**TheOpen University**

# THE BRITISH OPEN UNIVERSITY,

# REGIONAL ACADEMIC SERVICES, EAST ANGLIA

## in co-operation with

# EMPIRE STATE COLLEGE, STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

## present

# AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

## September 10th to 13th, 1991, in Cambridge, England

*THE STUDENT, COMMUNITY AND CURRICULUM:*

*INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON*

*OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING*

*CONFERENCE PAPERS*
*Edited by Alan Tait*
*Editorial Assistant: Lesley Messer*

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# INTRODUCTION

The Cambridge conferences on open and distance learning have always had the learner as the central concern. My collaborator Roger Mills and I termed the first two conferences in 1983 and 1987 Workshops on Counselling and Student Support. They were intended to provide a focus on the dimension of learning systems which seemed to receive less priority than it merited, especially compared with course production, and as an opportunity for staff development on an international level for colleagues in these areas, who discovered quickly that many of their concerns were mutual. The conferences were also small in terms of number, some 60 -70 participants, in order to encourage interaction, a feature that appeared to be all too infrequent in larger scale meetings. At this stage, the theoretical approach had as its ambition the demonstration that counselling and tuition were important, indeed the more ambitious amongst us asserted integral, elements in distance education systems. While we learned that around the world students services were often marginalised in terms of consideration and funding, a counter current supporting tuition and counselling also emerged as the rasher hopes of educational technology declined, and drop-out rates continued to concern the academic management. A fruitful partnership with senior colleagues at Athabasca University, Alberta, Canada, in particular Jane Brindley of the Student Services Department, and Ross Paul, then Academic Vice President, provided a range of opportunities for colleagues from both institutions to reflect on the role of counselling and tuition, which deeply influenced our thinking and our practice.

The next conference in 1989 was theme based: 'Interaction and independence in open and distance learning,' drawing on an article by Daniel and Marquis (1). Again the emphasis was on the learner, and on the need for conversation, dialogue and in general an educational mode that was more complex than that of the filling of empty vessels by a jugful of academic material, however cost-effectively delivered at a distance. The essential role of tutorial and counselling services was emphasised as, at its farthest reach, important for democratic values in large scale educational systems.

However, we still had an educational problem on our hands. While we could assert the importance of tuition and counselling in mediating course materials, we remained unconvincedly constrained to the margins of distance education. If autonomous adult learners were so important in the educational process, where in distance education did they appear in discussions of what was to be learned? And could the question of 'What' was to be learned be separated from the 'How' which we had established was of such importance? Discussion had to move on to the curriculum; but not from the point of view of faculty plans, which was the main focus in the Undergraduate Programme in the UKOU , or of funding agencies, which provided the wherewithal of the development of Continuing Education programmes.

An introduction to the work of Empire State College (2) brought the

realisation that others had got further than we had.  Learners could
invent their own courses, defining with relevant academic support and
supervision topics, problems and projects for credit bearing 'courses'
(if the word was still relevant).  Credit could be given not just for
previous courses, but also for experiential learning (3). Distance
education could play a part in all this. The whole process allowed the
student, in his or her community(ies) to create the curriculum. This
collection of papers is published in partnership with Empire State
College, as a contribution to the conference 'Student, Community and
Curriculum: international perspectives in open and distance learning',
and acts as a resource for consideration of that theme and the question
of the necessary role of student services in distance education and
open learning.  It is not proposed that all education should be on the
Empire State model; what we hope this conference will make irrevocable
is that the learner has intruded into the curriculum, and that in
distance education and open learning it will be accepted that the tutor
and counsellor have an educationally critical role acting as
facilitator to the new knowledge that will be created as the student,
in his or her community(ies), relates to the educational institution.
This constitutes the rationale, rather than models which rely on the
'pathological', ie the weak or vulnerable student, important though
such support of course is.

This introductory essay does not attempt to introduce the reader to
every paper in the collection: there are 31 in total, with a
geographical spread across Australia, Canada, the Caribbean, Germany,
India, Japan, Malaysia, Norway, Poland, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Uganda, the
UK, the USA, and Zambia.  It attempts to relate some of the papers to
the themes of the conference as they were perceived by the Programme
Committee of Dan Granger and Elana Michelson of Empire State College,
and Roger Mills and myself from the UK OU.

The range of papers is wide, and can be divided up in a number of
different ways.  Some papers relate to the still important concerns of
those who want to record the fact that student services exist, and to
assert their importance.  Others approach the question of community
through topics of Access, and Equal Opportunities.  Both these groups
continue the Cambridge Conference tradition of concentrating on the
learner, on his or her success within the educational systems that we
have constructed, and on the issues of equity that appear to reinforce
the participation of some groups in our society, and confirm the
exclusion of others.  The third group of papers takes us, in the
context of distance education, to the educational system itself, and to
questions of knowledge that are properly questions that should engage
both learners and teachers (the two terms are not, of course, mutually
exclusive!).

Counselling and advising students in two institutions is compared by
Jane Brindley of Athabasca University, and Judith Fage of the OU UK.
The authors discuss the development of counselling services, and
observe that the two institutions operate from different standpoints.
In AU student and counselling services are independent of the
individual disciplines, whereas in the OU's Undergraduate Programme the
tutorial and counselling roles are interlinked.  AU has reduced its
commitment to student services to a very considerable extent, whereas
the OU has expanded its system to include counselling provision across
the newer programmes of study.

From two very different countries come descriptions of student support services and their implications for learning. K.M Pathusha of Madurai Kamaraj University documents student suport services available in India. In a country where there is such social, economic and cultural diversity it is hard to establish a student support system to meet all needs. 'Lack of resources and non-availability of trained personnel' results in print material being the dominant medium for learning, and impedes the introduction of new technology. The author's main conclusion is the need for an 'integrated plan on all-India basis.' In Malaysia, Abdul Rahim Mohd, Ridzuan Nordin and Nik Norulaini Nik Abdul Rahman of the Universiti Sains Malaysia examine student perception of student support. This comprehensive review of student attitudes reveals the paramount importance of 'academic-based items'.

The Sale of Goods Act is the inspiration to Ian Mitchell of the University of South Australia for consideration of what are in effect issues of quality assurance. He suggests that in responding to student needs we must consider ourselves ourselves as marketing a package, with students possessing buyers' rights; 'in an environment increasingly critical of our performance.. we must confront these issues and look at the maintenance of standards.'

Turning to the most effective modes of teaching and learning, there are several papers which examine the use of electronic media and their effectiveness. At the University of Ulster, a study on the use of video-conferencing between students on a multicampus university was undertaken by John Dallat, Grace Fraser, Robert Livingston and Ann Robertson. It is clear that despite the advantages it can have for the isolated student, there remain problems in its acceptance as equally valuable as face to face teaching in the eyes of students.

Shigeru Wakamatsu of the National Institute of Multimedia Education in Japan has undertaken research which suggests that students prefer to watch video lectures at 'scheduled fixed times' as opposed to learning in 'free time', implying that a scheduled time slot is supportive to the pacing and motivation of the learner.

Audio teleconferencing is reported on by Diane Thompson of Deakin University, Australia. It is argued that students should be able to articulate and defend ideas, and that two-way audio telecommunication can provide an infrastructure for dialogue for isolated students. The denial of visual clues however can lead to less than satisfactory outcomes without structured planning and familiarity with the medium. Gail Crawford of Athabasca University has researched into tutor initiated and student initiated telephone tutorial support, and relates this to several factors including drop out rate and course completion.

With the use of computer mediated communication (CMC) now well established in the field of distance education, several colleagues have gone on to look at its effects on open access and the curriculum. The assumption that within the framework of distance education CMC will help independent learning and develop autonomy has been examined by William Seaton at Thomas Edison State College, New Jersey, USA. The two concepts are not necessarily linked; physical separation of student and institution can still mean that independent study is viewed as just 'another method of conducting instruction' rather than the activity of an autonomous learner. Using CMC, the learners are viewed as 'taking

control of their own learning', but the development of critical thinking is not automatically achieved. If, however, CMC is viewed as a collaborative learning process, with active involvement of the group, then it is possible to generate dialogue. CMC can then function as a' gateway to resources, collaborative learning and individual achievement.'

Rex Tueller of Utah State University, USA, warns 'that educators pay far too much attention to the technology to the detriment of faculty training and course development and an almost complete neglect of...academic service to the student.' It is only with adequate planning, particularly with regard to what he terms the instructional triad of development approach, device and the student, that 'learning equivalency' of CMC to face to face tuition can be achieved.

The third paper on CMC comes from Rosalie Wells of Athabasca University. Discussion centres on the question of access to the computer, and the author warns that unless the issues of gender are addressed 'the open democratic nature of the medium may be compromised.'

Roger Mills and Ross Paul have addressed the problems associated with access in two different institutions. Roger Mills discusses the way that the OU UK has dealt with the debate which arises when discussing a student-centred admission process. The two polarised models of interventionist and non-interventionist access policies (the latter being adopted by the OU as part of its policy) are outlined, and the author proposes the setting of performance indicators to identify trends. In an accompanying paper Ross Paul, now of Laurentian University, Ontario, has also asserted that we need to look closely at the intertwined policies of access and equal opportunities. He argues that open universities are 'far less successful than they have purported to be' in the area of open access, and moving on to the nub of the area of concern of this conference, that they have to change both the development and delivery of the courses to achieve these aims. He uses Athabasca as a case study to examine these aspirations. Successes in the programmes for aboriginal peoples have been achieved, but in doing so they have led to a 'reconsideration of course content and delivery' across the whole institution. There has been a gradual switch from a 'single home-study model of distance education' to the enhancement of 'course presentation systems, with special arrangements for specific groups of students.' Open admission itself is 'insufficient to respond to the needs of disadvantaged groups.'

The development of suitable curricula with and for the demographic groups recruited into distance education has been focussed on by other authors too. In many developing countries, western training packages of whatever quality are inappropriate for students needs. For example, Helen Buckley seconded from the University of Manitoba to the Windward Islands, examines an in-service training project for teachers. In a neo-colonial environment with the additional impediments of patriarchal structures, issues of race, class and gender have to be addressed both in the course content and in the overall design of the project.

Consideration of the relationship between course content and student participation in course organisation is given in the paper by Julius Odurkene of Makerere University, Uganda,and Jane Sparrow of Save the Children Fund (UK), based in East Africa. The development of a staff

training programme to increase the professionalism of staff involved in residential child care must take into account the needs of these workers. Surveys of learning needs and the development of priority topics within the curriculum are considered to be essential parts of the Child Care Open Learning Programme.

The educational approaches to meet the needs of the aboriginal communities of Canada are addressed by two groups of authors. In the first paper John Langford and Katharine Seabourne of the University of Victoria look at the learning experience of a culturally distinct minority group studying at a university dominated by western values. Aboriginal leaders participated in the design, marketing, delivery and evaluation of the programme,which was designed to have both 'aboriginal integrity' and 'academic integrity', so that in addition to academic quality it would also encompass 'the realities and values of native life in native communities.' The second paper comes from Athabasca University, from Lori Oddson, Lynda Ross, and Barbara Spronk. The programme described was negotiated with both the minority group and the funding agency. It was however constrained by the courses available in packaged form, an important locus of concern for this conference, and necessitated new written material as well as full-time on-site coordinators at the Native Education Centres.

The relevance of the curriculum in a dual-mode university which caters for both distance learners and the conventional student is explored by Richard Siaciwena of the University of Zambia. Identical courses are offered to both groups, 'But this raises a question of whether courses designed for young internal students are relevant to older distance students.'

From the Indira Gandhi National Open University, India, Amiya Sharma notes the decline in popularity of English Literature courses. The author proposes that the texts used in the syllabus are inappropriate for modern day India. There is a need for a 'literary experience that relates the reader to his (sic) society', and it is suggested that more literature from the Indian tradition would improve this situation. In this context the reader is introduced to Henry Derozio, the first Indo-anglian poet.

The changes in the last two years in Eastern Europe, in Poland and the former German Democratic Republic respectively, are the subject of two papers. First from the Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznan, Eugenia Potulicka examines the curriculum response to the changing need of students on comparative literature courses, contrasting the approach to development influenced by Marxist-Leninist ideology before the fall of the socialist government in Poland, with the fluid and fast changing situation post 1989.

Christine von Prummer writes from the Fernuniversitat in North Rhein Westphalia of a survey of the position of women learners in the former East German state. The distance education system in the old GDR had traditionally been valued as a means for achieving equality in education, 'distance education in the GDR served originally as a means for the reproduction of intelligence from the classes of workers and farmers and for the post-facto qualification of functionaries.' It also gave special privileges to women students, and according to the author the outlook for the position of women in society as well as in distance education in particular has changed markedly, with women

being 'negatively affected by the new social and political system.'

Terry Evans of Deakin University takes us forward with 'Knowing the voids: understanding the distance education student in a postmodern world'. "Distance educators ..can use their commonsense knowledge of previous students, they may be involved in a form of market survey or they may have information from institutional or other research on students which they can use. However it seems the case that the students just do not exist for many of us when we are developing our courses....' Here again we touch on the core of the issues which this conference faces, and which provide the rationale at its most thoughtful of services which support students. Robert Hassenger of Empire State College, on the other hand, takes a critical look at multiculturalism, and tilts at the 'political correctness' movement which seeks too crudely in his view to ensure representation of cultures in a curriculum in accordance with the communities of the learners.

Finally, Daryl Nation discusses how 'a community of scholars' functions in a distance and open learning institution. He contrasts the visions of the university of F.R. Leavis and Raymond Williams, both based in Cambridge, and concludes that the Cambridge-based National Extension College comes closer to an appropriate model for open learning, founded as it was by Michael Young, at that time also a university lecturer at the same university. It would be worthy indeed for this conference on open learning to aspire to follow in the traditions of those who sought to turn the older universities outward, especially if we acknowledge and act on the changes which the broader range of extramural communities will properly bring.

I would like to thank Lesley Messer for the considerable assistance she gave in editing these papers.

Alan Tait
Cambridge
July 1991

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# ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION:

## THE STUDENTS AT THE NKS COLLEGE

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## ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION
## THE STUDENTS AT THE NKS COLLEGE

### By Bjørn Baaberg, the NKS College, Norway

### A. The Present Situation in Norwegian Higher Education

In Norway access to higher education has been a political
priority for quite some time. This must be understood within the
framework of the basically social democratic ideologies that have
influenced the educational policies since the end of the Second
Word War. Higher education has for a long time been part and
parcel of the concept of lifelong learning, and higher education
ought in principle to be available to people "no matter where
they live or how they live." When this is the basic attitude,
access becomes a very central theme in all educational planning.

One result of this priority is that today we have about 150
institutions of higher education spread all over the land. This
is in a country with 4 mill people spread out over 324 mill
square km; – which is the population of a middle sized European
city spread out over slightly more land than for instance Italy
or Poland.

In 1987 the total student population was about 90 000 and in
1988 the Ministry of Education estimated that the total student
population in 1991 would be about 105 000. But at present – to
the surprise of the planners in several ministries – the total
student population is estimated to about 130 000.

Another way of describing the situation is that in 1987 about
2,6% of our population were registered as students in higher
education. In 1991, however, this number is 3,6%. This
represents an increase of 35% in four years.

This quite extraordinary growth is to a large extent attributed
to the situation in the work market. Since 1987 we have seen a
surge in the number of people who are becoming redundant and
young people who are not admitted into the labour market at all.
Another factor may be that the general inclination among people
to enter higher education is increasing. Traditionally enrollment
into higher education in Norway has been comparatively low. It
seems now that we are closing in on the other nations which we
tend to use as a reference (OECD countries).

Regardless of this very recent development, the long-term
demographic changes will have an effect upon the student
population of the country. We know that the number of potential
students, 19-year-olds, has already started to go down and it
will continue to stay relatively low until 2010. In this

situation the ratio of people who go on to higher education in each age-cohort must be increased, if the political aims of the nation shall be met by new generations.


B. Higher Education and Access

1. Access and Enrollment Procedures

It is in the interest of the present government to adjust the enrollment procedures in higher education. The present procedures stipulate essentially that enrollment into higher education requires completed A-levels (artium) or a corresponding education at secondary level. One can compensate for this but the regulations are rather restrictive. The initiative of the Ministry to open for more flexible practices in this area, is for the time being a rather controversial issue in Norway.

At present the distance education programmes are subject to the same enrollment procedures that you will find in all institutions of higher education. This is also why higher distance education in Norway for the time being is not open in the sense that anyone who wants to join a study programme, may enter at his own will.


2. Some Characteristics of the Average Students in Higher Education

First, let's establish some major characteristics of the regular student population, and then see if there are any differences in the profiles of the NKS distance learning students and the bulk of the student population.

Some of the characteristics that have a bearing upon access to the present public institutions of higher education can be summed up roughly like this (source: Norway's Public Report on Higher Education, 1988):

SEX — the proportion of female students in higher education is as expected; health and social workers as well as teacher's colleges are dominated by women, whereas colleges of engineering, university faculties of science are dominated by men. In other colleges (regional colleges of Administration and Business) and faculties (the faculties of Social Science, Law, Philology) there is roughly equal proportions of both sexes.

GEOGRAPHY — in the North of the country and in relatively speaking isolated areas the ratio of students is low, whereas the ratio is high in the western part of the country and in the south. This corresponds relatively well with the distribution of colleges and universities.

AGE — the average student is between 20 and 24 years old

FULL-TIME/PART-TIME — the number of students who are part-time is increasing, from 11% in 1981 to 21% in 1985. We expect it is

considerably higher today, - perhaps higher than 30%.

STUDY HOURS - the average number of study hours seem to be 22 for all categories of students put together. The full-time student worked - it seems - some 30 hours a week.

COMPLETION - about 55% of the students are able to complete their studies in the stipulated number of semesters (6% are faster, the rest of them are either slow or drop-outs.

## C. Student Characteristics at the NKS College

### 1. The College

The organization of our distance teaching:

All programmes are organized as part time studies, - the study load being 50% of full time study load per semester. Our courses can be combined with full time jobs or with rather heavy family obligations.

All courses are offered as distance teaching. The main "pillar" of our delivery system is always the correspondence element. As add-ons we use telephone counselling, face-to-face tuition once a semester, and computer conferencing.

We have offered courses in Business Administration since 1988, and Public Administration, Marketing, and Management since 1990. In the Spring semester of 1991 the college has a total of slightly more than 900 students.

### 2. The Students

It would be interesting to see if the student profile in distance teaching differs from that of the regular student population. And in particular if distance education may serve as an alternative delivery system - even in a country where higher education is decentralized almost to an extreme degree.

The hypothesis is that distance education opens for recruitment of other groups of students than those traditionally found in higher education. The purpose of this paper is contribute with some findings from our college that may support this hypothesis.

Since 1988 we have distributed questionnaires to all our students in Business Administration (first semester students and last semester students). About 500 students have received the questionnaire and 289 have answered the forms. The bulk of the figures I give you are taken from these forms which have been compiled but not yet fully processed. We expect a more comprehensive report to be ready in a years time. In addition I will also present facts and figures that have been collected by means of running samples based on the standardized information we have on our students in our central computer.

I would like to share some of this information with you and then point out where our students differ vis a vis the students in

"regular" institutions. I will concentrate on the facts and·
figures that have relevance to the question of access in higher
education.

The presentation of the findings in this paper must be regarded
only as a preliminary presentation.


SEX
In our different courses and the male/female ratio differs
slightly. In 1990 the ratios are as follows:

|  | male | female |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Business Administration | 66 | 34 |
| Public Administration | 50 | 50 |
| Management | 59 | 41 |
| Marketing | 59 | 41 |

Apart from the course in Business Administration the male/female
ratios are not very different from what we would find in other
colleges. This is rather interesting taking into  account the
fact that our college has a profile as an electronic college. One
should perhaps have feared that this would deter women from
entering. The course in Business Administration, however, has the
most distinct "electronic" profile of our courses, we suspect
that this is the explanation of the comparatively low ratio of
females in this course.


AGE
The average age of our students (in 1990) differ almost
dramatically from what we find in "regular" colleges:

| Business Administration | 34 years |
| --- | --- |
| Public Administration | 41 years |
| Management | 43 years |
| Marketing | 39 years |

We see that our students are considerably older than the average
student of the student population. This is the first hard and
fast indication that distance teaching reaches out to other
student groups than the traditional models.

Since our students are so much older than the regular students in
higher education, we must expect that the majority will have a
number of other characteristics that go together with a more
settled life; —  in particular regarding family, job and income,
previous education etc.


MARITAL STATUS
The majority of our students are married or they live together.
Based on the information we have collected from 1988 to 1990 the
relative distribution of our students in Business Administration
seems to be:

|                 | All students | Males | Females |
|-----------------|--------------|-------|---------|
| singles         | 15%          | 15%   | 16%     |
| divorced        | 5%           | 5%    | 7%      |
| living together | 14%          | 11%   | 19%     |
| married         | 66%          | 70%   | 57%     |

Distance education seems to offer access to students who live in a family and often have fewer possibilities to follow regular educational courses/classroom courses. The questionnaires also report on the number of children which our students have. Without going into detail it is documented that our students have a lot of social obligations and duties. These people are not likely to constitute the bulk of a student group in classroom teaching. They constitute 80% of our students, however.

Other studies indicate that the distance student needs support from their families in order to follow the study programmes. How do our students report on this issue? And, are there any indication that husbands and wives respectively are supporting each other? In this context it is interesting to report the responses of our students. A total of 93% report of a high degree of support from close family, and - interestingly - 66% report that their colleagues at work also are supportive.

Are there also indications in our material of the educational backgrounds of their close partners that may suggest a conducive atmosphere for the distance student? Almost 50% (49,3%) of the male students live together with people who have more than A-levels (artium), and out of the female students 68,4% have a partner who has completed education post-A-levels.

It seems that our students often have family obligations that tend to make regular studies difficult to access. However, they are strongly supported by their partners and colleagues when they start a study programme.


PREVIOUS EDUCATION
In our study of the Business Administration students as many as 51,2% have completed higher education - have a degree - from another college/university. Of the students that were enrolled in Spring 1991 in our Public Administration Programme more than 80% have completed a degree programme at another institution of higher education.

It seems therefore that we are not really serving as an alternative for the underprivileged. It seems rather that the role of the college has become to cater for those people who already have a fair amount of education but who want additional formal competence in order to become more competitive on the labour market.

Another indication that our students are "upwardly mobile" is that as many as 19% reported to having advanced in their carriers while still a student. ( We do not know what happens after they have finalized their studies).

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We suspect that some of the reason we have relatively resourceful students must be that since we are a private college, our tuition fees are considered as rather steep by many. It may well be that this is a basic factor that dictates recruitment to our college.

STUDY HOURS
How does the fact that our students are in full-time jobs affect the number of hours they study pr week?

Almost 73% of the students reported to work more than 10 hours a week, 6% worked 20 hours or more. The majority answered that they put in between 11 and 15 hours a week.

It seems that a majority of the students at the NKS college work about two thirds of that which is the average of all students in regular institutions of higher education. First, one must remember that our students are on a 50% study load. The findings indicate that relatively speaking the distance student takes his role as a student at least as seriously as his "colleagues" in a traditional college, maybe even more. This fact is extraordinary when you also remember that the majority of our students have full-time jobs, - often a rather demanding one at that. In my opinion this is one of the best indications of the flexibility of distance teaching, and how well it is suited in the context of life-long learning and in-service training.

COMPLETION
How many of our students complete their studies within the scheduled time (two "Open University credits" over two years)? The panel of students that we have followed most closely started in 1988. Of these students 34% finished in 1990 and got their Business Certificate when they were expected to. This does not mean that the rest are drop-outs. It means that a number of our students need more time. We have told our students that they can spend up to twice the scheduled time, without any extra financial or other inconveniences placed upon them.

Of the students that were enrolled in 1990 (Spring and Fall) in our courses in Public Administration, Management and Marketing the number of students that have continued from the first to the second semester is 94%. This is unexpectedly high and we dare not believe this to be a trend we can rely on. We must expect a drop-out rate of at least 20% from enrollment to the second semester and about a 10% drop-out rate in each semester throughout the study programme.

The drop-out rates in higher education courses are not well documented in Norway. But, on the basis of the material we have so far, it appears that the number of students that are able to finish their courses within the stipulated time is lower at our college than in the rest of the student population.

GEOGRAPHY
a) Regional distribution
Where in the country do the students live? Distance education is
often thought of as the means to reach out into distance valleys
and remote islands.

Without including detailed graphs let it suffice to say that our
students come from all parts of the country, and the geographical
distribution of our students corresponds roughly to the general
distribution of the Norwegian population. The exception is in the
far North of the country where the number of students by far
exceeds what we would expect on the basis of the population
distribution.


b) Urban - rural distribution
We have students from all over the country. But to what extent do
we recruit from the remote areas of the country, and to what
extent do we have students from urban and city centres?

We have run the postal codes of all our students against standard
categories set up by the Central Bureau of Statistics. The urban-
rural distribution among our students appears to be to following:

| | |
|---|---|
| Sparsely populated areas | 26% |
| Villages (up to 1000 inhab) | 10% |
| Small towns (1000 to 30 000 inhab) | 21% |
| Towns (from 30 000 inhab) | 40% |
| In other countries, platforms | 3% |

It seems that as well as being an alternative for those who live
in remote areas far from a "physical" college, we also reach
those groups of people which live in the towns but still find it
troublesome to follow institution-based educational programmes.
This is an indication that people even in central areas often
will prefer the flexibility of distance teaching programmes
rather than institution based teaching. The reasons for this
preference are not documented by our evaluations, but common
sense will suggest that the combination of jobs and family,
hobbies, etc. often function as an obstacle when study programmes
with strict time schedules are expected to be followed.

This is corroborated by a survey we of our Marketing Department.
In 1990 the students were asked why they chose the NKS College.
The majority of the students stressed that the flexibility of
distance teaching was one of the most decisive factors when they
decided to register with the NKS College.


## Conclusions

The students at the NKS College of distance teaching show other
background characteristics than regular students. They differ in
a number of respects; age, their family situation, income/work,
and previous educational carriers.

The flexibility of distance education seems to be well suited for

people who have established themselves with families and jobs, but they want to learn more in order to promote their own careers.

They put as much effort into their studies as other students.

A private college that relies on tuition fees enrolls a majority of students that must be described as "resourceful" in terms of their jobs, families and partners, and previous education.

Whether state run colleges would attract the same group of students is an open question. With no tuition fees it is not unlikely that other student groups would also consider distance learning as an alternative.

We feel that we certainly have documented the flexibility of distance teaching, and that distance teaching represents a mode of learning that can function as an alternative in higher education. On the basis of our own experience it seems that distance learning colleges may be ideal for up-grading people who consider regular teaching sessions as incompatible with their own situations. In short, access is widened by distance learning methods.

The fact that our students appear to be rather more resourceful than other students ought to be utilized by distance teaching institutions, both in the design of study programmes, and in the image-building of distance learning itself.


Oslo, May 21, 1991

# COUNSELLING IN  OPEN ADULT  HIGHER AND CONTINUING

## EDUCATION - TWO INSTITUTIONS FACE THE FUTURE

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# COUNSELLING IN OPEN ADULT HIGHER AND CONTINUING EDUCATION - TWO INSTITUTIONS FACE THE FUTURE

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AND JUDITH FAGE, OPEN UNIVERSITY, UK

The purpose of this paper is to look at the development of counselling services in open higher and continuing education through the histories of two open universities: Athabasca University in Alberta, Canada and the UK Open University; and to consider their future development. The authors have hosted each other as part of a British Council exchange.

The essential features of the kind of institution we are describing are: open entry (no academic entry qualifications); an adult orientation; study at degree level or equivalent, and in professional development areas.

## Athabasca University - History of Student Support

Athabasca University (AU) was founded as a pilot project of the Alberta government in the early 1970s. The mandate was to find new, unique ways to serve the ever growing numbers of adult students who for several reasons could not take advantage of traditional campus based educational opportunities. Print based packaged learning materials supplemented by individual telephone tutorial support was and still is the main mode of delivery. Tutorial support is provided by discipline based part-time staff (approximately 350) who work out of their homes and report centrally to full-time faculty. The tutor's role is seen as being largely course content "facilitator and guide" (AU Tutor Handbook, 1990).[1]

Although students often ask their tutors questions outside of the arena of course content, advising and counselling are not seen as a legitimate part of the tutorial role. These services are provided by student advisors and counsellors who are in a department separate from the faculties, and have been developed over time in response to the expressed needs of students and faculty, institutional demands, and research and evaluation studies.

Early in the history of the institution, a small department called "Student Development Services" was created to provide student support unrelated to course content. The emphasis in the formative years (not surprisingly, for a new institution with few courses and students) was in areas of recruitment, information provision, and advising of prospective and new students. The titles of the staff who performed these functions, "Student Orientation Specialists", reflected the focus of the job - to help bring new students into the institution and orient them to a new mode of learning.

As the institution expanded, it became necessary to rethink the role of student support. Surveys of other institutions were done, and student services staff collected information pertinent to the unique AU student population and method of study. Educators such as Malcolm Knowles, Patricia Cross, and Allen Tough heavily influenced this stage of development. Within this context, student services staff (who had been renamed counsellors) developed skills and self-help materials in the areas of academic advising (programme planning) and career development, these being the most in demand by students at that time.

As Athabasca University continued to grow at a rapid rate into the 1980s, counsellors gained more experience with the difficulties students were having in studying at a distance and completing courses. Students were asking for help with learning and study problems, and faculty and tutors become much more concerned about student persistence. Institutionally, there was a concern about withdrawal and non-completion rates. In response, the counselling staff developed services such as a comprehensive orientation to distance learning packages and learning assistance materials which were aimed directly at student success. During this period, counselling positions became much more clearly defined as professional counsellors requiring appropriate credentials, i.e. in Alberta, eligibility to become a Chartered Psychologist which requires a minimum of a masters degree in psychology and a specified number of hours of supervised clinical practice.

With the increased emphasis on professionalism, counsellors had some concerns that most service development had been based on guesswork (albeit based on firsthand experience) about what might help students to complete courses. As a result, there was a move to become much more systematic in research and evaluation activities to support theories of student success and support. Developmental research with regard to new services and evaluation of existing services became a regular activity of the department. Evaluation of services raised the issue of consistency of quality across all offices and staff and led to the development of more sophisticated training and staff development programmes.

Until about 1985, Student Services experienced modest but steady growth in resources until there were ten professional staff as well as a fairly sizeable support staff and a number of contract and part-time positions. After that period, reduced government grants and the need to expand academic programmes resulted in staff and operating budget losses. Student Services responded by becoming more efficient (e.g. using more packaged materials to deliver services), and by developing a new staff category called "Student Advisor". These are highly skilled clerical positions for which there is an ongoing in house training and supervision programme provided by counselling staff. The Student Advisors provide course, programme, and financial aid information as well as academic advising assistance. Students are referred to a counsellor by a student advisor only if they require specialized assistance such as career planning help, learning assistance, or diagnostic testing. This new level of staffing is much more cost efficient, and was intended to allow counsellors (who had been much reduced in numbers) to spend more time in development of materials which could be used by a greater number of students that they would be able to speak with on a one to one basis.

The next stage of development in student services was to ensure that the goals and objectives of the department were aligned with those of the institution. Although AU has had a mission statement for some time, there was no formal Strategic Academic Plan until 1988. Professional staff in student services participated in the development of the plan, and ensured that the services offered supported the goals of the University. Specifically this meant placing slightly more emphasis on retention strategies in the area of pre-admission services and learning assistance, a direction which had already been adopted, but which was formally written into the Strategic Academic Plan.

By 1990, the services offered by Student and Regional Services (the most recent name), included the following: pre-admission services (information, self-assessment materials, referral); academic advising; financial aid advising; diagnostic testing in mathematics and

writing skills; study skills development; career, educational and personal counselling; and access to resource centres in the regional offices. The latter contain career and educational information, post-secondary directories and calendars, and sample course packages. These services were offered by four offices: the central office and directorate delivered all services at a distance to students across Canada and played a very important central coordinating function. The two large and one fairly small regional offices offered face to face services to students in each of their areas and each reported through the central directorate.

It has been well documented that support services can and do make a difference to student success (Moore, 1986;[2] Paul, 1988;[3] Dewal, 1988;[4] Cookson, 1989;[5] Metzner, 1989[6]). Institutional studies research regarding students at risk also points to the need for learner support in the form of specific targeted interventions (Powell, Conway and Ross, 1990[7]). Research and evaluation studies carried out by counsellors at AU show that students benefit from receiving services, and that services can make a difference to completion rates (Delehanty, 1986;[8] Brindley, 1987;[9] Young, 1988[10] ). Despite this evidence and self reports from students about their needs, support services have now been cut at AU to point where they are probably not viable in the current form. Paul discussed this issue in his keynote address to the 1987 ICDE conference. In his paper called, "If Student Services are So Important, Why are We Cutting Them Back?",[11] he points out that decisions to cut support services often have not much to do with student success and much more to do with institutional politics.

