

**PAPER 7**

**DISTANCE EDUCATION IN THE COMMONWEALTH ISLANDS OF THE SOUTH WEST PACIFIC**

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## CHAPTER SEVEN

### 1.0 The Region

The commonwealth countries that constitute this region are Papua New Guinea, New Zealand and the countries that collaborate in the University of the South Pacific (USP), recognising that some of these have other organisations and agencies for higher education; these USP countries are Fiji, Tonga, Western Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Kiribati, Vanuatu, Nauru, Niue, Tokelau, and the Cook Islands.

Although the USP group are together because of their membership of that particular distance education university, there are many ways in which they sharply differ among themselves, in ethnic make-up, in political constitution, in the European cultures which have influenced them, in their economies and trading partners, in recent and past history, and their aspirations for the future. There are 11 states, each differing from the others, and in some cases composed of islands which claim substantial difference from the rest. If we take their present political status, while New Zealand was an early independent member of the Empire and Commonwealth, the other countries of the region have only become politically independent since the late 1960's. Some like Niue, Tokelau and the Cook Islands remain dependent, for example for security, on another larger neighbour. Some countries remain economically dependent on those larger neighbours, not only for direct aid, but on the remittances of their expatriates working abroad.

Populations are small and scattered. New Zealand has three million in an area about the same as the United Kingdom. Papua New Guinea has about the same population scattered over the fragmented terrain of its main island, the western half of which is part of Indonesia, and its archipelagoes of smaller islands stretching out into the Pacific. Nauru and Niue are small islands with populations numbering a few thousands. The other countries are clusters of islands, as ethnically and linguistically diverse within as they are from the region's countries. All told the rest add only one million to the six million in Papua New Guinea and New Zealand.

For a population of about seven million, there are perhaps a thousand languages, according to some counts, most of them in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. Mission and government efforts have produced widespread competence in English with pidgin forms in the Melanesian States of Papua New Guinea, the Solomons, and Vanuatu. There are several related Polynesian languages in New Zealand, Samoa, Tonga, Tokelau, parts of Fiji, Niue and the Cook Islands which retain and have even increased strength as significant elements of cultural identity at home and among expatriate Polynesians.

## PATTERNS OF DEVELOPMENT

### 2.0 The Educational Scene in 1960

A larger historical account would show that politically, economically and educationally, the principal events related to higher education and to distance education, in particular, occur in the period from 1960 onwards. This paper, therefore, attempts to characterise education throughout the region in 1960, then moves forward to the present to identify the principal changes and current issues.

In 1960, Papua New Guinea had recently begun to accelerate towards independence. Education was no longer dependent on the slender resources of scattered mission schools. The task of the Australians before they left Papua New Guinea was to open more schools and provide sufficient trained local teachers to maintain and expand primary education. Much was done to harmonise, integrate and support the mission schools as part of a comprehensive national system; time ran out before the task was complete but great strides were made in systematising primary education, building, staffing and equipping new schools, developing curricula and laying the foundations for future maintenance, growth and development. Less progress was made in secondary education, not unexpectedly as the flow of students from primary education remained uncertain. As for higher education, the University of Papua New Guinea was already being planned in 1960, and there was to be a University of Technology in Lae as well as teacher colleges. Before then, higher education was distance education. Some enrolments, mostly among expatriate Australians, were accepted by the University of Queensland, and some by the University of New England, then the two principal Australian distance education institutions. Otherwise higher education could be obtained only by leaving Papua New Guinea.

New Zealand in 1960 was also moving forward dramatically in higher education, but from a quite different basis of development. Universal primary and secondary education were well established, teachers' colleges were burgeoning with the shift from two-year to three-year training in prospect. Generous university opportunity existed but technical education, except for some that was provided at sub-degree level in some professional schools of the universities, was underrated and thought to need as its basis only weaker forms of secondary education. University education in New Zealand in 1960 was at a major point of departure: its federal system was about to lead to four separate universities, Otago, Auckland, Canterbury and Victoria (Wellington), together with two other full universities, one New Waikatu, another developed in 1964 from Massey Agricultural College and the nearby branch college of Victoria University, where a tuition system was established, in 1960, for a revitalised programme of extra-mural (distance) studies.

In 1960, the islands of the South Western Pacific still seemed some way from independence. In education, however, the New Zealand based scheme of co-operation was providing universal primary education in Fiji, Tonga, Western Samoa, Niue, Tokelau and the Cook Islands,

supplemented by considerable post-primary opportunity. Educational opportunity in the remaining island communities, the British Solomon Islands Protectorate as it was in 1960 (now the Solomon Islands), the New Hebrides, then an Anglo-French condominium, which has now become Vanuatu, the Gilbert Islands (now Kiribati), and the Ellis Islands (Tuvalu), was not so widespread.

Higher education in 1960, particularly university education, was sparse among these island countries. The School of Medicine in Fiji provided medical education. Schools of Agriculture existed in Fiji and Western Samoa, and there were Teachers' Colleges. Fiji had the Derek Technical Institute (now the Institute of Technology), and some Christian Missions provided vocational courses. University study for those who did not go overseas was by correspondence from London University's external degree programme, from Queensland University which was phasing out its enrolments from the Pacific, and from New Zealand's extra-mural programme. While these opportunities suited expatriate teachers working in the Pacific Islands, they were neither designed for, nor were they successful with, students whose cultural background, study skills, educational expectation and local support were very different from the originating countries. Not surprisingly, when in the mid 1960's a federal university of the South Pacific was proposed, suggestions were made that it should not only provide campus-based education within the local setting, but should provide distance education courses attuned to the cultures which the university would serve.

