

**COPING WITH FULLTIME EMPLOYMENT AND EVENING
STUDY AT MAKERERE UNIVERSITY: A CASE STUDY OF
WORKING ADULTS ENROLLED FOR THE BACHELOR OF
ADULT AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION**

Dissertation

**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Education (Adult Education)
of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa**

By

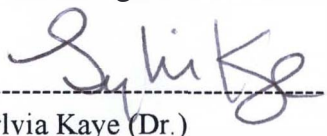
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December 2005

DECLARATION

To the best of my knowledge what is contained in this dissertation is my original work and has never been presented to any academic institution for any award.

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Supervisor

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the following: my late father John Kwemaramara (RIP) for his vision and modeling me into what I am now; my wife Grace Ngabu and children Walter Francis Ngabu, Charity Marie Karunga, and Immaculate Redempta Asaba-aheebwa who missed my time and love when busy with studies; and to all those committed to serving adult learners.

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ABSTRACT

This research was conducted at Makerere University Uganda, in the Department of Adult Education and Communication Studies on adult students in fulltime employment who were enrolled for an evening degree programme, faced with the challenge of getting time to study. The university had structured the course in such a way that lectures started at 5:00 P.M., the time they left work. At times, they studied non stop for five hours, and had only 32% of their remaining school time residual in which to do independent study and assignments. Moreover, they were working in a neo-liberal labour market that demanded them to retrain, but in their own time and at their own cost.

The focus of the study was on how these students integrated work with study in such a context. Specifically, the study looked at how these students found time to attend lectures, conduct independent study, revise, and take exams; and how they fulfilled their academic obligations.

The study was qualitative and of the case study type aimed at getting an in-depth understanding of how these students coped with the multiple and conflicting demands of work and study. What emerged is that these students try to get time to attend lectures by reducing on time meant for work, but being careful to maintain the delicate balance between work and study. They needed to retrain if they were to remain employable, and they also needed the job for survival and paying for their education. They managed to fulfill their academic obligations in the little time available by adopting pragmatic behaviour. With pragmatic behaviour, the student would find out what is useful in a course and concentrate on that in order to maximize personal outcome. Given the context and the strategies these students adopted, they most likely missed out on meaningful learning as an important educational goal. The role of the socio-economic and study contexts in influencing these students' approach to studying and learning was important to note. Recommendations to change the context are made to all stakeholders in the programme.

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

Worldwide the demand for further education is growing exponentially and many public universities are dissolving their ivory towers and opening their doors to many more learners. Student populations have increased tremendously and more so the population of adult non-traditional learners. This proliferation has forced institutions to adopt more flexible modes of provision because the current infrastructure is stretched to the limit.

However in some of these institutions there has not been adequate provision for one growing breed of learners – older adults. Given the background to the reforms and the institutional climate, adequately providing for older adults who have come along with these reforms seems more of an aspiration than an actuality. Older learners are always finding themselves at the crossroads.

Adults in Uganda's premier university, Makerere, are no exception. Beginning with the 1990s, the university started relying heavily on the provision of teaching in the evening as its best flexible option, which mode of provision allowed many adults in formal employment to enroll for higher education. The conditions in the labour market demanded that they retrain. Unfortunately, providing for these learners especially in planning, scheduling of courses, timetabling and provision of support services seems crowded out by the need to provide for the large mass of young fulltime students. In one way or another, adult learners have to juggle with the competing demands of work and study amidst limited time.

This study is a qualitative case study, which looks at how adult students in fulltime formal employment integrate work with university education in a typical developing country. It specifically looks at how students who were enrolled for the Bachelor of Adult and Community Education degree at Makerere University cope with work and

study, and what implications this could have for meaningful learning. These students, for convenience, studied in the evening.

1.1 Historical Background of Makerere University, and the Genesis of Evening Programmes.

Makerere University started as a technical college in 1922 offering carpentry and mechanics. In 1939 the technical college started developing into an institution of higher education, offering post school certificate courses. In 1949 it became a University college in a special relationship with the University of London. It soon became a college for the whole of East Africa, offering courses leading to a general degree of the University of London, and assuming the title of the University College of East Africa.

In 1963 the University of East Africa was established with Nairobi and Dar es Salaam as other constituent colleges. With the establishment of the University of East Africa, the special relationship with the University of London came to an end and degrees of the University of London came to a close. On July 1st 1970 Makerere became an independent national university of the Republic of Uganda offering undergraduate and post-graduate courses leading to its own awards (Epelu 2003).

As a metropolitan university, Makerere remained a predominantly traditional public institution with limited enrolment. It interpreted its charter narrowly restricting itself to providing post – secondary education mainly to young adults. Although it had a department of Extra-Mural studies, this was expected to cater for those outside the mainstream of formal university study and it targeted mainly community-based activities.

Beginning in the 1980s however, the university started feeling pressure that it should shift from an elite to a mass system of education. In the first instance, there was pressure from an increasing demand for higher education resulting from expanded lower levels of education and the emphasis for higher education as a prerequisite for accessing formal sector employment. An unexpected number of people demanded higher education. For example while in 1983/84 academic year 61% of the eligible candidates were admitted under government sponsorship, in 1990/91 only 35% were

admitted under government sponsorship and this downward trend continued and in the academic year 1999/2000 only 10.8% of the 16,674 eligible candidates were admitted and sponsored by government (Epelu 2003).

Secondly, due to structural adjustment programmes led by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Government of Uganda cut down on social spending including spending on higher education. By the mid – 1980s the government was on average funding less than 50% of Makerere's financial requirements (Passi, 1992). By 1990 the university suffered from such extreme resource constraint that it had to cut down on a number of services like research, staff development, computing, library, laboratories and teaching materials. But this had a negative impact on the quality of education offered by the University and lowered its standing in the public eye leaving the university no option but to reform (Epelu 2003).

Among the reforms, was the university's plan to open its gates to many more people through privately sponsored programmes so that it could generate income to sustain itself, after all there was a ready clientele. The first step towards privatization occurred when the Institute of Adult and Continuing Education piloted a self-sponsored external degree programme in 1992. The faculties of Law and Commerce initiated privately sponsored courses the following year. By 1994 the University Council accepted the principle that faculties with places remaining after the prescribed government intake could fill them with private students (Court 1999).

Additionally the university broadened access routes by introducing the Diploma holders' scheme on top of the previously existing direct and mature age entry schemes; introduced affirmative action for female and special needs students. Since then the student population of Makerere University has more than doubled. To date Makerere has twenty-two faculties/schools/institutes offering both day and evening programmes with over 30,000 undergraduate and post-graduate students of whom private students accounting for about 70%.

However, there was an apparent problem of limited infrastructure to keep up with the impending proliferation. The university was forced to adopt teaching in the evening and weekends when regular students were not using the facilities. The university had

introduced a distance education scheme, which was already being piloted with two external degree programmes. However in a country where computer penetration is very low and use of information communication technology limited, adoption of the evening programme seemed a more viable alternative. In 1995 the University Council sanctioned evening courses for all faculties (Court 2001), and today nearly all of the university's faculties/schools/institutes run evening programmes (Makerere University 2004). In fact, as Kasozi (2003) points out, the university's rejuvenation has been mainly dependent on the fees paid by evening students who account for more than 50% of private students.

1.2 The nature of evening programmes at Makerere University

Evening programmes at Makerere University run from 5:00 P.M. to 10:00 P.M. from Monday to Friday, though in some courses the teaching begins earlier than 5:00 P.M., and extends even to weekends. On average, an evening student has five hours in the university campus daily, while their counterparts the regular students have an average of 15 hours. Evening students go by the same two-semester calendar, same examination timetable, and same schedule for assignments, use same lecturers, are taught using similar methods to the regular students, and have the same contact hours with the traditional students.

1.3 Statement of the problem

While the introduction of the evening programmes has seen many non-traditional older learners join the university, its adoption may not have been because of an internal desire of the university or an attempt to bring prospective older learners into the mainstream. Rather it could have been more of a survival and coping strategy to the neo-liberal¹ changes like the state retreating from public funding of higher education. In effect, little is being done to reorganize provision and to change the teaching styles to cater for the unique characteristics of these older learners as seen hereunder.

¹ In the neo-liberal development paradigm the assertion is that government is a poor manager therefore service provision should be left to the private sector guided by market forces, and underdevelopment in the developing world is partly due to developing countries maintaining a large public sector. The perspective encourages reduced public expenditure on social services like education, introduction of user charges and increased private sector involvement.

Lectures for evening students begin at 5:00 P.M., the very time formal work in Uganda ends. In structuring the evening programme to start at 5:00 pm the university might not have considered the fact that among its clientele were those in formal employment who would need some time to leave their workstations and be in time for lectures. Chronic traffic jams that characterize Kampala city make the situation worse. This means that many of these learners join lectures somewhere midway through often missing the introductory parts. Moreover, given the new work order² few employers would allow their employees to leave work earlier to be in time for lectures. In fact, many adult learners keep it a secret from their employers that they are studying.

The system at the university is such that both day and evening students are treated in the same way, not realizing that learners coming during the day are full time and have more time at their disposal while those coming in the evening are in reality part-time learners. For example while lectures for fulltime day students were spread in 8 hours, those for evening students were massed in five hours. While the former had breaks to relax, and an average of four hours to do independent study after classes, the latter at times studied non-stop from 5:00 P.M. to 10:00 P.M. and hardly had time for independent study as they were occupied both day and evening. The university makes the assumption that because both day and evening students attend lectures daily, they therefore have the same amount of time and cover the same amount of work, and which is not the case.

There is a real possibility that these learners will be tired and fatigued after having worked the whole day. And the situation may be worse for female students, who on top of studying do all the household management, childcare and are in charge of family health and welfare. These tasks mean that women have a heavier workload and work longer hours, which impinge on their energy and time for study.

² Today the worker must retrain at own cost and time and satisfy the employer at the same time. Demands of the employer including workloads are intensified and escalating, there is a shift from fulltime employment to casual work all meant to minimize costs, and employees are expected to offer genuine commitment to each job no matter how short and depressing the job is.

In addition, some of these learners have been out of the formal education system for quite some time, are from diverse backgrounds and from a broad spectrum of motivation influences. Their educational preparedness, intellectual abilities, and study skills may have gaps in a university setting. Practices that do not provide for their unique circumstances may not favour meaningful learning.

To make matters worse, these learners do not have effective access to the major student support services like the library, book banks, information, guidance and counseling. The time the main library, which is the major educational resource of a university institution and in many cases the heart of any university is open, is when they are either working or in class. The departmental libraries remain open but only for a few hours after 5:00 P.M. Given the time they are on campus, it is difficult to get individual guidance and consult with their lecturers especially where information communication technologies are less developed and guidance and consultation have to rely on face-to-face interaction between student and lecturer.

The nature of teaching makes the situation no better. Lack of time, space, and staff to do tutorials makes the lecture method the most widely used strategy of facilitation. It may be preferred but may not lead to meaningful learning. The lecture may appeal to memory rather than the critical faculties of the students. There may be a mere absorption of what is being taught and an uncomfortable level of memorization, which may not go down well with adult learners, who are already tired. It is most likely that the lecturers will also be tired and exhausted by evening, which greatly affects the quality of instruction.

1.4 The purpose of the study

Given the situational and institutional circumstances under which these learners study, and the inherent contradictions between them as described in the statement of the problem, ordinary learners would most likely have dropped out. However, because of the conditions in their socio-economic lives, these learners stay on and many have gone through the system for years. How do they integrate study with work given such challenges? There is a practical possibility that they have developed an array of

strategies of integrating the two. But again what are the implications of these strategies to meaningful learning?

The purpose of this study, therefore, is to find out how these learners integrate both work and study given the situational and institutional challenges and contradictions, and what the implications are for meaningful learning given the strategies that they have developed.

1.5 Specific Objectives of the study

In addition to the main aim discussed above, the study had three major objectives:

1. To find out and contribute to the body of knowledge on how learners in formal employment today will approach learning in challenging circumstances such as being under pressure to retrain with a context not attuned to their unique characteristics.
2. To establish how attempts to integrate study with work could impact on meaningful learning.
3. To critically comment and suggest responses for action on how to integrate learning, work, and university instruction.

1.6 Research Questions

The following research questions were used for the study:

1. How do working adult students get time to study as they work? How do they find time for lectures, time for independent study, revision, assignments, and exams? How do they organize their time?
2. How do they go about the process of studying and learning? How do they do independent study? How do they do revision and prepare for exams? What implications could their approaches and strategies have to meaningful learning?

1.7 Motivation for the Study

My motivation for the study can be traced to the day I read the Mumbai statement on lifelong learning in higher education institutions (Banshali et al 1998). It was from this statement I started reflecting on the extent to which Makerere University was transforming into a lifelong learning institution and formulating my possible research area. At a conference to celebrate the Association of African Universities day at Makerere University I presented a paper on lifelong learning, but on mention of the Hamburg Declaration, the Mumbai Statement, the Cape Town statement, I realized that few people including adult educators were conversant with these important international declarations on lifelong learning in higher education institutions. I later realized that even the country's Higher Education Act was silent on lifelong learning. It was only the education White Paper that mentioned it in the passing.

By implication the university could be increasing access without a clear lifelong learning policy. This became the original focus of my study, but later seemed too big given the level, time and resources required. Nonetheless I was still interested in internal self-evaluation as an institution looking at the discrepancy between practice and rhetoric and implications for learning. My narrowing down to consider evening students who were working came from a paper presented by Katahoire (2003) at the Cape Town conference on the challenges of Makerere University as a lifelong learning institution, when she pointed out the problem of evening students who are part-time yet treated as full-time students.

It is from here that I started wondering how a working evening student in today's volatile labour market, treated as fulltime student when is actually part-time was combining both work and study and what implications this could have for learning and practice.

Literature on flexible modes of delivery of higher education like evening programmes which suit developing countries with little computer penetration and use of information and communication technologies is limited. Many southern universities are under pressure to do more in terms of widening and producing work ready

graduates but function with acute resource constraints. Many are forced to reform not out of an internal desire but because they have survive and this has implications for the core business of the university.

I thought this study could identify coping mechanisms employed by adult learners who were working during the day and studying in the evening, and propose more flexible ways of delivery of higher education especially from a southern context.

1.8 Research methodology

The study is qualitative in nature and is a case study. It is qualitative because it seeks to understand experiences of these students as lived by them and of a case study because the aim was to have an in-depth understanding and illuminate a general problem.

1.9 Thesis outline

This thesis has seven chapters. Chapter one introduces the study, gives the background to the problem, the problem and purpose of the study.

Chapter two gives a theoretical framework for the analysis of findings. It gives theories behind the learning strategies that working students will most likely adopt trying to balance work and study given their socio-economic lives. Specifically it looks at how conditions of the workplace and arrangements in the university will most likely influence how they approach learning. The chapter also looks at the implications of such scenarios to learning.

Chapter three is a review of related literature. It gives cases, examples, and experiences of how working students go about delicately balancing work and study given the contradictions in their socio-economic lives.

Chapter four discusses the methodology of the study- the research design, choice and description of the population for study, sampling procedures, data collection and analysis.

Chapter five presents the findings of the study. It brings out the different ways in which working students went about their learning experience. Specifically it looks at how these students got time to attend lecture, time for independent study, revision and exams; and how they went through the process of studying and fulfilling the academic obligations of the university given their orientation to learning, an insensitive work place, and a less flexible educational system.

Chapter six gives a discussion and interpretation of the study findings where the respondents' experiences are critically compared with existing literature and research findings; in relation to the theoretical framework.