Currently, the staff and resources in the Student and Regional Services department have been reduced to a level which makes drastic service cuts inevitable. In 1990, the central coordinating directorate was disbanded and all positions were made redundant, leaving the regional offices with no formal checks on consistency or quality of service and a huge increase in workload. As of 1991, all but two counselling positions have been made redundant in an effort to continue to fund new academic programmes internally. Only one of these positions is currently filled. The two large regional offices now serve all students across Canada as well as those living near to their centres, having divided the country into two large catchment areas. The smaller, more geographically isolated regional office has one staff member left and serves only the immediate region. Unless resources become available internally through measures such as reallocation or an organizational restructuring, service to students other than course content based support will be offered only at a minimal level in the form of some basic information and advising assistance for those students who seek it out.

In the face of such drastic cuts to student support services at AU, it is difficult to look ahead and speculate about the future. However, the reality is that institutional goals continue to evolve, student numbers are growing, and government funding is not likely to increase in the next few years. How student support might be provided is definitely in question. The fact that it is needed should not be. If anything, the rapidly changing context within which open education occurs demands that more attention be paid to support services which are essential to the achievement of student and institutional goals.

The UK Open University (OU) was founded in 1969, and, like Athabasca, its core method of educational delivery was through written course units, though supplemented by TV and radio, and supported by comprehensive assignment marking. Around 3380 part-time staff were appointed in 1970 and 1971, the first of whom were admissions counsellors. Their main task was to provide advice and counselling to applicants to the BA degree programme, thus establishing the counselling role from the start within the educational guidance framework, rather than the personal therapeutic context. Full-time senior counsellors based in the 12, later 13 regional centres were also appointed to supervise the work of part-time counsellors and were expected to have 'knowledge and sympathy with the problems of adult education'.[12]

After admission, students were allocated to correspondence tutors and to counsellors, based on the 250 or so study centres. The first Director of Regional Tutorial Services, Robert Beevers, described the part-time counsellor as having a 'defined tutorial role' - but 'few were trained as counsellors or even familiar with the exiguous literature on the subject' though 'most had counselled students informally in the course of their work as professional teachers'. From the start 'the OU counsellor was placed firmly within the teaching system, rather than in the area of socio-psychological services'. 'He has been called the 'anchor-man' who helps the student to relate the necessarily diverse and potentially disparate elements of the University's teaching system, and to articulate them to his personal needs and learning characteristics. Essentially he is concerned with the factors which contribute to, or mitigate against, the student's successful progress with his studies.' To parallel this, senior counsellors' 'academic experience and inclinations tend towards adult education and teaching methods'.[13] In 1976 the roles of tutor and counsellor were combined, at foundation level only, in one person to be known as the 'tutor-counsellor.' The essence of the tutor-counsellor model was, that the student's tutor and counsellor in the first foundation course would remain the student's counsellor through the degree course, continuing to provide counselling on the basis of a solid relationship built up through substantial contact in the foundation year. Students would be allocated to specialist tutors, for group tuition and assignment marking, for each course undertaken. This principle of 'continuity of counselling', though not perfectly implemented, has been a cornerstone of counselling support for undergraduate students in the OU. Beevers predicted that, whatever changes arose in the University's curriculum, the student would need 'an academic mentor whose work is predicated on him rather than on the course material.'[14]

Sewart[15] saw the counselling role as also providing a 'bridge or mediating function' for the separation between the system and the students' inevitable within distance education. Counsellors were essentially local, providing support by telephone, letter, and, where possible, face-to-face in group sessions or individually.

From this beginning, we see through the pages of the journal "Teaching at a Distance" the development of a number of strands in the counselling role in the UK OU. These strands are, broadly, supporting learning needs (confidence building and preparation; developing study and learning skills), often in groups, notably through the work of Gibbs and Northedge;[16] educational guidance, including vocational guidance and career counselling; helping students work through life conflicts which affect their study or motivation; and providing advice and information on the OU's systems and facilities. Redmond, with a

background in further and adult education, draws together the pedagogical and personal needs of the student in seeing an effective response as dependent on 'knowledge of the whole person', and requiring traditional interpersonal counselling skills.[17] Dorothy Eagleson describes the Northern Ireland educational guidance service -then a pioneer of educational guidance services for adults - and its close working links with the OU.[18] Ormond Simpson, Senior Counsellor in the East Anglian region, has made a substantial and continuing contribution to the application of counselling skills to the Open University's educational situation,[19] developing a series of leaflets for students and tutor-counsellors on a range of concerns within the OU counselling arena, such as choosing courses, taking exams, withdrawing from a course. In 1978 we see mention of the need for referral by counsellors, for example for vocational guidance, in the context of an international symposium on distance education held in 1975[20] - a new vocabulary in the pages of this journal. By 1983 Sewart saw referral 'to a wide range of agencies' as necessary to complement the legitimate areas of support in the OU.[21]

Debate on counselling in the Open University has continued within the above framework broadly unchanged over 20 years. Professional training has never been a requirement of counselling staff, though staff development has been refined and become increasingly more relevant, consistent and extensive. The most significant developments affecting the counselling service up to now have probably been the growth of the regional enquiry services, offering impartial guidance and counselling to people interested in joining the OU and now advising at least 80,000 enquirers every year; and the development of something that used to be called CE (continuing education) into a major activity of the University, with over 14,000 management education students in 1990, a substantial in-service education programme for teachers, and a developing health and social welfare and community education area. Counselling support is still, however, firmly linked to a particular programme of study, and the effect on the counselling scene of introducing new programmes has therefore been to expand the kinds of counselling support available across the university; so that, for example, in the BA degree programme, students are counselled by tutor-counsellors on the 1976 model which has proved so successful; students taking single degree-level courses have a separate course tutor and counsellor; and management diploma students have a tutor with a counselling role; neither of these latter offer 'continuity of counselling' as a principle, even within the programme.

Some might (and do) say that this is good. The Open University is providing 'horses for courses' and thus ensuring students' needs are properly met, depending on their programme of study. However, there are problems. Firstly, the same level of support is not offered across all study areas; to the extent that the Steering Group of the Academic Review of the University, reporting in 1989, had as one of its recommendations:

> 'Work should begin on redressing in the 1990s the inequalities of
> counselling provision as between different levels and types of
> study programme within the University'.

Secondly, a growing number of students are not following a discrete path through a single programme of study, but are moving from one to another, and from one counsellor and counselling system to another. A 1990 estimate showed that around 14,000 students had had meaningful contact with more than one line of study, and of this figure, some 89% had contact with two lines, and 9.4% with three lines of study.

Moreover a new Health and Social Welfare Diploma about to come on stream will include courses from both the BA degree and the management education programmes, thus attracting students already in other study areas. Given these circumstances, it is hard to see how the continuing needs of students for longer term educational development can be met through the existing programme based counselling service.

As a result of these concerns, a working group, chaired by Alan Tait, Senior Counsellor in the East Anglian Region, was set up with an initial brief to examine the question of support for students on the newer non-undergraduate level courses. In 1990 the remit of the group was expanded to include all programmes of study outside the BA degree. In essence, two opposing models, each with its own validity, were debated: the first suggested that every tutor should act also as a counsellor, with the advantage that the tutor already had close contact with the student and was well placed to provide counselling support. The second suggested a personal counsellor for all students who would follow them through their career with the OU, regardless of course or programme of study, building up a knowledge of their students and advising them on their educational development.

The group reported in January 1991 and its main recommendations were as follows:

a) the basic counselling model for students in all programmes of study should consist of a local or easily accessible counsellor who would provide continuity of counselling throughout a student's career in the Open University. Such counsellors would be expected to have firm links with the Open University's teaching system and with programme or study areas.

b) local counselling support should be backed by stronger links between students and tutors and counsellors and tutors. The tutor's role needs to be more clearly defined to reflect good practice, with greater emphasis on in-course support.

c) the existing provision of counselling support through the Regional Centre should be consolidated and should involve not only vocational guidance, study skills and other centrally organised counselling provision, but also a concentration of easily accessible expertise for each substantial programme.

However, this new counselling system is more than merely a rationalization: like the counselling system of Athabasca and all Open Universities, it needs not only to be relevant to the new environment now, it must also be flexible enough to cope with future developments and possibilities.

The Two Institutions - A Contrast in Context and Direction

The AU and OU systems of student support have developed along different lines, mainly due to differing context, tradition and geography. The OU is a much larger institution serving 180,000 students in Britain, (and now, increasingly in Europe) while AU serves approximately 11,000 students. AU, in serving all of Canada, faces the challenge of developing support services which can be delivered through a variety of modes, whereas the counsellors at the OU are able to support telephone and written counselling by face-to-face contact with students through the highly developed regional network. While both institutions

cater to working adults who are studying part-time, there are differences in student body which to some extent determine the nature of support services. For example, the time commitment (and possibly, therefore, the personal commitment) of OU students is much greater than that of AU students because of the major difference in course unit sizes.

While AU has regional offices and the support services have now been completely decentralized with no coordinating directorate, the existing services were developed using a centralized model with a goal of consistency throughout the system. The professionalization of student support at AU (all counsellors are required to have the same disciplinary base and membership in the same professional association, and consequently have a common body of knowledge) has contributed to the development of a common philosophy and service model. On the other hand, the OU regional offices and study centres have had more autonomy in service development, and each regional office has its own service modes; though the introduction of a distributed admissions system, based on an enquiries and admissions service in each region, from late 1991, is leading to much greater consistency and coordination between regions, and a concern for a university wide standards of quality of service. As well, at the OU, counsellors each have their own disciplinary base, leading to greater variation in philosophy of student support.

Another major difference between the two institutions is that they have chosen very different paths in terms of linking tutorial support with advising and counselling. The OU made a conscious decision early on to have many tutors also provide counselling support so that the functions are interlinked; its introductory guide to tutorial and counselling staff affirms 'the principle of educational counselling informs and is at the root of all Open University teaching'.[22] AU has taken a different approach with a model which creates a dichotomy (possibly a false one) between counselling and tuition. Faculty and tutors refer students who want assistance with non course content based issues to an advisor or counsellor. Finally, while the OU seems to have fully embraced counselling and advising as an integral part of the educational process, AU has chosen to cut back the counselling function to the point where it is probably no longer viable in its current form. Despite these differences, the two institutions face remarkably similar challenges in provision of student support services.

The Future

Alan Tait, in an address at the 1987 ICDE Conference,[23] spoke about the historical development of distance education from an industrial model involving mass production of knowledge, embodied in a more or less interactive course package, to one where there is "individualization and socialization of the educational experience to which the course contributes". He described the integral role of student support in contributing to the individualization and socialization process by "democratizing" the institution. In other words, the role of student support is to help students in whatever way necessary - information provision, study skills assistance, explaining bureaucracy - to ensure that all students not only have equal opportunity with regard to access but also in achieving their educational goals.

Pressures are increasing on AU and other open institutions to respond to growing demands for credit coordination assistance, special needs and minority groups, and a new group of younger students who cannot gain access to traditional classroom based education. More than ever, flexible and imaginative student support systems are necessary to "democratize" the institution in order to meet the widest possible variety of needs.

With the advent of lifelong learning, much greater geographical mobility, and the tremendous increase in the number of part-time adult students, there is much greater pressure on institutions to provide credit coordination systems. In response, there have been major developments, between institutions, between nations, and worldwide, in credit transfer including courses with a common curriculum rating leading to common qualifications (e.g. National Vocational Qualifications in the UK; the Canadian credit transfer system); accreditation of prior learning and experience (the British Columbia Open University credit bank); and systems where credits may contribute to more than one qualification (as recommended by the OU's 1990 report on the Classification and Certification of Open University Courses.) Both at AU and the OU, students may take part of a degree or other qualifications through distance education, and part in a conventional institution. Increasingly, this is likely to be an international process. For example, in the UK, the Secretary of state for Education (April 1991) comments "Under the Erasmus Schemes, study at European universities already counts towards the award of a UK degree. There is now a pilot scheme for credit transfer across Europe". The marketing of OU courses as a whole for 1992 will increase this cross-institutional activity.

In this context, a single institution will be less and less likely to be the "whole" answer for a given student, but it will be increasingly part of the answer as students pick and choose courses and programmes at appropriate times in their lives and in different geographic locations. For such credit coordination schemes to be effective, many students need the best possible advice from those providing front-end information, advising and counselling services.

Students will particularly benefit from unbiased "brokering" services which help them to assess their needs and make the very best use of a variety of educational resources.

Another major issue facing open institutions is the degree to which they are open to disadvantaged groups and minorities. Athough the mandate of institutions such as Athabasca and the UK Open University includes providing for those students who would not otherwise have educational opportunities, institutional reports indicate that the profile of the average student is still white and middle class with at least secondary school qualifications. Close to half of students entering AU have already completed some university courses (Powell and Conway, 1988).[24]

Examples of successful programmes for minority students, such as the university transfer and Health Administration Certificate programmes which AU offers in cooperation with the Yellowhead Tribal Council, show that support systems specifically adapted to the special needs of the group are essential for student success. In this case, classroom based courses are offered on site in a familiar and supportive environment for native students. Counselling and advising services are also provided on site and include such features as on-site registration with a counsellor present to explain how the post-secondary system works, credential regulations, transfer options and procedures, and how to use resource materials such as institutional catalogues and transfer guides. This type of service builds confidence and helps the students to become self sufficient so that they can take better advantage of the educational system. As well, programmes which offer students basic "learning to learn" skills are very important. Many native students are disadvantaged, not just socio-economically, but geographically, in that many of the northern schools which they attended are substandard. In the OU, parallel initiatives in increasing access to ethnic minorities and other educationally disadvantaged groups have developed and expanded under the aegis of the university's Equal

Opportunities policy. In 1990 funding was provided for a range of initiatives which are now being evaluated by the Institute of Educational Technology, and all units are submitting plans to the university's Access Advisory Team for reaching targets for recruitment and retention of disadvantaged students. Reflecting the experience of Athabasca's cooperative scheme above, group entry schemes to the BA degree, in which the OU collaborates with local institutions to recruit to access courses, well supported by a tutor-counsellor, leading into a foundation course, are a key feature of these initiatives; and supported preparation is being piloted this autumn. If open institutions are going to be successful in attracting and keeping minority or other disadvantaged groups, support services will have to play a key role.

While pressures are increasing to serve the needs of new groups of students and those created by a constantly changing context, resources in the post-secondary system are finite. Although in the UK the emphasis on increasing access to higher education has included a recognition of the need for counselling as part of access courses, most major new sources of funding in both countries are likely to be specific to academic programme development, with little attention paid to the counselling and advising infrastructure required to support new programmes. Counselling systems are not cheap. In particular, full-time university staff, requiring premises and with other high overheads, are extremely expensive. There is little realistic prospect in any distance education institution of increasing their numbers in the current fiscal climate. The most likely way of meeting new service needs is probably through the use of part-time staff. There are also considerable intrinsic merits in this prospect, in terms of increased localization of the service. As an example, the greater integration of counselling and advising functions with tuition at the OU has proven to be cost efficient and is probably one of the very best ways to provide comprehensive services effectively (with less danger of some students falling between the cracks as can happen in a system where counselling and tutoring are totally divorced). With increased use of part-time staff to deliver services and perhaps to take on some local coordination, and peer support and appraisal roles, the major role for full-time counselling professionals will become staff and systems monitoring and development, and the production of support materials (for both staff and students). Counselling services at the the OU and AU are already moving in this direction.

Student support staff will also have to find new ways to use existing resources. While academic courses and programmes are delivered through a variety of media, counselling and advising services have tended to rely on print, face-to-face, and telephone. There is great potential to use the numerous distance delivery technologies such as computer conferencing, teleconferencing, and interactive video and computer programmes in order to deliver support services more cost effectively and reach a wider audience. Experimentation and cooperative projects with those involved in educational technology are long overdue.

Conclusion

Although AU and the OU provide two very different case studies in historical development of student support, they face very similar challenges, in common with open institutions world-wide. The OU appears to be poised to meet these challenges, having a well developed network of student support. It appears to be long past the question of whether to provide counselling services, and well into the very pressing questions of what to provide and how best to provide it. Athabasca University, on the other hand, appears to have taken some backward steps in virtually eliminating their existing student support system, and will have

to struggle to rebuild before they are ready to meet current student needs, let alone future challenges.

It is difficult to speculate about the future, particularly when our environment and our student bodies are changing so rapidly. The importance of systematic evaluation and institutional research to investigate the best ways of meeting student support needs cannot be overlooked. In the final analysis, time and objective evaluation programmes will best tell us whether we are meeting our stated objectives of providing support systems which humanize and democratize our institutions, and maintain and develop open access.

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# CONTEXTUAL DILEMMAS OF A FOREIGN DISTANCE EDUCATION COURSE DEVELOPER: RACISM, CLASSISM AND SEXISM ISSUES IN PROJECT DESIGN

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## INTRODUCTION

Recently, Helen Lentell of the Open University posed the following question:

> How do women educators address inter-related and inter-dependent inequalities of class, race and gender in a neo-colonialist environment, when the demands of society are for a trained work-force achieved as quickly and cheaply as possible and where education is a privilege of a minority?[1]

The essence of this article is an initial attempt to address that question in the context of designing a distance-education project for teachers in the English-Speaking Windward Islands of the Eastern Caribbean.

## OCOD AND TEACHER IN-SERVICE IN OECS COUNTRIES

Since the early 1970's the Organization for Co-operation in Overseas Development (OCOD) has been assisting Ministries of Education in OECS countries[2] with the in-service training of their teachers. The Role of this CIDA-funded[3], non-governmental, professional, volunteer agency from Manitoba, Canada has been responsive not prescriptive. It has earned the respect of most people involved in the 'Development' and 'Education' processes in the region.

### The OCOD Summer Workshops

The purpose of the original OCOD programme is to pair a West Indian and Canadian graduate teacher then to deliver a fifty contact-hour or 2 week course to a group of practising teachers identified by their Ministries of Education. Courses vary from being six weeks held over a three-year period to being unphased held once per year for a different group each time. Courses are

usually held for two weeks each July - a time when children are on summer vacation.

Subjects vary from Educational Administration and School Management for principals, to Introductory Teaching Methods for untrained teachers or Secondary Teaching Methods for academically qualified teachers. Other subjects include core subjects in Language Arts (Reading, Communications, English Literature, English as a Second Language), Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies as well as courses in the Technical/Vocational areas, Counselling and Family Life Education, Adult Literacy and Classroom Assessment.

## The Clientele

The following table indicates the four potential target groups for OCOD summer programmes.

| Title | Unqualified Teacher | Trained Teacher | Qualified Teacher | Graduate Teacher |
|-------|---------------------|-----------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Education Level | Pupil-Teacher or Secondary School Leaver | Unsuccess-fully completed Teacher Training College | 4 'O' Level CXC/GCE passes  Successful at Teachers' College | 4 years BA or BSc Degree |

Table 01: A Sample Teacher Classification by Educational
Level in some OECS Countries of the Caribbean

The target group has always been of prime concern as Ministries of Education seek homogeneous groups when initiating a course request. The reality often overshadows the ideal when problems are considered and requests to OCOD are made.

## Educational Problems Facing Teacher Educators

Often, the only formal academic and professional supports that teachers receive throughout a given year are the OCOD Summer workshops. This is so for a number of reasons:

1. Financial resources have diminished due to dramatic population growths and world-wide recessions.

2. The growth of secondary schools and development of tertiary eduction has led to a necessary raising of standards which more closely align teacher training colleges to the University of the West Indies.

3. Many unqualified, untrained and even some trained teachers no longer have the necessary academic qualifications to enter the teacher training colleges, but they have been moved into teaching junior-secondary school classes because of their classroom experiences. This is a potentially explosive situation in countries already plagued with other infra-structural problems.

4. The teaching profession no longer has the same appeal to the youth as it once had, due to the current conditions including low status, low pay, long hours, ill-disciplined children etc. More than ever, it is still used as a stepping stone to other jobs.

   The high turnover rate of teachers alone will ensure continued requests for OCOD in-service teacher workshops which are very popular with most participants. But will this solution really help solve the larger problem and address the issues raised by Lentell?

## Teacher Education and the Neo-Colonial Environment

The teacher-education dilemma for the next twenty years becomes even more acute when the potential exists that some teachers no longer know the content of what they are expected to teach the children. This provocative concern exists in a society that respects education as the key to advancement but measures this success by the number and quality of ordinary level passes on external examinations be they sponsored by Cambridge (GCE) or the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC)!

E. Miller addressed this neo-colonialist educational issue well when he posed the following question:

> Unqualified teachers have been the mainstay of the primary school teaching force since mass elementary eduction was established in the Caribbean since 1834 ... Why is it that it is only within the last twenty years that recruitment into teaching jobs at the primary level, promotion and pay of teachers as well as entry to Teachers' College have been written in terms of CXC/GCE passes?[4]

After an intensive study of unqualified teachers in the Windward Islands, Miller also concluded that:

> ... the vast majority of unqualified teachers are women who work and live in rural areas of the four countries ... (they are considered to be) a traditionally disadvantaged group.[5]

How can OCOD assist Ministries of Education in the solution of this multi-faced teacher education problem? The question put to OCOD was then very similar to the one posed by Lentell; the operative phrase being four-fold:

- a neo colonial environment

- demands for a trained work-force quickly and cheaply

- secondary and especially tertiary education being a privilege of a minority and

- the inter-dependent and inter-related inequalities of class, race and gender.


## OCOD's Comprehensive Teacher Training Project (CTTP)

The response to the question was considered within OCOD's mandate of teacher in-service education, but it also included one other very important variable - a community-based project which was not imposed from the metropolitan country. If the project was to succeed it must be done by people in the Caribbean, for people in the Caribbean and obviously, with people in the region.

Thus the Comprehensive Teacher Training Project was initiated after a four-year research and germination period (1985-89). Table 02 outlines pertinent information about the project as it is developing.

| CTTP PHASE 1 - CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT - FIELD TESTING PERIOD: 1989-1992 | |
|---|---|
| Topic | Description |
| Countries | Dominica, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines |
| Learners | 120 Unqualified Elementary - school teachers<br><br>Nominated by their Ministries, Interviewed and selected by national advisory committees through OCOD |
| Subjects | English Language, Mathematics, Social Studies and Integrated Science<br><br>CXC - 'O' Level |
| Delivery Strategies | Adult education/distance education principles advocated<br><br>print-based, audio-supported distance education modules<br><br>learner/marker-tutor ratio 12:1<br><br>telephone tutoring<br><br>face-to-face sessions |
| Personnel | Curriculum Staff: Module drafters, editors, team leaders, consultants, writers<br><br>Production staff: consultants, administration, proof- readers, word processors, illustrators, assemblers and distributors, audio team<br><br>Field-Testing Staff: Country Coordinators, marker/tutors, consultants |
| Supporting Groups | Caribbean: CXC, UWI, Ministries of Education, Teachers' Colleges, SALCC, BWIA, CARNEID and others<br><br>Canadian: Canadian High Commission, Barbados; CIDA, CODE, AUCC, U of M, UBC, NIC, AU, Fanshawe College, CBC - Winnipeg, various Manitoba School Divisions and others<br><br>International: COL, SCET, OU, UW and others |

Table 02: Outlining the CTTP

**ADDRESSING RACE, CLASS AND GENDER ISSUES IN THE CTTP**

OCOD has long prized a populist or learner-centred approach to curriculum planning. It has emphasized local involvement at all levels, culturally relevant as well as culturally sensitive curricula and the use of sound adult-education delivery strategies and professionally researched content.

Asking Questions

Before applying for CTTP funding many questions had to be asked. Two feasibility studies (one initiated by OCOD, the other by CIDA) were conducted in the region to ensure that the physical, financial and human resources were available. Questions concerning distance education delivery and supports systems were framed for professionals in Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. Were the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values of those to be involved in such an undertaking sufficient, appropriately developed and flexible enough to firstly produce, then locally test developed materials?

Given the success of the Open University in the United Kingdom and the Special Mature university projects at the tertiary level in Manitoba, what kinds of support systems for learners should be put in place in the Caribbean? Given the neo-colonial environment in the Caribbean and the solid patriarchal structures in that society, how would the educated elite react to an educational innovation which, in time, may alter the social fabric itself?

CTTP Events which Addressed Gender Issues

The issues of race, class and gender permeated all of the project designs, initial training sessions and subsequent reports. Let us examine six CTTP events involving the gender issues to illustrate the point.

1.  The Miller Feasibility Study Questioned 153 unqualified teachers and found them to be predominantly female, high school leavers with CXC passes in English Language, History and Biology and with 3-8 years teaching experience.[6]

2.  The module-drafters, sent by CXC to assist OCOD in developing the scope and sequence of the curriculum content in the four subject areas, added the following dimension to the proposed learner profile. They gave the name Patricia Reddy to the fictitious private candidate and suggested that she was often a rural, young, single parent who spoke and hence wrote English as a second language (St Lucia and Dominica) or as a second dialect (St Vincent and the Grenadines).[7]

3.  The Rawlings training manual entitled **Facilitating Adult Learning at a Distance** was commissioned by OCOD for the project and was used to establish a mind pre-set for the Caribbean writers, marker-tutors and the learners.

    The manual covers such topics as:

    • distinguishing adult learners

    • determining learning styles

    • enhancing self-esteem

    • negotiating stress

    • making effective decisions

- managing time

- becoming self-directed

- educating for self-reliance

- activating learning contracts

- learning at a distance

- tutoring/counselling at a distance and

- developing and implementing action plans.[8]

When discussing learning for self-reliance with the writers, Ms Rawlings prompted a lively debate regarding Caribbean attitudes towards race, class and gender in what became a somewhat hostile setting.  Nonetheless, an evaluation of this presentation showed that it was excellent, yet provided 'uncomfortable food for thought' for the module writers and content editors.[9]

The content of the modules in all four subject areas will be specifically edited with race, class and gender in mind as the project progresses. **The Non-sexist Communicator: Solving Problems of Gender and Awkwardness in Modern English** will continue to serve as a guideline when editing modules in all four subjects.[10]

4.    As a result of the first writers' workshop in 1989, the writers described Patricia Reddy, thus adding even further dimensions to the learner profiles and identifying potential problems for the delivery system of the project. Many of the concerns predicted by the writers in August 1989 were confirmed by the learners at their initial training session in August 1990.

Most of the problems deal with social class (poverty) and/or gender roles.  They include such phrases as:

- left school in Form IV due to unplanned pregnancy. Now still in child bearing years.

- stress caused in the home due to space and time problems (3 room house, limited electricity, extended family living in the home).

- traditional duties as wife, mother, teacher must be maintained before role of student is allowed.

- partner supportive due to potentially increased income but not willing to help with household chores or child-care.

- transportation to face-to-face sessions a problem.

- afraid of maths and/or science.[11]

5. Untrained teachers were selected to participate in the CTTP by nomination through their Ministries of Education and then through an interview process conducted by National Advisory Committees. These committees consist of the Chief Education Officer or his representative, a member of the national teachers' union, the principal of the local teacher training college, an adult educator or University of the West Indies resident tutor, the CTTP country co-ordinator and the CTTP project coordinator. Selection was based on four criteria: teaching experience, academic qualifications and geographic location.

Although gender was not an issue, the learners selected matched the profile recommended in the feasibility study:

- Approximately 91% of the learners are primary school teachers.

- 75% teach in rural or remote areas of their countries.

- Most were untrained teachers.

- Over 65% of the learners had less than 9 years teaching experience; 38% in the 0-4 years category, but 37% in the 5-9 years category.

- The average age of the learners regionally is 26 years.

- Most learners have some CXC/GCE 'O' Level qualifications and are therefore only a year or two away from the entry requirements to the local teacher training colleges.

- 75% of the learners are women.[12]

6.  The most recent report to CIDA also outlines the impact that the project so far has had on women.  Table 03 indicates the involvement of women in the CTTP.[13]

| Titles | Women | Men |
|---|---|---|
| Project Coordinator | 1 | 0 |
| Consultants and Content Editors | 15 | 5 |
| Writers | 14 | 8 |
| Country Coordinators | 3 | 0 |
| Marker/Tutors | 9 | 1 |
| Learners/Teachers | 91 | 29 |
| Totals | 133 | 43 |

Table 03: Involvement of Women in the CTTP

This table deals only with the professional side of the project and does not include the production staff in the regional office, most of whom are also women.

# CONCLUSION

In the last twenty-five years, teacher education in North America, the United Kingdom and Australia has focused primarily on the development of three major themes: efficiency, equity and excellence. The maintenance of academic standards, the increased accessability to education for various disadvantaged groups and an efficient way of paying for all of this has plagued many policy-makers, administrators, researchers and educators.

With the advent of 'the information age', the realignment of global trading partners and the notion of life-long learning come the complications associated with limited population growth and the retraining of a work-force needed to embrace the technologies developing for the twenty-first century. These are heady problems indeed! Existing social, economic, political, educational and even physical structures and methods no longer seem appropriate to solve these problems.

Now, we must add third world problems to those experienced by the metropolitan countries: high population growth, global environmental issues, the spread of new diseases (AIDS) and a resurgence of once eliminated ones (cholera, bilharzia), international terrorism and urban crime as well as the throes of personal, national and regional identity crises. It is little wonder that the hurdles related to issues of race, class and gender seem to be increasing rather than diminishing throughout the world as 'power' seeks redefinition.

If we are really interested in becoming self-directed, self-reliant citizens and life-long learners, then these hurdles must be

individually identified, broken down, and overcome, not only in current distance education project designs but in writing the content of these courses as well. Telling your teenaged son in English or Creole to wash his own socks because you have to study becomes just as important to the learning process for the CTTP learners as getting a level one or two pass on an end of module test!

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3. CIDA stands for Canadian International Development Agency which is a part of the Canadian Government's Ministry of Trade and Commerce and which funds most of Canada's non-governmental organizations such as OCOD.

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TELEPHONE TUTORING: HOW IS IT USED AND BY WHOM?

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## Introduction

The provision of opportunities for two-way interaction between learners and the institution distinguishes distance education from its historical antecedents in correspondence education (Keegan(1) and Rumble(2)). The decision about how to provide for that interaction is dependent on a variety of issues such as: the students; the curriculum; and the institutional context. With adult learners, university level curriculum and large geographic distances, Athabasca University in Canada, elected to use a telephone tutorial system with postal support. The specific organization of the telephone tutorial system is unique to the institution but shares the common purpose of providing for two-way interaction between students and the institution. While teleconference and seminar supported activities are also employed, the majority of Athabasca University students are provided with telephone tutorial assistance.

Pressures from two directions have recently resulted in a research initiative relating to the telephone tutorial support system. As in most educational institutions, Athabasca is experiencing fiscal pressures. In addition, Athabasca has set as a priority the improvement in completion rates of students.

The existing tutorial system assigns individual students to specific tutors on enrolment. Tutors are available to receive calls and make calls to students for some scheduled hours per week. In addition, tutors provide feedback on written assignments.

The costs of this system are determined by: the rates of payment to tutors; the numbers of students enroling; and, the number of assignments submitted. Block sizes range from 25-45 students. Payment is based on blocks, or fractions of blocks of students. The smallest increment of payment is for 1/4 block. The system is, thus, somewhat imprecise and slow in responding to changes in student enrolment levels. It is even less responsive to differences in student interaction levels. Block sizes are established on an irregular basis and represent "best guesses" about the interaction demands for every course. Some inequities exist if these estimates are inadequate and tutors in one course may have higher block sizes and higher student demand for interaction than tutors in another course that has lower block sizes and lower student demand for interaction. In addition to block payments, a separate payment is made for each assignment graded.

Variation in student demand for services is a characteristic of both telephone and face-to-face tutorial systems. Ahlm(3), Flink(4), Holmberg(5), Orton(6) and Rekkedal(7), all report low levels of use of a telephone tutorial service. Clarke,

Costello and Wright(8) and Melton(9) report problems of lack of attendance at face-to-face tutorials.

Explanations for low demand for interaction include things like: students are uneasy exposing their weaknesses to people who assign their grades; students are reluctant to bother busy tutors; students can not reach tutors because of busy telephone lines and lack of answering machines; and, students are reluctant to make the first contact by phone. There is also evidence that some students do not want telephone tutorial support. Beijer(10), asked students their preferences and found that 30% did not want such contact. Fifty three percent of students in Blom's(11) study declined the offer of telephone support. Potter(12) found that 29% of both students and tutors preferred home-study without tutorial support.

There is little evidence about what attributes of telephone tutorial service are most important, however, one study, Scales(13) does tend to suggest that persistence in distance education may be more strongly associated with student initiated calls than with tutor initiated calls, at least for college and university students.

An attempt was made to devise an alternate telephone tutoring system that would be more cost-effective but that would still provide services to students at least as effectively as the regular system. The alternate system provided a number of services: a hot-line tutor service, available for three hours five evenings a week; a drop-in-centre in two urban areas, available for three hours one afternoon a week; an introductory tutor initiated call for students who had not contacted the hot-line nor submitted an assignment; and, an individually assigned tutor-marker. The tutors were also provided with telephone answering machines.

