

# CORRESPONDENCE COURSES



OF EDUCATION \* GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

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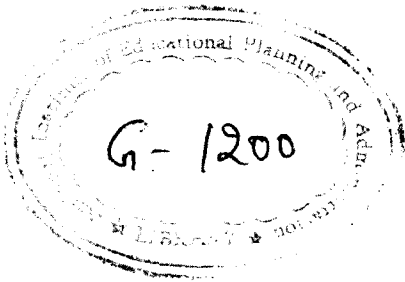


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## FOREWORD

The Committee, appointed by the Education Ministry, on *Correspondence Courses and Evening Colleges* in its Report recently submitted to the Government has recommended the institution of correspondence courses at the University level. The present booklet provides a general description of the system of correspondence courses and its organization. We are most grateful to Dr. Homer Kempfer (Deputy Chief Educational Adviser, A.I.D.) and Mrs. Muriel Wasi (Deputy Educational Adviser, Ministry of Education) for their valuable and unstinted help in the preparation of the publication.

In most newly-developing and advanced countries correspondence courses constitute an important part of their educational facilities and programmes. It is apparent that without the aid in some form of the correspondence system, and also evening colleges, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to extend the benefits of education to all those who need it. The system has a special role in relation to technical education at all levels. In the case of correspondence courses, as in fact in the whole field of education, it is most important to maintain proper standards. Standards are not static, and an effort has to be made continuously to improve them and to raise their level.

In the correspondence system, "lessons" by outstanding and gifted teachers (and no pains should be spared in their preparation) can be made available to every participant, even if he is in a remote corner of the country. Unlike classroom education, the correspondence system does not suffer from the limitations of physical accommodation, and in fact the larger the numbers, the more economical on the whole is the operation of the system. Again, correspondence courses provide considerable flexibility with regard to combinations of subjects leading to a degree, as one is not circumscribed in their use by difficulties connected with time-tables and similar factors.

The system of correspondence courses has certain inherent limitations, but it also possesses some definite advantages. The

Committee hopes that the merits and flexibility of the correspondence system will be fully exploited by the organisations operating the scheme. I have no doubt that the booklet will be of value to all those who are interested in or concerned with correspondence courses.

D. S. KOTHARI  
*Chairman*  
*Expert Committee on Correspondence*  
*Courses and Evening Colleges*

*New Delhi,*  
*22nd September 1962*

*'Anything that can be learnt from Books  
can be learnt from Correspondence'*

The system of correspondence courses has added a new dimension to Education. For its successful operation, it requires four essential conditions: (1) literate students eager to learn, (2) qualified teachers to prepare sound instructional materials, (3) instructors to provide individual tutorial service, and (4) a dependable postal service.

Instruction by correspondence was first used in France and Germany over a century ago when foreign languages began to be taught by mail. The world famous International Correspondence Schools began in 1891 with course in coal mines safety. From its beginning in 1892, the University of Chicago has offered instruction by correspondence. Since then, the correspondence method has continued to expand in western countries, the U.S.S.R. and several other countries of the world. Students are enrolled in practically every country of the world wherever the mails reach. Most technologically advanced countries supplement their classroom education through both public and private correspondence schools.

Every year in the United States of America more people enrol in correspondence courses than enter the first year of all colleges and universities combined. The correspondence method has been tried out and is used in various countries of the world at school level. In the United States, there are over 600 public and private correspondence schools offering over 10,000 courses in practically every occupation and academic discipline. Sweden enrolls over ten times as many correspondence students per million people as does America. Other Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands and the Federal Republic of Germany have big correspondence enrolments. In Scandinavia the majority of the engineering students study by mail. In the United Kingdom almost all Chartered Accountants prepare for their examinations by correspondence.

For decades, the U.S.S.R. has made good use of correspondence instruction in scientific, technological and academic fields. The recent re-organisation of their educational system places even greater emphasis on this method.

Education departments of Australia, New Zealand and Canada use the home study method extensively in elementary, secondary and technical Asian countries using correspondence courses for the in-service training of education. Ethiopia, Indonesia, Japan and Malaya are among the Afro-teachers. As most teachers have the necessary mental disciplines, correspondence instruction works well in teacher-training.

It will be evident that it is essential under the correspondence scheme that the number of pupils covered should be very large. Only so can the system be expected to achieve the economy that is one of its chief advantages.

#### WHAT CAN BE TAUGHT?

Practically anything can be taught by correspondence if the right techniques are used. Some of the best teaching techniques and best instructional materials in the world have been developed by correspondence schools. Many good classroom techniques can be used in or adapted to correspondence. Others have been developed especially for instruction by mail.