Chapter seven gives the conclusions from the study findings, analysis and discussion, and the appropriate recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

Using a review of relevant theories and literature, this chapter gives an appropriate framework for the study by showing how working students will most likely integrate work and study with situational and institutional contradictions, and how this may translate into learning. The socio-economic context demands that such students (working students) get more formal qualifications if they are to remain employable. But the same context demands that they remain working because the burden of retraining is solely theirs, and their release to study would mean releasing energy from production (Cruikshank 2002). Students in this study, are enrolled in an institution whose academic organisation – scheduling of programmes, course hours, time for assignments and exams, and time for other support services are least compatible with their situation and lives. They have an apparent role conflict from role demands that are simultaneous and incompatible and an overload due to time constraints. How do they cope with studying and learning in such a context?

An understanding of how these students cope and learn in such a context can be sought from constructivist ideas of learning. Of significance to this study are social constructivist ideas of context based learning and situated cognition; the theory of systemic approach to learning; and the broadened view of learning. It is hypothesised that how these students cope with both work and study – the strategies and approaches they use for studying and learning, will largely be influenced by the context in which they operate. The same context will influence the learning outcome because cognitive activity is contextually situated, that is to say the context in which learning occurs is inseparable from the emergent thought. These theories and concepts are expounded below.

2.1 Social Constructivism

As a philosophy of learning, constructivism is not a single unified theory of learning. It is a cluster of ideologies that all rest on the assumption that learning is a process of

knowledge construction. From a constructivist perspective, it is argued that learners are not passive beings that just respond to stimuli and that learning is not simply a process of acquiring knowledge that is stored in the brain for retrieval at a later stage.

Learning is an active process of constructing meaning and transforming understanding in interaction with the environment (Gravett 2000). Instead of passively receiving or merely copying input from teachers and textbooks, learners actively mediate the input by trying to make sense of it and relating it to what they already know about the topic (Good and Brophy 1995).

As explained by Gravett (2000), social constructivism is one of the strands of constructivism which views the origin of knowledge construction as being the social interaction of people, interactions that involve sharing, comparing and debating among learners and mentors. Social constructivism whose views stem from the works of Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky locates knowledge making of individuals in a dynamic social context. Social constructivists claim that the meaning making activities of the individual do not take place in isolation but in a context that is shaped by societal influences. According to Vygotsky, the father of social constructivism, a mental function is external (intermental) and therefore social, before it is internal (intramental). Learning is viewed as a movement from the external to the internal through the process of internalisation mediated by tools and signs. According to social constructivists, therefore, the individual learner is at once part of the intramental and intermental plane. Two concepts under social constructivism relevant to this study are context based learning and situated cognition.

2.1.1 Context Based Learning

Within social constructivist theory, context is accorded significance as it renders situations and events meaningful and relevant, and provides learners with the opportunity to construct new knowledge from authentic experience. We do not learn isolated facts and theories in some abstract ethereal land of the mind separate from the rest of our lives because learning is contextual. We cannot divorce our learning from our lives. The context in which learning occurs is inseparable from emergent thought.

This view known as contextualism in psychology is a central tenet in social constructivism (Applefield *et al* 2000).

Wilson, as cited by Merriam (2001) argues that learning is an everyday event that is social in nature because it occurs with other people, it is “tool dependent” because the setting provides mechanisms that aid, and more importantly, structure the cognitive processes; and finally, it is the interaction with the setting itself in relation to its social and tool dependent nature that determines the learning. When talking of context, we include the social emotional context. Emotions and feelings are key pointers to possibilities for and barriers to learning. Denial of feelings is denial of learning since, through emotions, some of the tensions and contradictions between our own interests and those of the others manifest themselves (Bamber and Tett 2000).

The main limitation of describing the different learning styles and approaches, is the tendency to concentrate exclusively on characteristics of the individual overlooking the context of learning. We must look at the demands of the institution and the social setting in which learning takes place. An approach strictly speaking can only be applied with any confidence to a particular teaching-learning environment since it is the result of the interaction between the student and context (Entwistle 2000).

2.1.2 Situated Cognition

Situated cognition, as a concept advocated in social constructivist approaches is a natural extension of the importance attached to the context in which learning is believed to be born. Knowledge is conceived as being embedded in and connected to the situation where the learning occurs. As a consequence, thinking and knowledge constructed are inextricably tied to the immediate social and physical context of the learning experience (Applefield *et al* 2000). In other words, it is a mistake to separate what is learned from how it is learned because knowledge is adapted to the settings, purposes and tasks to which it is applied (Good and Brophy 1995).

The proponents of situated cognition further argue that learning is not something that just happens inside the brain separated from the experience and context of the learning situation. It does not occur in a vacuum. It is not something that happens or is just

inside the head, but is shaped by the context, culture and tools of the learning situation. The external environment in which cognition takes place determines its workings and outcomes (Winn 2002).

In other words, the situative perspective on learning criticises institutional forms of learning based on functional psychology, which treats the school as a privileged and decontextualised site of learning that is intended for distant and future use. This perspective further criticises such institutional forms for presuming higher cognitive processes to be further away from the body or bodily feelings and from intuitive, concrete context-embedded experience.

2.2 The Systemic Approach to learning

The systemic approach to learning is based on the idea that the organism and the environment are inseparable and form only one unitary system. This is not manifested by research findings but is founded on the main postulate of the Organism Environment Theory. Hirsto (2000) argues that the main mistake in most theories of human behaviour is that they accept the common sense idea of man and environment as two separate systems with their own typical features, principles and laws. However, from the systemic point of view, the separation of organism and environment is the reason for theoretical crisis in psychology and leads to a blind alley because the organism cannot exist without the environment and the environment has descriptive properties only if it is connected to the organism. That is why not only learning, but also all mental processes should be seen ultimately as social in nature. Individual learning as a separate entity inside the head process is impossible because such a unit or system does not exist. Learning is the process in which we join in our world, which is inherently social and personal at the same time.

2.3 Learning Context and Coping Strategies

As seen above the context in which learning takes place will largely influence approaches and strategies to learning, and the learning outcome. This section gives theories of coping with multiple roles and approaches to studying and learning in a context that dictates that these adults must study but does not allow them the time to

study. First, is to understand how these learners will most likely cope with multiple roles and demands, then how they will most likely approach studying and learning in such a context.

2.3.1 Coping with Multiple roles and Demands

It is normal for any human being to be faced with multiple and often conflicting roles in life. How we cope with such roles has, from one particular perspective, been explained using the micro economic principle of opportunity cost. The theory of Opportunity Cost has its roots in the notion that resources are limited, and since resources are limited, every economic choice has a cost. But this requires one to weigh both the benefits and costs of ones choice. When weighing alternatives, the basic principle is that out of two alternatives with different expected payoffs, the one with the highest payoff at any one time will be chosen by a rational decision maker (Laudon and Laudon 1998; Wilbrink 1995). This is the rational model of human behaviour.

At times when there are conflicting options, one may use triage. When applying triage in coping with multiple demands, it is wise to consider which problem has the most important outcome, which problem has the greatest chance of solution, and which problem has the nearest deadline. Sometimes the problem with the most important outcome is different from the problem with the best chance of solution or the nearest deadline. One has to apply their own judgment in weighing the triage considerations (Malouff 2002).

In these decisions, the aim is to get maximum benefit or return. One must allocate resources among their different behavioural strategies so as to maximise their overall return. This is the principle of optimality (Kirsh 2000). However, in reality, these choices are made against a context or background (Malouff 2002).

2.3.2 Context and Approaches to learning

How the context or learning environment will influence how learners may approach learning can be drawn from the ideas of Lankbeck and Mugler (2000) on sequential

and pragmatic coping strategies which they identified when studying coping strategies of adult university students in a distance programme.

According to Lankbeck and Mugler (2000) the sequential strategies involve proceeding step by step. Students using this strategy must read the materials several times before meaning becomes clear, and some have to look up the meanings of words so that they can understand complex concepts. Many first skim through the material, highlight and write summary notes on what they consider to be the main points. They stress the importance of using their own words that facilitate retention. Even when it comes to exams, such students will put work for different subjects together, read them, and go to text books where not clear, read the whole thing again though it takes time, put the book aside and try to remember what was read.

Those with the pragmatic approaches focus on the material relevant to the assignment and limit themselves to what needs to be done to pass the course, ignoring all other material. At exam time, they may go to what is put down in their books, read through a few past papers, and go through assignments and some exercises.

However, Lankbeck and Mugler (2000) note that students who adopt the pragmatic approach do it not as a consequence of a low conception of learning as merely absorbing, storing and reproducing information, but because of the constraints and their observation that this strategy often results in passing courses. Many students are forced to abandon the sequential approach to become more pragmatic by the circumstances surrounding their learning.

Related to the sequential and pragmatic approaches are Marton and Salvo's (1976) categorisation of learning approaches into the surface and deep approaches. In the deep approach, the intention is to extract meaning, produce active learning processes that involve relating ideas and principles on one hand, and using evidence and examining the logic of the argument on the other. In the surface approach, in contrast, the intention is just to cope with the task, which sees the course as unrelated. While theoretically there seems to be a clear-cut divide between deep and surface approaches, Entwistle (2000), points out that there are important caveats in using these categorisations. It is wrong to try to put any student wholly into any one

category because of educational context. An approach, strictly speaking, can only be applied with any confidence to a particular teaching-learning environment, since it is the result of the interaction between the student and context. That we must look at the demands of the institution and the social setting in which learning takes place, instead of concentrating exclusively on characteristics of the individual overlooking the context of learning.

The argument here is that the student's overall approach to learning and the strategies adopted for specific learning tasks are mediated through the students' social, cultural and individual background characteristics and the learning situation the student finds himself or herself in. While it is true that background student characteristics may predispose the student to undertake a particular task in a certain way, this does not preclude the use of other strategies as the situation demands (Gordon *et al* 1998). For example, a deep strategic approach to studying is generally related to high levels of academic achievement, but only where the assessment procedures emphasise and reward personal understanding. Otherwise, surface strategic approaches may well prove more adaptive.

2.4 The Broadened view of learning

As seen earlier, the major goal of higher education and adult education in particular is meaningful learning, which is broader than the common sense view of learning. This section gives the broadened view of learning as a framework for inferring whether meaningful learning was taking place in the students' context.

The common sense view of learning involves the acquisition of knowledge. However, today, the vision of learning is broader and includes not only acquiring knowledge but also being able to use knowledge in a variety of new situations. This is what is called transfer of learning. Transfer is the ability to use what was learned to solve new problems, to answer new questions, or to facilitate learning new subject matter.

When this occurs, it indicates meaningful learning (Mayer 2002). Meaningful learning is recognised as an important educational goal. The ideal situation in learning is when information makes sense to the learner. The purpose of teaching is to assist

people to learn and to learn meaningfully. The purpose of higher education and education in general is to facilitate meaningful learning (Garrison and Archer 2000).

So far, there is no universal agreement about what methods yield efficient and lasting learning. However, if one's goal is to enhance transfer of learning, an environment that allows learners to construct their own knowledge may be preferable. A focus on meaningful learning is consistent with the view of learning as the construction of knowledge in which learners seek to make sense of their experiences observe Applefield *et al* (2000).

Essential to the broadened view of learning is construction of worthwhile knowledge and hence meaningful learning, is critical thinking. If knowledge is viewed as a system of tentative constructions, then it must be developed through critical reflection. This active engagement of the learner leaves little room for approaches that rely on passive acquisition of information. Learners must have the opportunity, time, and ability to critically make learning decisions with regard to constructing meaning and confirming knowledge (Gravett 2000:14).

The issue of time in learning has long been emphasised. By ensuring sufficient time, students gain a better grasp of complex ideas (Applefield *et al* 2000). Sperling (1982) shows that quite early psychologist Ebbinghaus showed that there is a simple straight-line relationship between the amount learned and the time taken to learn. Studies made since have confirmed his conclusions that the more time you spend learning, the more you learn. Pointing to the same idea, Berliner (1990) shows that as early as 1963 psychologist Carroll also stipulated that the degree of learning is a function of time spent learning over time needed to learn. Though his model has since been improved, it maintains its original validity.

Applefield *et al* (2000) further point out that concern should be more with depth of learning than breadth of learning. Often we are concerned with coverage of content. From a constructivist perspective and hence the broadened view of learning, they question if there is learning in 'coverage'. When emphasis in school is placed too heavily on information and its recall, the inevitable result will be prodigious amounts

of forgetting. Thus, the position is not to worship efficiency, but instead to value the quality of learning. That we should subscribe to the principle that “less is more”.

On the surface it may appear that efficiency is sacrificed, but the more important outcome for learners of all ages involves learning with depth. Certainly, we should be concerned about how instructional time is managed, but where tension arises over efficiency of instruction, the goal of achieving depth of learning rather than breadth of learning should be accentuated. What is of enduring significance is that learners acquire deeper levels of understanding, see their learning in a meaningful context, become increasingly competent learners, and have the awareness and ability to apply their learning in non-school contexts, Applefield *et al* (2000) add.

The broadened view of learning looks at the learner as a systemic whole. In contemporary psychology, the general position is that learning concerns the whole person – the body, emotions, and the will. The intellect is not the only agent of learning. Everything that affects physiological functioning affects the capacity to learn though educators are most conscious of the intellectual learning, which tends to play the greatest part in their plans and intentions (Commonwealth Secretariat 2001, Gravett 2000).

Our physical states are inevitably linked to our minds. For example, when one is threatened, stressed or frustrated, one’s brain downshifts, implying a minimising effect on brain function. When the brain downshifts, one is less able to engage in complex intellectual tasks. It is true rote learning can take place under stress evoked by threat, but meaningful learning is inhibited by stress (Griffin 1997, Gravett 2000). Griffin (1997) adds that it is common knowledge that our bodies reflect our emotions. Sometimes we feel the bodily reaction without having noticed the emotion, sometimes we ignore the emotion, while at other times we deny or repress it. The body knows the emotion is there, however, and expresses it in some way. There is research evidence to show that life situations for example occupying a job with long, unpredictable or inflexible hours, demands from other roles, and full or part time status as a student can cause strain and stress and therefore affect how one learns (Home and Hinds 2000).

What happens in the brain is well explained by Galyean as quoted by Griffin (1997). Galyean explains that if the learner has a negative attitude, or is bored, threatened or overly fatigued, the part of the brain called the thalamus secretes a series of hormones called endorphins, which anaesthetise the other glands thereby blocking the passage of new information into another part called the neo-cortex which processes the information. This is what he called 'intellectual shutdown in the face of high anxiety'. Hill (2001) brings out similar findings that extreme stress can alter brain function thereby diminishing its ability to remember experience. A fatigued or an anxious person will learn poorly or nothing depending on the level of the fatigue and anxiety.

2.5 Theoretical Assumptions

The socio-economic and study contexts will influence how these students will approach study; and the learning outcome because learning is contextual and influenced by the social setting and demands of the institution in which it takes place. How the students choose to give time and commitment to either work or study may vary according to what is pertaining in the learning environment.

For example, the context may demand they contend with work and study. But where there is role conflict and strain, and preoccupation with one role while performing another, juggling may be difficult. When the imperative to work is great, it may lead to non-attendance, or if the imperative to attend school is great, like during exams, many will find a way of being at school at any cost.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter presented the theoretical framework to the study. The study is posited within the constructivist philosophy of learning. It can be understood using ideas of context based learning, situated cognition, the systemic approach to learning, and the broadened view of learning. The framework shows how the socio-economic and study contexts will most likely influence how working students will approach studying and learning. It further shows how the approaches and strategies will influence the likely learning outcome. The next chapter presents a review of related literature.

CHAPTER THREE

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

3.0 Introduction

Using relevant literature, this chapter gives cases, examples, and experiences of how adult students in full time formal employment integrate work and study amidst situational and institutional challenges. Specifically, the chapter shows how such students get time for study when they have to work at the same time, how they approach study and learning, the specific strategies they use to fulfill their academic obligations, and the likely learning outcomes.