Implementation

The system was implemented with one course, a high enrolment, low completion rate course in financial accounting. The tutors were five volunteers from among the existing 20 tutors for the course. The remaining 15 tutors continued to provide regular telephone tutorial support. Students registering between September 1987 and August 1988 and between September 1988 and May 1989 were randomly assigned to the regular or alternate groups. Of the 1196 students in the first group, 629 were assigned to the regular group and 567 to the alternate group. Of the 672 students in the second group, 376 were assigned to the regular group and 296 to the alternate group. Students who resided outside the province, in the far north or in prisons were excluded from the alternate group for administrative reasons. Questionnaires were sent to students in both tutor groups.

During the first year of operation some administrative problems occurred. Disruptions in random assignment and changes in tutor assignments were dealt with, in so far as possible, as they happened. One serious problem relating to the provision of tutorial support occurred when an alternate tutor failed to mark and return assignments and to make introductory calls to the students. It is not possible to determine the full impact of this situation, nor to remove data from affected students.

Data Analyses and Results

Initial data analyses revealed a significant difference in completion rates in favour of the regular tutoring group. This unexpected outcome was disturbing. Subsequently the alternate system was changed to reduce the likelihood of a repeat of the unfortunate incident with one tutor failing to grade assignments or phone students. A later analysis of completion rates showed that the two tutoring groups had the same completion rates - 27% for both groups with a 7-8% failure rate.

Approximate 10% of both groups withdrew early in the course and received fee rebate. These early withdrawers were not included in the data analyses. An additional 5% of records from both groups were discarded because of data errors. The following analyses are based on the remaining 531 regular group students and 497 alternate group students from the 1988 enrolments. Questionnaire return rates for this group were 50% and 41% for the regular and alternate groups respectively.

Data describing the patterns of interaction between students and tutors is presented in the following Tables. Table 1 presents the first recorded interactions for students in both tutor groups.

Table 1

First Recorded Interaction by Tutor Group

| Interaction Type | Tutor Group | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| | Regular (N=531) % | Alternate (N=497) % |
| Assignment | 54.7 | 58.4 |
| Student initiated call | 7.7 | 5.8 |
| Tutor initiated call | 17.8 | 18.9 |
| No recorded contact | 19.9 | 16.8 |

There are no significant differences between the tutor groups in terms of first recorded contact. Table 1 shows that for the majority of students in both groups, the first contact

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with a tutor was through an assignment. For almost 20% of the students, the first contact was a tutor initiated call, and for 17-20 % of the students there is no recorded interaction. Table 2 presents the relationship between student initiated telephone contacts and completion status for both tutor groups.

Table 2

Relationship Between Student Initiated Telephone Contact
and Completion Status for Two Tutor Groups

| Completion Status | Tutor Groups | | | |
| | Regular* | | Alternate* | |
| | 0 calls (N=361) % | 1+ calls (N=170) % | 0 calls (N=294) % | 1+ calls (N=203) % |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Pass | 47.9 | 52.1 | 27.4 | 72.6 |
| Fail | 40.0 | 60.0 | 23.7 | 76.3 |
| Start | 69.3 | 30.7 | 57.0 | 43.0 |
| Non-start | 91.8 | 8.2 | 87.4 | 12.6 |

*Chi squared significant p<0.0001

Data in Table 2 show that student initiated phone calls are significantly related to completion status (p<0.0001) for both tutor groups. For the alternate group in particular, students who go on to complete the course are very likely to make one or more calls to a tutor. On the other hand, students who do not send in any assignments are very unlikely to call a tutor. In the alternate group, 40% of the students (203/497) initiated all of the calls. In the regular group, 32% of the students (117/380) initiated all of the calls. Table 3 shows the relationship between tutor initiated calls and completion status for both tutor groups.

## Table 3

### Relationship Between Tutor Initiated Telephone Contact and Completion Status for Two Tutor Groups

| Completion Status | Tutor Group | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | Regular* | | Alternate | |
| | 0 Calls (N=280) % | 1+ Calls (N=251) % | 0 Calls (N=380) % | 1+ Calls (N=117) % |
| Pass | 50.3 | 49.7 | 74.4 | 25.6 |
| Fail | 51.1 | 48.9 | 65.8 | 34.2 |
| Start | 44.3 | 55.7 | 80.1 | 19.9 |
| Non-start | 61.7 | 38.3 | 77.0 | 23.0 |

*Chi squared significant $p < 0.0154$

Data in Table 3 show a significant relationship between tutor initiated calls and completion status ($p < 0.0154$) for the regular tutor group only. Regular tutors initiated most of their calls to active students and proportionately fewer to students who submitted no assignments. Alternate tutors made their calls to all groups of students roughly equally. In the regular group, 47% (251/531) of the students received one or more calls from a tutor. In the alternate group, 24% of the students received one or more calls from a tutor.

Students in both the regular and the alternate tutor groups were similar in most respects. There were significantly more students from one city in the province in the alternate group and significantly more out of province students in the regular group. There was no evidence that geographic dispersal was in any way relevant to this study. Questionnaire responses from students in the regular and alternate system did not differ, but significant differences were found in questionnaire responses from students who successfully completed the course and those who did not.

Students who successfully completed this course were significantly more likely to have:

* enroled in the course for credit in an accounting degree or credential;
* completed another credit course within the previous 12 months;
* reported spending more time on the course;
* reported faster assignment turn around time; and
* scored higher on Ramsden's(14) Attitudes Towards Studying Scales - Use of Evidence and Extrinsic Motivation.

Successful course completers were also more likely to be female and to have:
* a part-time job,
* children at home; and,
* more previous credit and non-credit accounting experience.

Students who failed or withdrew from this course were significantly more likely to have:

* enroled in the course for job related skills or other reasons;
* no recent credit course experience; and,
* scored lower on Ramsden's Attitudes Towards Studying Scales - Surface Approach, Fear of Failure, Disorganized Study, Negative Attitudes Towards Study, Strategic Approach, and Globetrotting.

Students who withdrew from the course were also more likely to be male and to have full time jobs.

The relative costs of the two tutorial systems are partly determined by institutional and contractual constraints.
For example, payments for block allocations and telephone costs were continued in spite of decreased enrolments to the regular system tutors because of prior contractual commitments and moral obligations. Further, some costs for the alternate system were artificially high because block payments were made at the outset even though student enrolment grew only gradually. Finally, some costs were difficult to assess, for example, telephone costs were sometimes attributable to several courses rather than only to the target course and further, were attributable to students who had enroled prior to the project. Keeping these limitations in mind, it appears that the alternate system can reduce the costs of telephone tutoring by 1/3 to 1/2. The cost-benefit improvement is essentially achieved through providing much higher student-tutor ratios than is acceptable in the regular tutorial system.

Discussion

These results provide evidence that the tutorial support offered by the alternate system was at least as effective for students as was the regular system. The academic performance and completion rates were very similar with the alternate group achieving slightly higher academic grades.

These tutorial systems differed in three important ways. First, the alternate system made student initiated calls easier for students by having a tutor available on five evening per week and by providing all the tutors with telephone answering machines. Regular tutors were usually available only one or two evenings per week. Second, the

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alternate system reduced the number of tutor initiated calls tutors were expected to make. Alternate tutors were asked to ensure that all students were contacted during the first 21-30 days of their enrolment, so they were expected to initiate calls to students who did not call them or send in an assignment and to return any messages on their machines. Regular tutors were expected to maintain contact with all of their students approximately every month, although it was generally agreed that they could stop trying to contact inactive students after a couple of months. Finally, the alternate system made provision for face-to-face meetings through a Drop-in-Centre in two urban areas. With respect to assignment and exam marking the two systems were essentially the same.

The Drop-in-Centres provided to the alternate group were cancelled after six months of operation. In spite of efforts made to inform students about the facilities, utilization during the first six months was confined to a total of 8 students. While the Centres were only provided in two sites, student demographics suggested that at least 65% of students lived in one or the other of the cities where the Centres were located and substantially more lived within a 30 minute drive.

Data regarding first recorded contact is somewhat surprising. In both tutor groups, the intent was to contact students within the first few weeks of enrolment, thus, a tutor initiated contact might have been expected to be the first contact for more of the students. The 17-20% of students who received no contact is somewhat higher than might be desired. However, tutors do report that substantial numbers of students do not have current phone numbers and that some are very difficult to reach.

Data regarding student and tutor initiated telephone contact (Tables 2 and 3) raises some interesting questions. Student initiated calls are strongly associated with completion status. Particularly for the alternate group, it is clear that most of the phone calls were made by students who completed the course. Interpreting these results is difficult. There is some uncertainty about the reliability of the data - it can not be determined whether the tutors recorded all of the interactions with the students. While there is a strong association between student initiated calls and completion status, there is no evidence that this is a causal relationship. The data suggest that when tutors do not phone the students, the students who go on to complete the course phone them. It is possible that when tutors phone students some additional students do begin to submit assignments, however, there were no significant differences between non-starts in the regular and alternate groups. These data should not be taken to suggest that there is no value in tutor initiated contacts, however, those calls have not been found to be significantly related to course completion.

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Asking tutors to make regular calls to students has a significant impact on tutor work loads and time commitments as well as on their availability to students who are trying to reach them. These data suggest that, if a choice has to be made, making the opportunity for students to reach the tutor may be more effective than asking tutors to reach the students.

The results of this study tend to support the idea suggested by Thompson and Knox(15) and further discussed by Thompson(16) that tutorial support may be differentially effective for different groups or types of students. Significant differences found between successful course completers and those who failed or withdrew, support previous research at Athabasca University (Powell, Conway and Ross(17)). Reasons for enroling, previous course completion, gender and some differences in response to the Attitudes Towards Studying Scales may hint at differences between students that make telephone tutorial support more or less appropriate for them. The students who completed this course, both those who passed and those who failed, appeared to make use of the telephone support provided. Students who withdrew, made substantially less use of the support available in spite of the obvious efforts of the regular tutors on their behalf. While it would be quite inappropriate to attribute low completion rates to the tutors, it is possible that the type of tutorial support provided by both of these systems is inadequate for some of the students.

The alternative tutoring system was not expected to improve course completion rates, however, the low completion rates (25-30%) were of concern. Subsequent course revisions and re-organization have facilitated students who had been taking the course for job related and bookkeeping skills by providing them with an alternate course. The revised course no longer attracts so many of these students and the completion rates have increased somewhat. However, there is still some reason to believe that for many of the students enroling in introductory financial accounting, telephone tutoring may not be the most appropriate tutorial support system. The University is currently exploring some alternative non-telephone tutorial approaches.

The results of this study are encouraging with respect to telephone tutorial costs. They do suggest that this support can be provided in a more cost-effective way. Keeping in mind the limitations and constraints, particularly with respect to the uncertainty about the tutor recorded data and the fact that this research involved only one specific course, should the results be confirmed with other courses, considerable cost savings can be obtained. More research is required to determine if these results are generalizable and to identify possible aptitude-treatment interactions that might assist in

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determining the specific tutorial needs of individual students.

## Summary and Conclusions

The research reported in this paper involves the comparison of two telephone tutorial systems. They differ primarily in the emphasis placed on making student access to tutors easy at the expense of initiating telephone contacts to students. The data suggest that both systems provide similar levels of support to students. However, evidence is provided that students who initiate calls to tutors are more likely to complete the course. The evidence supports the contention that tutor energies expended in answering calls from students have a greater impact on course completion than energies expended on making calls to students. The evidence also suggests that relatively small proportions of the students made full use of the tutorial support provided by either telephone tutorial system. The relatively low completion rates of students in this course may indicate that some students are enroling in the wrong course, for example, those who wish specific job related skills, but it may also indicate that the telephone tutorial approach is inadequate for this course or for these students.

The potential cost savings of the alternate system without degradation in support to students has resulted in the University adopting the alternate model for a number of accounting course and exploring similar applications for other courses. At the same time, the University continues to explore alternatives to telephone tutorial service for particular applications.

This research is viewed as only a first initiative in the broader context of exploring tutoring in distance education. Clearly, the results of this study answer a few questions and generate more. It is important to explore further the issue of student initiated contacts. Is the effect obtained in this research unique or idiosyncratic to this course or in this context? Why are student initiated calls associated with success but not tutor initiated calls? What is the nature of that interaction? Can we find ways to encourage more students to initiate this contact? Would that be useful? This study does not address the possibility of aptitude-treatment interactions but does raise some questions. Are there some characteristics of those students who were successful and unsuccessful with both telephone tutorial models that might be relevant in devising more effective tutorial models?

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# TEACHING AND LEARNING BY VIDEO-CONFERENCING WITHIN A MULTI-CAMPUS UNIVERSITY

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# TEACHING AND LEARNING BY VIDEO-CONFERENCING WITHIN A MULTI-CAMPUS UNIVERSITY

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The merger of the New University of Ulster with the Ulster Polytechnic in 1984 created the multi-campus University of Ulster and a corresponding interest in inter-campus communication links across the province. The new institution is committed to advancing education in Northern Ireland 'by a diversity of means' and developing learning 'for the benefit of the community' [1]. Since the merger teleconferencing has been developed for administration, for business and for teaching and learning use on three of its four campuses; namely, Coleraine, Jordanstown [52 miles from Coleraine] and Magee College in Londonderry [32 miles from Coleraine and 72 miles from Jordanstown].

Audio-conferencing has become widely used for University meetings of academic and non-academic staff, but despite its being researched for teaching and learning [2] its use with students has been limited. The addition of audio-graphics in the form of a slow-scan and an electronic writing board has failed to increase the level of distance learning among students across the campuses, but the availability of full motion images from 1990 is expected to change attitudes towards more flexible and open forms of learning.

This paper outlines and evaluates the use of landlines carrying compressed signals forming a video-conferencing facility for teaching and learning purposes between the Coleraine and Jordanstown campuses during the 1990/1 session. After a brief contextual outline of video-conferencing itself and a consideration of its effect on student access, the paper features the issue of interaction in learning. The purpose of the paper is to contribute to an improvement in the provision and effectiveness of student learning at a distance and to inform colleagues in post-compulsory education generally in order that they might consider furthering levels of student access to continuing education.

Tagyos [3] provides an early description of 'tele-video-conferencing' similar to that installed in the University of Ulster as 'allowing full motion face-to-face interaction between participants in remote locations. It is the next best thing to actually being there and provides an extra dimension of immediacy, combining real time, full motion communication with an array of graphic support capabilities'. At each site the University set aside an accessible dedicated room and attempted to furnish it with unobtrusive equipment in a non-intimidating way. This included monitors, cameras, microphones and the CODEC control unit, a device which is the technical heart of the system [4] as well as movable seating and tables. The system is sound activated: this means that when a person speaks the monitor should show the location of the speaker.

A rostrum camera enables graphics - including 35mm. slides to be transmitted from either location, but a fax machine was not provided in 1990/91 and a robotic camera controlled from a touch tablet to zoom in on the person speaking was not operational. The availability of this unique facility is considered essential if students are to interact effectively in this learning environment, but of course the importance of good sound quality in video-conferencing cannot be overstated [5].

Boosted by the recent rise in insecurity among multi-national companies, the use of video-conferencing has become accepted by the business community [6]. The cutting of travel costs has been the claim of the telecommunications industry, but it is apparent that, while the facility cannot provide the real human touch, it can simulate real meetings and perhaps will prove to be an asset that opens up opportunities for companies to increase productivity [7] [8]. In America, Dutton et al [9] reported its benefits for decision-making and Fulk and Dutton [10] indicated that video-conferenced meetings were actually more efficient than face-to-face meetings. Parallel claims for video-conferencing used in educational settings may be possible, but in the mid-eighties research in educational teleconferencing had not got beyond audio-graphics to reach two-way full motion images. McIntosh [11] however, described the use of one-way full motion and two-way

freeze-frame communication for the remote delivery of courses by the California State University at Chico and described how classes at the University of Colorado at Boulder and the University of Denver shared a single tutor who alternated between campuses - as became the case in Ulster in 1990.

Nearer home, colleagues at the Letterkenny Regional College, across the border in the Republic of Ireland, have been involved with the EC funded STAR project [Special Telecommunications Action for Regional Development] for some 4 years. In 1991 an experimental series of 12 seminars were held whereby their third-year diploma students were able to access expertise in Dublin not available in their College. Swift [12] has reported on his use of audiographic teleconferencing [slow scan] to bring famous and prestigious lectures on the mainland of USA to his space science students at the University of Hawaii]. The University of Wales has a similar and recently installed system to that in the University of Ulster, but this has yet to be evaluated by academic staff and students at Cardiff, Swansea or Bangor.

At the University of Ulster, Wilkinson [13] emphasises that the video-conferencing system is primarily for teaching purposes and he has assisted the design 'to stimulate as closely as possible all the important activities in which a good classroom teacher engages'. Once technical staff have established the type of link requested ['business' or 'teaching' mode] and adjusted cameras according to the number of persons at each location, tutors can conduct their own classes by operating up to four coloured control buttons.

The authors of this paper came into teaching by video-conferencing because they were concerned to meet the educational needs of five postgraduate applicants at one campus who would otherwise have been turned away. Then they came to be interested in developing an interactional style of learning with one group of students across two campuses as far as the system would allow. Students were required to attend on two evenings a week during term time from the beginning of October 1990 until the end of May 1991.

The data upon which the paper is based includes that from the literature, that from a pre and post-session questionnaire survey of three tutors and ten students and that from supplementary class observation and student interviews. Five students attended classes at Coleraine where two tutors were based and five attended at Jordanstown where one tutor was based.

The availability of the same units of study in education for part-time, postgraduate/post-experience students at two University locations more than 50 miles apart meant that the students were drawn from a wide geographical area and that the class was heterogeneous. Their places of work stretched from the small and remote border town of Castlederg in the west to the port of Larne on the east coast and from the congested city streets of West Belfast in the south to the rural habitats of Magilligan in the north. Culturally, the students represented the two main traditions in Ulster and professionally they represented compulsory education [primary, secondary, special], non-compulsory education [nursery, further] and educational support [residential]. Furthermore, there were eight female students and two male and their age ranged from 25 years to 52 years. All were returning, or had recently returned to study - except one who, interestingly, had switched from studies with the Open University in favour of more conventional study among peers at her local University campus.

Teleconferencing seeks to promote equal higher and continuing education opportunities for part-time students in Northern Ireland: it provides greater access to professional development courses in education, and prevents teachers outside Belfast from being placed at a professional disadvantage. In 1990/91 the use of video-conferencing enabled a postgraduate course to be viable and gave its students increased promotion prospects as well as access to the cultural and recreational facilities of the campus. As the course is in modular form it created increased choice for one student registered for a course leading to the same award at Magee College who joined the Coleraine group [32 miles away].

When asked in the pre-session questionnaire what advantages video-conferencing might have for them as students, the majority listed the savings in travelling; others mentioned a greater choice of subjects for study and access to the most appropriate tutors irrespective of campus. Had the course been on offer at only one of the two campuses, attendance would have required half of

the students to spend at least three hours travelling time on two evenings a week. In addition, the students, most of whom came to their classes straight from their place of work, would have had insufficient time to get there. One student stated how difficult it was in any event to make childminding arrangements; another explained that video-conferencing had enabled a place on the course to be taken up that had been declined the year previously because it would have involved more than 200 miles of travel each week.

As one of the three tutors had been involved with the earlier experience of audio-conferencing some lessons learnt were brought forward to the new full motion facility [2]. These included the recognition that classes had to be well planned and planned several days in advance to ensure that each student at the distant site would receive, via internal mail, all supplementary handout material, that early classes would be conventionally held face-to-face at the start to ensure that individuals got to know each other and that the tutors would alternate between campuses.

As tutors and students alike were unfamiliar with the video-conferencing equipment and had not had the opportunity to develop any degree of competence in its use before the start of the course, it was agreed that no campus or sector of work represented would dominate and that no-one would hold back any comment or advice on maximising the effectiveness of interaction by visual and audio means. A policy statement prepared by all read as follows; 'the members of the course accept and respect each others' cultural and professional diversity and through personal contact, communication and inter-campus links are committed to working together as one group. To this end all will co-operate to acquire the skills associated with technological innovation'. Early experience with the system led the group to add; 'speakers will be on screen, will project their voices and make every effort to look at the camera and make eye-contact'.

As the tutors were naturally apprehensive about their ability to use video-conferencing as an effective medium of teaching, they did not expect students to have an altogether effective learning experience. Their yardstick was the conventional face-to-face classroom setting and concerns were expressed about the limitations of the technology, about teaching being made over-didactic, about being distracted by the equipment away from students and about the loss of informal contact among students at various points during the evenings that classes were held.

Students, on the other hand, were more mixed in their initial reaction; five expressed positive comment, eg 'I look forward to meeting a wider variety of colleagues and to ... a new experience, making me aware of the advancement of technology' and 'I felt it would be fun and interesting; the idea of working with new technology is not off-putting at all'. Four, on the other hand, expressed negative comment, eg. 'I have serious misgivings - perhaps due to a personal dislike of cameras, tape-recorders etc.. I do not feel like coming under the spotlight' and two expressed neutral comment, 'eg. I have no deep enthusiasm .. but no strong dislike either'. Paradoxically, students did not expect any detrimental effect on the content of the course but they were most concerned about the level of interaction; 'the distance and technology will probably cause an awkwardness'. Typical responses made after the first video-conferenced class experience appeared to confirm the fears of all; 'the cameras dictate seating and posture of individuals. There is no eye contact between students and tutor in the same room, let alone the other campus'. Two students, however, did express the view that interaction would become easier as everyone, staff and students, became familiar with the equipment.

Despite some frustrations felt by tutors during the session, post-session reflection revealed them to be positive about their own professional development. The equipment had been less difficult to use than they had originally feared, and in coming to terms with it they felt that they had enriched and added to their repertoire of teaching skills. They were agreed that they had become more committed to the whole concept of distance learning, but in its first year of operation they felt that they had not been able to provide as satisfactory a student learning experience as they would have liked.

Tutors felt that student involvement was neither of the quality nor depth they would normally expect. Limitations on student interaction across campus were seen to be caused not so much by an unwillingness on the part of the course members to be involved, but instead to the fragile and uncertain state of the equipment, in particular the sound. As one tutor put it,

interactions were 'frustratingly weak because of sound uncertainties, lack of eye contact, small size of human form at the distant location and the fixed and temperamental microphones'. Another stated; 'ineffective interaction resulted when the microphones were not operating properly; inaudibility caused questions or contributions to be repeated and the flow of discussion was seriously impeded'.

The attitude of the tutors to unforeseen interruptions was one of flexibility mixed with tolerance and contingency; as one tutor stated, 'if the sound did not work we set up the audio-conference 2000; if speech was not picked up, we used the mobile desk mike or moved the tables and chairs'. Stoically, the tutors were willing to see each problem encountered again. It is noteworthy that this overall high level of tolerance was rooted in the knowledge that there was much to learn about video-conferencing and, secondly, that since this was the first time the equipment had been used for teaching in the University of Ulster then problems were inevitable. Thus weaknesses in the sound system, since improved to ensure more effective tutor-student and student-student interaction, were undoubtedly seen by tutors as blocks in their efforts to generate active cross-campus interaction mainly through discussion. The problem of eye contact exacerbated their difficulties and cannot be addressed until the robotic camera facility is operational in 1991/92.

Teaching by video-conferencing had, as expected, altered the tutors' style of teaching and it had not necessarily been thought to be to the advantage of the students. There had, in the words of one tutor who pushed the capabilities of the system quite hard, 'been less activity learning, involving movement among students in the classroom [small group work, simulation and games]. This meant there was less variety of strategy used'. Another was concerned that he had been more dominant than usual; 'because group interaction was proving so problematic' he confessed he had adopted a role of 'anchorman' and felt obliged 'to keep the show going as best he could'.

The contribution of students/practitioners to the course content was generally regarded as weaker than hoped for. Tutors recognised that this was to a certain extent a result of their own limitations and preoccupation with the equipment. For one tutor the limitations on student contributions were directly influenced by participants' reluctance 'to make sustained inputs and the difficulty of relaxing over sound quality'. Another believed that though he had covered the course content in as much depth as he normally would, on this occasion 'student contributions to course content, utilising their professional experiences was not as high as it would normally have been in more orthodox teaching situations'.

The social advantages of learning by video-conferencing in 1990/1 were welcomed by tutors. They felt that the students at each campus had built up a strong rapport with each other. The notion of being involved in pioneering educational work and a shared experience that was novel was apparent to the tutors at both Coleraine and Jordanstown, 52 miles apart, and video-conferencing had not reduced student participation in decision-making related to the organisation of course content and to student matters generally; they might not have been able to take coffee with one another during classes but they did arrange to have a meal together on two occasions.

Once students were experienced learners by video-conferencing, their feelings on it were generally positive. Typical of the favourable comment included; 'video-conferencing is much better than I had anticipated...,' 'yes, no longer conscious of the technology, my fears of being in the spotlight had totally gone within a few weeks. I hope video-conferencing will continue to be the success that it has been these last few months', and 'I approached this with a completely open mind and having now experienced it first hand I feel it has been worthwhile and can certainly be developed in the future'. Another admitted to feeling slightly uncomfortable at first but once the technology was explained 'most of my fears were dispelled', and 'after that I enjoyed the new experience, and, bar minor frustrations from little faults in the system, I could recommend it to any other student embarking on the same course'. Just one student, who had some misgivings from the start, expressed an unfavourable view, but it was stressed that this was personal; 'I accept the technology, but I still do not like it and would prefer not to use it - even if this meant halving class contact time with the tutors'. In fact, as this student still preferred to learn by video-conferencing as conducted in 1990/1 than by learning independently at a distance with the Open University, no student expressed the view that video-conferencing had no advantages for them.

As the students were practitioners in education, six [of the ten] stated that the experience had developed their professional attitudes, confidence and skills: one stated; 'I learned skills; for example use of voice, eye contact which would have not been necessary otherwise. I am aware that my self confidence increased'. Another student, who soon lost feelings of being self conscious, stressed that 'it has shown me that technology is not something to be afraid of, but that it can be got used to very quickly and its potential exploited'.

As regards interaction among class members, students were enabled to become more knowledgeable, more specific and slightly less pessimistic than they had been before their experience. They reported that; 'exchanges became easier as the session developed'. Though patterns of interaction had been 'slow to develop,' according to one student, this aspect of the work 'went as well as it would have in an ordinary situation'. Another had 'adapted to the new type of interaction that it required by making one's point quickly and precisely and audibly for the benefit of everyone and not just for the students at one's own campus'. The danger of students at the distant site being left out of discussions was featured elsewhere; 'I feel it is important that students on both sites try to get involved in any discussions .. especially when the tutor is not at their site ...'.

There were, of course, some comments on the detrimental effect of the sound quality: problems were 'frustrating' and 'irritating as you cannot concentrate'. One explained a reluctance 'to break in' to the class; 'in discussion you cannot interject without causing sound problems; mikes cut out if two speak at once; some speakers were dominant and others choose not to take part rather than have the hassle'. Another student concluded that the limitations of the system made it suitable for straight lectures but not for discussion and interaction, but a more general view was that improvements, made possibly 'by the goodwill of staff and students', enabled 'patterns of interaction to be considered 'satisfactory'. In fact, nine out of ten students held this view and eight explained their tolerance in terms of recognising that in any new venture there are likely to be snags and minor problems.

Teleconferencing calls for high levels of concentration and this would appear to still hold true for the full-motion or video-conferencing system. This was required to be greater when the tutor was at the distant site, but two students, who like the others preferred those classes when the tutor was at their site, felt that this demand on their powers of concentration had a beneficial effect on their learning. Another went further and reported that 'motivation had to be greater than usual', while the student with the Open University experience pointed out that 'independent study had been easily transferred to the video-conferencing'.

Four students thought that the group had either cohered well or that friendship patterns had developed [albeit a little slowly]; 'mutual consultations frequently take place'; 'talking formally before class is natural' and 'because people had to try harder to form social links, video-conferencing actually had a beneficial effect on this aspect of the course'. More students, however, felt that there had been an adverse effect and that friendship patterns had developed on a campus basis, 'there is little opportunity for any friendships to develop and casual conversation is limited in rooms as mikes pick up the sound'. Despite their meeting face-to-face, there was 'always the sense of the students in Coleraine and the students in Jordanstown ... we were physically two groups and video-conferencing could not overcome this'. After all, it was explained that 'friendships are made over the coffee break'.

Clearly, teaching and learning by video-conferencing is a challenge to tutor and student alike. The quality of the sound system is fundamental to their effectiveness, and is a technical rather than an academic problem to solve for this element of the system must be nearer the claims of the telecommunication suppliers in 1991/2 than it was in 1990/1 if only because students cannot be expected to extend their patience into a second session. The addition of a Fax facility in the video-conferencing rooms next session will greatly assist the distribution of content created during the classes while the operation of the unique robotic camera facility should promote the higher levels of inter-personal communication and inter-action among the group sought by the tutors. After being satisfactorily introduced to the basic equipment in 1990/1, the tutors have few apprehensions about their ability to handle these supplementations.

In the future, the distribution of student demand may not be balanced as it was in 1990/1. One campus may be dominant in which case the procedure of alternating the tutor's location may not be appropriate. If this level of parity were to be dropped a more usual [centre / outcentre] distance learning mode of delivery by video-conferencing may be made to the location of lesser demand. This could ultimately take the form of an increased degree of open learning whereby students receive packages of material at home or at work and meet at their nearest campus to receive tutorial support via video-conferencing. In the meantime, as twelve to sixteen students is considered to be the ideal enrolment for the course, were there to be ten enrolments at Jordanstown in 1991/2 and three enrolments at Coleraine, the larger group at Jordanstown may learn face-to-face in the teleconferencing room and benefit from some student contributions made over the system from Coleraine. The smaller group at Coleraine, on the other hand, may learn over the video-conferencing system and will require additional tutorial support provided by appropriate means. If this were to be the case, it is essential that any comparisons in teaching and learning are avoided because the modes of delivery will be different.

Not surprisingly, all those involved with the video-conferencing experience in 1990/1 measured the effectiveness of teaching and learning against the norms of conventional face-to-face practice. So long as this is the case it is inevitable that any form of distance learning will fall short of requirement in some way; as Tagyos stated [3] 'it's the next best thing to actually being there', and Wilkinson has attempted to 'simulate ... a good classroom' [[13], rather than provide an alternative environment for learning that is real in its own right as is open learning. Were the alternative practice of open learning seen as the measure of distance learning by video-conferencing, the perspective and the response would be very different. The reality in the case of the practice at the University of Ulster in 1990/1 is that the student with knowledge of one form of open learning, measured learning by video-conferencing more from the measure of personal expectations of the traditional closed style of university study sought, rather than from the principles and yardsticks of the Open University already experienced.

The research into teaching and learning by video-conferencing within the multi-campus University institution is only just beginning.

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# MANAGING GROWTH AND RISK IN ADULT LEARNING PROGRAMS

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# MANAGING GROWTH AND RISK IN ADULT LEARNING PROGRAMS

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## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate how an educational institution may adapt the concept of intrapreneurism as a method of managing growth and risk. Intrapreneurism is a comparatively new concept that arises out of the concept of entrepreneurism, and yet differs in several ways from its parent. Entrepreneurism is the initial stage in building a business from scratch with limited resources; intrapreneurism is the application of modified entrepreneurism within an organization.

A basic assumption in American business is that most businesses must either grow or die, especially ones in their entrepreneurial stage of life. Another assumption is that growth entails risk. We believe that these assumptions are pertinent to educational institutions, for most universities must grow in one or more of their sources of revenues or eventually they will have difficulty meeting rising costs. In this paper we will provide a model for universities to encourage growth and to manage risk through an incrementally phased and gradually implemented commitment of the institutional resources. The model suggests that universities can provide encouragement for growth through recognition and support of "project champions" that have a special sustaining interest in the development and eventual success of the project. Risk management is accomplished by incrementally committing institutional resources to projects as the projects successfully clear a number of increasingly more stringent decision barriers. The paper presents an application of the model that allowed the University of Redlands to increase its revenues by $7,500,000 over a four year period.

## INTRAPRENEURISM

The concept of intrapreneurism grew out of entrepreneurism. It is appropriate, therefore, to begin with a discussion of entrepreneurism. Entrepreneuerism is the initial stage of building a

business from scratch with limited resources and high risk. Drucker (1985) in his overview of the phenomenon of entrepreneurism noted that, although the word was coined as early as 1805 in France by J.B. Saye, the concept was not discussed in depth in the literature until the late 1930's, starting with the eminent Austro-American economist, Joseph Schumpeter (1934). The focus of the discussion is on individualism and risk. The Concise Oxford Dictionary describes an entrepreneur as "one who undertakes a business or enterprise with chance of profit or loss," and a common understanding of the term is that the entrepreneur is an "owner-manager." Pinchot (1985) in an analysis of entrepreneurs' characteristics adds to this definition independence, survival, direct involvement, and risk taking as distinguishing features.