The use of "teaching machines" is now growing rapidly in the West. The heart of teaching machines is "programmed instruction" based on sound psychological principles of learning. Good correspondence courses have long used most of these principles. In fact, a few additional techniques from programmed instruction can now be added to correspondence instruction to make it still more effective. Charts, graphs, diagrams and pictures are simple supplementary visual aids.

Courses providing information are the simplest to organize and conduct. About 150 accredited colleges and universities in the United States offer correspondence courses in academic, agricultural, business, engineering, home science, teacher-training and several other fields. Most others, while having no correspondence departments, accept correspondence students by transfer. Many students in various parts of the world prepare for University of London External Examinations by correspondence. Still more prepare for various licensing and qualifying examinations.

### TEACHING SKILLS

In the United States, the U.S.S.R., and other industrialized countries, the biggest correspondence enrolment is in engineering, technical and skill subjects. In these subjects, information and its practical application are integrated in the same course.

Nearly 7,000 private business and industrial organizations in the United States use correspondence instruction for upgrading their employees. These are chiefly in the skilled trades, business occupations, and professions. Most of them arrange for instruction with specialized correspondence schools but a few conduct their own in-service home study courses. In addition, a dozen trade and professional associations offer correspondence courses to their members.

In manipulative skill courses, three-dimensional learning aids are often necessary: typewriters, screw drivers, slide rules, drawing instruments, and the like. Students learn by following instructions and observing results. Mailable kits of well-selected tools and practice equipment are supplied in such subjects as air conditioning, commercial art, electronics, engineering, drawing, photography, radio repair, tailoring, and watch repair. Disc and tape recordings are used in foreign languages, public speaking, and in some music courses.

Some practice equipment, however, is too big to mail: steam engines, power lines, turbines, railway gear, and factories. In such cases, instruction is offered only to employees who have access to the necessary equipment; or the course teaches only the related theory and information.

Face-to-face human relations skills are difficult to learn by correspondence—discussion methods, conversational skills, sensitivity to others. Even here the theory can be taught. Likewise, complicated skills directly affecting human life—surgery, psycho-analysis, auto driving—should not be attempted solely by correspondence.

### POTENTIAL SCOPE

The uses to which correspondence instruction is put in other countries illustrates its potential for India. Here are examples found in good use in other countries.

1. *Primary Education*—Tens of thousands of primary and middle school children in other countries are pursuing their studies by mail. One

school alone enrolls about 10,000 pupils per year in the first eight grades. Pupils in the lower grades depend upon a "mother-instructor" or literate member of the family to read the instructions and give direction to their learning activity. Childhood education by mail is used chiefly for handicapped or homebound children and for those widely scattered in sparsely-settled regions. Australia combines correspondence instruction with lessons by radio.

2. *Literacy Instruction Among Adults*—This is possible where a literate friend can receive the instructions to help the illiterate to learn to read.

3. *Continuation Courses*—These are for youth and adults unable to attend school. Once literacy is established, instruction through the middle and secondary school years can continue through matriculation and beyond.

4. *Supervised Correspondence Instruction*—Study is done under general supervision usually but the supervisor does not assist in instruction. The student reports are mailed to the correspondence school to be corrected by a qualified teacher. Supervised correspondence instruction is usable in secondary and higher education and with mature workers.

5. *College Courses Preparing for Degree Examinations*—These are for employed youth and adults, for others unable to attend resident institutions, and for students who cannot be accommodated in existing resident facilities.

6. *Technical, Scientific, and Engineering Courses*—Such courses provide pre-service and in-service training for employed people and related training for apprentices.

7. *Preparation for Professional Licensing Examination*—Law, accounting, many kinds of engineering, teaching, librarianship, and many other professions can be studied by correspondence.

8. *Adult Education*—Functional knowledge and skills can be learned without regard to any formal educational system. Such subjects are taken by people who want to learn and do not require invigilated examinations. Examples of such courses are: Farmers—many phases of agriculture; Craftsmen, artisans and skilled tradesmen who want to improve their competence without regard to diplomas or certificates; Businessmen and proprietors; Managers—foremen, junior and middle management, plant superintendents; and Housewives desiring to learn more about clothing, nutrition, child care, or general subjects.

9. *In-service Training for Government Employees*—Courses for further training of teachers, librarians, clerks, stenographers, community development officials, inspectors, police and firemen, railway workers, highway maintenance men, and tax collectors are widely used throughout the world. Numerous Government bureaux orient new employees and refresh their older ones through correspondence instruction. These courses may be optional or required either for promotion, for maintaining status, or for qualifying for normal salary increments.

10. *Military Training*—The United States Armed Forces Institute annually enrolls from 250,000 to 400,000 men and women from all military branches in non-service-connected subjects. In addition, nearly every branch of the armed forces has its own correspondence department to

provide its special military training. In Norway all members of the armed forces are required to pursue their education either in residence or by correspondence.