### 3.0 The Educational Scene Today

By the mid 1980s, the scene was very different. All the Commonwealth countries of the region were independent (their non-Commonwealth neighbours include American Samoa, and various French Polynesian dependencies). Education has great significance in government policies. Each remains concerned about the provision of places in schools and other educational institutions; about the quality of teaching and teachers' professional pre-service and continuing education; about curriculum issues, particularly those which affect national identity; about the use of vernacular languages and the teaching of English; about employability, not only at home, but in New Zealand and Australia where a wider range of more technical jobs exists. All could reasonably claim substantial education achievements since 1960, particularly in expanding secondary education, devising more diverse and appropriate curricula, improving the quality of teaching and a stronger local basis for higher education.

In New Zealand, universities have increased in size, diversified at undergraduate and post-graduate levels, and are more or less sufficient for New Zealand's needs in producing fully trained manpower. Like their Australian counterparts, New Zealand higher education institutions provide for many Asian Commonwealth students at undergraduate as well as graduate level. Also like their neighbours, they attract many post-graduate students from the Commonwealth Islands of the South Pacific, but they have quotas and stringent regulations for undergraduate students taking their first degrees. Alongside the

universities, attracting an increasing number of better-qualified students, has evolved a system of technical institutes, polytechnics and community colleges, offering vocational courses, but also identifying the educational needs and expectations of a wider public, mostly beyond their early post-school years, who are seeking continuing or community education. University education has never in New Zealand been limited to young adults straight from school; for many decades mature age part-time students, creating pressures for evening degree classes, were considered the bane of New Zealand university education. Nowadays, the universities have more interest in such students, but must compete for them with other higher education agencies. In such a context, distance education has scope to flourish.

In Papua New Guinea, primary education has made much progress, although only about 55% of primary aged children are in school. At the secondary level, only a third of primary leavers get places. In recent years, emphasis has been on expanding secondary education. Development at the upper secondary level has not been so widespread to put tertiary education under severe pressure. Papua New Guinea has lively universities, in the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG), in Port Moresby and the University of Technology in Lae, as well as a Teachers College at Goroka and several other post-secondary developments. There have been discussions about university level distance education but no major pressure.

Among the other island territories, Fiji has gone ahead further. While this may be the result of a larger population and more economic diversity, it is also in spite of greater ethnic diversity than is experienced by the other countries. Substantial quotas are reserved for Fijians in the upper levels of secondary education, in the university and in the polytechnic. Since government provides amply for Fijians at the upper secondary level, and allows the Indian communities to provide for themselves which they also do in generous measure, competition for Fiji's quota of places at the University of the South Pacific is keen. On their return, they commonly need some professional post-graduate qualification to make them acceptable in Fiji's professional life. They have created a market for quality courses in part-time, or off-campus, or distance education modes.

Since its foundation in 1968, the University of the South Pacific has been a major resource for the countries which it serves. Its schools of study, originally named natural resources, education, social and economic development, to indicate their functional purposes, have produced a steady stream of graduates in the last decade. While there have been complaints about the slow rate of production and the cost per student, those arguments are largely unjustified in the face of the quality and performance of graduates and diplomates. USP has been a resource base for its member countries in other ways. Training and research for specific needs, outside the framework of degrees and other qualifications, have flowed from the institutes set up in the mid 1970s; some such as natural resources and education and administration are alongside the schools of study; others for research or for Pacific studies have special entities within the

university framework. Extension studies have been another resource for the countries of the region; local centres have given visibility to higher education and have provided courses of an ad hoc nature to meet immediate needs. They have also provided a back-up to local distance education students, via the satellite link which has served USP for several years.

#### **THE DEVELOPMENT OF DISTANCE EDUCATION**

The principal agencies of distance education at post-secondary level among the island countries of the South Pacific are as follows;

#### **4.0 Papua New Guinea**

##### **Papua New Guinea, College of External Studies (COES)**

The college began its operations in 1957 as a training centre for the Public Service Commission and conventional classes were held for adult public servants. However, within two years, this specific function was to disappear from the College's operations and the College was given responsibility for preparing school based correspondence courses. Initially focused on lower secondary courses, the College gradually extended its courses into higher grades replacing the operations of Australian correspondence schools.

The College's main activity is providing secondary (Grades 7-10) correspondence education to those who do not continue in the formal school system. It also provides a Commerce Certificate for employed adults. About half of the courses parallel those taught in provincial high schools and the College awards its own certificates. Students may enrol and be examined at any time of the year and may study entirely by correspondence or in registered study centres or in arranged classes.

At the present time, the College is moving steadily to complete a full complement of Grades 7-10 courses and undertake a revision of the Commerce Certificate. Future activities consistent with the College's present directions would be the re-writing of some Grade 7-10 courses so that all courses (and the COES Grade 10 Certificate) are completely aligned to the national school curriculum and the offering of Grades 11 and 12 to full matriculation level. Organisational factors that can be expected to materially affect the College's operations are the decentralisation of administration and marking to provincial centres.

##### **The University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG)**

UPNG through its Department of Extension Studies offers Adult Matriculation (Grade 11 and 12) and a limited number of first year (Foundation Year) courses which form part of the University's Bachelor of Arts and Law Degrees. At present enrolments stand at around 750 Adult Matriculation and 250 Foundation Year students each semester. Enrolments have tripled in the last year and could mushroom. There is huge demand - the problem is building up a more efficient administrative structure in the Department to cope with new growth.

One of the most important developments for extension studies at UPNG has been the establishment of three extension centres in three of the country's provinces (East New Britain, Madang and North Solomons). While individual students scattered around the country do enrol in extension courses, the largest number of enrolments takes place in those provinces where University Centres have been established. It has been found that students have a better chance to succeed in their studies when they have access to tutorial assistance and general counselling and support, which the staff of University Centres are able to provide.

### **The University of Technology**

The University of Technology in Lae has developed some off-campus courses at pre-university level. Before the demise of the ATS-1 satellite in 1985, the University of Technology had a terminal and participated in some of the distance education discussions which were developed through the satellite network. In 1983 it initiated a wider Pan Pacific discussion group for distance education, which lapsed when the future of the satellite became uncertain.