While the literature is divided on the issue of differences between entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs (Drucker, 1985; Hisrich, 1990), the current authors believe differences do exist. Risk tolerance is one of the major distinctions between the entrepreneur and the intrapreneur. The intrapreneur wants to manage innovation and growth and is willing to take risk, but unlike the entrepreneur s/he is willing to trade off risk and power to remain within the organization to obtain the benefits of the support that the organization can deliver. A prime example of this trade-off was Fry at 3M who created the Post-it Notes (Hisrich, 1990).

Private sector business has learned that an organization normally grows or dies. In the move from the industrial age to the knowledge age, business has found that innovation comes quickly and reaction time is a basic requirement for survival. Drucker in his original edition of the management classic, Concept of the Corporation (1946), notes that a product or service life cycle is fifteen years. As the pace of business speeds up life cycles decrease to five years or less.

As higher education increases its involvement with the corporate sector, the accelerated pace of business may spill over into the university setting. Fifty-two percent of American students in higher education today are over twenty-five years of age. This segment of students represents the fastest growing market for universities. Many of the students in the adult market receive tuition support from private sector business. The Secretary of Education, Lamar Alexander (1991), in a recent announcement on the educational initiative of the United States included a major emphasis on the creation of partnerships between business and educational institutions. His remarks reflect the growing call from corporations for universities to provide reasonable access for working adults to educational programs. As universities attempt to respond to the corporate need, their pace of program development will be tied more closely to the private sector. Institutions such as the University of Redlands are already finding that corporate partners expect new and innovative programs delivered in a short lead-time mode. A prime example of a program developed and delivered in a short period of time is the

University's <u>CONNECTIONS</u> program with Pacific Telesis (Murray, Mancino & Dinmore, 1990; Mancino, Murray & Dinmore, 1991). This program provides the case study to be presented later.

The accelerated pace for developing educational programs encourages the use of intrapreneurial techniques to manage the risks of growth. Our approach to intrapreneurism differs from Hisrich's perception (1990) that intrapreneurism should attempt to secure senior management's commitment of resources for projects prior to the development phase. We have found that university intrapreneurs can stage the commitment of institutional resources as the risk of failure is reduced. Staging is accomplished by establishing an intrapreneurial unit within the university. The unit may be established in different ways. It may be composed of one esteemed person, an informal <u>ad hoc</u> group that commands respect, a created center charged with the duty to support innovation or any other arrangement that can carry out the unit's role. This twofold role is to encourage project champions and to establish increasingly tougher decision stages that must be passed for project champions to receive resources needed to move to the next stage. Project champions are individuals who have a special sustaining interest in the development and eventual success of the project. In effect, they become within the organization the owners-managers of the idea or project.Recognition of ownership represents one of the significant rewards (Block & Ornati, 1987) a university may offer the project champions.

The lack of seed money makes it difficult for most universities to consider creating an actual intrapreneural center. Should a university wish to try, however, it could start with a part-time faculty administrator, student research assistants, and part-time clerical assistance. As projects succeed, the center should become self-funding by receiving a portion of the new tuition and/or grants. Self-funding would allow the center to reward seasoned project champions, fund its staff, and provide seed capital to new project champions at the initial phases of their projects (Wetzel, 1986). Rewards to experienced project champions could include such things as equipment, travel funds, and books. The culture of most universities would make paying stipends or bonuses difficult

It is not simply a lack of seed money that prevents universities from creating intrapreneurial centers. Intrapreneurism usually runs counter to the traditional cultures of both universities and corporations (R. Siegel, E. Siegel, & MacMillan 1988; Pinchot, 1985; Bird & Allen, 1989). Consider three requirements of intrapreneurism. First, the concept requires project champions to be willing to take risks. Risk taking enables the champions to work in the dynamic environment of innovation and growth. Contrast this risk taking with the careful lives of tenure-track faculty members who may be concerned with minimizing their risks in tenure and promotion decisions. Another risk contrast is found in program development. Intrapreneurs are often faced with narrow windows of opportunity that require illustrative outlining rather

than full programmatic development prior to offering a program.
Illustrative outlining may appear to be inconsistent with the
traditional concepts of academic standards and faculty gover-
nance. Self-funding, however, requires relatively short develop-
ment periods that occur contemporaneously with the generation of
tuition or grant revenue.

A second requirement of intrapreneurism is that programs must be
focused on the common ground of the mission of the university,
the student, and in some instances, the host corporation. The
intrapreneurial process requires a strategic plan, accountability
to meet timely deadlines, and the ability to answer difficult
decision barrier questions (Fast, 1979). In many university
settings the requirements of mission and accountability may be
seen to be inconsistent with academic freedom. Moreover, strate-
gic planning in most universities involves a time consuming
process that involves students, faculty, administrators, staff,
alumni, and trustees.

Finally, intrapreneurism requires an openness to change (Pinchot,
1985). Many universities and corporations are hesitant to embrace
change until research has generated sufficient support for the
concept (Hisrich, 1990). Meager resources also influence many
universities to be conservative as they evaluate new projects

Intrapreneurism, then, runs counter to the culture of many
universities. In such universities there is little chance that
intrapreneural centers will be established. Intrapreneurs can
thrive, however, in such universities.


CASE STUDY


The University of Redlands was founded in 1907 as a small liberal
arts college located about seventy miles east of Los Angeles.
The University also offered a limited number of professional
degrees for residential students. With the founding of the Alfred
North Whitehead Center for Lifelong Learning (ANWC) in 1976 the
University made a significant change in direction by offering
adult students access to professional business degrees based in
the liberal arts. Similar to many other adult programs in the
United States, the decision to make this change was made at a
time of decreasing traditional enrollments and in the face of
faculty concern that standards would be lowered to generate
income. The issue of potentially lowering standards to provide
revenue continues to be a concern in higher education today
(Nicklin, 1991). Given these conditions at the founding of ANWC,
it was reasonable for the traditional faculty to view the program
as established by administrative fiat and without appropriate
academic standards or faculty oversight. During the intervening
fifteen years, significant progress has been made in addressing
these real issues (Waddell, 1990). Unfortunately many of these

traditional faculty are now the senior faculty at the University and represent a hurdle to continued innovation in the adult education program. The case we are about to describe represents one of the University's most recent successes in clearing the hurdle.

After several years of preliminary discussions the University of Redlands was formally approached in October 1989 by Pacific Telesis with a request to develop a proposal for a four-year, on-site, baccalaureate degree for its employees. The Corporation planned to cover the full cost of employees accepted into the program. The Corporation is composed of a family of telecommunication companies. (In the United Kingdom its affiliates manage cable television operations and provide a variety of services in wireless communications, access to value-added networks, and international longdistance telecommunications.) The largest company in the Corporation is Pacific Bell. The company has over 60,000 employees whose main responsibility is to provide local telephone service in California. The University competed with twenty-eight other colleges and universities to provide this degree program for several thousand Pacific Bell employees in Southern California.

With this formalized commitment of interest, the CONNECTIONS program successfully cleared its first decision barrier. At this point the University committed relatively few resources to the development of an initial curriculum format. Three faculty members  and a middle level administrator (dean) secluded them- selves for a week and developed the initial philosophy of an interdisciplinary program consisting of three phases of ever widening areas of inquiry. These phases began with a pre-semester to refresh student skills in math, writing, critical thinking, and study skills. The second phase covered general education topics and encouraged students to reflect on the self and then explore increasingly wider issues of the self in the family, organization, local and national community, and world. The third phase was composed of the professional major and upper division liberal studies courses. A brief preliminary description of each course was also developed. The group shared the concept and curriculum outline with appropriate faculty and administrative leaders and became recognized as the "project champions" of the CONNECTIONS program. The Vice President for Academic Affairs gave encouragement to the intrapreneurs and established criteria for stages of budget approval. The Curriculum Committee, which must pass all programs and individual courses, set a schedule for approving the stages of the curriculum. The Vice President and Curriculum Committee thus served as the intrapreneur unit.

The group delivered the initial curriculum proposal to the Telesis Management Institute on February 2, 1990. Encouraging interest was expressed by the managers of the Institute, who were intrapreneurs themselves. They acknowledged that the University was to have total control over admissions and academic standards, and they also welcomed the University's willingness to design

courses that addressed such corporate concerns as an ethnically
diverse work place, business ethics, and international responsi-
bility. Thus, the project passed its second major decision
barrier. While the University did not devote large amounts of
resources, the faculty champions were given released time to
continue to develop the program. Some departmental colleagues
were concerned that the champions' released time would create
more work for the rest of the department. The dean who was a
member of the project group was able to shift funds to hire part-
time replacements for the released faculty, and the concern was
moderated.

Initial negotiations on budget were entered into with Pacific
Telesis by the dean. The procedures of Pacific Bell did not
permit up-front development funding, but the company did agree to
an increased tuition base to cover development costs once the
program was operational. The development effort was expanded from
the original project champions to a broader group of faculty,
staff and administrators. Consistent with the intrapreneurial
concept, funding continued to be staged so development would be
completed six months to a year prior to courses being offered.
Development costs, however, were deferred until after tuition
revenue was generated by earlier phases of the program. This
funding plan implied a certain amount of risk if the development
were not completed on timely basis.

With the approval of the Curriculum Committee development and
refinement continued until mid-October 1990 when a letter of
understanding between the University and Pacific Bell was gener-
ated. One week later the first cluster of students began attend-
ing classes. The University had anticipated that thirty students
would begin their studies late in the 1990-1991 academic year.
During October and November of 1990, over 170 students enrolled
in the program. An equal number enrolled in the spring of 1991,
bringing the total enrollment in 1990-1991 to over 300 active
full-time students. These initial students will generate
$7,500,000 in tuition over a four-year period. Furthermore,
Pacific Bell has requested the University to admit at least 200
additional students in 1991-92.

By staging development, the University avoided diverting signifi-
cant resources from other programs in the initial phase. The
early stage tuition revenue provided funding for the development
of later stages of the program. In this early stage more of the
revenue was returned to the program in a manner similar to the
initial intrapreneurial phases of private sector companies where
profits are reinvested to ensure continued growth (Miller &
Friesen, 1982).

We are convinced that a major reason we were successful in being
selected by Pacific Bell was the University's fast response in
developing a program that did not compromise academic standards.
The business sector's concern for rapid response was confirmed in
a recent presentation by Dowdell, Hempfield and Giles (1991) at

the 1991 National Conference On The Adult Learner when Ashland College and General Motors discussed their university/corporate partnership.

## CONCLUSION

The literature suggests that there are several models a university might consider when supporting innovation (Bird, & Allen, 1989). Consistent with the intrapreneurial models of private sector business (Hisrich, 1990), several critical success features were present in the University of Redlands' CONNECTIONS program.

A Vice President for Academic Affairs and a Curriculum Committee served as an intrapreneural unit to encourage and challenge project champions to develop the CONNECTIONS program. The project champions devoted personal time and significant amounts of energy to bring the project to fruition. Within the team there was a high degree of cohesion which allowed for experimentation and errors. As mistakes were made and discovered, the program was altered and improved. One of the project champions was able to influence resource allocation directly so the program could remain relatively low profile during the initial phases of development. When CONNECTIONS was unveiled, there was considerable commitment from Pacific Bell, which made it difficult to question the wisdom of the development decision. In many organizations innovation is begun as a "skunkworks" project and is made public only after success is highly probable (Hisrich, 1990). The team communicated extensively with all stakeholders and did not engage in turf issues. Each project champion took personal responsibility for the success of the entire program and each champion was willing to share the credit for the success of the CONNECTIONS program with all of the other project champions. One of the circumstances that made this easier was the amount of work that needed to be done in a short timeframe. This meant there was plenty of work and acknowledgement to go around.

The project itself was of highly innovative. Both the concept and the curriculum caught the imagination of most people who became involved. The faculty who taught the initial round of the CONNEC-TIONS program were selected for their ability to assist students to reach their full academic potential. The faculty were, as much as possible, paired in a male/female team and when possible teamed with one of the project champions. To support the faculty selected to teach in CONNECTIONS the project champions developed extensive support material, held orientation sessions prior to the faculty entering the classroom, and visited each class to monitor and support both the faculty and the students.

The University has been generous in recognizing the project champions' work in terms of support for research, writing and presenting papers on CONNECTIONS. The most satisfying reward to

the project champions, however, is the recognition of the quality of the project. In December 1990 the Telesis Management Institute commissioned a study of the quality, cost, and administration of the 89 academic programs provided by academic institutions for Pacific Bell. The study singled the University of Redlands "... as the model for university/business collaboration by providing an innovative and integrated approach for adult learners" (Telesis Management Institute, 1991).

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KNOWING THE VOIDS: UNDERSTANDING THE DISTANCE STUDENT IN A

POSTMODERN WORLD

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# KNOWING THE VOIDS: UNDERSTANDING THE DISTANCE STUDENT IN A POSTMODERN WORLD.

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Once upon a time I used to know my students or at least I think I knew them well enough to teach them. I knew some of their parents, I knew their neighbourhoods, I knew what they saw on television, what teams they supported, what music they played. And these seemed to be fairly uncomplicated individuals. They had their differences, of course, but they shared so many things in common, including a limited experience of life, such that I thought I could teach them pretty well. In some cases, I had known the students for a couple of years or so, I had been their form master and I had even been away on school camp with them.

One day in 1974 I had a few new students in the class, they had come from Chile and could speak limited English. They sat quietly in class and were model students in every respect except their work, which was poor in comparison with their peers. Their quiet disquietened me. Who were these people? What were they like? How could I get to know them? My enquiries of others and conversations with them over the ensuing weeks helped me to get to know them, but I realised that the more I knew about them, and the more I knew of the experiences they had undergone, the less I really knew about them. I was learning about how different we were from each other. For example, for me a soccer ground in my childhood meant going with my father to see Guildford City play, or later on to go to Highbury to see the Gunners blaze. For my Chilean students, their fathers (or brothers, sisters, cousins, uncles, aunts etc.) were taken in front of the blazing guns in Santiago soccer stadium. My problem was that as a young teacher I wasn't sure how to teach people I didn't know. My teacher education had prepared me to teach in ways which related to students, but *who* were *these* students?

Now I am working in distance education in a university where we plan courses three years before they are to be offered and usually run these courses for another five years before a revised or 'remade' version replaces it. I have just been through this planning and development process in a very substantial way for the new Master of Distance Education course that we at Deakin University have developed with the University of South Australia and are offering for the first time this year.[1] The question that probably troubles me more than anything else in distance education is: Who are 'my' students? I develop courses for people who at the time have not even heard of the course, let alone decided that they will enrol. It seems that distance educators fill up this student void with what they imagine their students will be like. But, as this is based substantially on their previous experience, they cannot imagine students whom they don't know; whose experiences they do not share.

Distance educators and their institutions have several ways to fill the voids, or at least to seem to be filling the voids. They can use their 'commonsense' knowledge of previous students, they may be involved in a form of 'market' survey or they may have information from institutional or other research on students which they can use. However, it seems the case that the students just do not exist for many of us when we are developing our courses, in fact, our construction of courses forms a part of the construction of the existence of the students. If I relate this point to our MDEd course, I think it is probably fair to say that some of our students this year would not be students if it was not for the existence of our MDEd courses. This not just a matter of chance and choice; it partly represents the culmination of a variety of social, educational, political and economic processes, with forms of human agency, which together result in the particular course we have to offer. This course in turn structures the choices and actions which people can make about their educational experiences, not

just whether they become students or not, but what sorts of students they are able to become.

However, the problem remains that, if we recognise educational experience as social experience (in a wider sociological sense), then the way the course materials are designed and developed structures the students' educational (i.e. in this sense social) experiences. As the purpose of the course development is to provide what we expect to be appropriate educational experiences, then, to be reasonably assured about such things, it seems arguable that we need to know the people who create their educational experiences out of the materials. It is possible to manage this argument at a somewhat superficial level and merely move to adopt procedures to 'collect data' about students. Morgan argues that such approaches are 'mindless data collection' which really add little to our understanding of students.[2] I am posing the problem at a more substantial level: what do we need to know about our students in order to provide good quality educational experiences for them? But I am also posing the problem from a more postmodern viewpoint: what are knowledges of students? And what are the differences between these knowledges?

The sorts of research that Morgan himself undertakes and recommends we conduct into/with students help us to recognise both the 'wholeness' of students as people[3] and the importance of relating our understanding of students to broader theoretical explanations. However, the recent postmodernist debates[4] lead one to question whether the research knowledges which Morgan and other scholars in distance education have advocated, including Daryl Nation and myself, are any more sufficient than any others.[5] Broadly, these debates undermine the faith which we may have in any 'foundationalist' or 'grand' theories of any kind (from architecture to zoology) and argue the case that the postmodern world is one of disparity, difference, plurality and unpredictability, in which new personal, social and political allegiances and configurations are being formed.

If one adopts a postmodernist view to understanding 'the student' in distance education, then the 'whole person' approach is only partial, because one also needs to know the disparities between these people and, presumably, the consequences of such upon their learning. We also need to recognise that our approaches to research frame their own knowledges and, from some postmodernist viewpoints, these knowledges are no more privileged nor potent than one another. My colleague, Stephen Kemmis[6], in a paper entitled *Absent Presences in Educational Research* captures the problem from another perspective:

> Look. In a room just down the hall, there is a sociologist - studying the effects of culture or class on schooling, perhaps. He comes to the conference like a child with a bucket of sea water who has tried to catch the phosphoresence flickering in three-dimensional magic in the rippling waves along the shore. He rushes on to the lighted verandah of the beach-house: 'Mummy! Daddy! See what I have found!' In the light from the verandah, it is a bucket of disappointment.

He suggests that educational research is like taking the bucket from the sea and finding that the magic has gone in the cold light of research publication or conference presentation. Not only has the magic gone for the researcher but, removed from the site of educational practice, the relevance has gone for the practitioners. He concludes[7]:

> I wonder if we can stop those teachers getting in on the act - the research act. Our act.
> I wonder if they do research with any more or less substance, rigour or - damn it - with any more or less grace than we do.

I wonder what they think when we talk about them like this. As absent presences. As if they were specimens taken from the sea. As if they were dead.
I wonder if we're killing them.

I shall leave the matter of the distance teacher aside for now, but it seems that we could appreciate that students could also be seen as if they were specimens taken from the sea. Kemmis's point is that we are in danger of destroying the researched when they are made absent from the contexts in which they have meaning. He is making his argument in terms of action research in education, however, the case applies to distance education although the problems of action research in such contexts are somewhat different.[8] In refocusing Kemmis's points on to the postmodernist problematic above, we have the problem of not only researching the students (or having the students research) in their contexts, but also of uncovering and reflecting the diversity that is embedded in such postmodernist conditions.

In my earlier example drawn from my school teaching experience, I signalled how the endeavour to know my Chilean students led me into further voids of 'unknowing'. It was rather like the old maxim that 'the more you know, the more realise you don't know'. In my research in distance education, I have had a similar experience. Recently, I have been involved in some research which has involved interviewing students from Deakin University and the UK Open University about their studies in the context of their lives and biographies.[9] I do not have the space here to share with you some of the examples from the interview transcripts, but it would be easy for me to substantiate that the differences between people are more profound than the similarities. I selected my students for interview on the basis that they represented a range of ages, reflected both sexes and lived either close to, or relatively remote from, the institutions at which they were enrolled. It was certainly possible to document the common experiences which, gender, age and home location affected, but the closer one looked at the fine grain of peoples' lives, the more their uniqueness sparkled. The image which comes to mind is one provided by the postmodern science embraced in chaos theory, where minute occurrences in complex systems can produce unpredictable consequences of considerable magnitude[10]. Each person's biography charts a complex flow of events which has been channelled by social structures, buffeted by events and directed by human agency. The image which comes to mind is one from the chaos science of fractal images in geography: from satellite to electron microscope, the images of coastal landscapes are ones of ever unpeeling layers of difference. Likewise, the closer I came to the students the more their diversities were unpeeled.

This raises not just research problems for distance education, but also problems for distance education processes and practices themselves. The research problems are ones concerned with the 'absences' in our work; not just absences of omission in the sense that, say, Morgan [11] and Minnis [12] outline, but also absences of knowing uncovered or suggested by research itself. The problems of distance education processes and practices are created by the uncertainties that we now face about the knowns, the givens, the taken-for-granteds in our work. If we can see that there are considerable voids in our knowledge of the people we plan to teach at a distance, then what does this say about the educational planning and development we undertake on their behalf? Cziko[13] has argued, using postmodernist science, that educational research - of the positivist empiricist kind - is fatally flawed and just cannot predict or control the educational outcomes that it purports to do. Such arguments shatter the foundations of instructional design - except, perhaps, in the most tightly controlled and narrowly defined training settings. But the broader implications of my argument are that qualitative research leads us toward not only a better understanding of students - as Cziko argues - but also to an appreciation of the voids in our knowledge of those students.[14]

In an article with Daryl Nation[15], we argued an approach to understanding and practising dialogue in distance education. Such approaches are often founded on notions of students as 'independent learners' and they do require an understanding of students as active participants in their own education[16]. However, postmodern critiques lead one to believe that in recognising such independence and autonomy amongst students, one also has to recognise that the students may not only think and act diversely and unpredictably, but also as Harris[17] has argued they may eschew any form of dialogue with their teachers. If the processes, contexts and interpretations of each student's learning can be potentially infinitely diverse, then this raises questions of the capacity of institutions to provide systems which respond commensurately with their students' (and staff's) diversities, and of teachers to provide materials which accommodate uncertainty and assessment which celebrates differences.

1  See Calvert, J., Evans, T. D. and King, B. Inter-Institutional Collaboration In Australia: Constructing A Master of Distance Education Course. In Moran, L. and Mugridge, I. (eds.) *Collaboration In Distance Education,* (forthcoming).

2  Morgan, A. R. (1990) Whatever Happened to the Silent Revolution? Research, Theory and Practice in Distance Education. In Evans, T.D. (ed.) (1990) *Research in Distance Education I,* Geelong, Deakin University, pp. 9-20.

3  Morgan, A. R., Taylor, E. & Gibbs, G. (1982) Understanding the Distance Learner as a Whole Person. In Daniel, J.S. *et al.* (eds.) (1982) *Learning at a Distance: A World Perspective,* Edmonton, Athabasca University/International Council of Distance Education, pp. 103-106.

4  See, for example, Kroker, A. & Cook, D. (1986) *The Postmodern Scene,* New York, St Martin's Press; Lash, S. (1987) *The End of Organized Capitalism,* Cambridge, Polity Press; Lyotard, J. (1984) *The Postmodern Condition: A Report On Knowledge,* Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press.

5  See, for example, Calvert, J. (1989) Distance Education Research: The Rocky Courtship of Scholarship and Practice, *International Council of Distance Education Bulletin.* January, no. 19 pp. 37-47; Evans, T.D. & Nation, D.E. (1989) Dialogue in Practice, Research and Theory in Distance Education, *Open Learning* 4, 2, pp. 37-42; Minnis, J. R. (1985) Ethnography, Case Study, Grounded Theory and Distance Education Research. *Distance Education,* 6, 2, pp. 189-198. We could also explore the capacity of feminist critiques at this point to both deconstruct existing research practices and knowledges in distance education, and to construct feminist forms. Space doesn't permit such an exploration but, in my view, this would be less intellectually unsettling than postmodernist critiques. See, Faith, K. (ed.) 1988 *Toward New Horizons For Women In Distance Education: International Perspectives* London, Routledge; Grace, M. Gender Issues in Distance Education: A Feminist Perspective. In Evans, T.D. and King, B. (eds.) ( 1991) *Beyond The Text: Contemporary Writing on Distance Education,* Geelong, Deakin University Press, pp. 56-74.

6  Kemmis, S. (1989) Absent Presences in Educational Research. Paper presented at the *American Educational Research Association* conference, San Francisco, p. 1

7  Kemmis, S. (1989) Absent Presences in Educational Research. Paper presented at the *American Educational Research Association* conference, San Francisco, p. 4.

8  See, Altrichter, H., Evans, T. D. & Morgan, A. R. (1991) Introduction: distance education, evaluation and action research. In Altrichter, H., Evans, T. D. & Morgan, A. R. (1991) *Windows: Research and Evaluation on a Distance Education Course,* Geelong, Deakin University.

9  Evans, T.D. (1989) Taking Place: The Social Construction of Place, Time and Space, and the (Re)making of Distance in Distance Education. *Distance Education,* 10, 2, pp. 170-183; Evans, T.D. (1990) Putting Theory Into Place: Developing a Theory-Based Comparative Research Project in Distance Education. In Evans, T.D. (ed.) (1990), *Research in Distance Education I,* Geelong, Deakin University, pp. 36-47.

10  Gleick has told the story of chaos theory, including one of its most influential metaphors, the 'butterfly effect' whereby, it is argued that the complexity of weather systems is such that the movement of a butterfly may produce effects on the system which lead to an eventual storm elsewhere. See, Gleick, J. (1987) *Chaos: The Making of a New Science* London, Sphere Books. A colleague, Chris Bigum, has applied some of these ideas to deconstructing distance education. See, Bigum, C. 1990 Chaos and educational computing: deconstructing distance education. In Evans, T.D. (ed.) (1990) *Research in Distance Education I,* Geelong, Deakin University, pp. 72-82.

[11] Morgan, A. R. (1984) A report on qualitative methodologies in research in distance education. *Distance Education* 5, 2, pp. 252-267; Morgan, A. R. (1990) Whatever Happened to the Silent Revolution? Research, Theory and Practice in Distance Education. In Evans, T.D. (ed.) (1990) *Research in Distance Education I* Geelong, Deakin University, pp. 9-20.

[12] Minnis, J. R. (1985) Ethnography, Case Study, Grounded Theory and Distance Education Research. *Distance Education,* 6, 2, pp. 189-198.

[13] Cziko, G. A. (1989) Unpredictability and Indeterminism In Human behavior: Arguments and Implications For Educational research. *Educational Researcher* April, pp. 17-25.

[14] A colleague, Margaret Grace, has wrestled with some related problems stemming from her work with hermeneutic theory. See, Grace, M. (1990) Hermeneutic Theory in Research in Distance Education. In Evans, T.D. (ed.) (1990) *Research in Distance Education I,* Geelong, Deakin University, pp. 21-35.

[15] Evans, T.D. & Nation, D.E. (1989) Dialogue in Practice, Research and Theory in Distance Education *Open Learning* 4, 2, pp. 37-42.

[16] Nation, D. E. (1991) Teaching Texts and Independent Learning. In Evans, T.D. and King, B. (eds.) (1991) *Beyond The Text: Contemporary Writing on Distance Education,* Geelong, Deakin University Press, pp. 101-129.

[17] Harris, D. (1991) Towards a Critical Educational Technology in Distance Education. In Evans, T.D. and King, B. (eds.) (1991) *Beyond The Text: Contemporary Writing on Distance Education,* Geelong, Deakin University Press, pp. 204-224.

CURRICULUM AS CREATIVE TENSION BETWEEN

COLLEGE AND COMMUNITY

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I want to consider primarily the curriculum, as a 'course' to be
negotiated by the student, who is embedded in a community, one
with an increasingly international and inter-cultural thrust.

Others have addressed themselves to students and community.
I would simply reaffirm the points by other presentors that our
students are different from those of what used to be called
"traditional" college age; and that are embedded in a number of
other systems, including family, work, church, and volunteer and
leisure activities, among others.  And we are all, of course,
swiftly approaching, if not a global village, then, for starters,
a global economy  (Reich, 1991).1

And it is to this pluralistic "community" that higher educational
institutions are increasingly directed.  This has properly meant
a concern with multicultural perspectives.  But, not so properly,
it has also sometimes come to mean, with the rise of "multicul-
turalism," a subordination of academic to political concerns.

When I was an undergraduate, commencement speakers welcomed
graduates to full participation in the community of educated men
and women (see, e.g., Rosovsky, 1990).2  This was broadened in
the 1960s and 1970s, when the New Left began to demand that the
colleges and universities become "responsive to the community,"
by which they sometimes meant the interests of the undergraduates
themselves, but also the aspirations of the lower-income families
on whose turfs the campuses were often located.   The concern on
campus was to make the curriculum more "relevant" to pressing
social and ethical matters off campus.

This process was not entirely new.  As has been pointed out:

    Long before the hysterical response to Sputnik, the uni-
    versities had been under pressure to serve the interests
    of communities attuned to the government and big business.
    All that the New Left did was to define "community" to
    suit its own ideas and interest.  Like its enemies, it
    insisted on an engaged academy and poured comtempt on the
    ideal of the university as an autonomous institution (Geno-
    vese, 1991).3

In the Sixties and Seventies, the Establishment was attacked, but
its locus was in the military-industrial complex.  Now we are
'living in a time when all the once-regnant world systems that
have sustained (also distorted) Western intellectual life, from
theologies to ideologies, are taken to be in severe collapse'
(Howe, 1991).4  In the late 1980s and 1990s, the battleground is
more often intramural, as some view higher education as an exten-
sion of politics by other means.

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Earlier, campus protestors were primarily students, with some faculty supporters. Their demand was to extend the basic rights and reponsibilities of the democratic heritage, insisting upon a reconciliation of the ideals of Western Civilization with the practices of that civilization as they knew it. Now, the protestors are on the faculty, and the enemy is not government or business, but the curriculum, specifically, the "canon" of Western civilization.

This has resulted from a strange mixture of middle-class guilt on the part of senior faculty, because of the failures of the their Sixties' and early Seventies' commitments, after outgrowing Marcuse and Cleaver; and of relative deprivation by junior faculty who believe they are excluded from positions of real power in the universities (not knowing there are no such positions).

In the first group are those with an honest desire to examine other cultural traditions, to hear new voices represented in the public conversation and in the curriculum, in a world--and in the U.S. itself--becoming more truly multi-cultural (Halberstam, 1991; Toffler, 1990).5

In the second are those who, finding only a buyer's market in the universities, have embraced a kind of supply-side academics: if what the universities are teaching need no new proponents, they will change the subject, and thereby change the rules.

At least some of the appeal of multiculturalism as ideology is that it serves the ends of a victim's revolution on campus, for those who feel themselves blocked in their very American desire for upward mobility by those who received tenure in the boom years of the 1960s, most of whom are white males, and under siege by the inheritors of the civil rights, feminist, and homosexual rights revolutions. "Representation" has become the battle cry for any category of people feeling under-represented in any position or location, from football locker room to faculty club.

How does the curriculum get involved? Enter those who insist that Western culture in inherently hostle to women, black and other minorities, and homosexuals. It is "institutionally" racist, sexist, classist, homophobic, ageist, ableist, speciesist, and lookist.

And enter those who offer a new "discipline," one that invalidates the knowledge and methods of those in tenured positions, who are unable to deconstruct, revolutionize, or de-phallogocentrize the curriculum.

So the faculty come and go, talking of Michel Foucault.

In the deconstructionists' indeterminancy of meaning lies the
future for those who feel 'uncomfortable': we have a politics of
identity for those who feel excluded, either from representation
in a curriculum that purportedly reflects only the work of DWEMs
(dead, white, European males); or from 'representation' on the
faculty, because only those who have 'experienced' the sexism,
racism, etc. of the culture can really teach about it. 'True di-
versity' at some institutions means that gender and ethnic
differences must match the fields in which the new orthodoxy is
taught, because a scholar's race and sex must be correctly
brought to bear on the subject.

These new critics aspire not only to deconstruct, but to engage
in 'restitutive criticism', to restore the voices of those who
feel--and feeling sometimes seems a principal criterion--aliena-
ted, by drawing upon the guilt of the white liberal.6

So "multiculturalism" is too often neither multi- nor cultural.
It stands for a new ideology that discourages--even punishes
critical analysis.7

This is truly unfortunate, and not only for us white males.  It
would be considered a scandal, if anything that does not involve
a Kennedy or the royal family could qualify as a scandal.

True multiculturalism would certainly take into account the
social and historical forces that have shaped all expressions of
culture--including the au courant--and that would be a worthwhile
intellectual exercise.  Of course power has manifested itself in
the received wisdom of any society or cultural tradition.  Of
course reality is socially constructed, and knowledge is power:
what is produced and/or recorded at a given time is in part a
function of who had the power, and reflects certain shared ideo-
logical biases, but this need not force us into a Foudauldian re-
ductionism that would dismiss the contributions of the Western
tradition, or of individual intellect and imagination.

A curriculum for the emerging world community ought to examine
the relationships of power to belief, thought, and artistic ex-
pression in every society. But a multicultural perspective should
not mean some kind of proportional representation in the curricu-
lum, reading lists by head count, a kind of intellectual affirma-
tive action.  To suggest that such DWEMS as Plato and Sartre,
Aquinas and Freud, Locke and Nietzsche are speaking with one
voice because of their sex, race, and class is nonsense, and in-
deed betrays a woeful ignorance of the socio-historical process.