### CONTINUING EDUCATION

Continuous correspondence courses help employed people to keep abreast of progress in their fields of interest. New research findings, developments, processes, and ideas can be made available to them rapidly and regularly.

This type of course is essentially useful in the technologies, professions, and administrative occupations. Engineers, physicians, nurses, salesmen, businessmen, accountants, extension workers, teachers, psychologists, librarians, and governmental officials can benefit greatly from such courses. In India this concept has much to offer in such fields as community development, health, agriculture, industry—in fact, any field which is moving or requires to move ahead rapidly.

### AN EFFECTIVE METHOD

Both experience and research have proved the effectiveness of the correspondence method. Not unoften the achievement of students who finish correspondence courses is equal to, and sometimes better than, that of classroom students in identical subjects. Possible reasons for this are:

1. Written subject matter is likely to be better organized and more clearly presented than are oral lectures. A writer has enough time to prepare and he knows that his work will be seen by numerous colleagues. A lecturer is often lucky if he has an hour to organize his thoughts. A school enrolling 2,000 or 10,000 students each year in an academic course can afford to spend the time and money to make it excellent.
2. Written materials can be pre-tested, revised and re-written as often as is necessary for easy understanding.
3. Quality control of instruction can be easily maintained. Resident instructors visiting good correspondence departments are often amazed at the high quality of instruction.
4. Every part of a correspondence course must be mastered; all assignments are worked out by every student. No one can bluff or smile his way through.
5. Instruction is individual. No matter how large enrolment grows, the instructor is a tutor to each student. Each student's difficulties are examined and are remedied personally and in writing.

The primary purpose of the whole correspondence effort is *instruction*—to help the student to master the knowledge or skills. To this end everything is designed to make learning as easy as possible for the students. Any notion that learning needs to be difficult is antiquated and runs counter to good teaching. Regardless of level, any good instructor will attempt to make concepts understandable and usable. The good teacher will no more blame the student for not learning than a physician will blame his patient for being sick.

It is generally recognized that traditional lecture used by itself is a weak teaching method. For this reason good classroom teachers have



always used a variety of devices, techniques, and methods to improve communication and to induce greater student learning activity. Among the devices are:

- Blackboard sketches, drawings, graphs, solutions, charts, maps, globes, models, mock-ups, pictures, and other visual aids.
- Problems to solve in mathematics, the natural sciences, the social sciences, commercial subjects, law, graphic arts.
- Exercises for repetition and habit formation in mathematics, technical subjects, languages, arts and crafts, occupational training, history, social sciences.
- Questions in any subject to call forth information, require application of knowledge, bring about synthesis of information.
- Observation of processes in field, factory, laboratory, shop and demonstration hall.
- Participation in processes and experimentation in shop, laboratory, field, and community.
- Case studies (a) as observation, and (b) as situations to solve by synthesis and application of prior learnings

A good correspondence assignment will also include a variety of such devices—possibly more than are used in the classroom to help make up for the loss of the immediately answered question. But the correspondence instructor, once familiar with the normal student's mental processes, need not tediously and laboriously follow each one's thinking through a problem. In composition and writing subjects, and in certain others where organization of materials and expression is important, this may be necessary. In many subjects, however, knowledge need not be expressed in essay form. In mathematics, specific numerical answers reveal successful or unsuccessful mental processes. In science, formulas and symbols are important. In crafts, competent work is the answer. In cooking, taste is the test.

Unless the nature of the subject requires it, a correspondence teacher cannot afford to spend his time deciphering long and repetitive handwritten answers. Evidence of student learning and mental activity can appear in many specific ways. Dependence upon the essay questions alone can be restrictive. Various objective devices can be used to detect learning: completion questions, rank-order devices, checklists, rating scales, true-false statements, multiple-choice items, matching arrangements, construction problems, graphic display, and other problems calling for specific answers. The preparer of correspondence materials has many tools and techniques from which to select. Each one can be skilfully selected to serve its purpose as a surgeon selects his tools.

#### ADVANTAGES OF OBJECTIVE METHOD

These are some of the advantages of diversified questions, problems and exercises:—

1. Using objective items it is possible to cover a wider range of material than by the essay method. A larger sampling is possible and learning is made more specific
2. The objective approach compels the student to do more precise thinking than is necessarily exacted of him by an essay question. The student has no chance to bluff or to present irrelevant material.

3. Evaluation is simpler than in the essay system. Unreliable marking of essay answers is obviated. The objective type of question rules out different standards among instructors, differences of opinion, changing moods and other such extraneous factors and reduces the importance of legibility in hand-writing.