Australians can continue to enrol through the University of Queensland and other distance education institutions. Some expatriate New Zealanders enrol with Massey University and fulfil its residential conditions. Massey University's Certificate in Teaching of a Second Language (English) has attracted a wider clientele since it is not restricted to New Zealand expatriates. These enrolments suggest that, as the teaching profession is upgraded, there will be a steady market for mid-career professional courses for teachers of various kinds, diversifying the offering of the College of External Studies or utilising courses from other agencies outside Papua New Guinea which have such courses readily available. There may be a tendency to seek courses useful for public servants and professionals in law, commerce and other activities, as indigenisation of the professional sector proceeds. Papua New Guinea is likely to become a market for external courses export from Australia (and New Zealand if it adopts a more open policy towards overseas enrolment). But existing links between the University of Papua New Guinea and the University of the South Pacific are more likely to result in UPNG looking towards USP for models. Current costs in the UPNG budget make any immediate move into distance education unlikely, but in the longer term USP could provide courses for adaptation.

Papua New Guinea appears to be a Commonwealth country whose educational development is at a stage where distance education could contribute much more widely than present provision allows; it has neighbours experienced in distance education; it already participates in International Council for Distance Education and Australia and South Pacific External Studies Association activities and participated in the satellite relationships created by ATS-1. Since the footprint of the Australian National Satellite has been extended to cover Papua New Guinea, there seems a strong likelihood that developments in distance education through that Satellite will be able to provide additional services for Papua New Guinea. Papua New Guinea's

particular problems of difficult terrain in the major island and scattered island communities, fragmented not only physically but also linguistically, suggest that Papua New Guinea could be a country in which the development of Commonwealth co-operation in distance education could be worthwhile, could be initiated without great difficulty on the basis of the distance education experience of its neighbours and could generate models of co-operation that will serve outside the South West Pacific Region.

## **New Zealand**

### **New Zealand Correspondence School**

New Zealand has a counterpart system in distance education to that of the national, public system of education. At the school level, the New Zealand Correspondence School is a reputable institution with 66 years of experience of distance teaching, primarily by correspondence, but supported by audio and video cassettes and by a substantial network of regional teachers and parental support; it caters for 17,500 adults who have returned to school study, or who find the flexibility of subjects at the upper levels of New Zealand schooling provides them with a valuable source of adult education, and over 7,000 children at primary and secondary level.

For school children the roll is open to all who are eligible and is compulsory when they cannot get to another school. Students from other schools may enrol if courses that are essential to their future are not available locally. Adults may enrol usually for part-time study if they are unable to take courses locally. There are no fees for school aged pupils. For adults \$15 is charged to cover postal costs. This fee is under review at present.

In New Zealand there are national syllabuses and prescriptions for all state schools and the Correspondence School courses are based on these. A full programme is provided at primary and pre-school levels and the school teaches most of the secondary subjects available in the New Zealand curriculum and many more than are provided by any other school in the country. All courses are made up of 15 to 20 written assignments together with supporting material in the form of audio tapes, pictures and slides, kits of material for practical work. Library books and texts are also lent. Returned completed assignments are marked and sent back to pupils by teachers together with new work.

Teaching staff are recruited from the national state and private schools. They must all be trained and registered teachers and work under the same regulations and are paid the same as teachers in state schools.

Student pass rates are in the main maintaining or improving their levels from year to year and these levels are comparable with those from other schools.

The per capita costs for pupils can be compared annually with those in other types of schools.

## Annual Operating Costs in \$ per Pupil

### Financial Year

Pupils Attending	1980/1	1981/2	1982/3	1983/4	1984/5	1985/6
State Primary Schools	820	1024	1145	1196	1244	--
State Secondary Schools	1606	1734	1849	1855	1956	--
Correspondence Schools (All Pupils)	959	1114	1238	1260	1553	1725

### New Zealand Technical Correspondence Institute

The New Zealand Technical Correspondence Institute, the counterpart in distance education of the technical institutes, polytechnics, and community colleges, has an annual roll in excess of 32,000. TCI was founded as a distance vocational education centre in 1946. Its original role was to assist returned servicemen to study for a trade. It was then called the Army Education Welfare Service. From humble beginnings, it branched out into technician education in 1959. Later, professional courses such as accountancy were offered.

The Technical Correspondence Institute provides courses in over 940 technical subjects. In technical education there are examining bodies which set national standards and prescriptions for many subjects and the Technical Correspondence Institute develops courses leading to these qualifications. In some cases, where there is no national examining authority, courses are designed to meet the requirements of the industry concerned. The entire process of course production, once the prescription is decided, is carried out by the Technical Correspondence Institute staff.

The Institute teaches only vocational subjects, and has considerable expertise in doing so. There are nearly 400 tutors, nearly all recruited from industry or commerce, and about 100 administrative staff. Tutorial support is highly personal.

About 25% of vocational students study with TCI. The results of public examinations conducted by various authorities show that Technical Correspondence Institute students usually have a distinctly higher pass rate than the average for all New Zealand students.

The per capita costs for Technical Correspondence Institute students are estimated for the last four years to be

1982/3	1983/4	1984/5	1985/6
\$395	\$390	\$410	\$430

The main medium of instruction is texts, with some audio tapes. At one time some video tapes were produced, but only a small percentage of students have VTRs. Courses are presently being developed for students with computers.

While both the Correspondence School and the Technical Correspondence Institute are single mode institutions in the sense that they teach only distance education students, both teach to the prescriptions of courses which are taught elsewhere in face-to-face institutions; both contribute to the development of national curricula for those programmes; both, however, have some courses exclusive to distance students; for example, the special needs section of the Correspondence School deals with problems of individual students in particular circumstances that would not permit them to follow the regular school programme; and the Justices of the Peace Course at the Technical Correspondence Institute exists only in a distance education form.