In the emerging world community, we should study such phenomena as the rise of capitalism in Japan and Fundamentalist Islam. But we cannot be hampered in our quest by sacrificing the tools of critical thinking in order to avoid someone's feelings of alienation, of being 'disrespected'.

True multiculturalism would set no boundaries by gender, ethnicity, sexual preference, political orientation, or class origins. And we must be consistent: if one using the same criteria for determining what 'should' be taught means one can be charged with 'uniculturalism' (for which read racism/sexism), then dialogue is impossible. Students need to lean how to make judgments based on universal criteria, not conformity to what is ideologically correct at a given time.

To do otherwise is to distort free inquiry, and to do a disservice to those who are already spending more energy celebrating their victimhood than overcoming it, as Shelby Steele (1991) has pointed out.8   Social inequalities are real; they are not going to be overcome and remedied by changing the curriculum--or by blaming differences in performance on 'institutional' racism, sexism, and the like.  We need to understand our failures, not to explain them away.

Not everyone, black or white, male or female, begins with the same advantages, preparation, and talent as others.  They should not be expected to be equally successful in college--or after. To pretend so, and to use differential criteria of success in evaluating their academic work, is a cruel hoax, condescending and patronizing.  There is room for compassion and sensitivity; but these need not altogether replace the expectation of competence.

If we are guilty of ethnocentrcism and prejudice, the way to educate ourselves and our students is to engage these, by drawing upon all available resources.  Ethnocentrism is portrayed exquisitely by the DWEM who wrote Othello and the Merchant of Venice.9  Does this mean that only a white male of European extraction can teach these?  Would his Jewishness add to or subtract from his 'objectivity,' his ability to give assure that Shakespeare is being taught as he 'felt'?  To even address such questions is ludicrous.  The result can be a reductio ad absurdum: Western sieve replaces Western Civ.10

Perversely, by insisting upon the 'experiential' criterion for all, we are led to question how women can teach Shakespeare, or blacks, Melville.  It is ironic that some of the victims of the new provincialism are those who have been most discriminated against.  A black American should not be made to feel guilty because she wants to study the Renaissance, or the Chicago novel, rather than to specialize in African American literature, as some are told they have a 'responsibility' to do.11

How is choosing curricula and faculty by using criteria of 're-
presentation' and 'voice' different from the argument of the
'creation science' advocates, who hold that evolution is 'only a
theory'? It is. But we have criteria for making judgments about
whether this theory is more useful than 'creation science'.
Hypotheses can be generated, that are open to disverification.
All theories are not created equal--if a pun can be pardoned,
here. Decision about academic matters have to be made on
scholarly, not political, grounds.

What does all this have to do with educating Rita?

The aim of education is to enable individuals to continue their
education. We do not wish to indoctrinate--even if this is like-
ly, at-a-distance--but to get students to join the conversation,
which is daunting enough, without sustained interaction with
tutors and each other, and free from the "outside" influences of
our students' statuses and roles in their families, careers, and
other sectors of their lives. We do have an obligation to help
them to learn how to learn, however. This does not mean an in-
doctrination into a political position that we have decided our
students 'need,' especially one grounded in a moral superiority
that is more dangerous than the one these tenured radicals
(Kimball, 1990) would deny.12

Teachers should constructively challenge the thinking--indeed,
even the 'sensibilities'--of students in higher education, if
they are doing their jobs.13 Multiculturalism is to be wel-
comed, if it means scholarship about subjects that have been
foolisly ignored or relegated to second-class status. Certainly
there are social and historical reasons why almost all influen-
tial economists, say, have been white males; and these should be
understood. But race and sex are insufficient grounds for ex-
cluding these scholars from the curriculum, and does a disservice
to the values of inquiry and objectivity. When our or students'
intellectual commitments come into conflict with our or their
political sympathies, we should explore why. We should 'teach
the conflicts,' not compromise scholarship by ideology.14

We cannot do this by 'thought' that can fit on a bumper sticker:
'Hey, hey. Ho ho. Western culture's got to go!'

The very respect for diversity and for reasoned argument come out
of the Western tradition. (Even the appeal to liberal guilt is
peculiarly Western.) The very idea of oppression is grounded in
Western categories of thought.15 We cannot take a Straussian-
Althusserian 'spectator-of-time-and-eternity' stance that pre-
tends to sneer at 'Western hegemony', but does so in the vocabu-
lary of Western values.

What of the charge that we are 'imposing a certain world-view'?
There are a couple of immediate rejoinders: 1) how could we--or
you--not?  All education 'imposes' values.  Even teaching
children to read and write is a choice, reflecting a worldview;
2) so are you: we cannot avoid being captives of our epistomolo-
gies.

The curriculum will be the locus of many conflicts.  But these
can be constructive.  The tensions between community and differ-
ernce, otherness, can be confronted in the curriculum.  More
students would be better off for learning what it is like to be
female, or black, or gay--and why some object to the use of at
least two of these terms. And this can be done without confining
ourselves and our students to authors and books that pass
ideological muster, or which must be taught by 'representatives'
of everyone who can fit her position on a placard, or capture it
in a sound bite.  Most of us have syncretistic identities,
belonging to more than one culture.  The curriculum can be
enlarged to include these.  Perhaps it must be.  But our
students' minds should not be coerced into correspondence with
some socially-constructed reality.  Their integrity--and ours--
demands more than that.

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# THE STUDENT SUPPORT SYSTEM AT THE CENTRE FOR OFF-CAMPUS STUDIES, UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA: STUDENTS' PERCEPTION

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# ABSTRACT

The students' perception of the support system for the off-campus academic programme offered by Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) was studied. In this study, a sample of students pursuing the programme was asked to indicate the degree of importance for 27 items of the support system. The library facilities at USM, followed by study materials, and the three-week annual Intensive Course have been indicated by respondents to be the most important forms of the support system. Others such as visits by the administrators of the Centre for Off-Campus Studies to the regional centres, the regional student association and the facilities to purchase books through the mail are of least importance to respondents. In general, respondents perceived those items of the support system that are academic in nature to be more important than those which are non-academic. Except for one item, there are no statistically significant differences between the perception of male and female respondents.

Significant differences between the perception of respondents enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Social Science programmes and the perception of respondents enrolled in the Bachelor of Science programme on certain items of the support system were observed. It was also noted that students from lower level of study perceived certain items to be of higher importance compared to that perceived by students of higher level.

The findings of this study illustrate the differences in the perception and expectation of distance education students at USM on various items of the student support system that are available. These findings emphasised the need to tailor the various items of the support system to meet their expectations.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Distance education institutions have responded to the needs of part-time distant learners in three major areas: the instructional design, the course delivery system and the student support system[1]. The student support system can be further divided into administrative and academic support system. However it is not possible to clearly demarcate the academic from the administrative roles of the support system or to clearly separate the student support system from the other two areas. It is just equally difficult to draw the line between the student support system from the other two.

The general aim of the student support system is to facilitate the learning process in order to achieve better results, be more economical and flexible[2]. Furthermore the academic support system assists students in interpreting and understanding the learning package. Distance education has broadened the available options for academic support to include face-to-face tutorials, telephone tutorials, electronic mail, computer conferencing, out-reach visits and on-campus study schools as well as the traditional correspondence mainly through mail[3].

Students consider the support system to be an integral part of distance education, and distance education institutions can express their commitments to the students through the provision of a good student support system. The range of items of the support system provided by a particular distance education institution is normally modified to cater for changes in students' characteristics, needs and expectations. Over time, students' characteristics, needs and expectations could vary. In this respect, there is a need for the institution to offer a range of support services, some of which may be highly useful and efficient only for some types of students but never for all because of their different biographies, learning styles, prior knowledge, social motivation and other factors[4].

The range of student support services offered by the Centre for Off-Campus Studies (COCS) has increased since its inception in 1971. These developments have occurred in-line with changes in students' characteristics and modifications in the structure of the off-campus programme. To illustrate this point, prior to 1988, the COCS depended on part-time tutors to conduct tutorials at regional centres. Since then, face-to-face tutorials have been gradually replaced by teletutorials conducted by lecturers from the Centre via the teleconference system.

As a part of a larger study on the student support system, students' perception on the various items of the support system provided by the COCS has been probed in this study. This paper will present the students' perception and highlight the differences in perceptions and possibly expectations on the various items of the support system. The implications of the findings from this study on the nature of the support system provided by the COCS in the future will also be discussed.

## II. METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

A research instrument in the form of a questionnaire containing close and open ended questions was used in this study. Included among the questions is an item where students were asked to indicate the degree of importance for 27 items of the support system. A scale ranging from 1, as not important at all, to 5 as very important, was used in the evaluation of each item of the support system.

By means of a stratified random sampling, 20% of the 2,625 students enrolled during the 1990/1991 academic year were selected for the purpose of this study. The strata used were sex, programme enrolled, level of study and ethnicity. Only the first three strata will be discussed in this paper. From 525 students selected for the study, 404 completed the questionnaire. This corresponds to a response rate of 77%.

The completed questionnaires were coded and the SPSS software was used to calculate the mean response for each item and to determine any significant differences between the relevant strata.

The 27 items of the student support system are given in Table 1.

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**Table 1** : Student Support System at the Centre for Off-Campus Studies, Universiti Sains Malaysia

| No. | Item | Note |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Orientation Programme for new students | 4-day long for new students at USM |
| 2. | COCS Handbook | Given once |
| 3. | Academic Planning Book | Given every year |
| 4. | Pre-enrolment of courses for the following academic year | Done during Intensive Course |
| 5. | Intensive Course (IC) | A three-week (compulsory) annual residential school |
| 6. | Regional Centres (RC) | One centre in each state |
| 7. | Regional Centre's Student Association | One association at each centre |
| 8. | Face-to-face tutorials at RC | Only for the Bachelor of Science Programme |
| 9. | Laboratory work at RC | Only for the Bachelor of Science Programme |
| 10. | Teletutorials | 4-10 hours per course per academic year |
| 11. | Agenda for teletutorials | 1 agenda for each teletutorial session |
| 12. | Library facilities at each RC | |
| 13. | Library facilities at USM | |
| 14. | Course learning materials | |
| 15. | Visits by COCS administrators to RC | |
| 16. | Counselling services | |
| 17. | Academic counselling services | |
| 18. | COCS radio programme | 20 minutes per week |
| 19. | 24-hour telephone answering service | |
| 20. | Resident Tutors | Part-time personnel at RC |
| 21. | Students' academic record | Issued every academic year during IC |
| 22. | General counselling session via teleconferencing | |
| 23. | Purchasing of books from USM by mail | |
| 24. | Borrowing of books from USM's library by mail | |
| 25. | COCS Monthly Newsletter | |
| 26. | Forward collection of learning materials | Collected during IC |
| 27. | Off-Campus Student Association | Parent body of RC Student Association |

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### (a) Distribution of Respondents

The distribution of respondents among the strata studied is given in Table 2a, 2b and 2c.

Table 2a :   The distribution of respondents and student population according to sex

| Sex | Respondents | Population |
|---|---|---|
| Male<br>Female | 83   (20.5%)<br>321   (79.5%) | 599   (22.8%)<br>2026   (77.2%) |
| Total | 404 | 2625 |

Table 2b :   The distribution of respondents and student population according to programme enrolled

| Programme | Respondents | Population |
|---|---|---|
| B. Sc. | 67   (16.6%) | 512   (19.5%) |
| B. Soc. Sc | 138   (34.2%) | 945   (36.0%) |
| B. Arts | 199   (49.2%) | 1168   (44.5%) |

Table 2c :   The distribution of respondents and student population according to levels of study

| Level | Respondents | Population |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 78   (19.3%) | 620   (23.6%) |
| 2 | 92   (22.7%) | 512   (19.5%) |
| 3 | 82   (20.3%) | 509   (19.4%) |
| 4 | 82   (20.3%) | 478   (18.2%) |
| 5 | 70   (17.4%) | 506   (19.3%) |

**Table 3 :** The percentage of respondents indicating "very important" (scale 5) and the mean response for each item of the support system

| Ranking[+] | Item No. | Item | % Respondent | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 13 | Library facilities at USM | 82.1 | 4.81 |
| 2 | 14 | Course learning materials | 80.2 | 4.76 |
| 3 | 5 | Intensive Course (IC) | 77.4 | 4.72 |
| 4 | 3 | Academic Planning Book | 75.4 | 4.72 |
| 5 | 2 | COCS Handbook | 72.2 | 4.69 |
| 6 | 12 | Library facilities at each RC | 66.6 | 4.48 |
| 7 | 21 | Students' academic record | 65.7 | 4.61 |
| 8 | 1 | Orientation Programme for new students | 56.1 | 4.37 |
| 9 | 11 | Agenda for teletutorials | 55.3 | 4.40 |
| 10 | 6 | Regional Centres (RC) | 53.8 | 4.34 |
| 11 | 17 | Academic counselling services | 48.7 | 4.33 |
| 12 | 8 | Face-to-face tutorials at RC | 47.5 | 4.33 |
| 13 | 10 | Teletutorials | 47.2 | 4.24 |
| 14 | 19 | 24-hour telephone answering service | 44.0 | 4.20 |
| 15 | 16 | Counselling services | 38.2 | 4.18 |
| 16 | 9 | Laboratory work at RC | 36.6 | 3.95 |
| 17 | 4 | Pre-enrolment of courses for the following academic year | 36.1 | 4.07 |
| 18 | 26 | Forward collection of learning materials | 35.3 | 3.91 |
| 19 | 25 | COCS Monthly Newsletter | 31.4 | 4.07 |
| 20 | 24 | Borrowing of books from USM's library by mail | 26.1 | 3.81 |
| 21 | 22 | General counselling session via teleconferencing | 23.8 | 3.61 |
| 22 | 20 | Resident Tutors | 23.7 | 3.69 |
| 23 | 27 | Off-Campus Student Association | 22.8 | 3.68 |
| 24 | 18 | COCS radio programme | 22.0 | 3.72 |
| 25 | 15 | Visits by COCS administrators to RC | 19.3 | 3.68 |
| 26 | 7 | Regional Centre's Student Association | 14.6 | 3.46 |
| 27 | 23 | Purchasing of books from USM by mail | 11.7 | 3.39 |

\* Ranking is based on the percentage of respondents indicating "very important" to the item.

**(b) Respondents' Perception of the 27 Items of the Student Support System**

Table 3 gives the rankings of items according to the percentage of respondents indicating "very important" for each item and the mean response for each item of the student support system. The first 8 items seem to capture a large proportion of the learning process. The most important item of the support system is the library facilities at USM. The next two items which were also regarded highly important by the respondents are the study materials and the annual Intensive Course.

These three items are "academic" in nature. The most important item of the support system (Item 13) is the library facilities at USM, which has a mean response of 4.81, 82.1% of the respondents indicating it to be very important. This is followed by study materials (Item 14; 80.2%, 4.76) and the Intensive Course (Item 5; 77.4%, 4.72). All three items constitute the core of the learning process: learning materials are provided to the students; they compulsorily attend the Intensive Course and supplement their learning materials by seeking additional reference from the library. Library facilities at the RC (Item 12; 66.6%, 4.48) is ranked 6th, most probably indicating the lack of reference materials at regional libraries.

The next four items, excluding Item 12, are those that we would consider as "supplementing" the process. The Academic Planning Book is ranked fourth (Item 3; 75.4%, 4.72). It contains (annual) information on the scope of learning materials and assessments, names of lecturers, schedules of teletutorials, laboratory experiments and Intensive Course activities: the book is to help students plan their annual learning activities. The COCS Handbook is ranked fifth (Item 2; 72.2%, 4.69). It contains information, graduation requirements as well as synopsis of courses: the Handbook, in conjunction with academic records (Item 21), is meant to guide students as they proceed in their programme. The record of academic performances is ranked seventh (Item 21; 65.7%, 4.61) followed by the Orientation Programme (Item 1; 56.1%, 4.37). Taking all four items together, we have: the Orientation Programme setting the stage, the Handbook to give overall guidance, the Planning Book to give annual guidance and the academic record to guide and "motivate" students.

Surprisingly, the new service offered - audio conferencing system - is placed in the middle of the rankings. Since the facility provides interactive communication, one would expect the ranking to be higher. Teletutorials (Item 10; 47.2% 4.24) is ranked thirteenth and teleconference counselling is ranked twenty-first (Item 22; 23.8%, 3.61). In fact the agenda for each teletutorial (Item 11; 55.3%, 4.40) is ranked ninth, well above the ranking for teletutorials themselves! Several reasons may be given for such rankings. First, the agenda may contain more than just topics to be discussed during a teletutorial session; it contains information that will assist students in planning their study and making trips to the RC to take part in the teletutorials. Hence, the significance of an agenda over the actual session. Second, a tutorial requires a different task, compared to a lecture. To be precise, it requires students to take an active part in the process. The reluctance to take part, either due to unpreparedness or the fear of making mistakes, and

the high possibility of being cajoled into taking part, may influence the students into thinking that tutorials are burdensome and hence, the lower ranking. Third, unlike the Intensive Course, which requires one trip to USM, and the learning materials, which can be handled at home, teletutorials require students to make a number of trips during awkward times to the RC. Again this "difficulty" may influence their ranking. Face-to-face tutorials (Item 8; 47.5%, 4.33) is ranked twelfth, one place above teletutorials (Item 10; 47.2%, 4.24) with only marginal differences in either the mean value or in terms of percentage of respondents valuing each item as very important.

The Regional Centre (Item 6; 53.8%, 4.34) is ranked tenth while Resident Tutor (Item 20; 23.7%, 3.69) is ranked twentieth. We can interpret such a gap to mean that students value the physical services at the Centre to be far more important than the services (mostly management) rendered by the Resident Tutors.

Academic counselling (Item 17; 65.7%, 4.61) was perceived by respondents to be more important than personal counselling (Item 16; 38.2%, 4.18). The high importance indicated for couselling is reflected in the high importance also given to the outside office hours telephone answering facility (Item 19; 44.0%, 4.20). Observations made with respect to counselling suggested that adult distant education students are more capable of handling their personal problems than their academic problems. The type of counselling valued by respondent could probably be those associated with course requirements and course contents. This is because the general counselling (on time management and study skills) conducted via tele-conferencing is relegated to lower importance (Item 27; 23.8%, 3.61).

Other items of the student support system such as laboratory sessions at the RC (Item 9), pre-registration (Item 4), forward collection of study materials (Item 26), monthly COCS Newsletter (Item 25) and borrowing of books from USM's library by mail (Item 24) are also regarded to be slightly less important by respondents.

The lower importance given by respondents to resident tutor (Item 20) and visits by the COCS administrators to RC (Item 15) suggested that students attribute importance to the academic contribution of the support system. In these cases, students do not directly benefit academically from the services.

A similar explanation could also be put forward for the low importance given by respondents to the RC based student association (Item 7) and the COCS student association (Item 27). It is possible that the current activities organised by these associations do not cater for the academic needs of students. It is also possible that if the associations take the initiative to organise academic group discussions and other activities which are academic in nature, the level of importance attributed by respondents for these associations will be much higher.

The low importance perceived by respondents for the 20-minute weekly radio programme (Item 18) suggested that this item does not contribute much to the student learning process. On the other hand, least

importance is given to purchasing of books from USM by mail. This may suggest that there are alternative means of obtaining the required books. One alternative is that students acquired most of the required books or reading materials when they attended the annual Intensive Course; another alternative could be the seniors being a source of additional learning materials.

Generally it has been observed that students at the COCS regard the print based materials to be very important for their studies. A high degree of importance was also given to the compulsory annual Intensive Course. Such an observation has also been made Siaciwena[5]. The students' perception towards the Intensive Course at the COCS is currently being studied. It is possible that great importance is placed by students on the Intensive Course because it provides students with opportunities to receive direct academic guidance from lecturers, access to reference materials in USM library and a continuous period to pursue academic activities.

Respondents also perceived that teletutorials are of about similar importance to face-to-face tutorials. This observation could certainly be used to justify the introduction of teletutorials as a replacement for the face-to-face tutorials.

It can be seen from this study that those support services which are not academically oriented are of lesser importance to the respondents. This may suggest that respondents give priority to their academic progress. However, it does not mean other services which are not directly related to student academic process are not necessary in facilitating the student learning process. Items such as the resident tutor is very critical in ensuring the smooth running of practical classes and teletutorial sessions at regional centres.

## (c) Variation of Respondents' Perception as a Function of Strata

### (i) Sex

Except for one item, that is the Student Association at regional centres, there are no significant differences between the perception of male and female respondents. This may suggest that respondents' expectations do not differ significantly between the sexes.

### (ii) Discipline

The analyses of the perception of respondents enrolled in different programmes on serveral items of the support system are given in Table 4.

**Table 4** : Items which are significantly different* by programme enrolled**

| Item No. | Item | Relationship of Mean | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Orientation Programme for new students | H > S, | H > SS |
| 7 | Regional Centre's Student Association | H > S, | SS > S |
| 9 | Laboratory work at RC | | S > SS |
| 10 | Teletutorials | H > S, | SS > S |
| 18 | COCS radio programme | H > S, | SS > S |
| 22 | General counselling session via teleconferencing | H > S, | SS > S |
| 27 | Off-Campus Student Association | H > S, | SS > S |

\* Significantly different at 0.05 level of significance.

\*\* S stands for mean value from respondents enrolled in B. Sc. programme, SS of those enrolled in B. Soc. Sc. programme and H of those enrolled in B. Arts programme.

The analyses presented in Table 4 indicate significant differences in the perception of the art students (B. Arts and B. Soc. Sc.) from that of the science students on seven items of the support system. Art students attributed higher importance to Orientation Programme (Item 1), the Student Association at RC (Item 7), teletutorials (Item 10), COCS radio programmes (Item 18), general counselling (Item 22) and the Off-Campus Student Association (Item 27) than that attributed by the science students. Obviously, science students attributed higher importance to laboratory work at the RC (Item 9) than that attributed by the social science students.

It is interesting to note that the arts students' perception on the non-academic aspects of the support system is more positive than the perception of science students. However the more positive perception of the arts students on teletutorials could be influenced by the fact that for the academic year 1990/1991, there are no face-to-face tutorials held for the art courses.

## (iii) Level of Study

Table 5 gives items of the student support system which are significantlly different in relation to the level of study.

**Table 5** :  Items which are significantly different* by level of study**

| Item No. | Item | Relationship of Mean |
|:---:|:---|:---|
| 7 | Regional Centre's Student Association | $L_1 > L_4$,   $L_2 > L_3$ |
| 8 | Face-to-face tutorials at RC | $L_2 > L_3$,   $L_2 > L_4$ |
| 9 | Laboratory work at RC | $L_1 > L_4$ |
| 10 | Teletutorials | $L_2 > L_4$ |
| 11 | Agenda for teletutorials | $L_2 > L_4$ |
| 12 | Library facilities at each RC | $L_1 > L_4$ |
| 13 | Library facilities at USM | $L_1 > L_3$,   $L_1 > L_4$,   $L_2 > L_4$ |

*    Significantly different at 0.05 level of significance.

**    $L_1$ denotes Level 1 of study.

It can be seen in Table 5 that generally the perception of respondents from lower levels of studies (Level 1 and 2) are more positive than that of respondents from higher level of studies. This may suggest that the former group of respondents have higher expectation on the support system compared to that of the latter group of respondents.

## (iv) Comparison

Sex does not seem to be a major variable influencing the perception of students on the various items of the support system. On the other hand, programmes enrolled and levels of study seem to influence students' perception on the importance of several items of the student support system. It is observed that differences in perception occur mainly on items which are non-academic and this, in a sense, is a relief.

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## IV. CONCLUSION

USM is a dual mode university and the off-campus programme, since its inception, has been governed by the on-campus graduation requirements. Academic quality or standard and academic equivalency similar to the face-to-face or on-campus students had been (and will be) the guiding principles of the off-campus programme. In its attempt to attain, maintain and improve academic excellence, the COCS has changed its structure, improved its delivery system and extended and improved the student support system.

In an effort to widen tertiary educational opportunities in Malaysia, the COCS programme has provided an initial access to higher education. Opening the initial access to higher education services through off-campus programme requires good student support system and the COCS has responded to this demand. The kinds of services offered are extensive, but by no means exhaustive and optimal.

This study has revealed that students enrolled in the off-campus programme perceived academic based items of the student support system to be more important than that of the non-academic based items. Respondents enrolled in the B. Arts and B. Soc. Sc. programmes perceived some items of the student support system more positively compared to the perception of students enrolled on the B. Sc. programme. Respondents from lower level of study perceived that certain aspects of the support system are more important compared to that perceived by the respondents of higher levels of study. These findings illustrate the differences in the perception and expectation of students on the various items of the support system. They emphasise the need to tailor the various aspects of the support system to fulfill the students' expectations.

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BUILDING A MANAGEMENT PROGRAM FOR ABORIGINAL ADMINISTRATION

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# BUILDING A MANAGEMENT PROGRAM FOR ABORIGINAL ADMINISTRATORS

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## Introduction

Aboriginal governments are becoming an increasingly important aspect of the state in Canada[1]. Unfortunately, the men and women called upon to exercise administrative leadership in these governments often have very little relevant academic or professional training. To address this problem in British Columbia, the School of Public Administration, University of Victoria, has established an undergraduate level, credit Certificate Program in the Administration of Aboriginal Governments. This program has been in full operation for one year.

This paper explores a number of unusual features of this Certificate program. In particular, it notes that:

- The students are predominantly aboriginal people who are employed as administrators in or around aboriginal governments and have had little previous contact with post-secondary (university or college-level) education.
- The program is intended to have "aboriginal" as well as "academic" integrity, marrying two sometimes conflicting approaches to management and education. Aboriginal leaders participate fully in the design, marketing, delivery and evaluation of the program.
- The program is delivered on a modified distance education basis, designed both to accommodate the needs of adults working up to hundreds of miles away from Victoria and to familiarize them with on campus university life.
- Formal counselling, widely thought to be a prerequisite of success in programs of this nature, is not presently being provided.

In a wider context, this program raises perennial problems associated with providing a culturally distinct minority group with a relevant educational experience at a university dominated by conventional "western" values.

## The Students and Their Needs

Twenty-two students were admitted in the first year of the program. With the exception of one band manager, the students are all aboriginal people. They come from nine different locations in southern British Columbia and represent eight of the thirty-one tribal groups in the province and two tribal groups outside the province. The students' ages range from 25 to 54; half of them are in their 30's.

Most of the students hold administrative or management jobs. There are four band managers, a band planner, a tribal council executive director, two band economic development officers, two band program coordinators, two administrative staff from the provincial Ministry of Native Affairs, an area council executive assistant, a provincial

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coordinator, a band registry officer, a community volunteer, a self-employed entrepreneur and three university students.

Many of the students are single parents and fourteen of them are women. The preponderance of women in the program is in line with contemporary patterns. Federal government studies show that native women tend to stay in school longer than men. Moreover, in many bands and tribal councils in British Columbia, the women take on administrative and management responsibilities while the political leaders are usually men.

Three of the students were enrolled in other university programs when they began the certificate program. Two of the students were working on undergraduate courses and one student was undertaking an interdisciplinary masters' program in sociology and history. However, the others' previous educational experiences were limited to high school completion and occasional college transfer and continuing education courses.

The virtually total isolation of this first group of students from previous post-secondary management training is demonstrated vividly by the School of Public Administration's record of admitting and graduating aboriginal students. At the undergraduate level, the Diploma in Public Sector Management, offered as a distance education program, has attracted only a few aboriginal students; two of 188 DPSM graduates are aboriginal. The Masters in Public Administration, with high admission standards and a cross-country student body, has graduated 429 students; none have been aboriginal. Aboriginal students have not participated successfully in these programs because the programs do not seem relevant to their values and specific environment, they are often unable to meet the admission standards, and when they do gain admission they are isolated and unsupported.[2]

Aboriginal people who work for and with aboriginal governments are in desperate need of access to management training. They need administrative and communications skills, a solid understanding of the legal, political, economic and public policy dimensions of these governments, technical skills in financial and personnel management, and the confidence to work in both cultures. But the key point is that they need these skills developed in the context of their special circumstances. One student wrote in his letter of application that he wanted to improve his management skills so that he could help his band to attain

> "their goals of Self Government, a Comprehensive Settlement of their land
> claims, economically developing the increased access to resources that a
> settlement will hopefully bring, retention of their language and culture and
> a move towards self reliance and self esteem."

His letter also noted that that a Certificate in Aboriginal Administration might provide aboriginal administrators with "the recognition that to date people in the field of Native Administration have not had the opportunity to get". The students want their training "legitimized" by the University, but only if the training makes sense in the context of their special needs.

**Involving the Community in Curriculum and Course Development**
It is in the context of these special needs that the two guiding principles governing the development and delivery of the Certificate program emerged. The program would have "aboriginal integrity" as well as "academic integrity". Aboriginal integrity was defined as meaning that the program

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"should be offered in ways and contain content that philosophically and practically represented the realities and values of native life in native communities. It should reflect the aboriginal view of the world and not seek to take the aboriginal out of aboriginal peoples. At the same time it should be of the highest academic quality. It should offer students the best in instruction. It should expect the best from them."[3]

Academic integrity flows largely from the intellectual leadership of Professor Frank Cassidy and a small number of colleagues who have established a powerful record of research, consulting and administration in the area of aboriginal government.

Achieving "aboriginal integrity" involves a process of continuing consultation with the aboriginal peoples of the province. Early on in the program development stage, an Advisory Council was established made up of aboriginal political and administrative leaders, government representatives and University faculty and staff. A series of meetings led to the development of a curriculum of six required courses and two electives which reflected the learning needs outlined by the Advisory Council. At the end of the first term, student evaluation of the Communications course resulted in a substantial revision of that course and the addition of a second course in strategic communications. In fact, wider consultations with students over the first year (including the addition of student representatives to the Advisory Council and the course development teams) have had a substantial impact on the development of the program.

The present curriculum includes seven required courses:

*Written Communications in Aboriginal Organizations*
This course focuses on the development of written communications skills and includes practice in preparing briefs, drafting resolutions, reports, discussion papers, memoranda, speeches, press releases and business letters.

*Organizing and Aboriginal Organization*
This course considers the dynamics of organizing as an activity in and with aboriginal organizations. It emphasizes organizing processes, goals, structures, culture, power, leadership, strategic decision-making, effectiveness and change in the context of the movement of aboriginal organizations, governments and communities to fuller self-determination.

*Law and Aboriginal Governments in Canada*
This course examines the authorities of and legal relationships between aboriginal, band, federal and provincial governments. It includes analysis of aboriginal (customary) laws, international, constitutional, statutory and common law pertinent to aboriginal governments.

*Aboriginal Governments and Canadian Governments*
This course considers the traditional nature and contemporary evolution of aboriginal governments. It emphasizes the movement for self-government, the constitutional process, citizenship, the jurisdiction and financing of aboriginal governments, the Indian Act, service provision by aboriginal and Canadian governments and the Canadian political process as it relates to and is affected by aboriginal governments.

*Managing With People in Aboriginal Governments*
This course develops human resource management skills and includes topics such as: labour relations, motivation, job design, performance appraisal, group dynamics,

negotiating, and conflict management. Emphasis is placed on the relevance of the cultural traditions and values of aboriginal peoples.

*Managing Systems in Aboriginal Organizations*
This course develops skills and understandings in basic principles of planning, financial management, accounting, budgeting, information systems, evaluation, project and program development.

*Strategic Communications in Aboriginal Governments*
This course provides the understanding necessary to effectively manage organizational communications in an aboriginal government setting. It focuses on the development of oral and written communication skills in relation to the media, strategies for organizational communications and promotion, the evaluation of communication efforts and good communication practices for aboriginal administrators.

In addition to these, students could chose one elective from university transfer courses in English, the social sciences or business administration, courses in the School of Public Administration's Diploma in Public Sector Management, or a week-long summer institute offered by the School on a topic focused on aboriginal governance. This summer, the course focuses on the aboriginal land question in Canada.

Upon completion of the eight credit courses (normally expected to take 16 months), the Certificate in Administration of Aboriginal Governments is granted. For those students who are admitted to the School's Diploma in Public Sector Management, all courses are also eligible for credit towards the Diploma. Similarly, the Diploma courses are eligible for credit towards the Open University of British Columbia's Bachelor's degree in Administrative Studies. In this way, the Certificate program can be used to access other degree programs as well as being a useful credential in its own right.

Because of the lack of suitable instructional materials, each course has been developed "from scratch". To ensure both "aboriginal' and "academic" integrity, each of the courses is developed by a project team which includes the subject matter specialist, an instructional designer, two or three aboriginal political leaders or senior administrators appointed as Program Associates and more recently, a student representative. The Program Associates have made extraordinary contributions to the development process. They critique the course designs, provide case examples and documents which are used as instructional materials, and identify resource people for the on-campus and audio-conference sessions.