4. Correction of the objective type of answers takes less time than the correction of essays. Intellectual activity and content are always important. In special subjects, content can be arranged and printed in a form which requires the full mental cooperation of the student, but exacts of the instructor only a minimum of reading. This economy is not evident when only a dozen students are enrolled but is a major problem when 500 to 5,000 students take the same course.

5. Students like the challenge of variety, provided by objective tests, that stimulates. Information is more rapidly and precisely given and taken and the sense of being on test constantly stimulates a very good student response. As a result drop-out rates are lower.

6. Better provision can be made for students of different bents to demonstrate their learning. A variety of objective ways can allow students strong in mechanical manipulation, spatial relations, artistic and other non-verbal abilities to display their learning.

7. Fluency in language is always an advantage, but it is not the only mark of an educated person. Sometimes, a student of fundamentally mediocre ability is fluent and is able by virtue of his fluency, on the essay type of question, to beat one who is cleverer but without the gift of words. The objective method is a positive advantage for the able student who is not fluent.

8. Finally, valuable thinking and study time is not consumed in the business of writing out long answers.

#### TAKING A COURSE

Taking a correspondence course is much like preparing home work assignments. However, the self-teaching instructional materials can make it both more interesting and easier.

Upon enrolment the instructional materials are sent to the student. They usually consist of one or more textbooks, necessary supplemental materials, and a text supplement or assignment book. The text supplement breaks the course into possibly 15 to 40 lessons. Each may require from 5 to 20 hours of work depending upon the student's ability.

The student may have to study carefully one or more chapters. Every few pages he may be faced with a self-check test. Each test consists of a few exercises, problems, short-answer questions, or test items. These focus on the important points and are designed to help the student to learn. If well prepared, these can be as interesting as games and puzzles. Students will do the exercises and take these self-check tests and thereby understand the subject matter better. They also reveal to him how well he is learning. The answers are in the back of the text supplement. They show his immediately how well he is doing and on what parts he needs to spend more time. These answers are not sent to the instructor; they are for the student's own information. If lazy students avoid the self-check tests, they are merely refusing to do practice exercises designed for their benefit.

After studying the entire lesson, the student works out his response on a student response sheet. This may be a set of problems, drawing, exercises, or questions. Questions may require essay, short-answer, or objective answers. In some subjects the best response sheets use a combination of types. Poor response sheets call for only a reproduction of information previously covered. Better ones call for the application of knowledge in the lesson to practical problems. In some courses, samples of the students manipulative work must be mailed in. Ingenuity in the design of items goes far in making the course easy to learn. With the material in the text and the instructor's comments, this represents the heart of correspondence instruction.

After this "student response" or report is sent to the school, the student starts work on the next lesson.

At the school the instructor carefully checks and corrects the student's work. If the course has been well prepared, he may expect to find very few errors or misunderstandings. Good lessons are designed to be self-teaching and self-explanatory. They progress by easy steps. The Instructor notes the mistakes and writes out corrections on the student's response sheet, usually in red ink. For problems frequently missed, he may prepare and duplicate model answers worked out in detail. He can enclose these with the corrected responses which are returned to the students and thereby avoid writing the same lengthy explanation on many papers. Prompt return of student response sheets strengthens the psychological effect of reward-reinforcement.

A record is kept of the student's mark. The average of the marks made on all the reports may count a modest percentage towards the final mark. However, individual marks on response sheets are primarily for the student's information.

A tally is also kept of items in each response sheet missed by students. Those parts often misunderstood are clarified in the next revision. Text materials are often published in pamphlet form and are frequently revised.

After all assignments are finished, the student takes an invigilated closed-book examination. Sometimes these examinations are also taken at intervals during the course of Paper. The mark on this final examination determines whether or not the student passes and is the chief ingredient in the final mark.

#### ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Many teachers familiar only with classroom teaching, feel that correspondence instruction will lead inevitably to lower standards. Most of them have neither studied nor taught by this method, yet they feel competent to pass judgment on it. Fully aware that information can be gained from the printed page, they nevertheless discount the efficacy of unfamiliar methods. Used to lecturing and face-to-face instruction, they "know" that anything except time-worn traditional methods must be poor substitutes.

Vocational and technical educationists too, know the merits of instructor demonstration and the return student demonstration under the evaluative and corrective eye of the instructor. Used to oral instructions, they often forget that people can also learn skills by following *written* instructions.

The same type of conservatism that prevents some farmers from trying out new methods sometimes prevails even among teachers. The argument is that it is difficult; that it will not work; or that it will not work as well. To the unsophisticated and sometimes even to the sophisticated it seems that correspondence instruction is bound to lower academic standards. In fact, this need not be so. For quality is controlled ultimately by those who set educational policies and run an educational system, whether it is the classroom system or correspondence teaching. Academic standards are determined by several factors:—

1. Admission standards. Previous experience and preparation of enrollees.
2. Well-prepared instructional materials, easy-to-understand texts, ample exercises in application of knowledge, pre-tested and constantly revised courses.
3. Careful correctional and instructional service.
4. Invigilated examinations of good quality; careful administration and fair marking.
5. Standards set for passing the examinations.

