Case Summary:
You are working as a summer student for Professor Challenger of the department of sociology and anthropology on an expedition to the highland of New Guinea studying the culture and customs of an isolated tribe. Reports have been heard that almost all children of the tribe are born female. Children are reared as girls but once in their teens the village elder takes the children through a secret ritual where about half the children are turned into boys. Adults range in age, according to their physical characteristics. No formal pairing marital practice. Mating occurs during rituals. There are no signs of malnutrition.

Aside from the village elder, no clothes are worn in the exceptions of a penis sheath, making it easy to determine physical sex of tribe members.

There is very little mixing of tribes although there is an account of a raid on one of the neighbouring tribes where several of the older women were brought in at this stage. The elder is very old (65 rains) and tribe members speak of the elders special powers to understand male and female forms. They have recently celebrated the birth of a baby who is acknowledged as the next village elder.

What We Know:
-On an expedition to the highlands of New Guinea to a secluded tribe
-Village elder takes children through ritual for sex change and half are turned into boys
-Children are born and reared female
-Men and women are separated
-One male (defined by genitalia) lives with women
-Village elder takes children to hut
-Village elder claims special powers to understand male/female forms

What We Don’t Know:
-Where is New Guinea
-How can they change sex
-How they chose Village Elder
-The tribe’s lifestyle and health
-What happens during tribe raids
-Village elder’s sex
-What happens in the ritual
-What is inside the change hut
-Where change hut is located
-How important gender roles are to tribe

Quotes From The Students:
Kyle: “A lot more interactive than your regular lecture / seminar.”
Mason: “It is a very active and accepting group with no judgment, it’s very open.”
Sam: “It is a new and innovative way to learn.”
Mikaela: “The smaller class setting allows everyone’s opinions to be considered and discussed.”
Emily: “The skills you learn in this class can be applied to other subjects and help a lot with self-development.”
Kenny: “Students learn that thinking as a group is a top priority for the course.”
Allison: “The class highlighted how important having good and scholarly sources was to an effective presentation.”
Lauren: “Group processing at the end of each class allows you to receive constant feedback on how you are arguing.”

Professor Challenger and the Tribal Customs

What We Know:

What We Don’t Know:

Quotes From The Students:

Learning Issues:
Learning issues are about taking key points from the what we don’t know list and turning them into research topics. As a class, we would make a list of subjects and each student would pick one that they were interested in and they would be presented the following day.

Presentations could be done through any medium imaginable from oral reports to interviews to concept maps. This resulted in a new form of learning that was not experienced in our other classes. Instead of sitting in a class with 600 other students and listening to lecture, we got to learn from our peers presenting in unique ways.

The passion about the subject material presented was evident and always led to an informative and enjoyable class experience.