## Program Delivery
From the outset of planning, the Advisory Council stressed the importance of devising a delivery strategy which would accommodate the students' needs and extend the notion of "aboriginal integrity" into the learning process.

It was assumed that most students would be working full-time and that many would be living at great distances from the university. The success of other UVic distance learning programs which combine intensive face-to-face sessions with sophisticated instructional packages and audioconferencing tutorials inspired the model for this program.

Each of the required courses combines concentrated multiple-day seminars on campus with instructional materials for independent study off-campus and telephone tutorials.

Students take two courses per 13-week term and spend three 4-5 day sessions on campus during each term. The campus components bring students together with government officials, aboriginal leaders and academics. The Program Associates often co-instruct or share coordinating responsibilities for the on-campus sessions.

Tutors are integral part of the delivery and student support strategy. Their tasks include assisting students to absorb the course readings, providing non-evaluative feedback on assignments; chairing audio-conferences to discuss course-related matters; and providing feedback to instructors regarding the progress of students. The tutors are expected to be familiar with the course materials. Tutors are selected from graduate students in Public Administration and Law.

The telephone tutorials between campus sessions were originally designed to provide academic support. However, in response to student feedback, the purpose is changing. In the first term, students reported that the tutorials helped to bring them together as a 'group'; in the second term, they questioned their relevance and resented the time required to participate. To ensure relevance and to maximize the potential of audioconferencing, course teams are designing the conferences around specific course objectives. Conferences will also be used to expand access to key resource people who could not otherwise participate.

It should be noted that the Advisory Council plays a wider role than just helping with curriculum and program planning matters. Council members play an important role in marketing the program, selecting students, advising on faculty and staff recruitment, supporting funding requests and participating in the course evaluation process. Program Associates also help to market the program and identify potential students. Council members and Program Associates have helped students with the admissions process by ensuring that the student's employers (Band Councils or aboriginal organizations) understand the academic obligations involved in the employee's participation in the program, with particular reference to the time required.

## Counselling
The part-time and distance learning aspects of the Certificate program compound the already difficult problems that many aboriginal students have in adjusting to the demands of the curriculum. While the School recognizes that providing a supportive environment for the students will be critical to their success and the continuing success of the program, it has not, to date, formally addressed the counselling and advising aspects of program delivery. A study of student support services offered by other Canadian institutions delivering programs to aboriginal students was undertaken and it identified strategies which are generally adopted in programs of this type. They include:
- staffing administrative, academic advising and personal counselling positions with aboriginal people;
- a Visiting Elders Program in which one elder would be in residence, each month during the academic year, so as to be available to students for counselling and stress management;
- establishment of a peer tutorial system in which more experienced students work with incoming students.

It is anticipated that the counselling issue will be dealt with more directly over the next year.

## Conclusion
This program represents a complex and robust response to the need to create real access to post-secondary management training for British Columbia's growing cadre of aboriginal administrators. Moreover, the response would appear to be largely successful. Twenty of the twenty-two students completed the first year in defiance of experiences which suggest that an attrition rate in excess of 50% would be expected. Not only did the aboriginal students stay in the program but they found it valuable. Evaluations are, on the whole, positive.

This program, however, is not without its difficulties. First, it is expensive, placing substantial economic demands on students, their employers, the university and the federal and provincial levels of government. Second, it is difficult to staff. Academically qualified aboriginal or culturally sensitive non-aboriginal candidates for new faculty positions are rare finds. Third, while it may help to create a relevant program for a group of students who had little access to post-secondary education, it also creates a potential "ghetto" situation - isolating aboriginal students (and their instructors) in a program which is separate from programs taken by non-aboriginal students. Finally - and related to the previous point- the balance between the two "integrities" is proving to be an elusive target. Students clearly value the legitimacy that a university based program imparts, but their course evaluations suggest that they often value the teaching of native instructors, program associates and resource people more highly than the teaching of non-aboriginal academics and experts. It will be interesting to see if the program is able to maintain its vision as a meeting ground between aboriginal and conventional, western approaches to management and management education. It is not yet clear that the modern university can adapt to the pressures that such a vision creates.

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FACTORS AFFECTING STUDENT SUCCESS

IN DISTANCE TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMMES

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# FACTORS AFFECTING STUDENT SUCCESS IN DISTANCE TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMMES-

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There is a need for research related to teacher education programmes .It is evident that in developing countries , distance education plays a vital role in clearing the backlog of untrained teachers but the effectiveness of those programmes is highly questionable . This paper suggests an integrative approach of those drop-out/ success models used in conventional and distance education to study the problem of drop-out in distance teacher training programmes.

## Teacher training at a distance

Teaching must be the largest profession in the world .According to Perraton[1] there were 18 million teachers in 1968 and 29 million in 1978.There is no argument that the development of any form of education depends not only on the expansion of the number of teachers but also on the quality of the teachers available to provide education. As an immediate solution to problems of the rapidly expanding education systems, many developing countries have recruited professionally untrained and/or academically unqualified personnel for teaching. For example according to the estimates of the International Labour Organization, 40% or more of primary school teachers in Bangladesh, Guyana,Jamaica ,Sri Lanka and Trinidad received no training in the 1970's . In India more than half of primary teachers and 90% of middle school teachers are unqualified (Jain[2]).According to the World Bank Report (1987)20% of male teachers and 25% female teachers were unqualified in Pakistan. In order to overcome the qualified teacher shortage some countries have already examined the possibility of expanding their traditional teacher training system but most of them have failed to keep pace with the increasing demands of their education. Therefore distance education has emerged as an effective approach to tackle those problems. It has been used by over forty nations as a supplement to conventional teacher training(Brophy & Dudley[3]) and in Australia distance education is no longer merely an alternative mode of formal education because it plays a vital role in the National Education System .

However distance education plays an important role in developing countries and especially for teacher education its advantages are many fold.

*Training teachers by distance methods is less expensive as far as it can rely on existing buildings, equipments and manpower.

*Teachers can attain professional certification or academic upgrading without interrupting their earnings.

*While studying teachers can remain at their schools so no replacement is necessary.

*The teacher work situation can be used as basic resources for their studies.

* It is beneficial to rural schools and remote teachers.

(Coldvin & Naidu[4] , Perraton[5] , Kinyanjui[6] )

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Brophy & Dudley[7] identified 53 Third World projects using distance education for teacher training . Those projects range from quick fix , crash programmes to permanent long range parallel options to traditional teacher training colleges and universities. Some countries like India , Sri Lanka , Kenya, and Pakistan have active certification or degree programmes at a distance but some countries have only sandwich programmes which combine a campus based model with distance methods .Although the distance-teaching approach is widely used in the field of teacher training there is a little evidence to show that it can satisfactorily train teachers to teach. For example in Guyana, the distance-trained teachers at teaching science are as good as the college trained teachers but the latter group shows a high competence in interacting with their pupils(Brophy & Dudley[8]).As Perraton[9] points out ,high quality teaching material ,sophisticated student supports system and ability to offer education at a cheapest rate are the major successes in the west ; on the contrary Arger[10] argues that many institutions like ES Department of the University of Papua New Guinea, STOU in Thailand and DISTED in Malaysia are struggling with differences of the reality and the promises of mass opportunity, high quality education and national development. Indeed this situation does not prove that distance teaching is a panacea offering solutions to every educational problems.

## Introduction to the problem

" Distance teaching has often been marked by high dropout rates , themselves a measure of student dissatisfaction with learning and the difficulty of studying by oneself."(Perraton[11]) Distance teacher trainees are generally older and have family responsibilities. Their studies have a lower priority than family .Most of them are working in rural schools and have extra duties to perform in their schools.Though the working situation provides an encouraging environment for their studies,most of them are unaware how to make the best use of it.Unless the study programmes are carefully planned to suit their needs and characteristics, they are more likely to achieve lower standards or to dropout. There is a growing understanding that teacher training programmes have a lower drop out rate relative to other courses but a certain dropout/failure rate is inevitable when trying to clear the backlog of untrained teachers in large numbers.

Distance educators are very concerned about the drop out issue and they have devoted a considerable time and resources to address it.For example Siddiqui[12] pointed out that dropout rate from "Certificate of teaching" is 17% and "Primary Teacher's Orientation Course" is 46% in the Allama Iqbal Open University .In the Korea Air Correspondence University 20% of students are teachers but approximately 50% of the first year students dropout from their courses before they reach their second year( Kim[13]).The Open University of Sri Lanka(OUSL) has been conducting a PGDE programme since 1982 but in each academic year more than 20% of students are repeating their exams and 5% of students are not willing to continue their studies.Therefore this problem is important and should continue to be given attention by distance educators and researchers.This situation prevents demonstrating to conventional institutions the effectiveness of correspondence teaching in teacher training programmes and necessitates immediate improvements

and changes that can more effectively helps distance students to achieve their goals and hopefully retain more of them until completion. Coldevin[14] argues that"the question is thus how to make the existing and future systems better in order to meet the daunting challenge".Therefore the main aim of this article is to analyse which theory is appropriate for studying the dropout-failure problem in distance teacher training programmes as a multi-dimensional process involving the interaction between student and institution.

## Models of drop-out : Descriptive models

A great deal of research has been conducted to understand the dropout problem but most of the studies are only demographic or descriptive(Spady[15], Tinto[16], Garrison[17]).During the last two decades,with the realization about many limitations of those descriptive studies and the complexity of dropout process,the researchers' concern has shifted to longitudinal-theoretical models. Some of these models are quite narrow but some models link various individual - institutional characteristics to the process of dropping out from traditional and distance institutions.

## Theoretical models

Spady[18] introduced the first theoretical model ,which is an adaptation of Durkhiems "Theory of Suicide",to describe the under-graduate dropout.Tinto[19] has developed Spady's model into an explanatory predictive model of dropout process and it has subsequently become more popular by creating remarkable changes in the studies of dropout/success in all educational settings. According to Tinto , individual integration into the academic and social system of the college directly relates to one's continuation in that college .Having tested the validity and the predictability of Tinto's model, some researchers ( Pascarella & Terenzini[20] . Pascarella & Chapman [21]) have concluded that it is useful for theoretical and research purposes as well as for practical purposes of planning retention strategies.

## Theoretical models used in distance education .

After implementing distance education as an alternative mode to face-to-face education , dropout problem has been an important aspect of the research. Garrison[21] has stated that "there is no area of research in distance education that has received more attention than the study of dropout". This is sometimes not because of the seriousness of the problem but because distance educators need to show distance approach as an effective and viable method of structuring and delivering education. On the other hand it provides necessary information regarding the problems and needs of distance learners so as to develop high quality distance teaching programmes.

There is no argument that the development of those conceptual models of dropout in conventional education has provided a useful framework for studies of dropouts in distance education.The literature describes numerous reasons for student dropout from distance education(Woodley[22] Mclellan[23] Kember[24] ,Shale[25] ) but what is being suggested is a conceptual model or a theory to study the dropout problem as a longitudinal process( Bean &

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Metzner[26] , Garrison[27] ). All those models of dropout in distance education
are mainly based on two theoretical assumptions:

*The importance of the social and academic integration between student and
institution is apparent both in conventional and distance education so the
existing models have provided a sufficient framework for distance education.
* Distance students are more affected by their external environment than by
the social integration variables :therefore a different theoretical model is
necessary to describe the unique and critical nature of distance education.

Researchers who agree with the first assumption are more prone to use the
Tinto's model for their studies (Taylor[28] ,Malley Brown & Williams[29],
Pascarella & Chapman[30] )and its conceptual relevance to distance education
has been noted by a number of distance educators(Baath[31]). Considering the
unique and critical nature of distance education Bean & Metzner [32] have
introduced a model which gives less attention to the social integration
variable but it is also supported by some other researchers in different ways.
(Brindley[33] ,Bajtelsmit[34].). The prime concern of the adjoining part of this
article is to analyse how far these two theoretical assumptions are relevant to
understand the dropout problem of distance teacher trainees.

**Variables related to distance teacher training programmes**
Unlike other programmes, teacher trainees are likely to be more
homogeneous in motivation,attitudes, interests and qualifications and they
are studying to progress within, or enter , a common occupation but there
may be differences in their age,gender and residence.
As Bean & Metzner[35] suggest "the main difference between the attrition
process of traditional and non-traditional students is that non-traditional
students are more directly affected by their external environment".A large
number of studies have supported the same idea by highlighting the
importance of the immediate environment of the student. When applying
these assumptions to distance teacher training programmes in developing
countries the effect of financial factors as well as the certainty of the
surroundings should be considered as important. On the contrary an
argument can be mounted that a close congruent relationship between their
educational and occupational components may have positive effect on their
successful completion.Teachers have similar hours of work but extra-
curricular activities and additional administrational responsibilities may
have a considerable effect on their studies.
There is no argument that academic integration variables are prominent in
models of dropout in all educational settings but there may be contradictions
when referring some of the conclusions to developing countries. For example
in Rekkadal's [36] study the main reason given for discontinuation is related to
the circumstances outside the immediate control of the institution. In
contradiction,it is being found that badly organized programmes and
insufficient opportunities for personal guidance are the greatest concern in
developing countries(Matiru[37], ,SIDA report[38] ).
The most influential theoretical contributions to understanding the student
dropout process differ in respect to the social variables.Taking basic

characteristic of distance education as the physical separation of teacher and student it is obvious that technically mediated communication between student and institution should be of paramount concern to distance educators. Many distance educators have pointed out the necessity of starting research to understand and predict dropout from distance education on the basis of various aspects of the mediated communication process.One of the basic issues of the Conference on Interaction and Independence in Distance and Open Learning (1989) was the importance of the human element in distance teaching systems.Thus in countries like United States and United Kingdom with their extensive use of telephone tutorials ,audio teleconferencing and other personalized assistance student persistence may be higher..

The priority objective of a teacher-training programme is the satisfactory application of suitable principles and techniques to teacher training but how far this can be fulfilled by using distance mode is open to criticism. Although Kenyanjui[39] has suggested applying "three-way teaching "for teacher training and updating programmes as one of the effective ways of providing necessary opportunities for application, much evidence shows the limited nature of student-institutional interaction in teacher training programmes in developing countries.Teacher trainees want to maintain a close relationship with their tutors to get appropriate guidance for the problems associated with their studies so many countries have realized the advantages of individualizing student support and expanding face-to-face contacts in distance teacher training programmes.( A report on untrained teachers in Sri Lanka[40],Sujatha[41].Mullick[42])Therefore the emphasis on optimizing social and academic integration between teacher trainees and institutions appeared to be worthy of investigation in the distance education arena.

Since teaching involves a continuous social encounter with a group , the student teacher must understand and be skilled in facilitating the class as a social group.When we consider school as one of the major components of those training programmes university-school linkage should be strengthened. Unfortunately little research is found about dropouts from distance teacher training programmes so future research should study direct effects of these variables to enrich the understanding of the dropout process.

This analysis suggests the idea that any single existing model of dropout does not provide a sufficient framework for understanding the critical nature of the drop-out process of distance teacher trainees so an integrative approach of all the prominent models is encouraged. A study is in progress to identify the factors affecting students' failure/success in the PGDE programme of the OUSL.

## Conclusions
* No single factor explains the dropout process in distance education and at present no theory in distance education exists which can adequately explain the phenomena of dropout . What is needed is a satisfactory integration of all prominent models to understand the complex nature of the dropout process in distance education.

* Social integration variables should be considered as important as the academic and environmental variables when studying dropouts from distance teacher training programmes.

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STUDENTS, BUYERS' RIGHTS AND QUALITY CONTROL

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# STUDENTS, BUYERS' RIGHTS AND QUALITY CONTROL

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### Introduction

There are several important influences nowadays impinging on the effective management of distance education operations. As always, the task of management is the reconciliation of those demands. What is distinctive about current influences is that so many of them are couched unequivocally in business environment terms, for example, 'user pays', 'service providers', 'Higher Education Contribution Schemes', 'student demand', 'product profile deficiencies' and 'strategic planning'.

This paper will use the Sale of Goods Act (Australia) as a base from which to make comparisons between the business world and the operations of distance education. The fact that this paper is focussed around an Australian Act is of little concern, since the above act is not unlike that found in at least other English-speaking environments and probably in other countries as well.

In the process of making these comparisons, issues of consumers rights' and quality control will arise. The paper thus provides the opportunity for some reflective thinking on the mission and goals of our various distance education enterprises and thus on how we reconcile the demands of our students, our communities and our curricula.

### Sale of Goods Act

'Sale of goods legislation regulates a contract for a 'sale' of 'goods' ...A contract for a sale of goods is a contract whereby the seller transfers or agrees to transfer the property in the goods for a money consideration called the price; thus the transaction must involve (1) a contract (2) goods and (3) a price.' (1)

There could well be extensive legal debate as to whether or not in some distance education contexts we have any of these three elements. In many institutions we have specific instances of them all; of that there is no doubt. On a broader scale, however, I want to suggest that:
    * the engagement between institutions and students constitutes a contract;

* teaching/learning exchanges constitute goods and/or loosely-defined services (though services are narrowly defined in a legal context); and
* that the `user -pays' schemes and/or Higher Education Contribution Scheme fees constitute a price.

Latimer goes on to elaborate (2) `In every contract for the sale of goods there are certain conditions which are automatically made part of the contract (unless excluded by agreement between the parties) ...The implied conditions are five:
`1. That the seller has the right to sell the goods.'  This, in distance education terms, means that it is not appropriate for any institution to buy a set of U.K.O.U. course materials, rip off the front covers of same and replace them with those of the said institution, then offer the new booklets for sale as original work of the said institution.  Academics condemn students for plagiarism, but this is a form of institutional plagiarism and breach of copyright. Woodley offers droll comment (3): `Distance teaching can have other outputs besides the more obvious ones and several of these have been looked at.  These include the use, acknowledged or otherwise, of OU teaching materials on courses in other institutions (Moss 1979: Glaister and Carr 1986) ...'

`2. That the goods will correspond with their description.' The classic case to illustrate this implied condition is Beale v. Taylor.  A car was advertised for sale as `Herald convertible, white, 1961'.  The defence was that at least the front half of the car was the said Herald convertible - but, yes, the back half was from another car, which was an earlier model.

One suspects that some institutions deal a lot in convertibles - and perhaps with some justification.  After all, it does take the average distance education student some years to complete an award; and re-accreditation procedures require that we produce a new model every three to five years.  A large percentage of students `buy' one model and finish up with a later version, inevitably with a front-half and a back-half.

`3 That the goods shall be of merchantable quality.'  This implies that the goods have sale value, that they have some utility, that they can fulfil at least one of their uses. This recalls one argument that one long-forgotten source offered in justification of newspaper distance education courses - `In the end, one can at least wrap up the garbage in the garbage'.

There are further dimensions to this condition - partly reinforced by consumer laws. Products should fulfil their advertised function. It is on this basis that a housekeeper goes to the provisions store and makes the food purchases.

The housekeeper selects items of choice and accepts responsibility for the selections so made in response to the advertisements on and about the goods. Can you imagine housekeepers going to a supermarket and merely selecting opaque bags marked 'Sufficient for a $50 budget' or $100, $150, $200 as appropriate - without prior knowledge of the contents of the bag or the facility to peruse the contents? And yet is this not what we often do in distance education? 'A diploma bag in .......ology', 'A degree bag in Science (Biochemistry)', 'A Masters bag in Education' etc may be found on our shelves - and we expect the customers to buy, without too much opportunity for a close perusal of the contents. Why should students rely on the 'Trust me' platitude? And, if we deny students the opportunity of item selection, what responsibility do we assume to ensure that our curricula will satisfy descriptions offered? The community which both supplies the students and our funds may call us to account.

Yet, under this implied condition, the seller can be released from this warranty if the buyer can inspect the goods - and thus assumes responsibility for detecting any defects, that is, those able to be detected by examination of the goods. Normally, distance education students don't have the opportunity to inspect the goods - especially if we regard the goods as not only the teaching materials but also including the teaching/tutoring services. Von Pittman's entertaining article, Villainy, incompetence, and foolishness: correspondence study in fiction, may not be too far from the truth.

While we believe our goods may be merchantable, would we venture to add a further warranty: 'If you undertake this course successfully, we will guarantee that you will find at least 10 years continuous employment on leaving the institution'. Could not the community also expect to see that warranty honoured? Such a warranty would strengthen our perceived relevance to community life.

'4 That where the buyer has made known the purpose for which the goods are required, the goods shall be reasonably fit for that purpose'. This means the seller has an obligation, derived from wider knowledge of the field and the product, to advise an ignorant buyer on the adequacy or otherwise of the product's capacity to achieve the buyer's stated goal.

The law generally releases the seller from obligations if the buyer has specified by brand name the goods that are required or has indicated to the seller that the seller's advice is incidental to the purchase. The whole tenor of such a condition as this has implications for the responsibilities of counsellors. In any subsequent court case mounted by a disgruntled student charging negligence, the question will be raised: Did the counsellors exercise 'due care', knowing that their advice would be relied on?

Many distance education institutions have discovered the value of brand names and are engaged in a profitable line of business. I shall leave it to you to nominate the leading brands.

'5. That, if it is a contract for sale by sample, the bulk shall correspond with the sample.' This means that a seller can't induce a buyer into a contract with tender steak and then deliver putrid meat. One example stands out in my experience. I once viewed, in a chief executive's office, a superb set of Geography teaching materials and asked if it were possible to obtain a set. The answer was 'No. There were just two sets made. There's one; the other is with our national minister for education. We produced two sets to get special funding. They're the only copies we have. The students get nothing like that; and we've used for other purposes the special funding we got'. The bulk did not correspond to the sample. Students often feel that the funds made available for distance education don't seem to benefit students.

Again there may be little connection between the initial advertising 'glossy' brochure and the course materials or between the well-presented initial course materials and the later, out-dated, unrevised, more advanced modules. The initial sample doesn't match up with the bulk.

Latham sums up this section with the comment: 'What these implied conditions do is to cast the onus on the seller.'(4) That is an unequivocal statement.

**Altering the conditions of sale**

Latimer explains that the clause (5), '(unless excluded by agreement between the parties)', is potentially dangerous to all parties. You will all have had experiences of having purchased, say, electrical goods. On opening the package, a Warranty card is found which looks re-assuring: you've made a good purchase of a reputable product from a reputable firm. Closer inspection often reveals that the warranties are offered 'with the exclusion of all warranties that can be legally excluded' - and you wonder what the warranty is.

The exclusions are usually the five implicit conditions listed above and sellers are trying to limit their obligations to replace and/or service the goods. In disputes on these matters before the courts, the courts tend to favour buyers, since such exclusions can normally only be made 'by agreement'. Where is the agreement in a pre-printed warranty card? What then is the nature of agreements which we attempt to effect with pre-printed distance education course materials? 'I thought I was enrolling in a course about ........, but I found ........' is a statement we frequently hear from students. But more of that later.

**The onus of proof rests with us**

The onus of proof to satisfy the implied conditions of sale clearly rests with us, the distance education institution. If a student writes: 'It is with regret that I am withdrawing ...', an institution must seriously consider replying: 'It is with regret we acknowledge we precipitated your withdrawal ..'. The prospect of writing such a letter is sufficient to make chief executives shudder.

A.E.Grimwade, in a paper entitled 'Management systems for external studies' and presented to the 1975 ASPESA Forum, Adelaide, wrote: 'An external studies operation is not easy to administer. I sometimes think it is an exercise in overcoming dysfunction. Something is always going wrong. The reason is easy to see when it is realised that associated with every process is a number of clerical steps. Thus, if we can achieve 95% clerical efficiency and there are six clerical steps in each operation, then the overall efficiency is .95 x .95 x .95 x .95 x .95 x .95. My calculator tells me this equals .74 which means we will mess up the student around one time in four.'(6)

We don't rely on clerical staff quite so much these days; but 'the computer is down and the back-up is not up' is heard more frequently instead!

**Living in the real world**

We can refuse to accept much of the obligation implied in the Sale of Goods Act if we contend that 'in the real world' things do break down and need to be returned for replacement and repair; and inconvenience is encountered etc. Why should distance education students expect to lead a charmed life and have untrammelled usage of their product? Teaching institutional staff do have to reconcile resource limitations, lack of staff, time constraints, over-commitment of resources/facilities etc, chronically unsatisfied demand for services. Students cannot expect 'the customer is always right' treatment.

Some will recall the ripple of horror that engulfed some
idealists at the 1978 I.C.D.E. conference in New Delhi when
staff from Waterloo University flashed their famous
heretical one-liner: Individualisation is a privilege not a
right.  The North American university was by even then
experienced in zero budgeting; and that's why it is still
successful today.

Maybe we all need to pursue more vigorously higher
performance standards.  Some firms guarantee for their goods
almost immediate return to service in the event of
breakdown. Automobile associations might illustrate the
ideal.  The local TELECOM advertises 'if your phone is
continuously out of order for three days you can apply to
Telecom for a rebate of the rental for the period'.  (Does
one apply by phoning?)  Even the Tax Office has a Problem
Resolution Program, advertised in the 1990 Tax Pack, 'to
solve those most difficult problems in 10 working days'.
Inevitably, they want the last word.. The 'small print' goes
on to add 'There are special conditions which must apply to
your complaint or problem before it cam be referred to the
Problem Resolution Program.  For details ask your Tax Office
for a free booklet on the Problem Resolution Program.' (7)
(So it's 10 working days + ..)

In terms of honouring the sales contracts we enter should
distance education institutions have their own Problem
Resolution Programs?  One of the attractions of the Tax
Office PRP is that it grapples with the question of relative
power.  Its intent is to give the individual taxpayer power
within the Tax Office.  That is, people competent in tax law
and procedures undertake to pursue an issue within the Tax
Office on behalf of a taxpayer.  (Later, if the problem
persists, the taxpayer still has further avenues of
independent appeal outside of the Tax Office.)  The
procedure is an oblique expression on the part of the Tax
Office that as a 'seller of services' it has an obligation
to its clients.

What is the equivalent in the distance education context?
Within an institution where should such a Program be
located?  To whom does it report?  What resources should it
have available?  To what does it have access?  Does it
itself become a drain on resources?  Will its very
availability create an enormous surge in demand for its
services?

The existence of such a Problem Resolution Program would
indicate to the student body and the community at large that
the institution was serious about redressing 'Villainy,
incompetence and foolishness' - that we were not content
with 'shonky sales'.

## Some buyers' complaints

If we are willing to attempt to empower students, it will help if we listen to them.  Below are some typical comments from students who are dissatisfied customers.  Try to read each comment carefully, building the scenario around the comment, then reflect on how the problem might be remedied.

'I undertook the course with expectations ..'
'I would like to know my tutor's name, before I enrol'
'No mention was made of compulsory residential schools when
        I enrolled'
'I had decided to 'test' the program administrative
        procedures and student support system ... it gave me
        insight into the problems and issues that might be
        confronted ..'
'I had no letter of welcome ...'
'What happened to the students' choice of units?'
'What will be the cost of the textbooks required for the
        course?'
'Will the residential school program content be 100% new?'
'The result is 'Satisfactory"; how well am I performing -
        51% or 91%?'
'My tutor doesn't listen ... I can't get a word in.'
'I'm fully occupied just reading what's in the materials; I
        haven't time for further reading.'
'In the first award we were treated as colleagues .. Now
        we're whipped over the hand.'
'If you have any problems, please phone.    The onus on
        establishing dialogue was placed on me (the student).'
'I received my study materials four weeks late and only one
        week before the first assignment was due. That's
        unfair.'
'My lecturer never answers the phone..'

From your own experience, you will be able to add several more comments, which have created discomfort, as you were only too aware that the student complaint was justified.


## Sale of Goods Act irrelevant

Even if we are disposed to support the ethical intent of the Sale of Goods Act, having avoided, as most of us have done, the strict application of the law to our circumstance, we should be aware that there might be several situations in which we could not readily co-operate with the law.  How do we reconcile the demands of students, community and our curriculum under those circumstances?

These situations might be:

1. Many institutions enjoy a huge demand for student places and can afford to ignore, in the short-term, the complaints of dissatisfied students.

2. Many institutions are so government-dominated that satisfying governmental requirements is the primary strategic objective of the institution. There is no point in providing top-quality service to students if the institution's very survival is under threat from governmental intervention. Institutions have been closed because they were too successful.

3. Many institutions know only too well what is required for provision of efficient and effective distance education but simply do not have and cannot get sufficient resources. Compromise is inevitable.

4. There are often cultural nuances which make it unwise to hasten blindly on with activities to 'empower' students (buyers). There are traditional power relationships between teachers and learners which must be honoured and reconciled. (For example, see Murphy, Karen.)

5. The community has expectations of what education will provide, so the 'business' of education is not merely a transaction between institution and student. Maybe the real learning contract is between the community and the student, with the institution as sub-contractor to the community.

**Conclusion**

This article has claimed that we operate in an environment which is increasingly critical of our performance. The article has explored one control mechanism used by the community, namely, the Sale of Goods Act and applied it to the distance education context.

This led to the consideration and application of the five implicit conditions of any sale:
1. We have the right to sell the goods.
2. The goods we sell correspond to the descriptions we give them.
3. The goods are merchantable - fit for sale and able to be put to some use.
4. Having been advised of student need we provide only goods adequate for those needs.
5. Samples of our goods are typical of all our goods.

These are important performance and ethical issues. We can choose to confront or avoid them. We can remain passive and allow our students (the buyer/customers) to determine by their preferences from which institutions they will buy their goods. We can allow the community to exercise whatever disciplines it has power to impose. Or we can take the opportunity to review and refine, if necessary, our standards.

Torstein Rekkedal sums up the options, on the presentation of his initial, unfavourable evaluation research results: 'I remember I was present once when the director was asked how he dared to publish the results of the drop-out part of the study, and his answer was that he did not dare not to publish, since openness of institutional results is necessary for increasing quality. The immediate reaction of the institution was that all employees - academics, administrators and clerical staff - became involved in a project aiming at assessing the organisation and the administrative, teaching and counselling routines and procedures in order to state long- and short-term goals for changes to increase the quality of teaching materials and services. At the same time I was engaged to plan and conduct a research and evaluation scheme with the same goal, quality control and quality development...'(8)

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ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION: GETTING PAST THE RHETORIC

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# ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION:   GETTING PAST THE RHETORIC

## Background

Over the past two years there has been increasing recognition both
within the Open University and throughout all areas of post-16 (post-
compulsory) education that increasing the number of places available in
higher education and ensuring that these places attract non-traditional
students is critical for the future development of the United Kingdom as
it moves to be a full member of the European Community.  This paper
examines the way the UKOU has approached its task of increasing the
numbers of places available and broadening the student intake.

## The UKOU

The OU is, by definition, an open access institution of higher education
which attracts large numbers of adults without traditional entry
qualifications.  A recent review of the University concluded: once
students who lack the normal qualifications for entry into higher
education have managed to obtain their first credit, they have a good
chance of going on to be a graduate.

The fact that there has been a national initiative in the access area,
with many "access" courses springing up throughout the UK (over 600 at
the latest count) has encouraged the OU to re-think and review its
position.

As a result a new policy has been approved which sets national targets
aimed at increasing the numbers of students from non-traditional
backgrounds.  At the same time the University has now agreed, in the
context of extra funding, to increase its undergraduate population to
approaching 100,000 by the end of the century.  This involves increasing
our annual intake to 29,500 by 1993, bringing back in students who have
"dropped out" part way through their degree and improving overall
retention rates.

In 1971 (the OU's first teaching year) 27% of new undergraduates had
"less than 'A' level or equivalent", by 1990 that figure stood at 38%
and we are aiming towards 45% by 1997.

Within this broad "proxy" target we are looking to recruit more minority
ethnic students to our Foundation Courses, and more women, especially to
Maths, Science and Technology, and we will continue to monitor and
assess the performance and progress of all significant groups.

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At present, of those who finally register as students within the University's undergraduate programme, 80% complete a foundation course and gain a course or credit.

However, the percentage of initially registered students who do not finally register has fluctuated between 27 and 32% over the past 10 years. It is the University's intention, as it expands both the number and proportion of those less qualified on entry, to improve on these percentages.

Recent research has indicated the scale of this problem. Overall, there is no doubt that the groups mentioned above, do less well in their first year than students with either traditional University entry qualifications or who already have some qualification at higher education level.

The rest of the paper illustrates the very special aspect of 'access' as it affects the only institution in the UK which allows the potential student to make the decision as to whether he/she wishes to be admitted rather than the University deciding. This is clearly a "student-centered" admission process but is it good enough? Here lies the kernel of the debate.

## The Debate

To polarise the two positions.

a)    The non-interventionist model

The University is open and an increasing percentage of applicants do not have traditional university entry qualifications. We should be directing all our efforts to improving the service for them and ensuring our retention rates improve.

b)    The interventionist model

Without denying, and indeed supporting the view in (a) above, the model, which is the one currently adopted by the University, does acknowledge the need to try to recruit more broadly and to support the wider group of students more effectively.

