. I don't know whether genuinely to impress him or because it is a part of my research. These mixed feelings bother me.

Event # 8. 30.04.06

What a shame. Did not do EPA work whole of this week. R: Uneasiness about taking test. Have not spend the required number of hours i.e. 30 per week, am feeling a bit uneasy to take the test.

Reflection: Spending 30 hours per week on studying EPA is a real challenge for person like me who takes each day as it comes and hates the rigidity of doing things according to

	<p>fixed timetable. Is it the influence my social/cultural influence during childhood. There is no urgency to rush, there is always limitless time seem to be my thinking. Maybe time management is an issue for me at least in a Western society time has become comodified.</p>	
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