Resident educators are sometimes worried because corrected-student-responses and even model answers go back to the students. True, other students can get hold of them, copy the correct answers, and send them in as their own. Or, a student can hire or persuade a friend to prepare his assignments. Students soon see that such practices do no good to them but are positively harmful to their interests. Learning is personal. Hiring another to do it is a waste of money. If one learns by copying correct answers, at least, and though this may not be the best method of learning, something is achieved. It is better to learn this way than to go on making mistakes. Of course, it is best to learn by thinking out a problem for oneself. In some subjects, imitating correct answers may be a positive help for a certain part of all initial education implies the ability to imitate good models. Imitation is, however, second-rate and as soon as one is old enough to think for oneself, one has to look for reasons to justify belief in the excellence of even good models. Copying them becomes not only second-rate, but contemptible.

The whole intent of the instructional system is to help students to learn as easily and quickly as possible. Whether or not learning has taken place is demonstrated at the final examination. Due precautions have, of course, to be taken in the preparation and administration of these examinations.

#### FAILURE AND INDISCIPLINE

Success in correspondence instruction requires qualifications often not found in resident students until the end of the course. People without a clear purpose do not start their work. Quite commonly 10 to 20 per cent of those who enroll, pay fees and receive their books, do not send in the first response sheets.

Another sizeable group find themselves unqualified for further learning at the level required. Some of them have never learned to study effectively. Some cannot read with understanding. They may lack background in subject matter. They may be uninterested in the subject. They

will do a few assignments and stop. They lack the self-discipline and direction to do the work necessary to learn the subject and finish the course.

The non-starts and early drop-outs in correspondence courses may be as high as 30 to 50 per cent or more. In resident schools this wastage shows up only at the end after students have occupied classrooms, hostels and staff time. In this respect alone, correspondence instruction offers a considerable financial saving. If all college students were required to finish their first year by correspondence, a very large saving could be made in higher education. Second year enrollees would be proved students with a greater likelihood of graduating.

The social loss would also be reduced. No competent and purposeful student would be eliminated. Aspiring but incompetent students could recognise their weaknesses early instead of at the end of the course. They could abandon hopeless ambitions and avoid the frustrations of long years of unrewarding struggle. They could re-direct their energies into more compatible channels.

The undisciplined make no progress until they discipline themselves to their own study schedules. If the courses are well prepared, the causes of most failures will be self-evident. If the work is not done, students have only themselves to blame. Final examinations will be the same or of the same level for both resident and correspondence students.

The correspondence method may not develop any more character than does the lecture method. It does, however, effectively identify those with certain desirable character traits. Correspondence instruction is essentially suitable to adults although it is extensively used with children, too, provided they have adult supervision. It is not spoonfeeding. Persons who take correspondence courses gain competence and confidence as well as knowledge, or else fall by the wayside. Those who finish such courses have demonstrated their ability, initiative, persistence, and a self-discipline which employers like.

#### ADVANTAGES OF CORRESPONDENCE STUDY

Correspondence instruction has several advantages not found in resident instruction. Because of its flexibility, economy, and individual instruction it can extend education in ways not possible in residential systems.

##### *Flexibility*

Once courses are established and available, a person can enroll and start his study at any time. He need not be a slave to an academic calendar.

Or, enrolments can be accepted up to a given date. Regular times can be fixed or suggested for students to send in their response sheets and take examinations. With proper incentives, only a few may drop behind and require additional time. Travellers can study en-route or while away and not miss classes. Military men and migratory workers can continue their education.

Correspondence courses reach women tied down to their homes and youth too young to go away to school.

Correspondence study is a boon to the isolated student far from seats of learning. The method is equally appreciated by city students unable to attend classes. Workers on rotating shifts and others employed during class hours find correspondence study convenient. Heaviest enrolments are often found in cities.

Students with sufficient background can enroll at any age without feeling out of place in a classroom.

Each student can progress at his own pace. The able and fast are not held back by a fixed class schedule. The slow can take all the time needed. The unemployed can study full time and finish as soon as their ability permits. The fully employed can study in their little spare time and finish later. Those too busy can postpone study to a slack time.

Home study can be combined with group study, study circles, instruction by radio and television, the use of teaching machines and other educational methods. In technical and engineering subjects and skill-teaching courses, short residential-terms for supervised laboratory and practical work around big, expensive, or complicated equipment can be arranged. This practice is often followed in Scandinavia, the USA and the USSR where students may use vacation time for such resident instruction. Employers also may release correspondence students for short resident terms. One good way to ensure regular study is to start with a short resident term. Students can send in their responses during the year and end with another term and examination.