#### **Massey University, Centre for University Extra Mural Studies**

At the university level, Massey University's Centre for University Extra Mural Studies provides undergraduate credits towards the degrees of seven of the University's faculties and towards many diplomas and certificates. These same credits can contribute to the degrees of the other New Zealand universities, when the students of those universities are unable to attend internal classes, and register for tuition in extra-mural courses. Massey University therefore is the provider of distance education for the entire New Zealand university system. Courses are primarily in print, many accompanied by audio cassettes, some with video cassettes; face-to-face contact occurs at vacation courses on the campus, or at off-campus weekend courses conducted by Massey's staff. Some subjects have regional tutors but there is no network of regional centres; however the Extra Mural Students Society has developed a very substantial support system with 'communicators' throughout New Zealand (and for pockets of Massey University students in Papua New Guinea, Fiji and Western Samoa), to counsel new students, generate study circles and act as a liaison with the University on behalf of individual students. The Extra Mural Studies Programme originated as a service for teachers; it now serves a wide range of professions, such as nursing, business, public service, social work, farming. To provide for such diversity in a country with a small population means that economies of scale are not possible and therefore other economies must be made in styles of presentation; nevertheless, Massey University has retained the opportunity for its academic staff to upgrade and modify their courses afresh each year.

#### **The Advanced Studies for Teachers Unit**

The Advanced Studies for Teachers Unit (ASTU) enables teachers to upgrade their qualifications, and undertake professional studies in subjects such as the curriculum or the changing technology of teaching.

It was relocated close to Massey University in 1984 at Palmerston North Teachers College. With most of its students certificated teachers, the Unit provides opportunities for them to extend their professional qualifications. Courses, in general, evolve as the result of curriculum changes, advances in educational technology or the demands of career stages. An increasing number of its students are graduates with a number having gained their degrees as extra-mural students of Massey University who bring with them confidence in studying at a distance.

While the Unit's major instructional medium is written material supplemented by audio cassettes, it is gaining expertise in the production of videos for teaching specific skills, particularly music. With each of the teachers colleges providing tutoring staff, the Unit is able to ensure each student is taught by an experienced teacher trainer with the appropriate tertiary academic background.

A strength is its model for course development. It draws not only on its own staff but also on the expertise of leaders in their respective fields throughout New Zealand and the Unit's target groups. Together these people meet as a subject advisory group to plan the structure of a course. Course writing may be undertaken by a team or an individual generally found within teacher education, which includes the Unit. Less reliance is now being placed upon writers in other spheres of education. Editing and production remains the responsibility of the Unit. Surveying prospective student groups has proved to be a sound initiative as a step toward satisfying the needs of students.

An increasing number of courses have their counterparts in the nation's other teachers colleges as face-to-face courses, with an increasing use being made of ASTU teaching materials. All in all, teacher education is currently involved in working with some 8,000 post-service enrolments, with the Unit teaching some 5,700.

As a component of teacher education the Unit has been able to become actively involved in the introduction of curriculum changes. In particular, a course in Health Education is accepted as the basis for training teachers who have been selected by the Department of Education to initiate and manage health education in their own schools.

As part of the national drive to upgrade the status of pre-school teachers the Unit in the last three years has developed six courses. The Unit was able to capitalise on the expertise gained on the preceding eight years through its contribution to the training of childcare personnel.

The Unit also assists other organisations interested in teaching. Currently the Unit is professionally associated with those working in Intellectually Handicapped Centres, generally lay people, through the "Certificate of Social Education and Training of the Handicapped", Police Education and the Schizophrenia Society. It has courses for "Community Karitane".

A number of visitors from South East Asia and the South Pacific have helped the Unit build bridges. Teachers from the Cook Islands have continued to study with the Unit. Some co-operation with teacher education in Papua New Guinea is a strong possibility. Expatriates continue to enrol with the Unit with one student from Bhutan looking forward to gaining her qualification in the near future.

#### **Other New Zealand Initiatives**

Apart from these four major institutions, New Zealand has several smaller distance education operations. Otago University has an interactive study-centre network of off-campus lectures. In 1984 the University Grants Committee approved the development of a national network using these teleconference techniques to offer professional programmes at a postgraduate and post-experience level. These will usually include health sciences, such as dentistry and medicine. Waikato University teaches a certificate for continuing educators from its Department of Continuing Education. The Workers Educational Association - Trade Union Postal Education service provides correspondence courses for workers and their families to improve their basic level of educational achievement and to undertake studies of interest to members of the workforce, particularly if they engage in trade union responsibilities. This service is about to be subsumed under a Trade Union Education Authority whose proposals for distance education seem likely to turn more towards the use of broadcasting media than correspondence. The Radio New Zealand Continuing Education Unit provides ad hoc adult education courses of public interest through radio, with support print material; once programmes have been broadcast they are distributed in audio cassette form to public libraries for further use. Finally there are, of course, the commercial correspondence colleges, two of them involving substantial numbers, and several much smaller very specific operations, for example the courses in small business management conducted by the Development Finance Corporation.

The Marriage Guidance Council of New Zealand conducts two correspondence courses, one for its counsellors, another for tutors in human relationships. Several professional societies offer distance programmes for continuing education.

In New Zealand, distance education has wide public acceptance and this has enabled a diversity of activities to evolve. It also generates expectations among New Zealanders who travel abroad that distance education will remain available to them. These expectations have created a market for New Zealand courses overseas, to which it has responded to a very limited extent, through various co-operative frameworks. Among the New Zealand distance education institutions, there has been much co-operation in recent years. This co-operation has now become focused in the Distance Education Association of New Zealand (DEANZ). DEANZ has enabled distance educators in New Zealand to report more readily the development which they are undertaking and to identify the needs which are felt among them. Professional training as distance educators, particularly in the instructional methodology of distance education, greater access to public

broadcasting and recognition of the role of new communication media in distance education are the principal current interests.