3.1 Multiple Commitments and Time for Study

Kember (1999) observes that anyone who has been an adult student will have faced the problem of conflicts between study demands and meeting the other obligations all adults face for example conflict between writing an essay or completing the employer's report, reading to catch up and doing domestic work or trying to accommodate study alongside an existing web of ties, obligations, and duties. Apps (1982) observes that no single block to learning is most cited by adults returning to school like time. Most of them work fulltime, study, and have other responsibilities so the problem of finding time for attending classes, and even more importantly, time for study seems insurmountable. The situation is made worse by the conditions of the workplace and the less responsive nature of the educational institutions to these adults' lives.

Miller (1998:34) observes that the organising principle in most workplaces now is the "½ +2+3 concept": the workforce is divided by a half, paid twice as much, but produces three times as much output. This means intensified workloads and difficulties for working adult students finding time to study. The situation is made worse by academic organization of some educational institutions. The oldest and still one of the most common modifications of adult education to accommodate the special needs of adult part time learners is scheduling learning activities at times when they

are free to participate in them. Scheduling perhaps needs much more attention than it has received to date, because it is a concern of people with crowded and irregular work schedules (Cross 1981:216).

Whether the more technology based flexible modes of delivery like distance and open learning or the less advanced ones like evening programmes, a programme will be popular with working students if it is convenient and learning is well spread out. For traditional institutions of education, however, scheduling is still one of the most difficult changes to make because it is a structural change that requires almost everyone from registrar to teacher to do his or her job differently, Cross (1981) adds.

In some institutions, it may even be difficult to recognise part time students because of structural barriers. For example Knapper and Cropley (2000) found out that many German universities offered no recognition of part time status despite the fact that up to 75% of students in some faculties were employed. Students in these universities were required to take seven or more final exams within three months. Those students who had outside jobs had to complete these examinations within the same narrow time span as those studying full time. Even if it would take a simple administrative change, like distributing the exam over two terms, it was difficult because curricula and exam conditions were specified in state law.

Given such circumstances and contradictions, adult students will develop a number of strategies to find their way out. In a study to find out how adult students managed their time in lifelong learning, Blaxter and Tight (1994) identified strategies like alternation or substitution, combination or synchronisation and other strategies students with conflicting roles like study and work used to cope.

3.1.1 Alternation and Substitution

Many students were found to alternate periods of study with periods when other activities were stressed. In practice, this meant giving up some other activity or effectively substituting one effort as a student for another effort in other roles. Anyone taking on a demanding new role like studying part time will have to cut back on some of their activities. Blaxter and Tight (1994) found widespread reductions in the amount of time spent in participating in a range of social and leisure activities. The

most notable casualties of studying were watching television, playing sport, and visiting the pub. Many of their respondents reported giving up one or more of their major roles to enable them to pursue their part time degree studies.

3.1.2 Combination and Synchronisation

In addition to substitution and alternation, Blaxter and Tight (1994) found students to be using combination and synchronisation. They found that the strategy of combining study with other roles or other activities was more common than the strategy of alternation or substitution. One student described three coping strategies: over scheduling his week which was precarious but possible because of the autonomy in his work, but when things became tough, he synchronised his class attendance with his wife's activities outside the home, and combined study related activities with his working day. The latter involved use of his car as study space, studying while at work, strategies that were also employed by other students. Kimeiko (2004) identifies other strategies in this category as using fleeting moments to study or fitting study time into the late evenings or very early in the morning in weekdays, and into the afternoons and weekends.

Blaxter and Tight (1994), however, observe that where their respondents' responsibilities included just one or perhaps two major roles in addition to their student role, they were able to cope at least for most of the time. But such coping was likely to be undermined at any moment by an unforeseen event like an urgent order at the place of work. This imposed a continuing strain upon the individual, which severely limited their capacity to engage in their studies. Where responsibilities extended to two or more major roles, their capacities to cope were greatly affected.

McInnis and Hartley (2002) make the same observation in their study of Australian university students who were working. They found that many students began by being well organised, managing their time well, and keeping track of everything they had to do and ticking things off as they did them. Most cut back on leisure time and social life to have enough time for study, but as pressure increased, especially when a number of assignments were due in or at exam times, they cut down on hours of work or even missed lectures for the day or week in order to get the work done.

Nevertheless, all those researching this area – Blaxter and Tight (1994); and McInnis and Hartley (2002), note that the inclination towards work or study kept shifting depending on the pertinent circumstances. For example, in McInnis and Hartley's study some students admitted that they frequently missed lectures, labs and tutorials because of their jobs. In most cases, they wanted to work and earn more money but would cut down hours of work when assignments were due in or at exam time. Kember (1999) also makes a similar observation. He points out that for adult students in full time employment, work has the largest time allocation because they have obligations that make it inevitable for them to continue working. However, when they have to do assignments or exams, priority goes to study and they will find a way of maintaining the balance between study and work.

3.2 Multiple Commitments, Approaches and Strategies to Studying and Learning

The commitments the learner has vis-à-vis disposable time will influence how he or she will approach studying and learning, and the specific strategies the individual learner will employ. In a situation where a learner is under external pressure, like work commitments amidst limited time for study, such a learner will most likely adopt surface approaches to learning, and will most likely prefer teaching characteristics where content is clearly organised and well presented for this not only aids their memorisation in exams, but also such teaching characteristics save much of their time (Garrison and Archer 2000).

In the study on Australian university students, McInnis and Hartley (2002:48) found that these students were being overwhelmed and they themselves agreed that paid work got in the way of their academic study and confessed to not having enough time to do in depth work. One common strategy they used was doing limited reading or only the minimum reading required focusing mainly on assessment tasks and assignments, or doing the bare minimum required rather than doing as well as they could. Their teachers complained that they were coping by doing the minimum amount of study required to get by, and were not achieving the standard of work, which they were capable of. Neither were they capable of engaging in deep or reflective learning. Gillespie (1990) observes that obviously good readers read only

what they need to answer their questions, but when under pressure most people will skip words, quickly look through a piece to get a rough idea of what it is about (skim) or ignore everything else in the text but focus on the section they need (scan).

Other common strategies students used identified by McInnis and Hartley (2002) were making extensive use of online course material as this saved time and one would access material when needed – at all times of the day or night, and they manifested an over reliance on the more collaborative approaches like group discussions.

3.3 Working Women and their Coping Strategies

The struggle for further education affects men and women differently. It is commonly perceived that in Uganda as well as other countries, women generally do all the household management, and are in charge of childcare, family health and welfare, which impinge on their energy and time for private study. This can be a barrier to progress for women whose lives preclude the study patterns of the conventional full time course (Whaley 2000).

Lowe (1996:277) also points out that the amount of completely free time that is actually disposable varies greatly between men and women. Those household and family duties continue to make heavy demands on women in most societies throughout the world. In less developed countries, it is notorious that nearly all women lead arduous lives. Even in many industrialised countries, sociological surveys show that despite efforts of the Feminist Movement, the overwhelming majority of women have much less residual time³ than men. Even in those households where at least some duties are shared between couples, workingwomen remain disadvantaged, and this impinges on their time for private study.

Lewis (1988) brings out similar findings in a study about married women with children who were re-entering higher education after a break of several years. She found out that these women were pulled in several and often-conflicting directions by a seemingly endless stream of demands from work, family, friends and community.

³ Residual time is that time that is not committed to any demands like work, family, social, civic and other duties.

Faced with role conflict, most women will cope in a reactive way by attempting to fulfill all role demands on the assumption that demands are unchangeable and must be met, observes Clouder (1997). Study is an additional commitment, which is often only given priority late in the night when all other demands have been satisfied. Such women feel that their ambitions are selfish and that those of their families, especially children take precedence, and if opportunities are limited, they should be last in the line, Clouder (1997) adds.

Blaxter and Tight (1994) got the same findings on how women tried to cope with multiple roles. In a study on how adult learners juggled studies with their other roles, they found out that women had family, personal and work commitments taking primary importance and their studies had to be arranged around these commitments, to the loss of most of the wider context of student life. They often felt they were under pressure to maintain their overall performance in all their roles. This was typically achieved by the adoption of a regular routine in which study was confined to their 'own time'⁴. To depart from such visible efficiency was very risky as well as impractical, especially in a household full of demanding non-students.

Given their circumstances, especially in a largely patriarchal society, Clouder (1997) further observes that few women attempt to alter external structurally imposed expectations; instead, the majority copes by altering personal expectations and behaviour. For example, many will prefer negotiating role support from family members like asking children to help them with housework, to negotiating demands made on them by the course. Here there is no attempt to change demands but just an ability to compartmentalise and separate roles with difficulty. For some women this strategy can work only if temporarily. Unfortunately, such women find the course a very stressful experience. Because of this role conflict, many fail to complete important elements of the course and are awarded ordinary degrees, and many academics fail to acknowledge this difficulty of women learners.

⁴ Blaxter and Tight described women's 'own time' as the period of the day when their children were at school and/or husbands were at work.

3.4 Learning Strategies and Learning Outcomes

When looking at the relationship between learning strategies and learning outcomes, the dictum “what is learned and how it is learned are two inseparable aspects of learning” is examined. Entwistle (2000) says that the starting point of relating learning strategies to learning outcome was an investigation by Marton and Saljo (1976) on how students went about reading. In Marton and Saljo’s study, students were asked individually to read an academic article and were told that they would be asked questions afterwards. It became clear after the transcriptions that students had interpreted that instruction very differently, and their ability to answer questions about the meaning of the text depended on how they had decided to tackle the task. Some students sought a thorough understanding of the author’s message while others had relied on question spotting learning just those pieces expected to come up in the test. A descriptive concept with two categories of approaches to learning – deep and surface approaches to learning – has since been adopted with the former associated with meaningful learning and the latter with learning as just information taking. A number of modifications have been made to the original ideas of Marton and Saljo, but they still maintain their validity.

There is a lot of research evidence to show that how we read determines the learning outcome. For example studying how we read and the resultant outcome, Gillespie (1990) cautions that it is important to note the purpose for which the reading is done and the level of understanding involved. Where learners have had little time to read, or where the purpose has been to get through the reading to fulfill requirements of the teacher, they have been found not to read everything, doing speed-reading, the reading task being less meaningful as their understanding of meaning is just the literal comprehension level.

Well handled, reading provides extensive opportunities for reflection, which is important for integrating information in a meaningful manner. Though this may not be the case with every adult learner, nonetheless Garrison and Archer (2000) observe, that no better method to learning brings out meaningful learning like independent study. Much learning is known to occur independently as students read and study on their own. For this reason, reading, especially reading that is done in advance, may be a more active learning activity than listening and may provide for a higher level of

cognitive processing.

Moll et al (2001) warn that reading clearly is not a matter of passively receiving ready-made understanding from books. All reading from the start is a highly active process. It has levels of understanding. There is the literal comprehension, interpretation, critical, and creative reading levels. The full possibilities for meaning in reading can only be realised through working at all of these different levels, especially the creative reading level. At the level of creative reading, we understand ideas, we are able to use them to predict and generalise, and we have opinions about their validity. In addition, we can also use the ideas as a basis for developing new ones.

Such reading needs time. Garrison and Archer (2000) point out that the amount of reading expected should be realistic with regard to the time available to students. That for example, going by most traditional skills manuals on how to tackle demanding learning tasks, many students have adopted strategies like speed reading to allow them cover their required reading more quickly. However, speed-reading has been found to deflect students from reading for meaning.

As with all learning activities, reading will have limitations when used in isolation. It has been found to yield better results when combined with writing. Writing is an effective means to facilitate higher order thinking. The reason is the inherent need to be reflective during the writing process. Garrison and Archer (2000:140) say that writing, especially expository writing, offers an opportunity for students to work actively and independently with their own knowledge; they can clarify meanings, find inconsistencies, discover implications and establish connections between previously isolated fragments of knowledge.

To write reflectively is to construct meaning. Writing can be a time where exploration and confirmation merge. Unfortunately, too many writing assignments are not intended to have students construct new meanings. Too often the purpose is recitation and not reasoning, knowledge telling and not knowledge transforming. While there is a role for recitation or knowledge telling, the real challenge for adult and higher education is in transforming knowledge through reflective writing.

Common with students with multiple and often conflicting roles are approaches that save their time. Of particular interest are collaborative approaches like the group discussion. Brophy and Good (1995) point out that group discussions properly conducted can be a powerful tool for promoting adult learning. Discussion can lead to development of powers of analytic clarity and increased appreciation of the complexity of the topic gained by listening to the different viewpoints. Exposure to new input from others makes one aware of things one did not know and leads to expansion of ones cognitive structures. Exposure to ideas that contradict ones own beliefs may cause them to examine those beliefs and perhaps restructure them. The need to communicate one's ideas to others forces them to articulate their ideas more clearly, which sharpens their conceptions and often leads to recognition of new connections. As a result, cognitive structures become better developed.

However, Darkenwald (1996) citing Brookfield points out that these outcomes are seldom realised in actual practice and many of the claims made with respect to the cognitive outcomes of discussion are unsubstantiated. The rapid pace of many discussion groups, which can lead to confusion rather than enlightenment, often precludes appreciation of the complexities of a topic or issue. Other shortcomings according to Brookfield include the often low quality of participants' contributions with respect to their relevance to the topic or issue under consideration, the lack of coherent, cumulative learning over time, and the many dysfunctional aspects of the psychodynamics of discussion groups.

Besides, much as academics today are emphasising collaborative learning or study, and it appears that students see the value of discussing with others, collaborative academic work and group assignments often provide problems for employed students. It is often very difficult to find common times when all members of a group are available. It is difficult to get together between lectures and in the relatively short periods they are on campus (Garrison and Archer 2000).

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has given what is so far researched and documented on how working adult students cope with study and work, and their coping strategies can influence

learning outcome. What is brought out is that when students have multiple commitments and yet have to study, they may have no option but to substitute effort as a worker for effort as a student, or combine studying with work roles. When overwhelmed they may resort to surface approaches or doing the minimum amount of study required to get by, focusing mainly on assessment demands. The situation could be worse for female students.

The next chapter looks at the methodology used in the study – the research design, sampling, tools, data collection and analysis processes.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology of the study, looking at the study design, choice and description of the study population, sampling procedure, data collection and analysis.

4.1 The Research Design

The design of the study draws from its purpose and research questions. The purpose of this study was to find out how working students integrated both work and study given the situational and institutional challenges and contradictions they faced. It was guided by the following research questions:

1. How do these students get time to fulfill their academic obligations as they work? How do they find time for lectures, independent study, assignments, revision and exams?
2. How do they go about the process of studying and learning? How do they do independent study? How do they do revision and prepare for exams?
3. What implications to learning could their approaches and strategies have? To what extent could these students be learning meaningfully?

The purpose of the study could best be achieved and research questions answered using a qualitative research design using a case study. Qualitative studies, among other things typically serve to reveal the nature of certain situations, systems, relationships, gain insights about the nature of a particular phenomenon, develop new concepts or theoretical perspectives about the phenomenon, and/or discover the problems that exist within the phenomenon (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001). Indeed, this study was intended to gain insights into a phenomenon and problem – how students coped with multiple demands. Secondly, this study sought to understand the problem from the participants' perspective. In other words, it aimed at understanding the experiences of these students as lived by them. The key philosophical assumption in qualitative research is that reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their

social worlds (Merriam 1998). The research was a case study mainly because, as Leedy and Ormrod (2001) point out, in a case study an event or phenomenon is studied in depth, and that sometimes researchers focus on a single case perhaps because its unique or exceptional qualities can promote understanding or inform practice for similar situations. They further add that a case study may be especially suitable for learning more about a little known or little understood situation.