#### *Economy*

For very good reasons correspondence instruction usually costs substantially less than half of classroom education. All the investment in classrooms, hostels, libraries, laboratories and campus is saved. Once established, only godowns for materials and offices for the staff are needed.

The maximum economy is possible only when enrolments grow large enough to allow of the benefits of mass production. With many students enrolled, overhead expenses can be spread over a larger base. Administrative personnel, building space, and office equipment need not increase in proportion to enrolment. Texts, study guides, instructional equipment, and record systems come cheaper in quantities. Only costs such as instruction and postage increase directly with enrolment. The greater the enrolment in a course, the lower the costs. Large enrolments also give both incentive and the tuition income necessary for building courses of high quality. One correspondence centre can serve an entire nation in its subject field.

Correspondence instruction uses fewer teachers than does classroom study, one instructor, in a normal office week, can grade from 100 to 400 student papers. The number depends somewhat upon the subject and design of the course.

After the instructional materials has been prepared, junior instructors can handle most of the instructional service. With a key, model answers, and the essential texts at hand, an instructor is largely a corrector of student papers.

Students also find correspondence study economical. Most study is done at home. Travel and class attendance time is saved for productive study. Travel costs, meals and lodging, and other incidental expenses are avoided.

Many correspondence students earn while they learn. They may be employed and study in their spare time. Lunch hours, evenings, week-ends, and holidays are put to profitable use. Students can contribute to their family and national income while studying. They can gain experience and seniority without taking productive years for study.

### *Individual Instruction*

All correspondence instruction is individual except in a few special situations. In some countries study circles send in consolidated group reports. In such cases, individual students are not identified by the school.

While the immediate advantages of face-to-face interaction of minds is absent in correspondence study, the student has unlimited access to his instructor's time. No appointments are required. A student can ask as many questions as necessary to gain the understanding he desires. The tutor is always writing to *one* student. This two-way writing "maketh an exact man".

In practice, often a great deal of warm and friendly feeling develops between the instructor and the student. There is no need for such a relationship to be cold and impersonal.

### *Correspondence versus Classroom Study*

The time lag between the students' learning activity and the response of the teacher is the greatest technical drawback in correspondence instruction. With prompt return of corrected reports, this lag often is no greater than when papers are returned by classroom instructors.

We must remember, too, that study at home adds very little to the social education of the student. Influence of peers and older students on the playfields, in group discussions, clubs, and various extra-curricular activities is absent. Mature students integrated into their communities often have a normal social life, but in correspondence study, many of the horizon-lifting influences of broader social contacts are missing. Home study does not cure students of timidity, prejudice, and social handicaps. Correspondence instruction is good for disseminating information and skills but its impact on creating social change is weak. Likewise, it provides no practical training ground for developing leadership.

The correspondence student misses the broad exploration and intensive and specialised depth of study possible in large libraries. Likewise, correspondence study is often weak on comprehensive research projects, the design of research studies and research methodology. While they can be arranged, the more creative relationships between able students and scholarly research professors is harder to carry on by correspondence.

Home study depends largely upon individual motivation. Motivating influences of the group are absent. Young people in particular often lack clearly defined purposes. Unless a person has matured enough to set his own goals, he is likely to make no progress in correspondence study. Family influence may help, but skilled guidance and counselling tailored to the individual is difficult to provide by mail.

For these reasons students who can enter upon classroom study should do so rather than depend purely upon correspondence instruction. It is largely for these reasons that no college in the United States will give a degree based entirely upon correspondence study. There, at least one-half and more often three-quarters of the college work must be done in residence.

Since it is recognized that experience on campus yields some benefits not obtainable by correspondence, it is hoped that to the extent circumstances allow most correspondence students will be able to do at least a part of their study in personal contact with teachers. For correspondence students summer sessions and other short resident terms and extension centres could be arranged.

#### SOME IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS IN THE ORGANISATION OF CORRESPONDENCE COURSES

##### *Duplicating is Costly*

Most state universities and colleges in America offer correspondence instruction, often in the same fields. That is, each institution offers basic courses (papers) in English composition, history, economics, sociology, political science, mathematics, and so on. Usually these courses cover essentially the same subject matter and largely duplicate each other. Each school develops its own text supplements and related instructional materials. A recent study showed that the average enrolment in an American university correspondence course was only 54 students. This number is entirely too small to justify the expenditure of time and energy required to build a good course. If the 3,000 students in first year Economics were enrolled in one instead of in 50 different institutions, the costs could be much less and instructional quality higher.

The American experience has an important lesson for us. We must ensure at the very outset that, in the interests of quality and economy, wasteful duplication is avoided.