## 6.0 University of the South Pacific

From the first planning of the University of the South Pacific, it was intended that distance education should be a part of the University's work. The University began to teach in 1968; distance education began in 1970, as part of a programme of extension studies which included continuing education programmes at various regional centres in each of the countries that constitute the University's membership.

A particular feature of USP's distance education programme has been that it serves a multiplicity of countries federated into a single university; and that for this purpose it has used the voice-to-voice satellite communication links initially made available through the ATS-1 satellite. Programme delivery relies on support at regional centres. The University has used the satellite not only for tutorials, but also to help with the management of the extension network. Since the University required preliminary studies before the full undergraduate programme began, these two were built into the distance education programme, and, subsequently, degree credits have been made available throughout the region.

Co-operation has been part of distance education at USP since its inception: USP students can be 'registered for tuition' in the Massey University programme; the satellite network was a major exercise in co-operation by many Pacific countries; USP has special relationships with several other institutions involved in distance education, for example, Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education, Australia; and recent developments in law, religious studies and nursing studies have been collaborative exercises with Massey University's departments which were already engaged in distance teaching in those fields. As has already been suggested, USP's existing links with the University of Papua New Guinea could provide the basis for further regional co-operation.

### GAPS AND FAILURES

The difficulty with indicating gaps and failures in distance education is that there are not really norms of what should be done, or how distance education should be conducted. It seems pointless to suggest that, because New Zealand has a wide diversity of distance education at all levels of education, formal and non-formal, other countries which do not, are in some way deficient, or under-developed. But the New Zealand experience indicates that there are few, if any, sectors in which distance education should be discounted. The experience of the University of the South Pacific, moreover, shows that in distance education we have moved to the integration of new communications technology and interactive communications, even though the particular example might not be called high technology by some communications specialists. Undoubtedly the repertory of techniques and skills in distance education has increased and with it has increased the need for training in the effective and economical production of materials

in a variety of media and imagination in the applications and integration of new media in distance education.

On that basis, one can reasonably say that in Papua New Guinea there are many areas of professional mid-career development for which distance education might be employed, using broadcasting, the telecommunications possibilities resulting from AUSSAT (the Australian public-service satellite broadcasting system), and the organisation of effective delivery systems for print and cassette media. Papua New Guinea appears to be a country which would benefit from co-operative Commonwealth distance education initiatives already available in the Pacific basin. New Zealand, now that it has its own distance education association, seems set to improve the skills and training on which its comprehensive distance education system is based, in order to enable the range of educational and communication technologies to play a larger part. The University of the South Pacific, following the loss of the ATS-1 satellite, is considering the further use of communication technologies.

It is perhaps salutary to look back at a paper prepared for the 1981 ASPESA Forum. Collaboration, co-operation, off-shore activity, the introduction of communication technologies which could reach much further afield, the diversification of studies and clientele - all these incipient developments have progressed since then. But some challenges have provoked much less response. One was the concern with multi-cultural variety within the region. To quote from that 1980 scene paper:

Little, if any, distance teaching was carried out in any other language than English. The concepts were external, European concepts of logic, science, rationality, taking little account except as descriptive anthropology of any other conceptual and spiritual systems, or of the adaptation of these alien ideas to any different social or intellectual environment. As distance educators, we may have been skilled in leaping space and schedule, in individualising learning opportunities and freeing study from the institutional constraints of class and school but we must have seemed less skilful in imagining the intellect and attitudes of those recipients of our courses who did not share our cultural and educational backgrounds.

There were challenges about languages:

What difficulties confront distance education in local languages?  
Should distance education be confined to major world languages?  
What contribution can it make to teaching English (or another language) as a second language?\*

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\*Bewley, D.R. (1981) Dimensions of distance: distance education in a South Pacific setting: theme paper for the 1981 forum of ASPESA, in Crump PDL and Livingston K (Eds) *Dimensions of Distance*, Massey University & University of the South Pacific.

The paper raises challenges about the tasks of adaptation and of explaining local realities and potentialities and asked what role, if any, distance systems have in the development of nationhood in new Pacific states. Does it cater for the static village societies as well as it caters for mobile people? In asking whether distance education caters as well for Pacific Island people as it does for the Europeans of those communities, it raises questions about provision when they become mobile, creating multi-culturalism in the countries to which they go, and questions about cultural maintenance among migrant communities who do not wish to lose contact with their home cultures. Amid all the achievements of distance education among the Pacific Island countries, including Australia, during the 1980s, it can still be argued that such challenges remain.

#### **CO-OPERATION IN DISTANCE EDUCATION**

The Commonwealth island countries of the South Pacific are no strangers to co-operation. There are professional associations (ICDE, ASPESA), Unesco's APEID and Higher Education Consortium Programmes, the Australian Correspondence Schools Principals' Association, the Distance Education Association of New Zealand (DEANZ) and various inter-institutional relationships.

#### **7.0 Multinational Co-operation**

##### **Professional Associations**

ICDE (The International Council for Distance Education) representation and membership throughout the region was stimulated by the decision to hold the 1985 World Conference in Melbourne, hosted by ASPESA. The prospect of attendance meant that several papers involving more analysis of issues and activities were produced from Papua New Guinea, New Zealand and USP. The region also attracted ICDE research allocations, including a study of Massey University's Extra Mural Student Society student-based support system; a joint Australian-New Zealand study of the evolution of academic staff attitudes towards distance teaching and a report of USP experience with satellite-linked tutorials.