Indeed, how the working adult students coped with multiple roles of study and work is a little known or understood situation. This case study could be used in a particular or specific instance like this one but actually can illuminate a general problem. There is a practical possibility that what students were going through in one university department is representative of what the rest of the students were going through. Besides, for heuristic reasons, a case study can help to explain reasons for a problem and discuss alternatives, which this study attempted to do.

4.2 The Population

The principal population of the study was adult students enrolled in the evening programme for the Bachelor of Adult and Community Education degree, but who at the same time were in full time formal employment. Out of 106 students enrolled in the evening programme, about 50% were in full time formal employment. Formal employment was used to refer to that type of job that had set times for reporting and breaking off, had a regular payment in form of salary or wages, and was governed by employment regulations. It could be in the civil service or the private sector. These students had joined the university through the mature age entry scheme or the diploma holders' scheme; access routes meant to broaden adult participation in university education, and had had a break from formal study for at least five years for mature age entrants and two years for diploma holders.

4.3 Sampling Procedure

The sampling process was largely purposive though the random method was used for focus groups. There are two types of sampling: probability sampling and non-probability sampling.

Probability sampling allows the investigator to generalise results of the study from the sample to the population from which it was drawn. Generalisation is not a goal of qualitative research and therefore non-probability sampling is the method of choice for most qualitative researches. Where the researcher is not seeking to answer quantitative questions like 'how much' and 'how often,' but qualitative problems such as, discovering what occurs, the implication of what occurs, and the relationship linking occurrences, the most appropriate sampling strategy is purposive sampling (Merriam 1998:60).

Silverman (2000:104) also observes that in qualitative research, before one can contemplate comparing the case with others, one needs to have selected the case. Purposive sampling allows one to choose a case because it illustrates some features or process in which one is interested and this demands one to think critically about the parameters of the population one is interested in and to choose ones sample case carefully.

I opted for purposive sampling because my particular interest was to understand qualitative issues rather than quantitative problems pertaining to how adult learners in formal employment were managing in the university's evening programme. Purposive sampling has been found to be effective in obtaining a holistic view of the situation and in understanding systems, behaviours, events, situations and underlying processes.

Common sense sampling was used when selecting respondents for informal interviews. I selected students I knew were working, could easily be contacted and would freely hold a conversation with me. Common sense sampling was further used in selecting female respondents to bring out the special challenges women were facing in the struggle for further education given their roles as wives and mothers in the home, which eat up much of their time for independent study compared to their male counterparts. To bring out this challenge, I selected female students I knew were married and were possibly mothers.

Purposive sampling was also used in selecting respondents for the self-administered questionnaire. There were 106 students enrolled in the evening programme in all the

three years at the time of the study. I estimated those in full time formal employment to be between 40% and 50%. However, to cater for error, I circulated 60 questionnaires (20 questionnaires to each year of study) when I was sure that students were in full attendance.

The only probability sampling method I used was with selection of students for the focus group discussions. I used the stratified random sampling where three focus group discussions of 10 each per year of study were selected, and where gender was represented on an equal basis. Stratified random sampling is used where the researcher wants to ensure that different subgroups of the population (strata) are represented. For example, one may want to ensure that both men and women are respected in the sample (Kakooza 2002).

4.4 Methods and Instruments of Data Collection

The study used a self-administered questionnaire, informal interviews, focus group discussions and to a small extent document review. These methods and instruments were deemed the best to generate the necessary data among the many available. They were structured and administered in such a way that they worked as a spiral where one method married into another but at the same time reinforcing it and created a synergy in answering the research questions. The self – administered questionnaire was used to get a first ‘sweep’ of data, while the informal interviews and focus group discussions were used to get in-depth individual student experiences, clarifications, confirmations, and differences in opinion.

4.4.1 The Self-Administered Questionnaire

The self-administered questionnaire was the first tool to be used for data collection. Irwin (1999) points out that the use of a questionnaire to gather information is most appropriate when the researcher wishes to gather data at a relatively superficial level for a number of reasons, but among others to obtain a first ‘sweep’ of data for the specific purpose of developing or informing a more in-depth interview programme. In this study, the questionnaire was used to collect basic data from students as a point of departure for deeper analysis. Questions for the subsequent informal interviews and guidelines for the focus group discussions were largely drawn from the information

obtained from the questionnaire.

Irwin (1999) adds that another major factor in deciding whether or not to use a questionnaire relates to the researcher's own assumptions about the population and hence the sample they are working with, for example, their capability for completing the questionnaire, and their attitudes towards sharing the information. In this regard, the questionnaire was preferred for a number of reasons. In the first instance, data was being collected from a literate group that was not so scattered that collection of the filled questionnaires would be difficult. It was cheap and easy to administer as respondents could be easily found in class.

There were 106 students enrolled in the evening programme at the time of the study. The basic assumption was that at least 50% were in formal employment. To allow for error, 60 questionnaires were prepared, 48 were given out, and 36 returned fully filled, a return rate of 75%. I clarified that the questionnaires were meant for those adult students who were working during the day and studying in the evening.

Specific information sought (see appendix i) included: basic socio-demographic data about the respondents; how these learners managed to get time to attend lectures given that lectures began when most of them were still at work; how they got time for independent study, revision and exams; their studying and learning processes including how they handled individual and group assignments; how they used academic resources; and how they prepared for exams and satisfied other academic requirements of the university given that they were part time learners treated as full time learners, and working in a neo-liberal labour market highly influenced by the human capital theory⁵.

4.4.2 Informal Interviews

Informal interviews were used with six students – two female and four male. As Narayan (1996) points out, the advantage of this method is that the lack of a

⁵ The core thesis of human capital theory is that people's learning capacities are comparable to other natural resources involved in the production process. When the resource is effectively exploited, the results are profitable both for the enterprise and society as a whole. It tended to equate workers' knowledge levels with their levels of formal schooling where more schooling would lead to higher productivity and macro economic growth.

predetermined structure allows free association resulting in broader exploration of the topic, which may bring to light unknown issues and facts. Having the issues and concerns in mind, I encouraged my interviewees to talk about them in a relaxed, conversational and informal manner. Indeed this resulted in a broader exploration of the issues, and bringing to light many more, which were hitherto not revealed by the self-administered questionnaire and possibly could not have come up during the focus group discussions if I had relied on just the two methods.

Specific issues in the informal interviews (see appendix ii) included: how the individual students found time to attend lectures, to do independent study and course works, and to prepare for and do exams. How they approached individual and group course works, how they approached reading in limited time, and how they used academic resources like the library and book banks. These individual experiences allowed insight into the challenges to learning these students met and the strategies they had adopted to cope.

4.4.3 Focus Group Discussions

In this study, focus group discussions were used for getting various opinions, clarifying data, and getting a deeper analysis of the strategies students were using, especially as brought out by the preliminary findings from the self-administered questionnaire.

Marshal and Rossman (1995) point out that the focus group discussion has a number of inbuilt advantages. In the first instance, the groups are selected because they share certain characteristics that are relevant to the question of study; and in a permissive environment they will most likely encourage discussion and expression of differing opinions and points of view as peoples attitudes and beliefs do not form in a vacuum: they often need to listen to others' opinions and understandings in order to form their own.

Secondly, studying participants in a natural real life atmosphere does not have the artificiality of a one-on- one interview. This allows the facilitator the flexibility to explore unanticipated issues as they arise in the discussion. Lastly, the results of a

focus group discussion have high face validity because this method is readily understood, and the findings appear believable (Marshall and Rossman 1995).

I held four focus group discussions on four different days. The first three were general discussions of 10 members each (five male and five female students) drawn from each academic year among those who had filled the questionnaire. Specific issues discussed (see appendix iii) included clarifications on gaps that were not filled by the self-administered questionnaire and informal interviews, but more emphasis was put on the study and learning process – how these students selected resources for reading; how they went about the reading, note taking, preparing and taking exams; and possible recommendations. Indeed, I was able to get more insights into the coping strategies of these students. This was possible because they were conducted in a friendly and permissive atmosphere that allowed free association. They were also therapeutic since students were able to talk about their challenges, stimulate each other in conversation and to give recommendations. I arranged to meet these students for a few minutes or an hour when they were freer after class. I arranged venues for discussion and facilitated them to go home though a bit late.

The fourth focus group discussion was specifically with married women. I gained an insight though later, that in Uganda, like in any southern patriarchal society, women are expected to perform their wifely/motherly duties always and if they load studying on top of these other duties, they have a more difficult time than men. Specific issues looked at were if there were coping strategies peculiar to them as women given their obligations and resultant role demands and conflicts.

4.4.4 Document Review

Documents can be a ready-made source of data to the imaginative and resourceful investigator because they are usually produced for reasons other than research. They could be public or personal documents of respondents or even researcher generated. Researcher generated documents are documents prepared by the researcher after the study has begun. The specific purpose for generating documents is to learn more about the situation being investigated (Merriam 1998).

In this context, public documents used were the class and exam timetables, and the course guidebook. Researcher generated documents included comparative bar graphs (see appendices iii and iv) that were derived from the timetables. The purpose of these documents was not to bring out the coping strategies but to illuminate the problem.

One form of document that directly showed the coping strategies of these students were the photocopied materials at the various Xeroxing machines near the departmental offices. An analysis was done to find out the type of material that was being photocopied at the time of course work, tests and exams where a pattern could emerge that all students photocopied the same material and even had it several times unknowingly. This data augmented that collected from interviews and discussions.

4.5 Validity and Reliability of data

Validity is interpreted as the extent to which an account represents the social phenomena to which it refers. It is both internal and external. Internal validity deals with the question of how research findings match reality. Do the findings capture what is really there? External validity is concerned with the extent to which research findings of one study can be applied to other situations. That is, how generalisable are the results of the study? Reliability on the other hand refers to the extent to which research findings can be replicated. In other words, if the study is repeated, will it yield the same results? (Merriam 1998).

The concepts of validity and reliability have their origins in discussions of experimental research. In recent years, however, some qualitative researchers have started to question their relevance to qualitative designs. That for example, reliability is problematic in social sciences because human behaviour is never static. Rather than demanding that outsiders get same results, a researcher wishes outsiders to concur that given the data collected, the results make sense – they are consistent and dependable. The question then is not whether findings will be found again but whether the results are consistent with the data collected. Equally, the question of generalisability has plagued qualitative investigators for quite some time. That part of the difficulty lies in thinking of generalisability in the same way as investigators do using experimental or correlational designs (Merriam 1998).

Despite the debate, what comes out clearly is that regardless of the type of research, validity and reliability should be concerns of any research; possibly the difference should be in procedures of accounting for trustworthiness. All research is concerned with producing valid and reliable knowledge in an ethical manner. Being able to trust research results is especially important to professionals in applied fields like education. Any results of a research are trustworthy to the extent that there has been some accounting for their validity and reliability (Merriam 1998). Qualitative researchers must also convince themselves (and their audience) that their findings are genuinely based on critical investigation of all their data and not depending on a few well chosen examples or succumbing to the temptation of anecdotal evidence (Silverman 2000).

In qualitative research where understanding is the primary rationale for investigation, accounting for research trustworthiness takes different forms than in quantitative research where the rationale may be testing a law or hypothesis. While quantitative research ensures research quality using statistical analysis of quantitative data, qualitative research ensures research quality through parameters like respondent validation, long-term observation, peer examination, the refutability principle, deviant case analysis, the constant comparative method for validity; theoretical frameworks and audit trails for reliability; and triangulation for both validity and reliability (Merriam 1998, Silverman 2000, Leedy and Ormrod 2001).

It was not possible to use all the above parameters to ensure quality of the study. Nonetheless, I found triangulation of results, constant comparative method, peer examination, and providing the study with a theoretical framework as best parameters for ensuring quality.

4.5.1 Drawing on Triangulation

According to Marshal and Rossman (1995) one of the strategies that can enhance a study's generalisability is triangulating multiple sources of data. Triangulation is the act of bringing one source of data to bear on a single point. Borrowed from navigation science, the concept has been fruitfully applied to social science inquiry. Data from

different sources can be used to corroborate, elaborate, or illuminate the research question. Citing Foreman, Merriam (1998) describes triangulation of data from different sources as 'pooled judgment' for the different data can be used to confirm the emerging findings.

This study was designed in such a way that the selection and ordering of methods of data collection reinforced and built into each other. I used the questionnaire to get a first 'sweep' of data then the informal interviews and focus group discussions later. It was possible to corroborate the findings from the questionnaire with the findings from the focus group discussions and informal interviews to see the emerging trends and patterns from where I was able to get clarifications, confirmations and divergences.

4.5.2 Constant Comparative Method

Relying on triangulation alone would not be enough to ensure validity. There are debates that at times a multiplicity of methods or approaches may not necessarily mean validity much as using different datasets or deploying different methods is useful (Silverman 2000). To reinforce triangulation, I used the constant comparative method. The comparative method means that the qualitative researcher should always attempt to find another case through which to test out provisional findings or hypothesis (Silverman 2000). Occasionally, I would hold informal interviews with new respondents to crosscheck if their revelations matched the findings I had got from the earlier respondents. Constantly, I found out that these revelations meshed with my findings.

4.5.3 Peer Examination

One other measure of validity in qualitative research suggested by Merriam (1998) is peer examination. At times, I would get stuck as to what I wanted exactly, or if I was not looking for the obvious and not contributing to the body of knowledge. During such moments, I would share my findings with my friend working with Nature Uganda who had finished his doctorate. Later, I presented my findings to my fellow staff members in the Department of Adult Education who acted as sounding boards on the findings as they emerged. This strategy worked well and through it, I was able to clarify many issues and get more focused.

4.5.4 Providing the Study with a Theoretical Framework

Going by the traditional canons of qualitative research, a qualitative study's transferability and generalisability to other settings may be problematic. To counter such a challenge, the researcher can refer back to the theoretical framework to show how data collection and analysis can be guided by the concepts and models. By stating the theoretical parameters of the research, it becomes possible to see whether or not the cases described can be generalised, for new research and transferred to other settings; or how the research ties into a body of theory.

I provided the study with a theoretical framework drawing on social constructivist ideas of context based learning and situated cognition; and the broadened view of learning. The concepts in the framework, especially those on context based learning aptly explain why these students cope in the way they do as their learning is highly dependent on the context in which it takes place.

4.6 Ethical Considerations

To legitimate my study and gain access to institutional records, I began by sharing my research proposal with the Head and staff of the Department of Adult Education and Communication Studies, under the Institute of Adult and Continuing Education. They gave my study a blessing, as it would inform the department's current practice, now that enrolment at departmental level has more than doubled, and chances were greater that more employed students had enrolled.

I later wrote to the Institute Director for clearance and permission to do research in the institute and attached the proposal. The proposal was vetted through the institute research and publications committee and was recommended for possible funding from the university's Higher Education Committee as it was deemed beneficial not only to the institute but also to the field of adult education in higher education institutions as a whole. I also got clearance from the National Council of Science and Technology as a statutory requirement.

4.7 Data Analysis

In qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis, and the product is richly descriptive. Words rather than numbers are used to convey what the research has learned from a phenomenon. Data in form of respondents' own words and direct citations from documents support the findings of the study. Therefore, in making sense out of the different sets of data collected, the researcher can process data immediately, can clarify and summarise it as the study evolves (Merriam 1998).

Given this background, I decided to analyse my data right away, data set after the other. I gave out the self-administered questionnaire first and immediately made a preliminary analysis by listing the responses and later trying to figure out categories and a rough idea of the emerging themes. I captured important quotations. While waiting for the questionnaires, I was carrying out informal interviews. I compared my preliminary analysis from the self-administered questionnaires with transcriptions from the informal interviews noting similarities and differences in responses, and capturing important quotations and anecdotes. These preliminary findings gave more insights into what to focus on in the focus group discussions.