##### *The Field Must be Supervised*

Low quality often arises when proprietary or private schools start and operate without governmental regulation. Some realizing that their own future depends upon building a good reputation, provide excellent instruction at a fair tuition fee. Others, interested in only a quick profit, may give very little or no *bona fide* instruction. In fact, some schools open, promote their courses vigorously, enrol many students, collect tuition, and suddenly close, leaving their students stranded. They are the "fly-by-night" schools that have given correspondence instruction a bad name in some countries.

It is essential that there should be some measure of governmental control on the inauguration and operation of private schools. Vigorous enforcement of appropriate regulations without fear and favouritism, can keep the field clean and respectable.

##### *A Great Democratizer*

More than any other method, correspondence study extends educational opportunity to all literate people regardless of age, wealth, or circumstances. Education often remains the privilege of the elite unless some means is found to extend it to all at whatever time in life they need it. Once a person starts to work, full-time classroom instruction is seldom practicable. Evening colleges are feasible only in urban centres.

Two prominent American educationists have written: "High on the list of institutions that are democratizing education stand the correspondence schools, most of which offer training both in general education and in vocational subjects for many different occupations. Their offerings



cover a wider range of courses by mail than are available at residence courses in any community, large or small. The repertoire of every correspondence school is available through the post office, to every student not only in the United States but in the world. The student does not travel to the school. The school comes to him.

"Only by means of the correspondence school will it ever be possible to give vocational education through schools to more than a comparatively small minority of the citizens of this or any other country. These schools have become among the most effective democratizers of our educational systems." (C. A. Prosser and T. H. Quigley: "vocational Education in a Democracy," American Technical Society, Chicago, 1949).

### THIRD PLAN

It is highly recognised that existing facilities in higher education are inadequate to meet the current demand. Furthermore, the increase in number of seats in institutions of higher learning is not expected to match the anticipated increase in enrolment, which, in recent years, has been growing at the rate of over 50,000 annually. At this rate, enrolment will increase from about nine lakhs in 1959-60 to over 12 lakhs in 1965-66.

Classroom education requires adequate classroom, well-stocked libraries, equipped laboratories, hostels, and other physical facilities. Classroom education also requires a staff of qualified and devoted teachers. Any significant increase in the number of classroom students must be accompanied by the proportionate increase in the physical facilities if standards are not to be adversely affected. Higher education is caught between the need to provide for a rapidly-growing number of students and the need to maintain the necessary standards.

Many deserving students are sometimes not able to join institutions of higher education either because of limited seats, or because they live far away from the institution or are employed during the day or because of financial difficulties. In addition, many aspiring young teachers wish to improve their educational qualifications but are not in a position to attend regular, full-time or part-time classroom instruction.

In order to meet the genuine desire of deserving students who cannot be accommodated in regular full-time day colleges, for higher education, the Government of India have included in the Third Five-Year Plan a scheme for establishing correspondence instruction. The scheme envisages the possibility of introducing correspondence courses at the ordinary pass degree level in selected universities. Evening colleges are also expected to provide facilities for additional students in Arts and Science.

The Committee on Higher Education of the Central Advisory Board of Education in January, 1961, welcomed the proposal, but recommended that these courses should be developed at this stage as an experiment in higher education. The Committee emphasized a cautious approach. It also recommended a continuing exchange of experience between the Ministry of Education with other units of government engaged in or anticipating the development of correspondence instruction. On the 16th and 17th of January, 1961, the Central Advisory Board of Education suggested that further detailed study should be made by a small committee before a firm decision was taken.

In line with the resolution of the Central Advisory Board of Education, the Ministry of Education have appointed an Expert Committee to work out details of the Scheme of Correspondence Courses and Evening Colleges. The Committee has gone into the problems involved and has submitted a report, the recommendations of which have been accepted.

#### INTRODUCTION OF CORRESPONDENCE COURSES AT DELHI UNIVERSITY

In late 1961, Parliament amended the Delhi University Act in order to enable it (a) to accept students in correspondence courses from all over India, and (b) to offer degrees based on correspondence instruction upon passing the same examinations as are required of regular classroom students.

The University of Delhi has appointed a Working Group to go into the details of the introduction of correspondence courses at the University. This Group held several meetings and discussed plans and the budget for the scheme. From this Working Group two major decisions have emerged with the support of the University Administration:

- (i) A separate office within the University with separate staff has been set up to administer the correspondence instruction programme.
- (ii) Courses will be offered in the following seven departments as soon as they are prepared: English, Mathematics, Political Science, Economics, History, Commerce, and Modern Indian Languages (Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, Punjabi, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Malayalam).