ASPESA (The Australia and South Pacific External Studies Association) dates from 1972. Its biennial forums and the intervening workshops have brought distance educators from the Commonwealth island countries of the South Pacific into regular contact with each other and with their Australian colleagues; the 1981 forum organised jointly by USP and Massey University was held away from Australia in Fiji; a workshop in 1984 celebrating Massey University's 25th Anniversary was conducted in part as an ASPESA workshop. ASPESA publishes *Distance Education* as its professional journal and also newsletters; its fellowship scheme and research funding have not affected the South Pacific part of the organisation. Interest Groups have been active off-shore from Australia, notably the technology/telecommunications group which, until ATS-1 ceased, included Massey University and various USP terminals in its weekly satellite meetings; the student

counselling group with its secretariat at Massey University's Extra Mural Student Society and Centre for University Extra Mural Studies; and the ASPESA section of the ICDE Womens Network. ASPESA has struggled, not always successfully to avoid being dominated by the university/college of advanced education sector; it has one executive post reserved for technical and further education (TAFE), and has a school-level section (promoted to ensure that it did not take ICDE further towards becoming too exclusively a 'higher education' organisation).

There are times when ASPESA seemed to its South Pacific members preoccupied with Australian issues, or limited to exclusively Australian perspectives, with only few Australians attempting to comprehend regional rather than Australian general issues in distance education. A few exceptions had direct experience of Papua New Guinea and USP. It has yet to be seen whether the emergence of a distance education association of New Zealand will affect New Zealand membership of ASPESA, sparse before the 1981 forum, despite the extension of ASPESA to the school sector and the development of subject interest groups for agriculture, nursing studies and second language English, where South Pacific interests are strong.

Unesco's Regional Education Office for Asia and the Pacific (REOAP), in Bangkok, currently has two programmes involving distance education in which Commonwealth island countries of the South Pacific, and other Commonwealth countries participate.

a) **The Asian and Pacific Programme of Educational Innovation for Innovation for Development**

This functions through a network of institutions named by member countries for their outlook and performance in innovation. Papua New Guinea, New Zealand (since 1981), Fiji (1984), Tonga (1984), Western Samoa (1984), are members, as are Australia, Bangladesh, India, Malaysia, the Maldives, Sri Lanka (and Pakistan), as current (or former) members of the Commonwealth. Distance education figured in the work programme of the third cycle of APEID activities (1982 to 1986), as part of its interest in infrastructures for educational technology, low cost instructional materials and local educational resource centres. APEID brings together representatives from the network to share professional experience, and focus on particular aspects of development which seem worth dissemination more widely. For distance education in the third cycle, it conducted regional and sub-regional meetings on:

- Distance education in teacher education (Pakistan 1981, including New Zealand plus Australia, India, Maldives, Sri Lanka);
- Distance learning systems and structures (New Zealand 1982, including New Zealand, Tonga, plus Australia, India, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Pakistan);
- Personnel categories, functions and training needs (Pakistan

1983, no South Pacific participation, but India, Sri Lanka and Malaysia were Commonwealth participants);

- Workshop training methods for distance educators (Sri Lanka 1984, including Papua New Guinea and New Zealand, plus Bangladesh, India, Maldives, with national follow-up workshops in Papua New Guinea, Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Pakistan);
- A concluding regional review/evaluation meeting (China 1986, with New Zealand, plus Australia, Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka).

Distance education figures in the fourth cycle of APEID activities (1987-1991), with proposals for the continuation of system development and personnel training methodology for countries recently starting distance education and also for the extension of distance education for other sectors of the education system, in particular searching out its roles, in non-formal, adult and continuing education.

#### b) Unesco's Regional Higher Education Consortium

In 1982, a new programme for higher education was established building on a network of institutions in the Asia Pacific region. Innovation in distance education was identified as one developmental activity. New Zealand, Australia, Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Pakistan are participants. Activities in distance education so far are limited: a joint Australian/Thai programme resulted in a short article on evaluation; New Zealand and Australia shared in planning and designing (and Australia in executing) a training workshop for the development of multi-media instructional materials which was attended by participants from other Commonwealth countries. The higher education consortium publishes a newsletter, *Never Too Far*, and has scope to be a substantial focus for distance education in higher (ie, mainly university) education, especially if it becomes a focus for Asian Development Bank support.

### 8.0 Co-operation on a National Level

The Distance Education Association of New Zealand (DEANZ) reflects the co-operation that has long existed across the levels of distance education there. It includes adult and rural education agencies involved in distance education as well as the main providers. Anyone may join, including clients such as adult students or parents of pupils. Its President is from the Correspondence School, its Vice President and Treasurer from the Technical Correspondence School, and the Secretary from Massey University. It is concerned with ensuring public professional political interest in the well-being of distance education, but it is co-operative rather than confrontational in these matters. It seeks to disseminate distance education skills more widely and improve the quality of distance learning and teaching; to this end, it has set up a committee to review and extend training: it hopes to extend access to broadcasting, it has a newsletter and well-attended annual meetings. It has already become an agency which

government consults and through which major providers maintain liaison with the public.

## 9.0 Co-operation Between Institutions

### Massey University

Massey University has a wide experience of such co-operation. Some examples follow:

#### 1. Massey University - USP

'Registration for tuition' allows students at a non-distance-learning institution who have attendance difficulties to enrol in Massey University Extra Mural (ie distance education) courses. It is accepted throughout the New Zealand University system, enabling distance teaching to be concentrated for many years at one institution, and the others to slough off any provision for non-attending (even part-time) students. By adding USP to the legislation that enables registration for tuition to occur, Massey University achieved several objectives:

- it extended the range of choice available to USP distance education students;
- it avoided Massey University competing with USP, since it could advise students to seek USP distance learning courses or to seek enrolment through USP as students of that university; and although Niueans, Tokelauans, and Cook Islanders are technically eligible to enrol as New Zealand citizens, they too are counselled to enrol with USP if that seems more appropriate.
- it enabled Massey University to provide courses where they were needed without being obliged to admit students (through its open entry regulations) about whom judgements about admission were better made locally.

Very few enrolments occurred in the early years of this arrangement, but numbers have increased in recent years.