I then analysed data from focus group discussions. I began by transcribing and categorising data from every focus group discussion, juxtaposed the data to map out similarities, differences, and unique findings and seeing if the emerging issues are in a way related to those that emerged from the self administered questionnaire and informal interviews. As ideas started to emerge, I got an insight that I ought to have investigated into how female students were coping with work and study being in a patriarchal society on top of the challenges and contradictions at the place of work and at the university. I later had a focus group discussion with female students who were married and were not part of the earlier focus groups.

My last stage was to establish data categories across the three different data sets highlighting related ideas. I brought similar ideas together and developed themes and sub-themes. I finally returned to my research questions and objectives of the study to establish the existing relationship between the data collected and goals of the study.

Much as I was getting themes that could answer my research questions, at times I found I had some data that would best respond to if the study was on the university structures rather than how these students coped within these structures. Even with comments from fellow members of staff, I tried to map the emerging themes to the theoretical framework of the study to see if I was in context. This sent me deleting some of the irrelevant findings though nice to hear. Possibly, this agrees with the warning by Narayan (1996) on using informal methods of data collection that at times a lot of irrelevant information is collected and that they require greater interviewing skills.

4.8 Summary

The methodology and design of the study draws from its nature and purpose. The study was qualitative with the purpose of understanding how working adult students integrated work with study given the situational and institutional challenges and contradictions.

Use of a purposively selected sample; choice and ordering of research methods – the self administered questionnaire for a ‘first sweep’ at the data, informal interviews and focus group discussions subsequently were meant not only to get an in-depth understanding of the situation but also contribute to the validity and reliability of the study.

This study aptly brings out the major issues on how students integrated work with study and their implications for meaningful learning despite some challenges. The findings from the entire process are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter brings out the findings on the different ways in which adult students in full time formal employment went about their learning experiences in the quest for further education given problems such as, an insensitive workplace, inflexible timetables, and limited time for study. These findings are presented according by the research questions which sought to find out how these students got time for study, that is time to attend lectures when classes started at a time that was not in step with when they left work; time for independent study, revision, assignments, and exams yet their work demands did not allow them a lot of time and neither did the academic organisation; and how they went through the study and learning processes in such a context.

Consequently, two broad sections are looked at in this chapter. In the first section, I present how these students got time for study, specifically looking at how they got time for attending lectures and how they got time for independent study, revision, assignments and exams. In the second section, I present how these students went through the study and learning processes given the fact that they were operating within a bare minimum of time. (see appendices iii and iv)

5.1 Getting time for study as one worked

In getting time to study, these students had two problems – first, their lectures began at 5:00 P.M. the very time formal work ended; not all of them were near the university – they had to travel and often beat traffic jams; and given the new work order⁶ few employers would allow their employees to leave work earlier to be in time for lectures. Secondly, the academic organisation at the university was highly structured and these learners were treated as full time when they were actually part time.

An analysis of a typical semester timetable revealed that at times they expected to use

⁶ In a neo-liberal economy guided by market forces, the employer will want to produce at least cost possible and get maximum output. Allowing time for study would be releasing energy for production.

100% (five hours) of their school time for class work, hardly leaving room for breaks and independent study. Even after 10:00 P.M. when their classes ended, most would be going home and possibly to rest after a day's work. Therefore, they had to find ways of getting time to attend lectures, and also find ways of getting time to do independent study, revision, assignments, and exams.

5.1.1 Getting time for attending lectures

As earlier seen, these students were in an apparent role conflict and dilemma- to leave work earlier and possibly lose the job, or to satisfy the employer at the expense of failing the course. There were four possible solutions to this dilemma: taking advantage of a lax working environment, seeking approval of the employer to leave work earlier than the closing time, using underhand ways in being at school in time if one could not get the employer's approval; or accepting the situation and persistently go late if one could not risk using underhand ways. The employment status of students as indicated in the table 1 dictated so.

From the table, 69% of the students were employed in the private sector and 31% in traditional civil service; 17% did not need permission or any other means to leave their work places early to be in time for lectures as there was some flexibility at their work places. But, 83% of the students needed permission from their employers to leave work earlier if they were to be in time for lectures and these were the interest of this study.

**Table 1: Student status and possibility of getting permission to leave work early
N =35**

Category of students	Didn't need permission to be in time for lectures	Needed permission to be in time for lectures		Total	%
		Could get express permission	Couldn't get express permission		
Employed in private sector	1	3	20	24	69%
Employed in civil service	5	2	4	11	31%
Total	6	5	24	35	
%	17%	14%	69%		100%

Consequently, these students had developed a number of strategies depending on the intensity of the problem or the context, which included: clearing ones pathway,

negotiation, risking but cautiously, and resignation and accepting the situation as presented below.

Clearing ones pathway

Depending on the circumstances at the workplace, there were students who made sure they cleared their schedules early such that nothing held them up when it came to leaving work for lectures. To make sure no work was pending by the time they left office, some reported to their work stations earlier than the rest, some even as early as 7:00 A.M., one and a half hours prior to the official hour of 8:30 A.M., and/or kept on work even during the lunch break. Though it was not clear whether this strategy helped them finish the workload before 5:00 P.M., some thought it would also earn them approval in case they left at 5:00 P.M. or a few minutes earlier. Below are some of their responses.

I make sure I come very early, and then remain on my desk the whole day such that if I leave a bit early, it does not cause an alarm. I win sympathy because everybody will have seen me busy.

I do the work very fast and make sure I finish before time for lessons. Sometimes I arrange with someone to relieve me to come earlier, especially when there is a test.

I always make sure I do what I am expected to do on time then find my way to school. I at times have to forego lunch so as to finish the work, especially if it is paperwork.

I make sure I have cleared my work by 4:15 p.m so that I can even beat the traffic jam.

The strategy of clearing ones pathway was common and worked best with students employed in the civil service where there was some atmosphere of permissiveness and they did not need permission. Nonetheless, it is important to note that the permissive was not absolute that is why these workers would endeavour to have their work schedule cleared before 5:00 P.M.

Negotiation

The strategy of negotiation, like the rest of the strategies was common with students (69%) who could not get express permission to leave work early for lectures, who

were largely employed in the private sector. In this strategy, there were two forms of negotiations. In the first form, the individual student would negotiate with the employer to be allowed to leave earlier than usual. Indeed some employers allowed their employees to leave work earlier to be in time for lectures but this was purely not out of policy but a negotiated settlement at times accruing out of the personal relationship one had with the employer; or would even be conditional. Below are some of the responses to the effect.

My boss allowed me to leave at 4:00 P.M., but it is because he is a relative who wants to see me study.

I requested to leave early. My boss is parental and allowed me to leave at 4:00 P.M.

My boss is aware and gave me permission to leave by 4:30 P.M., but I must get to office very early such that by the end of the day I have no pending work.

I discussed with my boss and he allowed me to leave at 4:00 P.M. in case there is not much to do.

The second form of negotiation was these learners going into informal agreements with their colleagues to stand in for them when they left earlier than 5:00 P.M., or to cover them up in case of any eventuality. One student whose workplace had a clocking system had even abandoned using her signature in preference to just writing her name because in the event of leaving earlier than 5:00 P.M., her friends would just write her name in the register, a thing that would have been difficult if she was using a signature, which her friends could not make. Other such phenomenon can be inferred from the responses below.

I made arrangements with my immediate supervisor to leave early.

Sometimes I get someone to relieve me but when I fail I close and rush for lectures.

I delegate my work to my assistant because he understands my situation, but at times when it comes to taking hard decisions, I have to miss.

Risking but cautiously

In situations where negotiation could not work, the next strategy was for the learner to risk leaving earlier so as to be in time for lectures but cautiously. Fifty seven percent of the students revealed that neither did they find getting permission nor negotiating

easy. Because they had to attend lectures, being enrolled in a formal university with an academic organisation that called for strict attendance, they at times found it inevitable to risk leaving work earlier so as to be in time for class. When to risk and when not to risk depended on a number of factors both at the place of work and at the university. At the place of work, one would take advantage of opportunities like an immediate supervisor not being around or when there is a lull in business. On the side of the university, they found it inevitable to risk when there was a test, or on days of the week when subjects they deemed hard were being taught or even when an individual lecturer they deemed 'must be attended' was to be teaching. This can be seen from this response by one of the respondents.

We read our lecturers. If he or she is the type who gives notes, you can afford to come late or even miss when caught up with work. But there are lecturers you must attend even if it means coming late because there are some things he or she will say which you will not get in the books but are in everyday life, the examples and emphases he or she will give, you even remember in the exam.

But important to note is that no student solely relied on risking because like any other strategies, it could not be sustained as can be inferred from the responses below.

Work stops at 6:00 P.M. I have to escape to be in time for classes. But one cannot escape always! In most cases, I miss the first lectures.

I already have a bad record of escaping. I have not yet found a friendly way of putting it right.

I set my work to stop at 5:00 P.M. when actually I am supposed to go beyond that. But at times it is inevitable I go late.

If chance allows, I leave 30 minutes or an hour before.

Resignation and accepting the situation

There were those students for whom clearing the pathway, negotiation and risking were impossible because of working in a very stringent environment. Such students reported that they left everything to fate and found it inevitable to miss the first minutes of the lectures or even the whole lecture. Reasons for leaving everything to fate included some or all of the following: working in places that did not pay them for the time they were not at work, deducting their wages for the time lost, or even threatening to fire them. "At first I used to break off at 4:30 P.M. so as to be in time

for lectures. But management decided to deduct money from my salary equivalent to 30 minutes lost daily. Now, I have nothing to do but to come late,” remarked a student who was a manager in a transport company.

However, some have not resigned completely. Much as they had to work up to the close of business, some had found ways of reaching the university in the shortest time possible. One student had bought a *bodaboda*⁷ motorcycle to beat traffic jam in the city so as not to be too late for lectures. Many were using such means of transport other than public transport because it was more flexible and faster. There were reports of some students preferring using commuter taxis and *bodaboda* motorcycles to their personal cars.

5.1.2 Getting time for independent study, revision, assignments and exams

An analysis of a typical semester timetable revealed that at times evening students used 100% (five hours) of their school time for class work hardly leaving room for breaks and independent study. Even after 10:00 P.M. when their classes ended, most of them would be going home and possibly to rest after a days work. A set of strategies for getting time for independent study, revision, assignments and exams could be identified. These included optimal use of the little time available, synchronising annual leave with exams and seeking time off just for exams.

Optimal use of time

Optimal use of time included common sense skills that would help one to use their available time in the most efficient and productive way possible. The commonest strategy was for students taking advantage of their biological prime time or that time of the day when they were at their best for reading. In this particular strategy, 44% of the students woke up in the middle of the night or very early in the morning to read before going to work, as this was the time they were mentally alert and had minimum disturbances and distractions.

⁷ Type of motorcycle used for transport especially for those who cannot afford hiring cars or those going in

places where cars cannot reach or because of traffic jams cars are not as fast.

Then, there were those students (16%) who used the principle of contiguity. These students said that they would revise what they had covered in the day immediately they reached home before they forgot. They said that reviewing lecture notes on the same day of the lecture helped them to reconstruct the lecture, than if they did it at some later time. However, whether to revise notes immediately after the lecture or not would at times depend on the individual lecturer. If he or she was the type who presented the lecture logically, stressed the main points, gave an overview at the end and possibly linked to what would be covered next, one would not be compelled to review the notes immediately. If he or she was the type who approached the lecture from different perspectives, one had to revisit the notes to sort out ideas.

There are two things to note with these two strategies, however. It was common for students to combine the two strategies as can be seen from this response.

I divided my night into two parts – I leave class at 10:00 P.M., 11:00 P.M. to midnight, I read through the notes I made that day, 4:30 A.M. to 6:30 A.M. I am up revising.

Reviewing the day's notes may not be as demanding as serious revision like preparing for a test which most likely they would do in the morning when they were at their best hence the need for combination. Secondly, the two strategies were largely characteristic of male students because for female students on reaching home, priority would be on home care, and in the morning would be on preparing breakfast and taking children to school.

Another strategy was scheduling. In scheduling they used techniques like budgeting their time, setting time aside like a weekend, adjusting personal schedule to fit in assignments, minimising all forms of disruption and distraction, taking a day off work or even missing a few lectures to do the assignment if it is very urgent. "Saturday morning and Sunday evening are strictly for revision," said one student.

"I reserved Friday, Saturday and Sunday because there I have free time though Sunday I am disrupted by visitors and in our society you cannot explain that you are studying," said a female student. "For assignments, I wake up earlier than usual so as to read for more hours. I can even cut some lectures depending on the urgency of the matter," said another.

Then there was the strategy of taking advantage of free moments in ones daily activities. There were those students (16%) who carried their books and used any free hour to read from their places of work. Some read in taxis, especially those who travelled longer distances to school or traveled upcountry over weekends. Though these fleeting study moments could not take the place of more concentrated study periods, they could add up.

Lastly, common among all respondents was the strategy of cutting back the time spent on some not so important activities like watching TV or substituting them with reading altogether. “When tired, I can switch on TV but normally, I have no time for that. Even for newspapers, I rely on the press review on radio. If there is something interesting that is when I will follow up the newspaper. Football, I may not miss. It is a passion”, remarked one student.

Synchronising Annual Leave with intense revision and exams

When it came to revision and examinations, the pressure for time increased. The university always left two weeks for preparations and another two weeks for doing the examinations. This time was deemed not enough given the fact that some lecturers would teach up to the eleventh hour, the nature of assessment required a lot of time for revision, and the work demands at times required most learners to continue working normally. These students had to seek some form of leave from work for revision and examinations, and indeed most of them required time off if they were to do their exams.

One of the strategies therefore, was to synchronise annual leave with revision and exams. These students sought their annual leave when exams were drawing near. They often negotiated to have it phased: if granted ordinarily, it would be incompatible with the semester system. In Uganda, annual leave is between 20 and 30 working days on average and taken once a year, but there are two semesters in an academic year implying that the learner would need to take leave twice each academic year to be able to use it for exams. In effect, they requested to have their leave phased

into two blocks of time to coincide with whenever they were doing exams as can be seen from the responses below.

I partition my 24 days into two to cater for the two semesters”

You take your annual leave in bits – two weeks for the first semester and another two for second semester, if employer is good.

The problem with my annual leave is that it does not cater for first semester, which begins in October. I apply for leave still but plan it to coincide with exams.

At least 50% of the respondents revealed having used their annual leave to do exams and having had it structured in such a way that it coincided with exams.

Negotiating time off just for exams

Today, it could take a good employer to grant one leave let alone granting it in phases to coincide with ones exams. With profit maximisation and cost minimisation at the centre of many business ventures, the tendency among employers, especially in the private sector is to by pass annual leave or to grant leave during off peak business seasons. The probability that such leave would coincide with exams would be marginal and at times it would be granted when least needed by the student.

About 25% of the students were not certain their employers would give them leave to do exams and they (employers) would at times be indifferent to their situation as can be seen from the responses below.

At my place of work, you do not determine when to have leave. It is difficult to fit in exams. You can have it when you least need it.

I am entitled to annual leave once a year. But we do exams twice a year. My annual leave may not even coincide with a single examination period.

I am a teacher. Second semester exams take place when the school is extremely busy. So, I cannot get leave that time. I can only have two weeks in the first semester.

Given such circumstances, they just prayed if they could be allowed some time for exams. And being exams, most employers allowed them time off (indeed this had worked for about 25% of all the students) but often at some price as studying was

seen as a personal achievement. Testimony can be got from the following student responses:

My nature of work can allow me only a few hours off. So, I am only allowed those for exams.

I can be allowed a few days off to do exams. But it will be just for exams.

I get days off to do exams, but I signed an agreement to have my money deducted.

I submit my exam timetable, and will be allowed to come and do the exam. The days have to be for exams strictly and they are unpaid.