## The Non-Interventionist Model

Here the concerns are related to the avoidance of "the revolving door" factor. As the University is already open we should be spending what limited resources we have to try to improve the success rate of all students. For example a recent survey in one Open University region indicated that a considerable number of initially registered students

never open their course material. This region argues therefore that, rather than waste resources on the 'non-starters' the majority of support should be focussed on students who submit their first tutor-marked assignments. Those supporting the liberal approach argue that we should not spend time and effort in recruiting a higher proportion of non-traditional students whom we know have a higher chance of not completing their first year. This may lower the Open University's retention rates and, in the era of performance indicators, make us more vulnerable to unfavourable comparisons with other institutions as the Open University is integrated into the newly proposed structure for higher education in the United Kingdom. It is the case, however, that the University demands a quarter as much again, in terms of quantity of work, of its honours gradautes, as do traditional universities. The time has come to review this situation.


## The Interventionist Model

This has been agreed by the University's Council, Senate and Academic Board. The University's express intention is to recruit more students to the undergraduate programme who do not have the traditional university entry qualifications. This "proxy" target, it is suggested, helps to provide an institution wide goal, whilst enabling each region and academic unit to look specifically at its own position and its own student demographics.

Regions have been encouraged to look for ways of extending the knowledge and understanding of what the University has to offer, to a wider group, through targetted publicity, collaboration with other institutions (of further and adult education) and through carefully thought through group admissions schemes.

There is no proposal to change the University's admissions procedures, save the further encouragement of regions to use the guaranteed admissions system for group admission in certain circumstances.

The argument against the interventionist approach can be persuasive eg the University already has 5% of its students from ethnic minorities thus reflecting the national population. However, anyone attending the recent round of graduation ceremonies will notice very clearly the very small number of ethnic minority graduates and at Ely Cathedral in East Anglia on 1 June 1991, there was one ethnic minority graduate in some 500, attending the ceremony. (It could be the case, of course, that graduands attending ceremonies might not be a representative sample.)

The other argument against a thoughtful, positive approach to recruiting more broadly has been indicated above, and is that relating to success rates of students.

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We in the Open University will argue for performance
indicators which involve many measures, the completion of an
honours degree being only one of them.  We will need to have
measures of trends showing that our students are supported
better, that they find greater satisfaction from studying
with us as well as achieving success in their early years
with the University and subsequently.

I look forward to discussing these critical issues with
colleagues at the 4th Cambridge Conference in September
1991.

ROGER MILLS
10 June 1991

ref: highed

A COMMUNITY OF SCHOLARS AT A DISTANCE: A CONTRADICTION IN TERMS?

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# A COMMUNITY OF SCHOLARS AT A DISTANCE: A CONTRADICTION IN TERMS?

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The topic for this paper was conceived in the midst of a lengthy engagement with the possibilities of enhancing independent learning for students in distance education.[1] Like Ross Paul, I believe that 'one of the central goals of a university education ... is to develop independent learners'.[2] To further engage with the theme of the previous conference, I also believe that independent learners are created most effectively in contexts within which there are a variety of opportunities for *interaction* between students and their teachers, between students themselves and between their teachers. Learning is most effective within a *community of scholars*. Since ancient times scholars have gathered together in communities to pursue their quest for knowledge. Since mediæval times universities have been amongst the most important communities of scholars. The university ideal worked out in these circumstances is both worthy of preservation and adaptation to contemporary circumstances.

How is it possible to create communities of scholarship within universities which engage in open and distance education? With great difficulty, is my answer. But, I would assert just as firmly, that there are also difficulties for those attempting to foster communities of scholarship in all contemporary universities. We are in an age of mass university education. Our challenge is to create communities in contexts where numbers alone make this difficult but not impossible. Many distance educators surrender to these challenges by attempting to make a virtue from the enforced independence of students from their teachers; various forms of 'interaction' compensate for the chronic alienation of students and teachers from each other; any idea that a scholarly community could be created is regarded as impractical if not fantastic. It is not proposed to begin by asserting a definition of the term *a community of scholars*, but, rather, to draw upon some Cambridge scholarship and experience in working towards an understanding for our purposes.

In his quest to explain the ramifications of *culture* in the development of English society from the emergence of capitalism, Raymond Williams has made frequent use of the concept *community*. For him it is dynamic rather than a static concept linked thoroughly with economic and political change. Working class solidarity against owners, middle class notions of service and the country house life of the agricultural and merchant gentry are all community relationships. A young man moving from a Welsh border village to Oxbridge is moving between communities. The transition to a post-industrial society is based upon new technologies which will allow economic and political decision making to occur democratically from homes, workplaces and communities.[3] 'The success of the Open University' has demonstrated that 'there can be a new range of formal learning systems, which people can use in their own time and at their own pace'.[4] This is not the same understanding of community as that espoused by his erstwhile literary mentor, F. R. Leavis.

In a letter to *The Times*, in 1968, Leavis proclaimed:

> The 'privilege' the universities must surrender lest they be attacked as anti-democratic citadels is the right (or duty) to maintain the standards proper to a university. Of course 'university' now, in this country, too, is a term applied to some very different kinds of thing - there is, for instance, the Open

University, there are correspondence colleges that hope to become universities, and Mr Wilson not long ago expressed his satisfaction that a number of Colleges of Technology had swelled the total of universities (a snub for snobbery, he thought).[5]

He proceeded to remind his reading public that 'only a limited proportion of any young adult age group is capable of profiting by, or enjoying, university education'. If more than this academic élite are allowed into universities 'the whole community is let down'.[6]

For Leavis *the university* represented the last chance to keep alive the ideas which would allow reform of and resistance to 'technological-Bethnamite society'.[7] These dark mechanistic forces had even pierced universities such as Cambridge and English Schools have a particular responsibility in thwarting them. He advocated not a return to an agricultural economy but, through the close scrutiny of great literature, to an intellectual appreciation of an 'organic community with the living culture it embodied'.[8] Such an understanding would avoid 'a surrender to the "progress" of the machine'.[9]

Leavis's understanding of a *community of scholars* can be derived from a brief review of the college system at Cambridge. The University of Cambridge was incorporated formally in 1571, following the traditions of the Universities in Oxford and Paris, as a federation of self governing independent colleges.

According to sources from England's senior university, the term college can refer to the following:

> 3. A community of clergy living together on a foundation for religious service, etc. Now chiefly *Hist.* ME. 4. A society of scholars incorporated within, or in connection with, a University, or otherwise formed for the purposes of study and instruction ME. 5. The building or set of buildings occupied by such a society ME.[10]

The same source defines the term society variously, but the relevant references to community are as follows:

> I. 1. Association with one's fellow men, esp. in a friendly or intimate manner; companionship or fellowship. ... 3. The aggregate of persons living together in a more or less ordered community 1639. ... III. 1. A collection of individuals composing a community or living under the same organization or government 1577.[11]

All of these mediæval and almost mediæval meanings of college, community and society are packed into contemporary usage of the terms *community of scholars* and *university*. Firmly implicit in this usage is the understanding that a community of scholars resides together for substantial periods of time. From this perspective, college life in Cambridge University provides manifold examples of communities of scholars pursuing the ideal university experience. Implicit in this understanding are the facts that a select few students will enjoy this life in early adulthood and thereafter most will depart for the real world, leaving behind an even more select group of scholars who have performed excellently and can enjoy this life on a long term basis, as dons. Leavis would have it stay thus, eternally. But, is this possible in the face of *industrialism* and, heaven forbid, *post-industrialism*?

C. P. Snow, who Leavis often attacked as the personification technological-Bethnamism, has offered a rich variety of ideas which deal with the relationship between Cantabrigian scholarly communities and provincial academies, the corridors

of political power and the workshops, laboratories and boardrooms of industry.[12] Snow's literary work has attempted to demonstrate how technocratic science works. A core message of Snow's novels is his identification of the self-careerists, who call themselves professionals, who use communities to further their own interests. The sequence *Strangers and Brothers* should do more to convince men of power to rediscover community than the rectorial ravings of Leavis.

Snow's fiction offers detailed portraits of the communalism of intellectuals in provincial and Cambridge settings. Scholarship is the individual, often lonely and too frequently tragic pursuit of the truth by brilliant specialists; but, these individuals draw their strength from a community dominated by conventions and political intrigue. In contrast to Williams, Snow's world, both fictional and real, is that of the networks and communities of powerful men. It is concerned with the 'masses' to the extent that fair and efficient government is the concern of these powerbrokers, whose task it is to harness science for the good of us all. Above all, Snow's work demonstrates the active connections between Cambridge and the seats of power in industrial Britain from the 1920s to the 1970s. It shows how the powerful at the centre can use the people and ideas from one community in the tasks of controlling many others.

The fact that there are now two remarkably different universities in Cambridge is pertinent to the ideas of Leavis, Snow and Williams. Leavis represents the apparently critical mentality that simply cannot comprehend why there can be an Open University. Snow helps us to understand why politicians and bureaucrats would create such an educational industry and why only a few of those steeped in the Cantabrigian collegial tradition could see it as a university, let alone a harbinger of the university of the future. Williams can take us further than Snow and assist us to consider if it can be ever be possible to have viable communities of scholars within a post-industrial university. Also instructive, in this regard, is Michael Young's tale of the Cambridge connection in the creation of the Open University.[13]

Before turning to Young's story, I offer this outsider's sketch of the Open University as important background knowledge. The Open University is represented in Cambridge by a Regional Office, which is responsible for students who reside East Anglia. The university has it headquarters in Milton Keynes and it has thirteen other regional offices throughout the United Kingdom. It has no colleges or campuses, in the conventional sense of the terms. Almost all its students are part time. It admits students through an open rather than an academically selective basis. Compared to the University of Cambridge it is very recent. Its has no direct connection to mediæval education, except for some ceremonial trappings and the collegiality of its Senate. Few people would probably wish to consider using the concept of *a community of scholars* in assessing its educational performance, as I would.

Cambridge played a very important part in the creation of the Open University through the development of the National Extension College. The influence of the University of Cambridge was almost entirely negative. In the mid-1960s, Michael Young, who had come to the university to establish sociology, attempted to convince his 'fellow dons that they should set up a second university ... to make use of the buildings and equipment in the five months of the year when the first university was on vacation, and to use them for more mature people who were taking up their studies in later life'.[14] One don responded positively and the bulk either ignored him or responded with howls of derision. The vacations were for research not additional teaching! Proposals to import teaching staff from Battersea Polytechnic were simply not credible. Undaunted by the rebuff, through a chance meeting with Brian Jackson, Young was able to transfer his ideas to the development of the National Extension College.

The National Extension College offered what was effectively a 'pilot project for an Open University'. Many of the elements of its successor were there at this beginning:

the use 'teaching machines and programmed textbooks', tapes, broadcast radio and television, correspondence tuition and weekend and summer schools. Thus, in Cambridge in the mid-sixties, town played host to a redeveloped form of teaching for external university degrees, while gown got on with its cloistered scholarship. With regard to the Open University, the rest is a glorious history!

Can and should those forms of university education which cater for more than the brilliant few ever function as *communities of scholars*? I wish to approach this question from the more familiar territory of Australian academia. But, we will not ignore the University of Cambridge, as it was able to play its part in holding up the development of higher education at a distance in Australia through its part in the intellectual formation of Leslie Martin. Martin had travelled to Cambridge in the 1920s on a scholarship to pursue a research degree with Ernest Rutherford at the Cavendish Laboratory. In this context he imbibed the spirit of the university scientist, divorced from the workaday world, pursuing truth in the laboratory.[15] Of Rutherford's 'boys', it was only Snow who showed in any interest in the application of science to technology.[16]

Martin brought this spirit back with him to Australia and it remained with him as he climbed the academic ladder to professor and trusted educational bureaucrat. In 1960, he was given the responsibility of chairing a Commonwealth government committee to enquire into the future of tertiary education in Australia. Martin believed a 'university department ... should strive constantly to become a centre of intense intellectual activity surrounding itself with that atmosphere which alone stimulates the birth of ideas', which fostered an 'intellectual chain reaction' amongst its members.[17] Research was his priority, along with the teaching of honours students; 'the rump', who would acquire their pass degrees and move off into teaching and industry, were given scant attention. Indeed, he wanted to transfer all pass students from the universities into colleges.[18] While he did not succeed in doing this, he was the single most influential person in creating a new sector of higher education, the colleges of advanced education.

Martin was also influential in transferring much of the future growth in enrolments for part-time and external students to the colleges. He had to accept a situation in which the Universities of New England and Queensland had established substantial and highly respected programs in external studies. However, his educational ideology regarded part-time and external studies as alien grafts upon a scholarly body. Despite strenuous objections from the Vice Chancellor of the University of Queensland, who was a member of his committee, Martin secured recommendations which included the emphatic assertion that 'the Committee does not consider the provision of external studies to be a university function'.[19]

The statutory requirements imposed by the politicians who created my own university made external studies a legal responsibility; this caused considerable consternation within the professoriate in Monash University's first decade.[20] The Interim Council had considered detailed proposals for external studies after the model of the University of New England in 1960.[21] Against a background of occasional requests from politicians and bureaucrats, the Vice Chancellor and the Deans keep the matter 'under review' for almost a decade. A lament from the Dean of Arts, in 1964, typifies the prevailing mentality: 'I still hope that we will not have to cater for external students in the next triennium (if ever).'[22] There was pressure from within, from the Dean of Education and two professors in language departments who put forward a detailed proposal based on the New England model. External pressure also increased by the late 1960s, forcing a considered response. The Professorial Board's reaction began with an echo of Martin: it did not believe external studies 'as being desirable from an educational point of view'.[23] It wished to put its efforts into 'areas where we can make our best contribution, namely full-time undergraduate teaching'.[24]

Whilst Monash University procrastinated, in 1970 a newly created Gippsland Institute of Advanced Education appointed the Assistant Director of External Studies at the University of New England as its founding Director. In this context distance education could become part of the institutional culture from the beginning.[25] Soon after Warnambool Institute of Advanced Education went into external studies. In 1974 Deakin University was created from a teachers' college and a college of advanced education; it was to be Victoria's first university committed to distance education. Recently, the Warnambool Institute has merged into Deakin University and Gippsland Institute has become a college within Monash University. Both universities are committed to the idea that their distance education programs are integral parts of the university. Both have become involved with teaching students who reside outside Australia.

As I regard the approaching word limit and review the discussion above, I am painfully aware that the ambitions of the open paragraphs are far from realised. There is no discussion of methods which could be used by practitioners of open and distance education who wish to go beyond 'mere interaction' to the creation of *communities of scholars*! Rather, I have been able to take Young's tale from the origins of the National Extension College and to offer some details which help us to understand the resistance to open and distance education from those who inhabit traditional scholarly communities.

This paper has been empirical rather than theoretical in its emphasis. There should be enough facts and just enough argument to engender discussion amongst scholars from a variety of communities. I promise to come to the conference with my mind fully laden with relevant (post-modernist?) theories. I will be seeking assistance from others to understand them, to apply them to the issues discussed above and to other practical situations of mutual interest

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[1] Nation, D. (1991) 'Teaching texts and independent learning', in Evans, T. and King, B. (eds) *Beyond the Text: contemporary writing on distance education*, Geelong, Deakin University Press, pp. 101-132.

[2] Paul, R. (1989) 'Do open universities do a better job of developing independent learners?' in Tait, A. (ed) *Interaction and independence: Student Support in Distance Education and Open Learning*, conference papers for the ICDE/BOU international conference, Downing College, Cambridge, 19-22 September, p. 183.

[3] The following books and novels relate most closely to this paper:
　　Books
　　(1958) *Culture and Society 1780-1950*, London, Chatto and Windus.
　　(1973) *The Country and the City*, New York, Oxford University Press.
　　(1983) *Towards 2000*, London, Chatto and Windus/The Hogarth Press.
　　Novels
　　(1960) *Border Country*, London, Chatto and Windus.
　　(1965) *Second Generation*, London, Chatto and Windus.
　　(1979) *The Fight for Manod*, London, Chatto and Windus.

[4] Williams, *op. cit.*, 1983, p. 151.

[5] Leavis, F. R. (1969) *English Literature in Our Time and the University*, London, Chatto and Windus, Appendix I, 'The Function of the University', pp. 186-187.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 187.

[7] *Ibid.*

Leavis, F. R. (1972) *Nor Shall My Sword: Discourses on Pluralism, Compassion and Social Hope*, London, Chatto and Windus, esp. Ch. II 'Two Cultures? The Significance of Lord Snow.

[8] Leavis, F. R. and Thompson, D. (1933) *Culture and Environment*, London, Chatto and Windus, p. 1.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 97.

[10] *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, Third Edition, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1973, p. 367.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 2040.

[12] The following books and novels relate most closely to this paper:
> Books
> (1967) *Variety of Men*, London, Macmillan.
> (1971) *Public Affairs*, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons. This includes his two well known, if not as well read and understood, papers dealing with 'The Two Cultures' and his reply to Leavis.
> (1981) *The Physicists*, London, Macmillan.
> Novels
> The *Strangers and Brothers* series
> available in 3 vols., London, Macmillan, 1972. or in Penguin under the following titles:
> *George Passant* (1940)
> *Time of Hope* (1949)
> *The Conscience of the Rich* (1958)
> *The Light and the Dark* (1947)
> *The Masters* (1951)
> *The New Men* (1954)
> *Homecomings* (1958)
> *The Affair* (1960)
> *Corridors of Power* (1964)
> *The Sleep of Reason* (1968)
> *Last Things* (1970)
> The list is in Snow's preferred order and first publication dates are in parentheses.

[13] Young, M. 1988 'Education for the new work', 'Announcing the National Extension College' and '10 years of NEC' in Paine, N. (ed) *Open Learning in Transition: an agenda for action*, Cambridge, National Extension College, pp. 3-22, 450-459.

[14] *ibid.*, p. 7.

[15] Davies, S. (1989) *The Martin Committee and the Binary Policy of Higher Education in Australia*, Ashwood House, Melbourne, pp. 43-49.

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 46.

[17] *Ibid.*, pp. 47-48.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 52.

[19] Martin Report (1965) Report of the Committee on the Future of Tertiary Education in Australia to the Australian Universities Commission, *Tertiary Education in Australia*, vol. 1, p. 46.

[20] Monash University is 'my own university' in two senses: I have undertaken all my undergraduate and postgraduate studies here and, following the merger of the University and Gippsland Institute of Advanced Education in 1990, it is now my employer.

[21] This section is based upon two unpublished papers: Moodie, G. (1991) "Academics' resistance of external course pressures: attempts to establish external studies at Monash University 1958-70" and '"Second chance" students during the founding years of Victoria's second university'. Both papers will be offered for publication in revised versions at later dates. The author would like to thank Gavin Moodie for his valuable assistance. The author is working on corresponding papers on the founding of external studies at Gippsland Institute of Advanced Education.

22  Moodie, '"Second" chance ...' op. cit. p. 3.
23  Moodie, "Academics' resistance ..." op. cit. p. 3.
24  *Ibid.*
25  Meek, V. L. (1984) *Brown Coal or Plato? a study of the Gippsland Institute of Advanced Education*, Melbourne, Australian Council of Educational Research, pp. 61-86.

# TURNING BARRIERS INTO BRIDGES: MEETING THE NEED FOR

# ABORIGINAL HEALTH ADMINISTRATORS IN WESTERN CANADA

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# TURNING BARRIERS INTO BRIDGES: MEETING THE NEED FOR ABORIGINAL HEALTH ADMINISTRATORS IN WESTERN CANADA

LORI ODDSON, TUTORIAL SERVICES
LYNDA ROSS, CENTRE FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION
BARBARA SPRONK, ANTHROPOLOGY

## 1. Introduction

In our attempts as open educators to meet the needs of our learners, can we sometimes make our programs too open? How do we determine our learners' needs? How will we know when the programs we design and deliver have met those needs?

These are some of the questions that have been facing those involved in the development and offering of the University Certificate in Health Development Administration. The credential bears the imprint of Athabasca University (AU), but is in reality a co-production of AU and the Yellowhead Tribal Council, referred to hereafter as YTC. The case study that follows is in many ways the story of the partnership between these two organizations. The paper has four sections: the background of the partnership and its work in creating the Certificate program; the courses, instructors, administrative structure, and students that constitute the program; what we have learned in the three years the program has been in existence; and the kinds of changes that could result, both in our overall structure and operations and in this program in particular, if we were to apply what we have learned to improving and even transforming the work we do.

## 2. The Partnership

### 2.1 The Partners

Athabasca University has been delivering programming to Native Education Centres since 1976. Using a version of the "field centre" model favoured by many institutions involved in Native programming (see Oddson and Ross 1991 for an extensive literature review), AU brings programming to small groups of Native students studying at Native Education Centres. These Centres are located either on reserves or close to them, and are run by Indian bands or groups of bands.

The Yellowhead Tribal Council operates such a centre just west of Edmonton, Alberta, the provincial capital. The Council was formed in 1979 to further the economic, cultural and social development of its five member bands. The aim of programs offered at YTC is to develop knowledge, skills and positive attitudes in students so that they will be self-confident, capable, and committed to setting goals, making informed choices, and acting in ways which will improve their lives and the quality of life on their reserves. The Council is committed to forging strong working relationships with post-secondary institutions, which provide the programming that serves their students, and with government departments and agencies, which provide most of the funding that makes this programming possible.

YTC university-level programming began in the fall of 1986, with AU as one of the participating institutions. By 1991, offerings by the three universities involved (AU and the Universities of Alberta and Calgary) included a general university transfer program, a bachelors degree in social work, a University Certificate in Administration, and the University Certificate in Health Development Administration that is the focus of this paper. In addition, YTC offers its own University and College Entrance Preparation program.

## 2.2 The HDA Program

In the mid-1980s the Federal Government of Canada indicated its intent to decentralize control over Indian health programming and eventually transfer this control to Indian nations. YTC was quick to pursue such control on behalf of its member bands. In reviewing their existing resources, the YTC leadership recognized the need for specialized education for prospective Health Directors before undertaking control over health resources and services. As a result, YTC established a community-based Steering and Curriculum Committee which secured federal funding to conduct a needs assessment and feasibility study, hired a consultant, and in the spring of 1987 began negotiations with Athabasca University.

YTC realized early on the advantages of an education program over a training program. Education programs leave more doors open to the graduate than do training programs, because they incorporate an understanding of the social and historical context of the issues involved in development and management, and because they lead to a university credential. Hence the decision to approach Athabasca University: AU is a fully accredited university, whose mission is "the removing of barriers that traditionally restrict access to and success in university-level studies, and the increasing of equality of educational opportunity for all adult Canadians regardless of their geographical location and prior academic credentials".

YTC had their needs for a program worked out by the time they approached AU. These were for a program that would develop

- communication skills, written and oral;
- skills in assessing community needs and conducting inventories of community resources;
- skills in developing human resources, including crisis management and building self-awareness;
- negotiating and contracting skills, at all levels of Indian and non-Indian government;
- team-building skills;
- awareness of how features of the physical environment can affect health; and
- awareness of general health issues, including community problems and concerns, programs currently in place, and traditional responses to health.

Further, YTC felt the program should have the following features:

- a holistic approach, whereby community health is explored from a variety of angles without the more narrow focus of professions such as social work or nursing;
- information about Federal and Provincial health care systems and public health policy, bylaws and principles in regard to Indian communities;
- incorporation of traditional Indian concepts of health and medicine; and
- provision of sufficient administrative skills to enable students to begin a working career in health administration at the band level upon graduation.

AU agreed to work with YTC in designing an appropriate curriculum, and in the fall of 1987 meetings began with regional and federal representatives of Health and Welfare Canada, Medical Services Branch, the major funding agency. At this point AU took on the major role in negotiating the curriculum, but university representatives were ever mindful that it was YTC who would be funded for this program and not the university. When it came time to negotiate the budget, the university's costing was only one of the inputs to the discussions.

## 3. The Program

### 3.1. Curriculum

The list of courses that resulted from these three-party negotiations was a compromise between the pressure from federal officials for a heavily administrative program and the determination of university representatives that the "development" portion of the program -- the social sciences and humanities courses -- would not be lost. What emerged was a two-year, 60-credit program that offered English writing skills, critical thinking, administrative principles, and communications skills in semester one; human sexuality, business math, personnel management, and introductory psychology in semester two; and principles of teaching and learning and a practicum in semester three. Year Two consisted of introductory accounting, contemporary native issues, computing literacy, and administrative law; the Canadian health care system, group problem-solving, community development, and research methods; and a final, 6-credit practicum.

The choice of courses was constrained by the courses AU had available in packaged form, given AU's practice of using the same course materials for classroom-based students as for those doing home study. Apart from some courses in nursing, however, AU had very little to offer in the area of health issues, and three instructor-delivered courses had to be developed specifically for the program. In addition, the two practicum courses were new to AU. Such courses are now being incorporated into AU's Bachelor of Nursing program, and into the proposed Addictions Counselling program, but at the time they were proposed for the program they were an untried venture.

### 3.2. The Instruction

The unique nature of the program also necessitated some innovations in the delivery of the courses. From their 15 years' experience with Native programming, the AU staff involved in developing the new program had learned a number of hard lessons. One, most AU home study course packages, no matter how rigorously developed and academically sound, required some adaptation, and sometimes extensive adaptation, to make them meaningful to Native learners. Two, Native learners suffered from previous schooling that was aimed at making them into middle-class, "white" people, who would speak English, not Cree or Dene or Sioux, and whose culture would be relegated to a compartment labelled "singing and dancing". Consequently Native students needed more time to work through the dense prose and computations that are typical of university-level packaged materials, and more one-on-one tutorial help. Three, typically three quarters of the students at Native Education Centres were women, almost always mothers of several children, and often without partners, whose responsibilities outside the classroom made great demands on them and left little time for study (see Spronk and Radtke 1988).

Over the years classroom instructors had been adapting the courses they worked with, providing extra tutorials, and supporting students in their struggles to balance studies with family and community responsibilities. Thanks to the willingness of the Medical Services Branch funders (MSB) to acknowledge these special requirements, AU was able to incorporate into the program payments to instructors over and above their regular contracts, in return for adaptation manuals that would be committed to paper, meetings with the program coordinator, and a two-hour tutorial session in addition to the three hours spent weekly in the classroom. Built into the contract negotiated between MSB, YTC, and AU was the expectation that YTC would provide the counselling and advising services required for mature students, since AU did not have enough staffing in these areas to meet the need.

## 3.3. Administrative Structure

Another lesson AU had learned over the years was that programming offered in Native Education Centres would not succeed without the presence of a full-time coordinator on-site. The coordinator's role is to provide an open and two-way link between the university, the students, the instructors and the administrators of the cooperating agency. In the case of the HDA program, these responsibilities were expanded to include advising and assisting instructors in the job of adapting courses to meet the needs not just of Native learners, but of learners who would eventually be working in health care. The HDA program coordinator was hired in June 1988, less than three months before the courses were to begin. In addition to the coordinator, staff from Tutorial Services and the Faculty of Arts, sponsors of the program within the university, were designated in-house troubleshooters, with the job of putting out small fires before they became outright conflagrations.

## 3.4 Students

Funding and approvals were not in place in time for an adequate recruitment and screening process to take place, so the 35 students who were admitted to the program were pretty much the 35 who applied. Most were YTC students, i.e., members of bands that were members of YTC, but a few came from "outside", attracted by YTC's location, its small size, and its offer of university-level programming. Again due to short lead time, these students were provided with only a pro forma orientation (introductions to program personnel and pep-talks from band chiefs and YTC administrators), and instructors were provided with even less. The program was underway.

## 4. What We Learned

### 4.1. Formative Evaluation

The fixing and patching that went on during the two years of this first offering gave new meaning to the term "formative". This was in so many ways a new venture that we all learned to expect the unexpected. One third of the students dropped out during the first year, due to less than adequate entry skills, family problems, and lack of genuine connection with and commitment to the program. Some courses were out of sequence; for example, the research methods needed for the first year practicum were not offered until the second year. Other courses were far too heavy, causing students to sag in the middle and fall apart by the end. There were evident gaps in the program, and at the same time courses that did not fit. Some instructors clashed with the coordinator, others had difficulty adjusting to classes where students wandered in and out, disregarded deadlines, or disappeared for days at a time. An endless trickle of administrivia left the in-house staff feeling as though they were being nibbled to death by ducks.

Yet we survived. Seven students completed the program within the prescribed deadlines, and went on to jobs in health or other administrative fields, or to further studies. Another 8 came close to completing the program. These results were judged successful enough to justify funding for a second intake, and when classes commenced again in September 1990, these 8 students returned to complete the program.

## 4.2. Summative Evaluation

The second intake gave us a chance to take advantage of what we had learned. Even without benefit of a formal evaluation, we were able to fix the worst mistakes. More vigorous recruitment and rigorous screening programs were implemented, resulting in a much better qualified group of 22 students, many from outside YTC. Two courses were replaced by more health-related courses, and the sequencing problems were remedied. Math was spread out over the first year, to allow students more time to come to grips with algebra. Students were provided with a Handbook, and administrative procedures and responsibilities were clarified and tightened.

In addition, the funding provided for the second intake included support for an extensive evaluation of the program. This was contracted out to the Centre for Distance Education at AU, whose staff worked at arm's length from the project. At the time this paper was written, that evaluation was still in progress, but was far enough along to provide us with numerical and narrative confirmation of what we already knew, but also some surprises. Of the 15 students from the first intake who were interviewed, many felt their entry skills in English and math were poor (35% and 73%), and voiced strong opinions that high school completion should be an entry requirement. Most of the instructors interviewed (10 instructors covering 14 courses) agreed. As for the success of course adaptations, most students (73%) and instructors (80%) were satisfied that courses were made relevant to health development. Students were more divided on the issue of relevance to Native concerns, with opinions ranging from very dissatisfied (14%) to very satisfied (21%). The majority of instructors (70%), however, said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the Native content (only one instructor was Native). Most of the students (72%) were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of the instructional materials, but less than half of the instructors (40%) expressed satisfaction, citing problems in obtaining materials when they were needed and in adequate quantities. Most students (60%) were satisfied or very satisfied with the instructors, but only half of them felt that they had had enough time to do the courses, whereas most instructors (70%) were satisfied with the pacing. As for communication with the program administrators, most students again were satisfied (60%), but a significant minority (20%) were very dissatisfied. Instructors were more satisfied with their communications with the administrators (80%), but were very dissatisfied (50%) with their communication with each other, rating it as "virtually nonexistent". Most students (72%) expressed great frustration with YTC in the area of policy, however, as did the instructors (50%), citing concerns about lack of enforcement of policies on attendance, deadlines, and smoking.

These results were more or less expected. What surprised us, however, given the severity of the problems we had all had to cope with, were the unanimously positive replies students gave to the question, "How do you feel you benefitted from this program?" All students mentioned an increased knowledge and skill base. Most were confident that their potential for employment had increased dramatically, not just because of increased skill levels but also their increased self-confidence. Further, when asked if they would recommend the program to others, 100% said they would, citing not only the benefits to individuals but to Native communities. Many of the students have already encouraged other family members to seek admission into the program.

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## 5. Where to from Here?

These responses are heartening to those of us who struggle to mount programs in the hope they will be of some value. It is evident that the HDA program, for all its deficiencies, is still serving as a bridge to new opportunities for these learners. Yet the responses are also chastening, because they point up areas where the bridge is still too shaky. For example, a too-open admissions policy in a program as demanding as this one does students no favour, and may in fact do them harm, if it sets students up for yet another failure, and jeopardizes the quality of instruction from instructors who must do remediation at the expense of course content. Another outstanding issue is the process of course adaptation, which is still an ad hoc matter of substitutions, deletions and additions, rather than a "regeneration" of courses that explicitly reveals assumptions and compares and contrasts Native and non-Native values, practices and viewpoints (see Goulet and Spronk 1988).

AU simply does not have the resources, either human or financial, to undertake this work. Even if we did have the resources, we could only proceed if we worked in partnership with Native people. Those partnerships are valuable, for universities as much as for Native people, but they themselves are probably only bridges. Native people are working to create their own post-secondary institutions, controlled and staffed by Native people, with programs that are their own rather than brokered in from non-Native institutions. There are three such institutions already in existence in Canada, and more are in the making; YTC itself may eventually become one. As these new institutions emerge, the role of universities in Native education will have to change. To what, who can say? All that can be safely said at this point is that we will try to remain responsive, flexible, and as open to change as we claim to be to our learners.