One popular course has been Massey's Early Pacific History paper which itself benefitted from feedback and participation by its Island-based students.

There have now been some collaborative ventures in course development:

- a) **Accountancy.** A first-year level course was developed in the mid 1970's through a sequence of co-operative activities.

At the first stage, several students were 'registered for tuition' as a group in one country in the Massey University Accountancy Course for credit towards a USP degree; in accordance with usual practice their assignments were returned to

a tutor at Massey University, with guaranteed rapid turnaround. In the meantime, at USP, an academic familiar with New Zealand foundation accountancy courses acted as supervisor for the students, conducting satellite tutorials with them and visiting them for a weekend course for which the Massey Course Controller was linked by satellite, at which problems and issues could be aired; he therefore became familiar with the students' needs related to such a course.

The second stage was the adoption and adaptation of the Massey materials as the basis for USP's own course, which was introduced using the same materials with some modifications but in the name of USP.

The third stage was a substantial redevelopment of the Massey University course by Massey University staff member seconded to USP. The USP course would have credibility with the Professional Accountants Association in Fiji and elsewhere in the region, and become the basis for more advanced courses leading to a recognised professional qualification.

- b) **Religious Studies** is a more recent development. Massey University has a well established foundation course dealing with the phenomenology of religions; its focus on New Zealand as a multi-cultural and multi-religious society makes it relevant to USP's cultural situation, but with some differences. The Massey University Course Controller was therefore invited as a consultant to join academics at USP devising such a course for internal and distance education purposes. His course materials became resource materials for originating a new USP course; he reports that his own course gained considerably in its multi-cultural aspects. It is taken by some Islanders who are New Zealand residents.
- c) **Nursing Studies:** many nurses from the Polynesian countries of the South Pacific have been trained in New Zealand, or under the New Zealand aegis at home. Although the South Australian College of Advanced Education has been prominent in secondments to and fro for mid-career nursing for Fiji and Tonga, it is expected that the Massey University materials will be used to develop courses at USP, perhaps in conjunction with Australian models, and perhaps benefitting from the ASPESA Nursing Studies Interest Group, formed at the 1985 ICDE/ASPESA Conference.

One essential factor in these relations is the positive disposition towards its Polynesian neighbours that is common in New Zealand universities, the interchange of people between New Zealand and its Pacific Island neighbours, and New Zealand's own growing consciousness of its multi-culturalism. Many New Zealand academics, including several from Massey University, have served at USP, seconded by New Zealand aid and with the University Grants Committee support.

Some conclusions can be drawn from these experiences:

- that the intended outcome, at least at foundation level, is a course which is essentially characteristic of the recipient institution, rather than a reach-me-down version of the original product;
- that it involves the recipient institution understanding and modifying the original pedagogical basis as well as the language and examples of the content and of the course material and integrating into the learning process its own supportive styles and resources.
- that this process may involve several phases of development.

**2. Massey University - Open College, Hong Kong, of University of East Asia, Macau**

For its business courses, the Open College (see Asia paper) turned to Massey University, where a Bachelor of Business Studies degree already existed as a distance education programme; this earned associateship of the New Zealand Society of Accountants, and recognition in other Commonwealth countries. The programme in accountancy has a particularly demanding set of courses which few except the best Massey University internal students complete within the three year minimum time and which therefore take extra-mural students much longer. It is modular and consists of 21 papers; a core of 10 papers in key aspects of business (accounting, economics, statistics, computing, law, marketing, administration), on which is built a sequence of other papers to make up a 'concentration' or 'major' (in accounting or personnel management, or economics, or industrial relations, or business psychology, or marketing, or agribusiness, etc). By aggregating courses in the core, a pattern of degree was designed, containing content comparable to a full BBS. Massey agreed to make materials available to the Open College to reprint in its own format. No fee was charged, although ex gratia payments were made to Massey for its administrative services. It was agreed, however, that Massey course controllers should be appointed as external assessors for their courses for a couple of years at least, to assess sample papers at the assignment and final examination levels, and paid a fee for those services. An initial batch of materials was provided for courses, with papers for advancing 'lines of study' (as 'majors' were to be called) to be negotiated subsequently. In those early stages, it was beneficial to have inputs from the University of East Asia's Professor of Management Studies, who had been Foundation Dean of Business Studies at Massey University and therefore responsible for the development of its BBS degree. Later Deans of Business took a keen interest in the project. But while acknowledging that Open College graduates would be considered, as would other good business graduates, for acceptance into post-graduate study, Massey University otherwise minimised its role in this arrangement. It was considered a piece of goodwill towards a new institution in the distance education community and towards a respected recent member of the Massey University academic community. Otherwise the University avoided becoming heavily

involved; it expected its academic staff to limit their activities as external assessors to duties that are a normal facet of an academic's work; it expected the Open College to negotiate for itself the use of reprint journal articles or book quotations on which Massey University courses sometimes depend heavily, or to negotiate the incorporation of republication of text books required as the basis for courses. A protocol rather than a contract was the basis of the initial arrangement. This was to serve as a guide for later negotiations for study materials to be conducted thereafter between the Open College and the Faculty of Business.

### **3. Massey University - Visayas State College of Agriculture, Philippines**

Massey University's relationship with ViSCA involves the transfer of experience and technique; no distance education materials have been involved. ViSCA turned to Massey University for help in mounting a post-graduate programme in agricultural extension. The method was an exchange of visits: Massey sent its appropriate agriculture department staff, its senior agricultural extension teacher, the extra mural resources officer, an instructional technologist who has now become Director of its Television Production Unit, and the University printer; ViSCA sent to Massey a team of instructors who would eventually design materials. Between them, they planned course design, production and delivery systems suitable for ViSCA's situation. Funding came from the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs as an aid project. While the change of Philippines government has resulted in a change of President at ViSCA, other key personnel for this project remain and it continues. It is essentially a consultative and training role, based on expertise in several separate departments which integrate for ViSCA's purposes. It is not unlike other consultancies in agriculture in which Massey University engages, although few others have had a distance education focus.