I just request for particular days I am doing exams and will compensate for the missed days during weekends and extra hours.

In some cases, some would get time using underhand ways like pretending to be sick and getting sick leave that would be used for exams or creating any reason that would enable them get time to do exams.

The study also looked at how female students got time for study given their roles as wives and mothers. What comes out is that women also used most of the strategies presented above. It is two strategies that were not common with them – waking up to read in the morning, and reading immediately they reached home.

The strategy of reading immediately before one forgot was used by only two female respondents who said that they would rather read something even if it were for thirty minutes before going to bed. It was not common with the rest, because after school they would be preoccupied with checking if children have had supper, were sleeping well, if all was set for the next day for children and husband, making reading difficult. Equally, all respondents did not find waking up to read easy much as it was one of the commonest strategies used by male students, as the same roles of preparing children for school and preparing for their husbands would preoccupy them.

Given such circumstances, many often found alternative time to read when they did not have these disturbances. Common practice was to read at their places of work and putting aside a day to do some reading. All of the respondents indicated that they

carried their books with them to their places of work in case of any fleeting moments when they were not busy which they could use advantageously. In putting time aside for reading many used Sunday as a day for reading – either the whole day or immediately after prayers for those who prayed first.

5.2 Studying and Learning Processes

Being registered in a formal university, these learners had to attend regularly, do independent study, assignments, and take an examination or any other form of assessment. According to Makerere University (1999), a full time student shall not carry less than 15 credit units in a semester to be eligible for award of a degree; shall sit an examination in each of the courses offered during each semester; and a minimum of two course works shall be required. But as earlier seen, these students were working within a bare minimum of time and the university treated them as full time students when actually they were part-time students.

The university regulations provided that a student should do a minimum of two assignments, which accounted for 30% of the total examination mark. The assignments could be done individually or in groups. The common tendency, however, was to give students one individual assignment and one group assignment. An average of two weeks was allowed for both categories of students to do and hand in their assignments which time was deemed enough for any ordinary student.

Given the fact that these learners were engaged for most of the days up to 10:00 P.M., and had other commitments as parents, workers or spouses, it was difficult to get time for assignments. The problem was exacerbated when sometimes assignments were given back-to-back, especially towards the end of the semester. Given such bare minimum of time to operate in, these learners had evolved a number of strategies to go about assignments, revision and preparation for exams as indicated below.

Limiting the Reading Scope

Many students admitted approaching studying by beginning with doing in-depth and active reading, using different sources which they would later use to make notes and in writing their assignments. However, when time pressure mounted (and indeed it

always did) they took to selective reading that helped them do the assignment aiming at passing it but with ease and in less time. Some revealed that they wrote their assignments as they read. If time allowed, they would give it another reading, if not, one would discuss it with a friend who would act as a sounding board. And in extreme cases one would just hand it in straight away. However, this depended on the learning difficulty involved in the assignment. All pointed to the fact that when an assignment was from a book like *Pedagogy of the oppressed* or a subject like philosophy, one would read everything and several times; where possible one would even seek an extension of the deadline for submitting the assignment. Though it worked for some, being given an extension of the deadline was discretion of the individual lecturer.

Most respondents confessed to confining themselves to reading only what they thought could give them what they wanted straight away whenever an assignment was given. This included among others going by the cues the lecturer had given. "I will go by lecture notes and then back it up with points summarised from the text book" said one student for example. Where the lecturer did not give cues, they inquired from other students like continuing students in case of freshmen, and/or getting in touch with their colleagues, especially fellow evening students who were not working and had more time to research.

Some were guided by the herd influence⁸ where the commonest practice was to read what they saw being read by other students, especially the day students and evening students who were not working because these were deemed to have more time to research and therefore had identified the relevant resources. To avoid taking chances, they photocopied all materials they saw their colleagues holding irrespective of relevance. While photocopying was precautionary and often helped them to be able to read at their convenience and avoid being bothered by having to return books to the book bank for other users, it was common for one to photocopy a lot of irrelevant material and often same material photocopied several times unknowingly.

⁸ Tendency for one to go by what the rest are doing even when it may not be the right thing to do.

Other forms of selective reading were common at exam time in way of categorisation of subjects during revision and speculative reading. When it comes to exams, it is common for students to put work for different subjects together, read through them, go to text books where not clear, read and read again and even try to remember what was read. But this takes time. In the case of these students, they confessed that they did not have such time, especially when role conflict and strain were at their highest in exam time. To that effect, they had a number of strategies on how to prepare for the exam.

In the first instance, they categorised subjects into 'hard' and 'simple' ones. For the hard ones, they devoted more time to them, reading the subject several times aiming at interpretation and analysis. Examples of 'hard' subjects included philosophy and statistics. For those they did not deem hard, they gave less time and would not read them frequently.

They also used speculative reading. They took into considerations factors like what the lecturer emphasised in class,, what is he/she fond of setting – application questions or those that required using his/her notes, and what would be the possible questions. They would then choose to either spend more or less time reading a topic or section of a course unit depending on what was the likelihood that a question would be asked from that topic or section. They would ascertain this from the nature of coursework assignments and tests the individual lecture would give, pastpapers if they happen to get any, and experiences from the more senior students.

Selective reading was also evident in choosing resources for the assignments. One male student confessed that he would first assess the question for the assignment – did it need real life experiences or just theories? If it was from real life experience, then he relied more on the Internet, as he believed there was a lot on the Internet from real life experiences. If it needed theories or concepts, he used more of books for he believed theories and concepts were better articulated in books and academic journals than just general information on the Internet.

Use of academic resources that saved much of their time

The second strategy was using academic resources that were easily accessible and saved much of their time. The major academic resources at their disposal were the main library, the institute library, the departmental book bank, and the Internet. None of the respondents, however, indicated having used the main library for research when doing an assignment. Reasons for non-use of the main library included, lack of time, as it was open when they were either at work or in class, distance if one was to walk there after 10:00 P.M., competition for books and space with the full time students who had more access and the impossibility of borrowing good books for them to read in their convenient time. The departmental book bank was the most preferred and used academic resource because of proximity, it is not as complex as the main library, the books there were specifically for adult education making it simpler for one to get what one wanted,,and the possibility of borrowing which enabled them to read at their convenience.

Of significance was the increasing use of the Internet, especially Google and Yahoo search engines. Forty nine percent of the respondents relied more on the Internet for coursework than any other source because it did not need gathering large volumes of books, most learners accessed it at their places of work and could use it any time they were free, but above all, it was easier to get the information one wanted from the Internet than a book. This was because a lot more of choice was given to one, than books could offer, and the feeling was that it took one shorter time to select what was relevant than it would take locating a book one wanted and getting the relevant chapter or section, not mentioning that relevant books were not available altogether. "Locating the book you want, and getting the relevant topic takes long. So one uses one or two books, but relies heavily on the Internet. At times lecturers complain that we are not using many books," remarked a female student.

The time saving factor could also be seen in their teaching method preferences. Being adults, the assumption was that they would learn better using (and possibly would prefer) customised pedagogy that is attuned to their unique characteristics where they are facilitated to learn rather than being taught. Surprisingly, 85% preferred the lecture to any other method and saw no problem with it. They preferred lecturers who

introduced the lecture, proceeded logically, explained and stressed the main points or emphases, gave an overview at the end and possibly what would be covered in the next lecture, to those who left them to research on their own or those who integrated the more participatory learning activities in the teaching. They preferred the former to the latter because the former did put a lot of burden on them to search for information hence saving their time.

Specialisation and symbiosis in group assignments

The strategies of specialization and symbiosis were characteristic of group assignments. The biggest problem with group assignments was having the learners together to do the assignment because they had different time schedules and interests. The problem was exacerbated when the lecturer constituted the group randomly not catering for the different interests. Many preferred being given chance to constitute their own groups as this allowed them to have the 'right mix' of students which included those students deemed 'potentials' who would do the research and possibly draft the assignment.

Some form of specialisation and a symbiotic relationship could be identified. The 'potentials' or younger learners with more time collected data or even drafted the assignments. The older and working learners facilitated the data collection process because they had the means especially money for photocopying, brought in data from the Internet, and were resourceful at the discussion level where they drew from their repertoire of experience. Asked whether they felt they benefited from such an arrangement, some said they did though some were not sure. "The way we learn from group assignments is less taxing but we learn. You learn at the primary discussion, you learn more during the presentation and when the lecturer gives an input", emphasized one student.

Reliance on Group Discussion for exams

Lastly, there was over reliance on group discussions for exams compared to reading individually. These students saw discussion as time saving as a lot could be discussed in a relatively short time compared to reading singly. They would discuss all possible questions and revealed that the strategy worked for them because a good number of

the discussed questions appeared in the final exam. There were those who thought discussion was a panacea to failing the exam and more or less solely relied on it.

However, there were those who realised that reading independently, especially before the discussion was vital if one was to follow discussions well and be certain of writing something in the exam. And for precautionary reasons, they never found it wise to solely rely on discussion. One female student confessed that she was already a centre of attraction to her employers, children, spouse, and the general public, and failing would be a very big undoing. Over relying on discussion would be taking chances.

There were those who said they had already invested a lot in education in the form of money, sacrifice and time. They could not afford to fail. They had to struggle on until they succeeded even when they had no time. They therefore had to use a combination of strategies to ensure they did not fail.

5.3 Summary

This chapter presented the findings of the study showing the different strategies these students used to get time to attend lectures, do independent study, revision, assignments and exams. They got time to attend lectures by evolving strategies that allowed them time off work but not impinging on work negatively. They fulfilled their academic obligations by evolving strategies that would help them do the minimum required to get by, or to find out what is useful in the course and concentrate on that.

The next chapter looks at the discussion arising from these findings, mainly the strategies seen against the study and socio-economic contexts and the likely learning outcome. A case is presented that these students approached study in the way they did because of the socio-economic and study contexts in which they were studying and learning.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

6.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the discussion arising from the findings of the study. These students were coping with two contextual problems – getting time to study in an institution whose academic organisation was not in step with their socio-economic lives and at the same time working in a neo-liberal labour market that hardly left them time for private study. The discussion centres on how they got time for study and how they fulfilled their academic obligations including meaningful learning in such a work context. This chapter therefore discusses two themes: time to study and fulfillment of academic obligations including learning as a major educational goal and in essence for which they were enrolled.

6.1 Time to study

As seen earlier, these students had two major problems concerning time. First was time to attend lectures, secondly was how to fit whatever school necessitated them to do in a bare minimum of time. The ensuing discussion on time looks at these two aspects. They got time to attend lectures ordinarily like a consumer would choose between alternatives. They fitted whatever school required them to do in the little time available with a lot of pragmatism.

6.1.1 Time to attend lectures as consumer choice

How these students got time to attend lectures were purely consumer choices between work, study, family and leisure but influenced by the socio-economic context they were in. Their actions can be explained by microeconomic principles of opportunity cost, triage, rationality and optimality. The theory of Opportunity Cost has its roots in the notion that resources are limited, and since resources are limited, every economic choice has a cost. If you want to use your limited time for another activity, you have to give up time for that activity. But, this requires you to weigh both the benefits and costs of your choice.

When weighing between alternatives, the basic principle is that out of two alternatives with different expected payoffs, the one with the highest payoff at any one time will be chosen by a rational decision maker (Laudon and Laudon 1998; Wilbrink 1995). At times when there are conflicting options, one may use triage. Malouff (2002) points out that in triage, one will be guided by such questions as which problem when not solved will have the most disastrous effect? But it is important to note that in reality, these choices are made against a context or background.

Since these students' lectures started the very time they left work hardly leaving them time to travel to school, they had no option but to leave the work place earlier if they were to be in time for lectures. But this was not automatic; given the context they were in. They had to be careful in the way they got time to attend lectures because if done carelessly, it would impact on them negatively at the work place. The socio-economic context shaped the way they would get the time to attend lectures.

In the first instance, in a competitive neo-liberal labour market these workers cum students needed to up-skill and earn credentials if they were to remain employable. But at the same time they were aware that the responsibility for up-skilling largely rested on them such that they had to find their own time to study and at their own cost.⁹ They were also aware that the labour market they were in was so volatile and insecure that the simple nexus between education and work no longer held, and completing a degree was no longer the universal ticket to a job as it used to be under conditions of full employment. They had to up-skill even at own cost and in their own time, but had to be mindful of keeping the job. This context put them in the catch-22 situation.

Faced with such a conflict, the only option was to give up some time for work and use it to travel to school. But given the context, a neo-liberal labour market, these students first weighed the benefits and costs of the venture, which would in turn influence the strategy to be adopted. And the strategy adopted would be one that would allow for time to be in class but at the same time maintaining the delicate balance between work and study. This explains why they began by seeking permission from their employers

⁹ Much as upskilling also benefits the employer, current labour market forces put the worker in a more vulnerable position that he/she has to shoulder the burden of retraining.

to leave work earlier than usual to be in time for lectures; if that could not work, they would negotiate with fellow workers to stand in for them; and if that could not work still they risked but cautiously. Those who worked in inflexible conditions where job security was not guaranteed, or where leaving early meant a cut in what they would earn at the end of the month, accepted to come late for lectures always.

Using the micro economic principles of opportunity cost, triage, rationality and optimality, these students weighed the situation and knew that it was important to study but the job was still a key factor for survival and even meeting the cost of education. They adopted strategies that would enable them contend with both study and work.

6.1.2 Pragmatism in getting time for academic obligations

Another concern was how these students got time to do independent study, revision, assignments and exams. As earlier noted, these students worked during the day and studied at night. The academic organisation was that they were treated as full time students when actually they were part time students. They were accorded the same contact hours with the traditional day students, assessed in the same way, given same time limits for assignments when actually they had only 32% of their official study time residual compared to their counterparts who had 52% of their school time residual not including night time. This study context in combination with the socio-economic context would leave them with no option but to find ways of fitting into the little time available.

The decisions these students were taking were again based on economic decision theory, highly influenced by the socio-economic context. The socio-economic context dictated that these students had to study if they were to remain employable and competitive. Even when they had very limited time, such a context dictated that they find all ways to get the time no matter how. Their situation was analogous to one who has a lot of essentials to buy yet the money is limited. Some of the solutions would be buying only those things that are vital, or buying small bits of each, or even buying all but going for low quality at cheaper prices. This is exactly what these students were doing – cutting the cloth according to its size.

Kember (1999) observes, that anyone who has been an adult student will have faced the problem of conflicts between study demands and meeting the other obligations all adults face. Apps (1982) also observes that no single block to learning is most cited by adults returning to school like time. Under such circumstances, one may use time management skills like scheduling, combining activities, and cutting back time on some activities like leisure so as to be able to use the little time one has in the most efficient and productive way possible. However, Okaka (1994) observes that these skills can only be sustained when there is the time to manage.

Indeed some students used basic time management skills like scheduling, using fleeting moments, and cutting back on some activities. Nonetheless, the socio-economic and study contexts forced them to take to strategies like limiting ones reading scope, categorising subjects into hard and simple ones, using their fellow students as sounding boards, reading only what they thought would give them what they wanted, using academic resources that saved much of their time, and relying more on group discussions for exams. None of these strategies is new of course; only the message is that these patterns of adaptation have increased markedly in the recent past due to changing study contexts.

However, important to note, is the significance of examinations in how they got time to study. During exams or even shortly before, workload and tension increased and priorities changed – focus was more on the exam much as they had to maintain the job. This is because of the role marks play in every student's life. Wilbrink (1995) observes that for the student, it is important to pass the examination or to get at least a particular mark because the obtained scores are decisive in credentialing, promotion or even accessing employment however fallible they may be. This explains why they took to synchronising annual leave with revision and exams. Synchronisation of leave with exams helped one to have more time for revision and exams.