\* \* \*

In order to serve the demands for more higher education in India without sacrificing quality, new educational approaches, methods, and techniques will have to be introduced. Correspondence courses, amply proved in many other countries, are one means of stretching limited resources. Inherent in the correspondence method is the prized individual tutor-student relationship. Correspondence instruction offers a system of wide flexibility, it can be used alone or in combination with other educational methods. Once an efficient organization is established, the method can serve large numbers of students at low cost. Indeed, a large enrolment is necessary to obtain the greatest economy and the best quality of instruction. The fact that the system can be established rather quickly without great non-recurring costs makes it especially attractive today.

## APPENDIX

### DEFINITIONS USED IN CORRESPONDENCE EDUCATION

#### DELHI UNIVERSITY

1. *Correspondence Instruction* (Correspondence Study) is a method of individualized instruction administered and serviced by mail.

2. *A Correspondence Course* is an organized series of instruction units designed to accomplish a definite objective by the correspondence method.

3. *A Correspondence Paper* is an organized series of instructional units equivalent to a similar paper in regular day college.

4. *Instructional Materials* are texts, text supplements, supplementary materials, student response sheets, work kits, equipment, supplies, tools, and practice materials used for study and learning.

5. *A Correspondence Instruction Text* is organized written material covering one or more lessons.

6. *A Text Supplement* (Study Guide) is a written supplement to the text designed to facilitate study. It may include required and suggested reading, research and study suggestions, additional instructional materials, self-check tests, study projects, and student response sheets all of which are related to the basic text.

7. *Supplementary Materials* are additional explanatory materials intended (a) to elaborate, clarify, or update the text, or (b) to present additional materials called for by the syllabus but not found in the text.

8. *A Lesson* is that part of the instructional unit to be studied and performed by the student according to correspondence instruction techniques and principles. A lesson includes the text, text supplement, assignment, self-check tests, and students response sheet and supplementary materials, if any.

9. *An Assignment* specifies what the student is to do in order to learn and indicates the type of response he is to make.

10. *A Student Response* (Response, Student Response Sheet) is that part of a lesson submitted for correction and evaluation service. It is designed to facilitate learning and to measure achievement.

11. *A Self-Check Test* is a set of exercises, questions, statements, or problems which aid a student in learning or reviewing subject matter studied. Upon completion he may compare his work with the answer key provided to show how well he has mastered the assignment.

12. *Assignment Service* is supplementary instruction related directly to an assignment and rendered on request. It is in addition to and separate from correction service.

13. *Personal Service* (Personal Problem Service, Personal Consultation Service) is advice, counsel, and guidance not directly connected with a specific instruction unit.

14. *Correction and Evaluation Service* is the correction and evaluation of the student response together with the necessary motivating and counseling by the tutor.

15. *A Supervised Examination* is one administered under the supervision of a competent person, who certifies that the examination was taken without unauthorized help. It may be given during the paper, at the end of the paper, or at the end of the entire course.

16. *A Final Examination* is one given after all instructional units have been completed.

17. *A Tutor* (Assistant Director) is an individual who, qualified by education, training, and experience, performs correction, evaluation, and personal service, and may assist in research, writing, and related activities as required.

18. *An Associate Director* is in charge of planning and organizing correspondence instruction in a subject department. He is responsible for all instructional service, and development and revision of courses.

19. *A Correspondence Student* (Enrollee) is any individual who is enrolled in a correspondence course.

20. *A Response Analysis Sheet* is a detailed and systematic record kept by the tutor of all errors or omissions made on individual items or sub-parts thereof on student response sheets. Its purpose is to identify revisions or improvements needed.

21. *Registration* is the administrative process by which a person becomes a correspondence student.

22. *An Enrolment* is a registration in a correspondence course.

23. *A Mark* (Score) is the per cent of responses which are corrected on a specified student response sheet. It may also be a descriptive term or index of quality.

24. *The Completion Ratio* is the ratio or percentage of assignments completed to the total number of assignments.

25. *A Model Answer* (or Model Solution) is a clear and complete answer to a question or solution to a problem together with such comments as may be necessary to explain it. It is used as a key by the tutor in correcting the student response and may be sent to the student with his returned response sheet as an instructional and correction device.

26. *An Answer Key* (Key) is a list of correct answers to items on the student response sheets. (Keys for self-check tests are part of the instructional materials).

27. *An Item* (Test Item, Question) is an individual part of an assignment. It may be a problem to be solved, a question, a true-false statement, a multiple-choice, matching, completion, short answer, or rank order item, or any other of the objective forms.

28. *Separation* (Termination) is the termination of a correspondence enrolment prior to finishing the papers in which the student was enrolled.

29. *A Non-start* is a student who never sends in a response sheet.

30. *A Dropout* is a student who sends in one or more response sheets but fails to finish the series (course or paper).

31. *A Transfer* (Transfer of subject) is a changeover from one optional course to another.