### **University of the South Pacific**

Besides the relationship with Massey University, USP has other relationships in distance education:

- PEACESAT/NASA/University of Hawaii: these agencies made available the ATS-1 satellite and enabled USP to pioneer in the Pacific the use of satellite communication for voice and digital, but not video, transmission for distance education.
- Deakin University: its materials production techniques were familiar to Dr Kevin Livingstone during his stay at USP, and he continued satellite contacts between USP and Australia (and PNG and New Zealand), on ATS-1.
- Several other Australian distance education institutions have had links, through ASPESA, including Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education.
- UK Open University has provided several visiting academics.

Recently, a link has been established between USP and UPNG. USP is now building up a range of courses in law. It has no law faculty, but offers a few courses in applied law in its school of social and economic development. UPNG has a faculty of law. A law unit of USP is being established in Vanuatu where USP will teach, in both modes, foundation law courses from which some students will proceed to UPNG to become lawyers. Many other students are, however, mature adults whose professional skills can be enhanced by studies in applied law without completing a degree. USP does not intend to teach a wide range of applied law courses but to endorse and act as a broker for those already available at a distance, some from Massey University (advanced commercial and organisational law, law for regional planning and for social work), and some from elsewhere, perhaps Macquarie University in Australia.

USP has also helped the Pacific Adventist College in PNG to develop an Extension Services Department. The college (only in its third year of operation) started an Extension Services Department at the beginning of 1985. It is only offering preliminary work at present, helping some prospective students to qualify for entrance. It has some 140 students enrolled at present. It is about to launch a special two-year programme in Administration to help national leaders in their church offices and schools, which will involve two four-week residential blocks, and two years of part-time work through the Extension Service. About 50 are expected to be involved in the programme. The College received considerable help from the USP in planning the extension work, and the USP also allowed it to adapt some material. The South Australian College of Advanced Education in Adelaide accepted the head of the extension programme on their course for preparing practitioners in distance education.

#### **New Zealand Correspondence School**

The School has close links with the Technical Correspondence Institute, which involve exchange visits of staff, and discussions on collaboration for in-service training of staff. TCI tutors are largely from industry and unused to teaching, and thus TCI has had to develop efficient tutor training, which is of interest to the school. The two institutions have also diverged in their use of technology, with TCI using Apple Macintosh wordprocessing and the school using a mainframe computer for administration: the two institutions are looking at ways of plugging into each other's facilities.

Another form of collaboration is with Otago University's teleconferencing facility. At present, the School brings its regional teachers together once a term. The School estimates that for the same cost they will be able to hold weekly discussions of one hour. Otago will provide the facility free, although the School will have to pay a small hourly rate during actual use. In return, other adult education groups will be allowed access to the equipment and room. The School is also looking at the possibility of improving telecommunications links with its supervisors in ordinary schools.

Internationally, the principal belongs to the Australian Correspondence Schools Principals Association, along with COES of Papua New Guinea. The members hold teleconferences at least three times a year, discussing problems or teaching materials. Sometimes conferences are on particular topics, and will involve specialist staff; early childhood education and special education are recent such topics.

The School has made a considerable contribution to the development of distance education worldwide. Significant development work in the past has included links with Zambia, Botswana, Jamaica and Indonesia. In recent years, contact has been largely within the Pacific region. Affiliation with the Unesco APEID programme has led to numerous visits from regional personnel, from one hour calls to three month fellowships. These have been particularly concerned with course development and production and broadcasting. There have been advisory contacts with PNG, and a small number of students enrol from the Pacific Islands, in cases where a small school is unable to offer a subject.

Elsewhere, the School probably has an informal influence. It receives frequent requests for samples of its materials, which included recently a strong interest from the Falkland Islands.

#### **POSSIBILITIES FOR NEW INITIATIVES\***

1. The extension and improvement of telecommunications in the Pacific basin could stimulate a metamorphosis in education in the region. Joint regional access to satellite audio facilities linked with teleconferencing equipment shared between institutions and their students could bring dramatic change and are within reach. In Fiji, for example, the school broadcasting service is run down and teachers are badly in need of retraining or upgrading. The USP already has audio satellite links. If this facility were made available to schools the quality of education might improve. Change is largely a matter of awareness and will-power, of providing a stimulus that will help teachers to make better use of the facilities that are available. Co-ordination in media use could stretch from university through school to non-formal level; currently equipment dedicated to the Unesco family life education project may be found cluttering the teachers' resource centre: sectional divisions inhibit sharing. A better use of existing facilities, a strengthening of the infrastructure, and a visible demonstration of the potential of media to decision makers could be a stimulus for change not only in Fiji but in many other islands in the region.
2. As elsewhere, training for distance educators is seen as a priority, especially more locally based training.

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\* This section contains conclusions drawn by Janet Jenkins from suggestions and comments made to her in the course of discussions on this paper.

3. Certain problems are prominent in small countries, where finance is particularly tight. The college of External Studies, Papua New Guinea, for example, has a small staff and writers are usually appointed on two-year secondment. Assistance is needed to support these writers and their training. The College also needs assistance with upgrading their wordprocessing equipment and their print shop. A support project similar to the USM/OLI link described in the Asia paper would seem to be in order to assist with institutional development.

4. There is some interest in projects to develop the use of media for non-formal education in the island communities. For example, plans are under discussion for health and agriculture learning materials for Papua New Guinea. These would be print and audio as PNG has no television. It is also short of manpower to develop the project alone, and the way appears to be open to seek partners for a collaborative international project. This could have three elements:

- the joint development of a plan and materials;
- the joint development of appropriate communications infrastructure;
- staffing and staff development to implement the programme.

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