Even those who could not get annual leave negotiated for time just to do exams. Synchronisation and negotiating time off also helped in maintaining the balance between work and study, as one would be sure of not losing the job because of exams. This also stems from the context of a credentialing world of employment.

In other words maintaining the job was very important, but passing exams was critical at that material time. Economic decision-making theory is again at work. At first, in an attempt to get time to attend lectures, focus was more on the job. The effects of losing a job would be far more disastrous than just missing a few lectures as one would still make it and satisfy the academic requirements of the university. It would be naïve of one if one lost the job and most likely did not even continue with studying because the whole decision would be self-defeating. But when it came to exams, it was critical to pass the exam because assessment and the resultant credential is what makes knowledge portable, valued and rewarded; and is what was crucial to their future. Therefore, priorities had to change because of the changes in payoff at that particular time but a balance still had to be maintained because of the socio-economic context, especially a volatile labour market these students were in.

These students' responses to the time for work or study conflict agree with the observation made by Curtis and Shani (2002) that work has become part of many university students' routine because governments have introduced tuition fees and reduced grants; and it is not possible for students to devote themselves to full time study without additional support from employment. Therefore, a balance had to be maintained between the need for study time and desire to maintain a job though they did not show what happened when it came to exams.

However, McInnis and Hartley (2002) in a study on working Australian university students found that in exam times, and during times for practicum and field placements, when the delicately balanced study and work arrangements would be upset, the students would change their hours of work or even give up work for a period of time. The only difference was that while in McInnis and Hartley's study, the students seemed to shift from strategy to another easily, like changing hours of work or even giving up work for a period of time; the context here was rather different. These were employees studying rather than students who worked. The context demanded they hold to their jobs because they needed them for tuition and survival.

6.2 Fulfillment of academic obligations

Fulfillment is looked at from two perspectives. Fulfillment of formal requirements of the course like independent study, revision, assignments and exams being enrolled in a formal institution, and fulfillment in form of learning as a major educational goal in higher and adult education. These students were expected to do independent study, revision and assignments aimed at promoting meaningful learning as the major educational goal, which learning would be assessed through an exam. There are several factors that impinge on learning outcome, but of significance is the context under which the learning takes place. Certainly, the socio-economic and study contexts (which have already been explained) influenced how these students fulfilled their obligations and the resultant learning outcomes.

6.2.1 Fulfillment of formal requirements of the course

As seen above, being enrolled in a formal institution, these students were expected to attend regularly, do independent study, revision and assignments that would eventually lead to meaningful learning. What again comes out is the role of context in fulfilling these obligations. The socio-economic and study contexts forced these students to adopt pragmatic ways of fulfilling these obligations.

Limiting reading scope, categorising ones subjects into simple and hard ones, using fellow students as sounding boards, reading only what they thought would easily give them what they wanted, using academic resources that did not involve a lot of searching, relying more on group work for revision and assignments, and surface reading; were pragmatic ways of coping with limited time. With pragmatic behaviour, the student will find out what is useful in a course and concentrate on that in order to maximise personal outcome. It is true background student characteristics may predispose the student to undertake a particular task in a certain way but Gordon et al (1998) point out this does not preclude the use of other strategies as the situation demands.

Using reading as an example, Gillespie (1990) shows how we can use pragmatic behaviour in studying as a result of context. She points out that while it is true that good readers read only what they need to answer their questions, when under pressure they will quickly look through a piece to get a rough idea of what it is about (skim) or

ignore everything in the text but focus on what they need (scan). What these students were doing is similar to this in how they approached reading for their assignments. Because they had no time, they only concentrated on what they thought was useful in enabling them to pass.

The same reasons could be advanced to explain their reliance on Internet. Reliance on Internet is modernity and there is a lot of quality information one could get on the Internet. Besides it would be in everybody's interest to use his/her time in the most effective way possible. In this case, however, it is less likely that it was a wave of modernity or looking for quality information that forced these students to turn to the Internet in preference to the book.

Commercial websites made their work simpler as they gave a lot of information in a relatively short time which students would pick irrespective of its quality. The same could be true of an over reliance on collaborative learning much as of late, collaborative study has been fronted by many academics as an integral part of any course.

An explanation to these students' strategies in their study processes can be drawn from the ideas of Lankbeck and Mugler (2000) of sequential and pragmatic coping strategies among adult students arising out of the context under which the studying took place. Studying coping strategies of adult university students in a distance programme, they identified two major categories of study strategies – the sequential strategies and the pragmatic strategies.

It was common for students to approach study using sequential strategies for a start and shift to the pragmatic strategies when caught up with time. In the sequential strategies students were found to be proceeding step by step, reading the materials several times before meaning became clear, taking notes as they read, and being organised even during exams. Those with the pragmatic approaches on the other hand focused on the material relevant to the assignment and limited themselves to what needed to be done to pass the course, ignoring all other material. At exam time, they could go to what was put down in their books, read through a few past papers, and go through assignments and some exercises.

However, Lankbeck and Mugler (2000) noted that students who adopted the pragmatic approach did not do it as a consequence of low conception of learning as merely absorbing, storing and reproducing information, but because of the constraints most of them faced and their observation that this strategy often resulted in passing courses. They concluded that many students are forced to abandon the sequential approach to become more pragmatic by the circumstances surrounding their learning and which most likely was the case with these students given that they had only 32% of their school time residual, had pressures from the work place, and hardly had time to read at night. The context or learning environment most likely influenced how these learners approached learning.

Garrison and Archer (2000) clarify the above scenario by pointing out that in a situation where a learner is under external pressure like work commitments amidst limited time for study, such a learner will most likely take to surface approaches to learning and will most likely prefer teaching characteristics where content is clearly organised and well presented for this not only aids their memorisation in exams, but also such teaching characteristics save much of their time. Also in the study on Australian university students who were in paid employment, the common strategies McInnis and Hartley (2002) found them using included doing limited reading or only the minimum reading required focusing mainly on assessment tasks and assignments, making extensive use of online course material, as this saved their time and one would access material when one wanted it – at all times of the day or night, and over reliance on the more collaborative approaches like group discussions.

6.2.2 Learning

There were no empirical studies to test the learning (may be that could be an area for future research), but it is common knowledge that what is learnt and how it is learnt are two inseparable aspects of learning. The same context most likely influenced the learning outcome. Going by research findings on learning, specifically on how and under what circumstances adults learn best, it can be extrapolated that these students most likely missed out on meaningful learning as a major educational goal. A number of factors – the psychological environment in which the learning took place, a narrow

reading scope and limiting resources for learning, and the group work fallacy make one believe they missed out on meaningful learning.

The psychological environment

The effects of the psychological learning environment in adult learning have long been acknowledged. Time pressures, difficult work situations and domestic concerns have been known to detract adults from learning. In the first instance, these students had a problem of getting time to attend lectures because of conflicting demands from work. In their attempts to be in time for lectures, these learners seemed to be in apparent tension, role conflict and strain.

A situation like whether to leave work early for study and possibly lose the job, or satisfy the employer and fail the course, catching up with ones reading or writing the employers report and others could keep one on tension and indeed students confessed they experienced constant tension. Reporting to work earlier than normal, working through the lunch hour in an attempt to have cleared work by 5:00 P.M. could be stressful. Having someone to stand in for one while away in class most likely made one remain worried of any eventuality at the place of work. Getting time for exams just heightened the earlier tension arising from getting time to attend lectures and independent study. It is natural for students to fear exams but it could be stressful for a student who has an acute time constraint and is not certain if the employer will give him/her time off to do exams. One of the causes of stress is uncertainty. Where there is inability to predict the future, anxiety develops and anxiety affects how we learn (Melgosa 2002).

Griffin (1997) also argues that tension, stress and worry affect how we learn because our bodies reflect our emotions and anything that affects the physiological functioning of the body affects learning. That we may ignore the emotions, deny them or repress them, nonetheless, the body knows they are there and will express them in some way. It is very possible for these students to be present physically, but psychologically absent. In the same vein, Gravett (2000) argues that when threatened, stressed or fatigued, the brain downshifts implying a minimising of brain function. When the brain downshifts, it is less able to engage in complex intellectual tasks. Rote learning

can take place under stress but meaningful learning is inhibited by it. And the situation could be worse for female students given the fact that they had a heavier work load, most likely more conflicting and contradictory roles.

Related to the above is the effect of not having enough rest and limiting ones leisure on learning. There is research evidence that people, who study nonstop, always face problems trying to recall and retrieve information. When we are exposed to a great deal of information without breaks, we need a much more complex cue system to retrieve this information. At times it is difficult to develop this complex cue system (Louw and Edwards 1997).

The likely effect of a narrow reading scope and limiting resources for learning

The study revealed that many students limited their reading to what they saw their colleagues reading or to the cues the lecturer had given; and used resources that saved much of their time. There would be nothing wrong with narrowing down to a few resources, especially the core resources and then use additional ones in learning or even choosing to give more focus on some course units than others depending on the learning difficulty involved. Concentrating on the most essential and most difficult were basic time management skills, which made these students' work easier, especially where they are under time constraints. However, getting limited to what everybody else was using, or to only what the lecturer had given could easily lead to a group thought because they could easily become victims of what Apps (1982) called herd influence. Herd influence leads to convergent thinking as opposed to divergent thinking and it is one of the blocks to critical thinking.

Where one of the primary purposes of adult education is learning to learn, this may hardly be achieved because learners most likely look at issues from a narrow perspective, hardly searching for different ways of looking at things, not recognising dominant ideas which tend to polarise people into thinking in specific ways. By and large, they could not have been developing into creative thinkers with specific abilities such as originality, flexibility, and capacity to generate new ideas, which are aspects of meaningful learning (Louw and Edwards 1997:332,403).

From the same findings, these students confessed that at times they did not give their assignments a thorough reading as they often wrote and submitted the assignments right away; or after writing, one just discussed the assignment with a friend to act as a sounding board. Most likely, many did surface reading rather than deep individual study. It is possible some of them tried to use the deep approach, but often as pressure mounted this was not sustainable. There is a lot of research evidence to show that how we read determines the learning outcome. And much learning is known to occur independently as students read and study on their own. Where learners have had little time to read or where the purpose has been to get through the reading to fulfill requirements of the teacher like these were doing, the reading task will be less meaningful as their understanding will most likely be at the literal understanding level.

This is the warning sounded by Moll et al (2001) that reading clearly is not a matter of passively receiving ready made understanding from books. From the start, it is a highly active process. It has levels of understanding – literal comprehension, interpretation, critical and creative reading levels. The full possibilities for meaning in reading can only be realised through working at all these different levels especially the creative reading level. This is when learners will be able to understand ideas, to use them to predict and generalize and to develop new ones. That is the whole essence of the broadened view of learning as the active construction of knowledge and transfer of learning.

Garrison and Archer (2000) also point out that such reading needs time. As early as 1963, psychologist Carroll had already stipulated that the degree of learning is a function of time spent learning over time needed to learn. There are several other factors affecting learning and the model has since been improved upon but still maintains its original validity.

In a related manner, Applefield et al (2000) bring out the idea of depth and breadth of learning, pointing out that often we are concerned with coverage of content. From a constructive and broadened view of learning perspective, they argue that there is not much sense in focusing on breadth of learning just and forgetting depth of learning. That where is the learning in coverage just? Certainly, not to say that we should not be

concerned with coverage, the goal of achieving depth of learning rather than breadth of learning should be accentuated.

Where students have adopted strategies like speed-reading to allow them cover their required reading more quickly, they may be addressing breadth of learning rather than depth of learning. There is research evidence to show that such learners have been found to be deflected from reading for meaning. The above notwithstanding, it is possible these students were just reproducing textbook knowledge, or what Garrison and Archer (2000) call knowledge telling rather than knowledge transforming. That while there is a role for knowledge telling the real challenge for adult and higher education is in transforming knowledge through reflective reading and writing.

Relying on Internet resources is equally good if they could get quality information. Today, the mantra – any time anywhere is becoming one of the major characteristics of a modern campus. Technology is breaking down the limitations of time and place even for traditional classroom centred learning. However, it may not yet be possible to totally eliminate the book given the level of technological development these students were in. Where IT has been integrated in university teaching, students have personal digital assistants hooked to the university portal; can access lecture notes, can communicate with faculty and fellow students, can access the library or even download some of the textbooks (Langenberg D and Spicer D 2001). Unfortunately, due to technological limitations, lack of time and awareness, these students were largely relying on commercial websites. None of them indicated having used an online academic journal. One is bound to doubt the quality of information they got from commercial websites because websites have a hierarchy of reliability with commercial sites being the least reliable for academic purposes.

The group work fallacy

The fallacy of group work could clearly be seen in the way students handled group assignments and how they prepared for exams. When it came to group assignments, specialisation and a symbiotic collaborative effort between students who had more time and those who did not could be seen. When it came to exams, the tendency among these students was to rely more on group discussion than individual study as

the latter was deemed to help them cover a lot in a short time. It is true one of the advantages of being an older student is the wealth of experience one has had during their life. So, students can be potential resources for each other when they meet in small groups to discuss or compare notes. Even when preparing for exams, fellow students can help act as sounding boards for one to see if one understands concepts as they do.

Secondly, as Brophy and Good (1995) point out, exposure to input from others makes one aware of things one did not know and leads to expansion of ones cognitive structures.

Exposure to ideas that contradict one's beliefs may cause one to examine those beliefs and perhaps restructure them. The need to communicate ones ideas to others forces them to articulate their ideas more clearly, which sharpens their conceptions and often leads to recognition of new connections. As a result, cognitive structures become better developed.

However, meaningful learning through group work given the context of these learners could be elusive. In the first instance, as is common with all part-time students, these students found it difficult to come together because it was very difficult to find common times when all members of the group were available. As a result, a symbiotic relationship existed between the freer and younger students who did not work but were enrolled in the evening programme, and the older ones who were working. The former did the researching and drafting of the assignments and the latter, the facilitation and came in at discussion stage.

Where the younger and freer students read and wrote the assignments and these did the talking and listening, the learning process could be incomplete. Garrison and Archer (2000:140) observe that no better method to learning brings out meaningful learning like independent study. Much learning is known to occur independently as students read and study on their own. Reading provides extensive opportunities for reflection, which is important for integrating information in a meaningful manner. For this reason, reading, especially reading that is done in advance, may be a more active learning activity than listening and may provide for a higher level of cognitive processing.

They go on to say that reading will yield better results when combined with writing. Writing is an effective means to facilitate higher order thinking. That writing, especially expository writing offers an opportunity for students to work actively and independently with their own knowledge; they can clarify meanings, find inconsistencies, discover implications and establish connections between previously isolated fragments of knowledge. That to write reflectively is to construct meaning.

Therefore, as Garrison and Archer (2000) again argue, meaningful learning must include all aspects – talking, listening, reading and writing because each of these activities is insufficient in itself in meaningful learning. These students were missing a lot by not reading in advance what was going to be discussed. Much as they had the experience, which they brought to the discussion, it could not have been very helpful if they could hardly see how it related to what was being discussed. Some of the ways of using experiential learning in practice are to use current knowledge to make sense of past experience, or to use past experience to make sense of current knowledge. But in these students' case, the knowledge component could be weak because of lack of prior independent study, rendering their experience brought into the discussion a half key since it is probable that they would hardly link or relate it with the material.

The danger of over relying on group discussions is well shown by Darkenwald (1996). He contends that group discussions properly conducted can be a powerful tool for promoting adult learning. But the learning outcomes associated with them are seldom realised in actual practice and that many of the claims made with respect to the cognitive outcomes of discussion are unsubstantiated. Citing Brookfield (1985), he points out that some of the shortcomings of discussion groups include the rapid pace of many discussion groups, the often low quality of participants' contributions, the lack of coherent cumulative learning over time, and the many dysfunctional aspects of the psychodynamics of discussion groups, most of which look evident in these students' groups.

6.3 Summary

This chapter presented the discussion arising from the different strategies these students used to get time to attend lectures, to do individual and group assignments;

and to fulfill their other academic obligations including learning meaningfully. Most importantly, this chapter illustrates how the context in which these students were, influenced the strategies they used to cope and the likely learning outcomes.

Their coping strategies rhyme with the theoretical assumptions of the study. It was hypothesised that the study and socio-economic contexts in which these students were would influence how they allocated their time between work and study, how they approached studying and learning; and the likely learning outcome. The next chapter looks at the conclusions drawn from the study and recommendations for the best practice.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.0 Introduction

This chapter gives the conclusions drawn from the study and the appropriate recommendations. Conclusions are drawn in light of the discussion and framework of the study. Given first is the overview of the problem and discussion from which the conclusions are drawn.

7.1 Overview

This study sought to find out how working students were coping with two contextual problems – getting time to study, and fulfilling ones academic obligations including meaningful learning in a neo-liberal labour market and in an institution whose academic organization was not in step with their situation and lives.

From the discussion, it is apparent that these students were doubly pressed by the context. They were under pressure to upskill and get formal qualifications and certifications to satisfy a credentialing world of work. Unfortunately, neither the university nor the workplace acknowledged these pressures. To the employer they had to find their own time to study and at their own cost. And to the university they had to find a way to fit in the mainstream. They indeed found ways to deal with the two contextual problems - by carefully and delicately maintaining a balance between work and study, and through pragmatic behaviour during studying and learning irrespective of whether it led to meaningful learning or not, as long as they earned the credential.

7.2 Conclusions

If under social constructivism, specifically context based learning and situated learning, we believe that knowledge is co produced by the learner and the situation; that the context in which learning occurs is inseparable from emergent thought; that we cannot divorce our learning from our lives; one can conclude these learners constructed knowledge from their environment because they had learnt to survive in it.

They were aware the pressures they had touched one of the most important aspects of their lives – wage work which Knud (2003) described as the inevitable foundation of life; a means of existence; a necessary evil and an exploitation that one has to come to terms with. They therefore had to find ways of maintaining their jobs while at the same time satisfy the requirements of the university.

It is simple to say these workers were coping with work and study because year after another they had gone through the system. However, important to note is the fact that they could have gone through the system because they had to given the central role work and the credential played in their lives. The interest of the university ironically though, and what would be the interest of any education system, was learning the content meaningfully so as to be able to use it in a variety of situations not just learning to survive in a harsh environment. Otherwise, the core purpose of adult education, which is promoting critical reflection and meaningful learning, would be lost. To use the words of Dore as quoted by Shugrensky (2001) we would be promoting more qualification escalation or certification for job attainment than developing mastery for these students. In this case, education would be promoted as a means to an end, the end being job attainment.

The study revealed that context played a critical role in shaping these students' approaches and strategies to studying and learning. If we believe that learning is contextual or situated; and that learning is not just the acquisition of knowledge but includes reflection, analysis and transfer, attempts must be made to change the context to provide conditions for meaningful learning. If we want the learners to gain knowledge about the course content, not knowledge of how to cope with a hostile environment, then a context that leads to the desired knowledge should be provided; and this is the responsibility of all the stakeholders.

7.3 Recommendations

Specific recommendations are made aimed at improving the context of learning for working students in the university's evening programme. The approach should be

holistic in nature and therefore these recommendations are aimed at all the stakeholders in the programme – the university, the employers and the students with the university having to play a leading role.

7.3.1 To the university

It is commonly perceived that changing a university is like ‘shifting a graveyard or a cathedral’. This needs immediate and strategic changes. Immediate changes can be implemented at departmental level, and strategic changes at policy level. The recommendations to the university are therefore both immediate and strategic, aimed at being implemented at departmental level where these students were directly attached, and at policy level. There are many suggestions one can make but the under listed constitute the main areas of focus.

To the Department of Adult Education and Communication Studies

The responsibility of helping these students to cope with work with study first lies with the department where they are registered. There is a lot that can be made within the mandate of the department that could contribute to the improvement of the context of learning.

The whole problem centres on how the programme was structured, and the resultant overload to such students. The department could play a leading role in spearheading a process of rethinking academic organization policies in the university to allow for flexibility and more time for self-study.

While the process of rethinking academic organisation may take some time, in the short run the department should train these students in how best to use the little time they have. This can be through active learning, and time management skills. These skills may not necessary be prescriptive but they are critical for all students; particularly those studying on a part-time arrangement.

While academic organization is a responsibility of the university planning organs, within its mandate the department can ensure some level of flexibility over study requirements and assignments. For example, care should be taken when making the

timetable such that lessons are well distributed to ensure flexibility. Individual coursework for working students can be allowed more time to enable these students have time for other commitments. Where students study non-stop for five hours, little meaningful learning may be expected out of them because their concentration span has a limit.

During group assignments, where possible working students should be allowed to form groups according to how easily they can meet, and mechanism put in place to make sure all participate rather than some doing the reading and others doing the talking. They should also be given more time for assignments, compared to the full time students.

The sphere of academic influence of these students should be seen to encompass the nature of relationships pertaining in their workplaces and in the home. Where the workplace climate is hostile, these students are psychologically affected, get stressed and this affects their study. It is recommended that the department establishes and maintains links with employers of such students. In some instances, it would simply mean that the faculty has a talk with the employer to see how both parties can benefit from the situation if a working student is finding problems of balancing work and study. It is not a simple process but it has worked for some. This will certainly work best if such students are encouraged to open up and seek guidance and counseling, and where the department is keeping a database of its students.

Since there is an increasing tendency for these learners to rely on the Internet for their research, possibly because they do not have time for library research, they should nonetheless be helped to make quality academic searches not just relying on commercial universal resource links or websites.

To the university administration and planners

Given that adults are increasingly expected and often required to engage in continuous study if they are to maintain or improve their employment positions and make the best of their life chances, there is need for the university to improve on its knowledge about such students - their social characteristics and the different domains of their lives, the contribution they make to higher education and the impact it has on them.

The university should do research on these students and where possible keep a data bank on them. This research should inform policy and practice. It appears incorrect to assume that as long as these students fit in the mainstream, or had the same contact hours with the day students, then they had the same chances to learn. It may equally be wrong for the university to look at student employment as an extracurricular type of activity that has nothing to do with the course of study. For many university students worldwide, the experience of combining work and study is not new. Work has become part of a full time student's weekly routine.

Scheduling, timetabling and course hours should be compatible with the patterns of these students' lives. They do not necessarily have to rhyme with the traditional students in everything because these two categories differ. Programmes for example could begin at 6:00 P.M in the evening to allow them enough time from work to class, even enabling them to attend lectures without having to seek permission from the employer to leave work early. Teaching could possibly stop at 9:00 P.M leaving them some time for independent study, and exams could also be done in the evenings. The programme could even take longer than the current three years to for example four years. There is a cost to incur obviously, but the benefits far outweigh the costs.

The libraries and book banks should open for longer hours in the night to cater for these students. In a country like Uganda where computer penetration and development of Information Communication Technology is low, the library remains the major academic resource of the university. It is unfair for these students when the complimentary service units like libraries and book banks close early.

However, it is important to note that the above two recommendation have to be implemented concurrently. Just extending the hours the library is open may not necessarily mean these students will use it. It may be useless to extend hours for an already tired lot.

7.3.2 To the Employers

The role of the employer in this study was very salient. Whether to have time for lectures, time for intense revision and exams, to get leave or not was largely at the

discretion of the employer. There is need also to focus some of the efforts to the employers if the learning context is to be improved.

Much as workers are expected to up-skill, many employers in this neo-liberal era think that allowing for study is releasing extra effort that would be put in production. While this is true, it does not mean that study should not be allowed as if it has nothing good for the employer. Employers and employers' associations can do studies to see how employees' further education impacts on firms and then come up with appropriate policies instead of being blind to their employees' further education when it is a current reality. For example, there is research evidence to show that people, who take up study after a stint at work, are more productive than those who get to work without prior experience (Curtis 2002). This is because they can relate the subjects taught to what happens at the workplace, which is a form of experiential learning. Actually work experience may be as valuable as the traditional lectures and should be taken advantage of.

Further education being a current reality, which we may not do away with, when not planned for will not only impinge negatively on learners but also on the firm. There is also research evidence to show that contending with work and study leads to stress, which can be counter, productive. The worker may be on the job for many hours but producing little work (Melgosa 2000).

7.3.3 To students

Much as the students are the victims of such context, they themselves should also contribute to changing it. Through student organs and other media they should create awareness among other students in full time formal employment in other faculties, and university managers and planners that they (students) are part-time students not full-time students, who need to have a different academic organization.

They can also lobby student leadership, the Department of Adult Education, and other professionals in adult education for support. The lobbying could be extended to policy-making organs of the state like the National Council for Higher Education to prevail over the university to revisit its academic organization. For example currently the National Council for Higher Education is reviewing the minimum requirements

for all courses of study in all universities in the country using the mandate given to it by the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act 2001. In a similar way the council could look at organization of courses in these institutions.

As workers they should advocate for their right to paid educational leave. Like any other, this attempt is bound to meet challenges especially in a neo-liberal labour market where there is a shift from full time to part time employment, work casualised, employees constantly threatened with job loss, and labour laws bypassed with impunity. Nonetheless, collectively a start can be made even if it meant looking for alternative ways of legislation to enable working adults get time to study.

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Appendix i: Self-Administered Questionnaire for Learners

COPING WITH FORMAL EMPLOYMENT AND EVENING STUDY AT MAKERERE UNIVERSITY: A CASE STUDY OF WORKING ADULTS ENROLLED FOR THE BACHELOR OF ADULT AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Dear Respondent,

It is now 10 years Makerere University is running an evening programme, which among others was aimed at enabling adults in formal employment access higher education. However there are indications that these adult learners are facing a number of challenges especially balancing the competing demands of time for study and work and studying under limited time constraints.

The purpose of this study is to find out how these learners are balancing these challenges and if the strategies adopted promote learning. The assumption of the study is that every individual learner has developed a range of strategies unique to him/herself to cope with these challenges. You have been identified as a valuable source of information in this study. I kindly request you to answer this questionnaire and in utmost good faith. The information you give will be treated with confidentiality, and you may not necessarily indicate your name. Looking forward to your response.

Thank you.

SECTION A

1. Course.....
2. Mode of entry:
 - Mature age entry ☐
 - Diploma scheme ☐
 - Direct Entry ☐
3. Year of study..... Age..... Sex.....
4. Marital status:
 - Married ☐
 - Single ☐
 - Widowed ☐
4. Employment by type:
 - Employed in civil service ☐

Employed in the private sector ☐

5. Nature of employment: Permanent ☐ Temporary ☐

6. What could have motivated you to return to school at this particular time?

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7. Is the course you are doing related to your employment?

.....
.....

8. If not what motivated you to do the course?

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SECTION B

9. *(Answer this question if you are the type of worker whose work stops at 5:00 pm or beyond).*

a) What do you do to make sure you are always in time for lectures?

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b) If you cannot be in time for lectures what do you do to compensate for the missed

material?

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10. When do you do your independent study?

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11. How do you get time for revision and preparing for exams?

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12. Do you get leave to do exams?

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13. How do you get the time off to do exams if your employer cannot give you leave?

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SECTION C

13. What do you do when you find you have an assignment that requires a lot of reading, you do not have the time and yet you have to do it?

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14. How do you make sure your assignment meets the standards/quality required when you do not have time to crosscheck, revisit and think through it again?

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15. What is your commonest source of information when doing coursework or independent study?

University library / book bank ☐

Internet ☐

External libraries ☐

Other- ☐

specify.....

16. Why is the source in 15 above your commonest source?

.....
.....
.....

17. How many books would you read for an ordinary university coursework?

.....
.....

18. How many books do you read on average?

.....
.....

19. How do you know the basic books to read?

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.....

20. Do you participate in group assignments?

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.....

21. If yes how would you rate your participation? (Tick as appropriate).

Very regular

Regular

Irregular

22. What do you do if most members of the group cannot come together to accomplish the assignment?

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22. How do you ensure you present a quality assignment when it is difficult for all of you to sit and evaluate it together?

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23. How do you revise?

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24. What do you do to avoid being overwhelmed by revision on the last minute?

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25. What comments/ recommendations can you give about avoiding or minimizing the challenges you meet in the programme?

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Thank you very much

Appendix ii: Checklist for Focus Group Discussions and Informal Interviews

Dear Respondent,

It is now 10 years Makerere University is running an evening programme, which among others was aimed at enabling adults in full employment access higher education, and indeed many have enrolled in many of the university's programmes. However the socio- economic and study contexts in which these students are, leave them very little time for study. There are indications that these adult learners are facing a number of challenges especially balancing the competing demands of time for study and work and studying under limited time constraints.

The purpose of this study is to find out how these learners are balancing these challenges. You have been identified as a valuable source of information in this study. I kindly request we discuss freely and in utmost good faith. The information you give will be treated with confidentiality.

Looking forward to your response.

Thank you.

Time to study

Getting time to attend lectures

How they managed to leave work before 5:00pm in a stringent workplace?

- Look at the specific strategies

How they beat traffic jams

Do the specific strategies work through out?

How are they sustained?

What is done when one cannot get the time?

Time for independent study, revision and assignments

What they did for daily revision

What they did on reaching home

When they read

For how long they read

Time for independent study

When they do independent study

For how long they do it

Time for individual assignments

Time for group assignments

How regular one was with group assignments

What is done if all members cannot turn up

How they beat deadlines

Time for intense revision

Time for exams

How they get time (the 2 weeks) for exams

Is there any form of educational leave?

If there how does it fit in the two semesters?

In case employer refuses to grant leave?

Study and learning processes

Commonest resources for independent study

Commonest resources for assignments

How they know the relevant resources

Quality assurance in assignments

Preparations for independent study/reading

Reading processes

Working bibliographies

Summaries

Comments

Questions

Relating with other works

Note taking

Reviewing notes after lectures

Thinking of examples

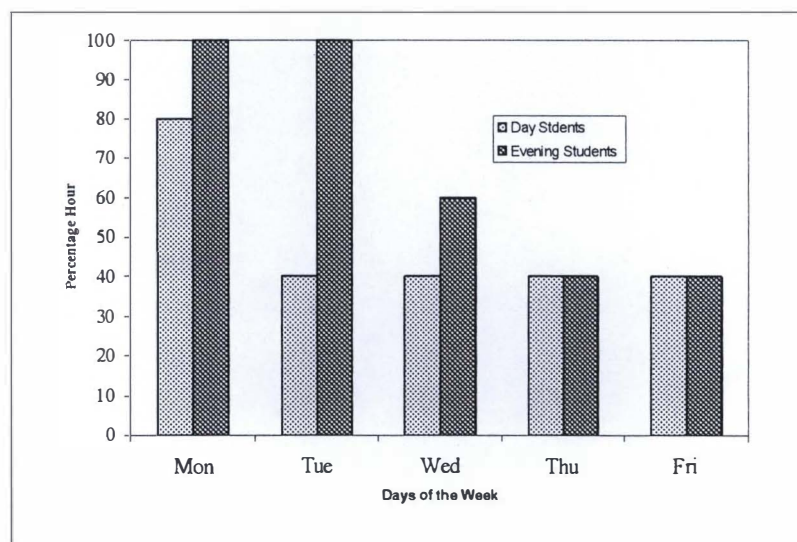
Summarising and restating them

Reading for exams

Setting priorities

How to read in the shortest time available.

Appendix iii: Percentage of the total time allocated to Day and Evening students according to a typical semester timetable.



Appendix iv: Comparative bar graph showing school time distribution for Day and Evening Students