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<u>OPEN LEARNING IN AFRICA</u>

<u>THE CASE OF THE CHILD CARE LEARNING PROGRAMME IN UGANDA</u>

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# OPEN LEARNING IN AFRICA

## THE CASE OF THE CHILD CARE OPEN LEARNING PROGRAMMF IN UGANDA

by

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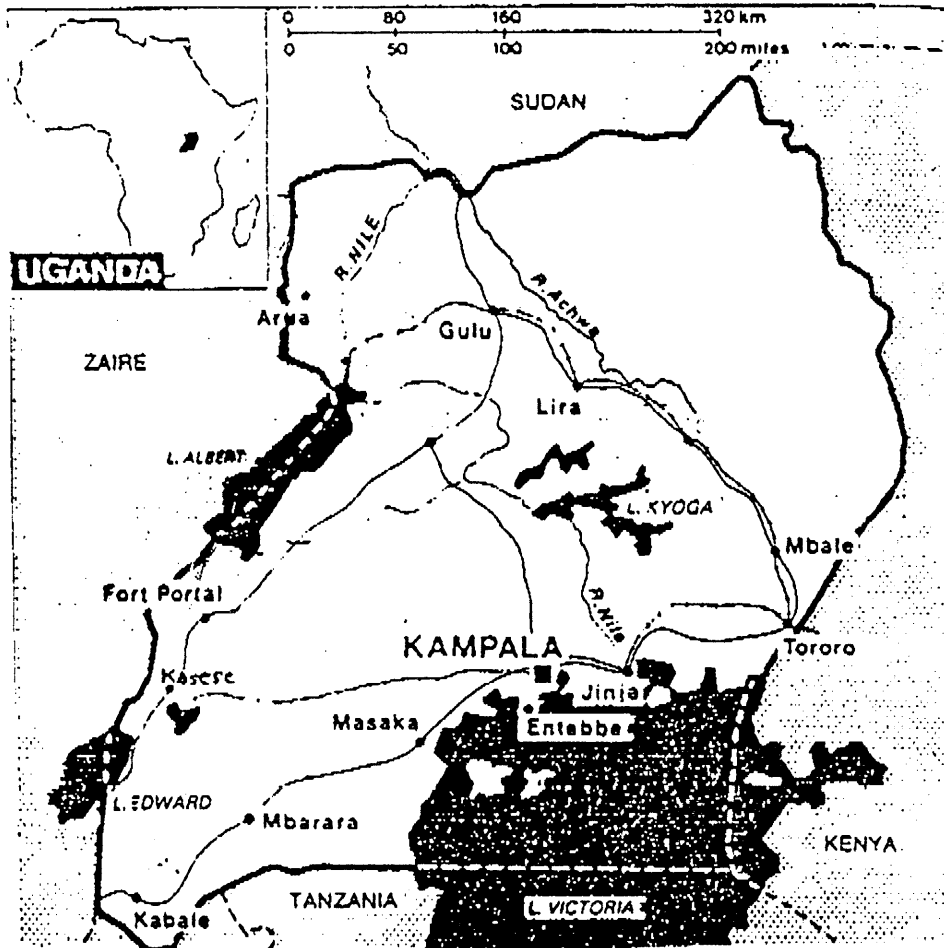
MAP OF UGANDA SHOWING SITES OF CHILDREN'S HOMES

## BACKGROUND

Open learning is a method of education which has become viable in Britain, Canada, the U.S.A., Australia and Western Europe. We felt that open learning could be used successfully in Africa. Specifically, we felt that it could meet the needs of residential child care workers in Uganda , who rarely have access to the few training institutions which are available in the country.

The original project proposal for the Child Care Open Learning Programme in Uganda was drawn up by the authors, in consultation with staff working in the child care field, both in Government and non-governmental organisations. In December 1988 the proposal was accepted by the Ministry of Relief and Social Rehabilitation and Save the Children Fund (UK) and a Project Coordinating Group was established.

The main objective of the Child Care Open Learning Programme was outlined as follows :

* to develop the professionalism of staff working in the child care field, particularly in child care institutions, and to improve the quality of care for children.

## Open Learning as a proposed method

This objective was to be achieved through the development of an Open Learning programme. Open learning is characterised by easy access, flexibility and cost effectiveness. It has been defined as an approach to learning which reduces or removes educational constraints, such as requirements to attend at a specific time or to follow a preordained course of study.

Unlike formal education programmes, an open learning programme does not rely on set timetables and examinations, and it is accessible to those without formal qualifications. Open learning enables staff with or without any prior training to participate. This is an important factor to consider since a large proportion of the staff working in residential child care institutions do not have any formal qualifications and have often completed primary level education only.

Open learning programmes enable learners to study in their own local areas, including their workplaces, which is particularly helpful to women who have family responsibilities which make full time study impractical. Residential child care workers are usually female and find it difficult to leave their family responsibilities, so training programmes which are workplace based would increase accessibility and allow a greater number of staff to participate.

The Child Care Open Learning Programme was conceived as a way of enabling residential child care workers to develop their knowledge and skills in caring for children whilst at their place of work. In-service training is usually cost-effective as it allows staff to study without leaving their employment. However, the support of administrators is extremely important so that the learning opportunity is maximised. An open learning programme was seen as a way of providing all staff who are caring directly for children with a training opportunity which avoids lengthy and expensive institution-based training and recognises existing work and family commitments.

Open learning is "learner - centred" and it places emphasis on the process of learning as well as the content. The establishment of workplace based self-help study groups is a central feature of the Child Care Open Learning Programme, recognising the importance of the learning process and the need for support.

An open learning programme for residential child care workers was developed in the United Kingdom during the early 1980's which resulted in the development of an Open University course "Caring for Children and Young People" (Course P653). Carol Hurley outlined the development and evaluation of this course in her paper "Open Learning for Child Care" (2) and commented that "there is much still to be done in evaluating the benefits and pitfalls of using open and distance learning in training for social work".

## Open and distance learning and child care workers in Africa

The Child Care Open Learning Programme appears to be an innovative approach to the training of child care workers in Africa. Most training programmes are institution based or they are organised as workshops, short courses and seminars.

Open learning methods have been used successfully in the field of agriculture, particularly by INADES in West Africa with groups of farmers. Radio listening groups were developed to give support to the learners.

Distance learning materials have been extensively used to train health workers by the African Medical Research Foundation (AMREF). Correspondence courses have been developed for use by Ministry of Health employees in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. Courses include Community Health and the Control of Diarrhoeal Diseases.

Distance learning materials have been developed for use in teacher education in several countries in Africa. One example is the Ministry of Education in Uganda who have recently initiated a project to train teachers using distance learning materials. This project is being organised in Mityana in collaboration with Action Aid (Uganda).

## Current context of child care institutions

Child care institutions, such as babies' homes, children's homes, and remand homes, have suffered from a chronic lack of resources during recent years, and yet there have been increasing demands for their services.

The number of residential child care institutions in Uganda has dramatically increased over a very short time, partly to provide care and protection to children orphaned and displaced through war and civil conflict, but also as a direct result of initiatives from both indigenous and international organisations. For example, Uganda Women's Efforts to Save Orphans (UWESO) and SOS Children's Villages. Many homes have also been established by religious organisations.

Currently there are more than eighty homes in Uganda. Voluntary organisations manage more than seventy homes, and a further nine institutions are run by the Ministry of Relief and Social Rehabilitation. These include two Approved Schools and five Remand Homes. The number of staff working in child care institutions is estimated as lying somewhere between one and a half and two thousand.

Children's institutions can be found in every region of Uganda, although there are concentrations around the urban centres of Kampala, Jinja, Mbale, Fort Portal and so on. Some homes are fairly isolated, especially from training institutions, and few homes possess any means of transport.

Numerous problems have been identified in children's homes across the country. Standards of care are often poor, with many children failing to receive 'good enough' care, whether physically or emotionally. The fabric of buildings is often in a poor state of repair, finances are usually very limited, and management capacity is often weak. Training opportunities for staff, whether formal or informal, are virtually non-existent.

Such massive problems can be addressed in a variety of ways, not least by injecting cash and material resources, but also by strengthening systems for monitoring and controlling the operation of children's homes. The Ministry of Relief and Social Rehabilitation is currently introducing guidelines and rules for the establishment and operation of babies' and children's homes. These rules have been developed to promote improved standards of care, recognising the particular problems facing child care institutions.

Long term and significant improvements in the quality of care for children living in institutions can be made through the development and implementation of a comprehensive staff development and training programme, which develops professionalism.

The Ministry of Relief and Social Rehabilitation has been working in partnership with Save the Children Fund (UK) to improve access to training opportunities for staff working in child care institutions. There are few training opportunities available at the moment.

**Current training opportunities for child care staff working in residential child care institutions**

Uganda has two institutions which provide social work training :

* Makerere University, Department of Social Administration and Social Work, Kampala, which runs a three year degree programme leading to a Bachelor in Social Work award.

* Nsamizi Institute of Social Development, Mpigi, which runs a one year Certificate in Social Development and a two year Diploma in Social Development course.

There is also an institution which provides training for nursery nurses and nursery teachers :

* Sanyu Training School, Kampala, runs a two year course leading to a Certificate in Nursery Nursing.

The minimum entry requirements for each of these institutions is "O" level or equivalent , although "A" level is necessary for the degree programme. The combined total capacity of these courses is not much more than one hundred students each year.

## Educational levels achieved by residential child care staff

Few residential child care workers possess sufficient formal qualifications to gain entry to training institutions offering professional courses in the social work and child care field. Access to relevant and appropriate training is consequently extremely limited, usually to a few individuals who have obtained sufficient formal qualifications.

A glimpse of the problem facing residential child care staff was provided by Maude Mugisha who examined the level of education of staff working in children's homes in the Kampala area (1). She found that 74 per cent of child attendants had received primary education only. All the staff surveyed were women, which reflects the predominance of female staff in this field of work.

In 1989 a survey of 144 staff working in 35 child care institutions all over Uganda was carried out by the Coordinating Group of the Child Care Open Learning Project. It was found that 30 per cent of staff had completed primary education only, whilst a further 45 per cent had completed secondary education. All the staff surveyed expressed a great deal of enthusiasm for the opportunity to learn more about child care so that they could improve their knowledge and skills.

## Distance learning materials

Distance learning materials can be used very successfully in an open learning programme, although learners need to have a high level of motivation to study individually. High quality materials can be developed which are relevant and appropriate to the needs of learners.

The Child Care Open Learning Programme developed print-based distance learning materials which could be used by individual learners, but also by learners meeting together in a self-help study group. The materials consisted of five course units which contained activities for learners to carry out, and a study guide to guide learners about how to follow the programme.

## Self – help study groups

It is crucial for learners to have an effective support system, particularly when distance learning materials are used, so that learners do not suffer from isolation or lack the opportunity to share ideas and experiences with other learners. Establishing self-help study groups is one way of developing a support system for learners in an open learning programme.

Study groups can be organised at the workplace, where work colleagues can meet afresh as learners. The context of a study group provides support and the opportunity for discussion, enriching the learning experience in comparison with individual study.

The Child Care Open Learning Programme is built upon the establishment and process of self-help study groups, where staff members meet at their workplace on a regular basis to discuss the programme learning materials and carry out activities together. The self-help study groups nominate one of their members to take the role of Study Group Coordinator. This is not the same as being a leader, but more of a facilitator and convenor, encouraging members to contribute and participate fully in the learning process and experience.

The self-help study groups aim to provide support and the opportunity to explore new ideas and skills in a secure environment.

## STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHILD CARE OPEN LEARNING PROGRAMME

The programme was to be achieved through the following process :

* a comprehensive survey of learning needs of the target group of staff working in child care institutions

* the development of a curriculum of priority topics to be included in the learning programme

* the development of relevant and appropriate learning materials for use by child care staff in self-help study groups in homes

* the establishment of pilot self help study groups in a small number of homes who wish to participate in the early stages of development of the learning programme

* the monitoring of the process and the progress of pilot study groups and pilot learning materials

* the refinement and improvement of the process of the learning programme and the learning materials, with a view to extending the learning programme to a wider group of target staff, ensuring that the necessary systems for support and monitoring are in place.

### Survey of learning needs

A learning needs assessment survey of child care staff was undertaken by the Project Coordinating Group during February and March 1989. One hundred and forty four staff, from thirty five homes, were interviewed to identify their learning needs.

The survey obtained information about the educational background and work experience record of staff working directly with children in residential institutions. Respondents were invited to identify topics in the field of child care which would be useful and relevant to their work , and which would help them to improve their care of children. Staff were also asked if they had participated in any previous in-service training opportunities. This was rarely the case.

The data was analysed by members of the Project Coordinating Group at a workshop in April 1989. More than ninety per cent of staff surveyed stated that they needed to learn more about child health care. Skills in training children and child nutrition were also identified by more than seventy five per cent of respondents. The administration of child care institutions and children with handicap were other priority topics.

## Development of a curriculum for the programme

Members of the Project Coordinating Group were aware of the need to develop a curriculum for the Child Care Open Learning Programme. The priority topics were identified through a survey of learning needs.
The Project Coordinating Group decided to hold a Curriculum Development Workshop to carry out the following tasks :

* to identify the course units of the learning programme, including the topics for each unit, the content and activities for each topic, and the methods.

* to deal with the question of relevance, usefulness, suitability and level of the course programme.

A three day Curriculum Development Workshop was held in June 1989, involving the following participants :

: a curriculum development specialist (Makerere University)

: a distance education / adult education specialist (Makerere University)

: a physician (Mulago Hospital, Kampala)

: a nutrition specialist (Mwanamugimu Nutrition Unit, Kampala)

: staff representatives from child care institutions (5)

: a communication specialist

: a specialist in children with special needs

: representatives from the Ministry of Relief and Social Rehabilitation

: a representative from Save the Children Fund (UK)

The workshop participants reviewed the priority learning
topics and the main learning needs which had emerged from the
survey of learning needs. The priority topics were proposed
to form the core units of the learning programme, and were
identified as follows :

| Original Unit Title | Final Title |
|---|---|
| Health Care | Child Health Care |
| Learning Skills | Skills in Training Children |
| Food and Nutrition | Child Nutrition |
| Children with Special Needs | Children with Special Needs |
| Administration | Planning and Administration in Children's Homes |

The units of the learning programme were arranged in the
following sequence :

Unit 1 : Child Health Care
Unit 2 : Child Nutrition
Unit 3 : Children with Special Needs
Unit 4 : Skills in Training Children
Unit 5 : Planning and Administration in Children's Homes

The content of each unit was developed from the groups of
topics identified by child care staff during the learning
needs survey.

The process of developing a curriculum for each unit of the
learning programme involved the workshop participants
dividing into five sub-groups, each taking one unit.
Each sub-group carried out the following tasks :

* determined the unit objectives

* specified the themes, main topics and sub topics

* specified the time required for covering each topic and the
  total unit

* activities

* methods

* possible visual aids

The topics, sub-topics and objectives were further refined
during the later process of producing the written learning
materials.

The questions of relevance, suitability and usefulness of the
curriculum to the target group of child care staff were
addressed by staying close to the learning needs survey
findings, and through the practical inputs of the workshop
participants who came from child care institutions.

The level of the learning programme was specified as
approximately "O" level or equivalent, recognising that less
literate learners could learn from participation in self-help
study group sessions, from carrying out activities and from
illustrations in the learning materials.

Members of the Project Coordinating Group proposed that a
Certificate of Participation in the Child Care Open Learning
Programme should be awarded to learners who regularly attend
self-help study group sessions and participate in the
programme. It was suggested that the programme could be
approved by the Ministry of Relief and Social Rehabilitation,
possibly in conjunction with an educational institution.

The Project Coordinating Group aimed to develop a relevant
and appropriate curriculum which matched the learning needs
of staff working in child care institutions in Uganda. At the
end of the curriculum development workshop, members felt that
the curriculum had addressed the needs identified by the
learners, through a participatory and democratic process.
However, members also recognised that the development and
piloting of learning materials and monitoring of the learning
programme would help to pinpoint weaknesses in the
curriculum.

## Development of learning materials

The Project Coordinating Group identified a variety of
resource personnel within Uganda who could be approached to
write materials for use in the Child Care Open Learning
Programme. Coordinators were appointed for each course unit
of the programme, some of whom were members of the Project
Coordinating Group. One member took the role of Editor,
although all members were involved in a series of editing
workshops, when each course unit was examined and drafts were
amended.

A Materials Development workshop was held in October 1989,
with key writers, illustrators and members of the Project
Coordinating Group as participants. Draft study units and a
study guide were produced by February 1990, which were
finally edited before publication as units for use in the
pilot stage.

## Pilot stage of programme

The pilot implementation phase took place between July 1990 and January 1991. During this period the open and distance learning materials were field tested in twelve child care institutions, with one hundred and thirty four programme participants.

Child care institutions were given introductory information about the programme, and were invited to enrol in the programme. The selection of institutions to participate was not entirely random, as the Project Coordinating Group intended that the programme should be piloted in a variety of establishments, in order to represent the range of different functions. Homes were identified or self-selected in Kampala, Fort Portal in the west of the country, and Mbale in the east. Within the twelve institutions there were Governmental and non-governmental homes, babies' homes and children's homes, remand homes and a special scholl for deaf children.

Homes participating in the pilot stage were visited by a member of the Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation Training Unit, when the programme aims and objectives were outlined and interested staff completed enrolment forms. Each home was invited to establish a self-help study group with one member nominated to act as a coordinator, and membership was suggested as being ten or less to allow full participation by all members.

The learning materials were issued to the Study Group Coordinators in two stages, mainly because of printing delays, so that participants received Units 1 and 2 together, and later Units 3,4 and 5. Participants received the Study Guide at the outset.

One hundred and seventeen participants successfully completed the programme. The drop-out rate was about thirteen per cent which is much lower than average rates for distance learning programmes of twenty five per cent or more.


## Monitoring and evaluation of the pilot stage

Participants in the pilot stage were invited to complete questionnaires at several points in the process of undertaking the learning programme. The questionnaires were designed to obtain feedback about the content of each study unit and the process of undertaking the programme. Focus group discussions were organised at each of the homes and a sample of self-help study group sessions were attended to observe the programme in action. Participants have been encouraged to put forward ideas and comments for strengthening the programme.

Feedback has highlighted the central importance of the self-help study groups and the role of the study group coordinators, particularly in supporting the learning process and providing encouragement. It has also emphasised the major role played by administrators in giving support and encouragement to their staff whilst undertaking a learning programme, and valuing the impact on their home and the quality of care for children.

Staff have expressed enormous satisfaction with the programme and have valued the experience of sitting with colleagues to discuss their work of caring for children. There have been clear examples of the programme's impact on homes, such as homes building pit latrines and purchasing thermometers, and devising new health record forms. Staff have commented that they now know more about their jobs and they can understand why children sometimes behave in strange and difficult ways.

The successful participants received Certificates of Participation awarded by the Ministry of Relief and Social Rehabilitation. There have been many reports from staff of the confidence which they have gained through being study group members and coordinators. The Child Care Open Learning Programme certificate was the first award in a lifetime for many of the participants.

Staff working in a special school for deaf children appreciated the programme and felt that the majority of learning materials were very relevant to their needs, since they care for children in a residential institution. They suggested that the programme should be made widely available to teachers in residential special schools, and even other teachers in boarding schools.


## SOME CONCLUSIONS

The Child Care Open Learning Programme has been validated and accepted by the Ministry of Relief and Social Rehabilitation and the association of child care agencies in Uganda as a relevant and appropriate learning and training programme for staff working in residential child care institutions.

The participants in the pilot stage have also validated the programme by their enthusiastic response to the content and process of the programme. There have been many requests by other staff to join the programme, and some staff have proposed that a further "advanced' level course is developed to challenge them further.

The programme curriculum and materials have been developed from scratch as there have been no similar initiatives in the past. Uganda has now developed a series of indigenous study units in the major areas of child care, which could act as a model for the development of additional materials in the future. Locally produced materials are still rarely found, although this situation is changing with improved stability in the country.

The use of an open learning programme has enabled a large
number of staff to participate with ease, and the process has
been kept as cost-effective as possible by groups meeting at
their workplace. This open learning methodology could
usefully be employed in other institutions such as schools,
health centres and hospitals, and with other groups of staff
at their workplaces. The major cost is the development and
production of study materials but funds can be obtained from
a variety of sources, particularly if the aims of projects
are congruent with national development initiatives.


There is a very real future for this methodology in Africa,
given current resource constraints, poor qualification
levels, developmental needs of women, and the basic needs and
rights of children in developing countries.

May 1991

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LOW INTERVENTION COURSE DEVELOPMENT:

AN APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY APPROACH TO DISTANCE EDUCATION?

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# LOW INTERVENTION COURSE DEVELOPMENT:
## AN APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY APPROACH TO DISTANCE EDUCATION?

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Synopsis: One of the "givens" of recent distance education practice has been the course team approach to course development. The assumption has been that only a course team can provide the range of expertise and perspectives in the field and adeptness in the appropriate use of communications media that are required to produce a quality distance education course. However, a course team approach can be costly and time consuming, beyond the means of many smaller institutions and educational providers in the Third World, and can limit opportunities to develop distance courses in other than "tried and true" curricula. An alternative approach considers distance course development as a logical extension of a teacher's range of skills, provides institutional support and direction as needed to individual course authors, and can produce courses within a six month to one year lead time for a cost of less than $10,000 Canadian. This is the alternative that has been used for the past 24 years at the University of Waterloo, Canada. It assumes that distance teaching skills can be developed among instructors and added to their repertoire of teaching approaches, and that support for course authors in learning distance teaching approaches and in using media for teaching purposes can be provided by an appropriate infrastructure and collegial sharing of experience, rather than by including individual experts in each course team.

## A Brief History of the Program

The University of Waterloo is a relatively young university, begun in 1957 with an initial concentration in engineering, math and science and a continuing orientation towards innovation. In addition to its academic reputation, especially in computer science, two programs distinguish Waterloo from other more conventional institutions; co-op and correspondence. Waterloo began one of Canada's first co-op programs in which students could combine formal studies with work experience, and that program is still Canada's largest. In 1968, Dr. Jim Leslie, a physics professor, began the correspondence program with an offering of four science courses to meet the needs of teachers in place who required further qualifications.

The program began with what Dr. Leslie termed a "commonsense" approach to the task of preparing course materials and providing instruction to distance students. Beginning from the on-campus basis, the distance program used established academic requirements and procedures as a reference point for its standards and practices. Course development was encouraged by what can be termed a "functional fiction" that indicated to professors that preparing a distance education course was basically the same as preparing and delivering an on campus course, but lectures were presented on audiotape, and blackboard points were captured in printed notes. The concept was functional because it presented the task as simply an extension of classroom teaching activity, as opposed to being an intimidating venture into an unfamiliar medium, and it was fictional in that it did not always take into account the differences in learning context and experience between the classroom situation and that of the individual, isolated, mature student at a distance. Nonetheless, this straightforward approach and fee-for-service compensation prompted more than 200 faculty members to develop and offer over 200 courses within the first ten years of the program. During those first years, enrolment increased exponentially, and by 1978, more than 4000 students were enrolled in the program.

In 1980 an academic and administrative reorganization redistributed the responsibility and funding for distance education from a single centralized correspondence unit to the academic faculties, the university's instructional development unit and a distance education administrative unit. This redistribution was impelled by a change in the financial arrangements for distance education. Previously, revenue from tuition and per-capita government grants for correspondence courses had been maintained in a separate budget stream, and distributed to academic units (17%) to general

university overhead (23%) and to the correspondence unit to cover direct expenses in preparing and operating courses (60%). As of 1980, revenue from correspondence activity was subsumed into general university revenue, and redistributed as part of overall operating budgets for faculties and administrative units. As financial control was reallocated, so was control over the focus and direction of the distance education enterprise as a whole. Although control of academic content in distance courses had always rested with the academic department and the faculty member preparing the course, control of funding for faculty time expended in course development and instruction was transferred to each of the six academic faculties. This meant that compensation for course preparation could vary from faculty to faculty, and would not necessarily be contingent on completion of course materials to particular distance education standards. In turn, this meant approaches to course development became a matter of negotiation, discussion and recommendation among faculty, the teaching resource office, and the correspondence admininistration, rather than prescribed as "the way to do distance education" from a centralised unit.

The Teaching Resource and Continuing Education (TRACE) office, which is Waterloo's instructional development unit, has a mandate to support the enhancement of teaching practice both on campus and off campus, to promote the development of innovative approaches to teaching, and to provide general policy direction to distance and continuing education programs. A faculty member seconded on a part time basis, officially designated as the distance teaching advisor, has developed a significant body of resource materials about distance education practice in general and at Waterloo. She has written two books on distance teaching, one on course development and one on tutoring, and prepares and presents workshops on distance teaching issues for faculty members and graduate teaching assistants who serve as course tutors. Although the distance teaching advisor is officially available for individual consultation about particular course development projects, there are relatively few requests for this type of consultation: consultation about course development projects tends to take place within the context of the correspondence administrative unit. The TRACE resources provide a valuable reference and are one means of building an "institutional memory" about distance education which course authors can consult on an ad hoc basis.

The Correspondence Office is the administrative unit which operates the correspondence program on a day to day basis. Although its role is not fully the "one mailbox" approach that Dr. Leslie initially envisioned, the correspondence office handles most aspects of student services; registration, fees collection, textbook sales, assignment receipt and return and examination arrangements. This unit also deals with course development, and handles the production, duplication and shipping of course materials to students. Although students are provided with instructor names and phone numbers for academic questions, they tend to contact the correspondence office if they cannot reach their instructor, or direct their academic inquiries first to that office. The day to day contact that correspondence office staff have with students and the informal "ombudsman" role the office provides as intermediary between instructors and students has built up a feeling for students' issues among staff, who draw attention to recurring issues to be addressed either by academic faculties or by TRACE. The collective expertise gained from direct contact with students and the facilities for support of course material development are two bases from which correspondence administrative staff work with faculty on course development. The course development process works within the context both of theoretical operating principles and a practical logistical framework.

Theoretical operating principles of the program

The principles articulated at the outset of the program remain its underpinnings serving as a useful reference point for both academics and administrators for setting standards for distance education at Waterloo. The first general principle, that the distance program is be based on the existing academic structure, is the basis for the rest of the operating principles.

•Academic standards. Students studying by correspondence meet the same admission criteria as those on campus. Students may be admitted on the basis of secondary school completion or as mature students, if they have not completed secondary school but have been in the workforce for some time. Many correspondence applicants already have some university courses.

•Academic control over the quality of instruction, course content, selection of the course author and course instructor is vested in the academic unit.

•Only courses which have been offered on campus and are part of the university's regular credit courses would be considered for development for distance education. In Dr. Leslie's terms, "the basic philosophy would be that the correspondence course format was just a different means of teaching a particular established course". (In the past few years, the program has developed and offered a number of non-credit courses to meet the demand for specialised learning, but it remains the case that all credit offerings must have been developed, approved by Senate, and offered at least twice on campus before being offered by correspondence).

•Since accreditation for completing the correspondence version of the course or the on-campus version would be the same, the learning experience by distance is to be equivalent to that on campus. The principle of equivalence is generally interpreted in terms of learning outcomes, but has also provided leverage to justify innovative approaches to the course and the creative use of media. As well, the interpretation of equivalency has been sufficiently liberal to allow course authors to use approaches more appropriate to distance students and to select texts more suitable for adult learners, within the same latitude usually afforded faculty under the aegis of academic freedom.

Logistical framework

In addition to the theoretical foundation of the distance program, certain basic logistical structures also define the framework for correspondence courses.

• Distance education courses are paced and are of the same duration as on-campus courses. The university operates on a three-term system. Term courses are valued at a half credit, and entail approximately twelve weeks of teaching/learning interaction, with an additional two weeks study time prior to the final exam.

•The twelve-week teaching/learning framework for distance courses has six assignment "time slots", for which there are administrative provisions to receive and log students assignments, forward them for marking, and return marked assignments to students. Course authors, when preparing the course, select which time slots are most appropriate for submitted assignments, given the structure of the course and the nature of the discipline: arts courses requiring longer papers tend to have three assignments, whereas language, science and mathematics courses requiring mastery of skills and concepts at each stage tend to have six assignments.

•The majority of courses use externally published textbooks, although not necessarily the same texts as those used for the same course on campus. However, most courses could not literally be termed "wraparound" courses: students' use of the texts represents less than 20 or 25% of the total course work. Texts are selected for their fit with content and orientation of the course, accessibility in writing style and format, comprehensiveness, and, increasingly, availability. In newer disciplines, where appropriate material may not be available, the course author may compile a book of readings, which the correspondence unit prepares and publishes as a text.

• The most commonly used media for courses are audiotape and print. Initially, the use of audio may have been an outcome of the concept of "translating" the classroom experience, but over time, audio has proven to be an effective and convenient medium, and the collective experience of both

course authors and technical support people includes many approaches to the use of audio which go beyond the concept of a straightforward "lecture."

• The inclusion of additional materials and media in the course package is considered on the basis of what is required for the learning experience to be equivalent to the on campus counterpart course. For example, the use of video (produced internally or externally) is considered if video is an essential part of the on-campus course, and/or if video can be an effective substitute for an experience not readily available at a distance, for example lab or field work.

•Once a course is developed, it remains basically the same for five years, although there is a once a year opportunity for minor revisions. In the fourth year of offering, it is decided whether a course should continue as is or with minor revisions, undergo major repreparation, or be discontinued.

## How it works in practice

A great deal of the information and support provided an individual instructor preparing a course is customised and informal, depending on the needs of the particular course and course author. Because the Correspondence Office handles all the logistics of offering courses, including calendar preparation and distribution, text ordering and copyright clearance, this unit becomes the central clearinghouse for information about each current and proposed course. When a new course is proposed, or an older one is to be reprepared, information about the proposal is provided to the correspondence unit and the prospective course author meets with the manager, course development, to discuss the logistics, structure and approach to course development.
That meeting, usually a year before the course is to be offered, reviews how the course is taught on campus; its objectives, its student profile, and how the course might be taught at a distance. (An outline of the basics of this discussion is on the page entitled "Course Planning.") The choice of texts and the use of media are discussed at this stage.

The schedule of course development may take place over a four, six, eight or twelve month time frame. The course author may choose to work relatively independently, or may provide sample materials at regular intervals, for review and feedback. After the initial course development meeting, the points at which the course author makes connections with the course development staff at the correspondence office are for questions about text selection and availability, when decisions are required about the use of copyright material, and during preparation of audiotapes and print material. The correspondence unit's provision of technical support for preparation of audiotapes and print material serves as a means of sharing both technical expertise and the collective experience from other course authors' use of various media, especially their innovative approaches.

For the preparation of audiotapes, some authors prepare complete scripts, others work from the equivalent of overheads or a general outline. Because the original concept of the audiotapes was that of talking to a student in a tutorial, and because of the concern for maintaining academic control with the instructor, tapes are not "produced" in the sense that a radio program is produced. Rather, the individual course author is provided with a professional quality audiocassette recorder, technical advice, and good quality tapes, and the course author can prepare tapes in a university office, at home, or in a small studio in the correspondence unit. This style of audio is seen as relatively low-key, informative and less formal than radio, and even though the content has been carefully organised, the flavour is of direct communication from instructor to student, or as one Waterloo professor commented, "From our kitchen table to your kitchen table." All tapes are screened for sound quality, and on request of the course author can be reviewed for presentation manner and clarity. Even though the original material is on audiocassette, rather than reel to reel tape, the technician can edit and reassemble audio material, and can enhance sound quality if needed.

The preparation of print material is one area in which there has been an evolution, both conceptually and practically. The initial concept of "blackboard notes", often handwritten, has changed with the growing awareness of distance students' need for print material to include clear procedural information, study guides, supplementary reading lists, and review questions. (Although this information was usually in the early courses, it tended to be on audiotape, where it was not readily accessible.) Print material is now seen as including the kind of information about procedures, texts, resource material, and student assessment that is usually presented in the first class on campus, and at the beginning or end of many classes during the term. Changing instructional practice and students' expectations both on and off campus have also altered the way print material is used. On campus, instructors are now required to provide printed course outlines including all the procedural information listed above, and many instructors prepare extensive print course packages for on campus use, which may include overheads and additional reading material. In response to these developments, the correspondence unit provides course authors with different levels of support for preparation of the print materials, depending on need, ranging from provision of print preparation guidelines for the course author who is working with his/her own computer to complete preparation of print materials from the author's written copy.

Videotapes developed specifically for correspondence courses are produced in the Audio Visual department of the university. There is a good working relationship with the Audio Visual unit (which concentrates on video rather than audio) and consultation between the two units about the production of videos for correspondence courses. Audio Visual also assists with the acquisition of rights and masters of externally-produced videos.

The correspondence staff clear copyright for any item included in the course package which originates with anyone other than the course author, and keep the course author informed of costs and clearance conditions.

Because of the volume of courses being prepared or reprepared each year (from forty to sixty), and because each course author is virtually working alone, it is sometimes difficult to keep track of the progress of each course development. Various "checkpoints" help identify potential problems; for example, if a course author does not provide copyright information on time, the correspondence staff will follow up. However, because the contractual arrangement to prepare a correspondence course is between the course author and the academic faculty, correspondence staff must rely on moral suasion to try to ensure courses are completed on schedule. If it seems a course preparation may be so late that it cannot be offered as scheduled, the manager, course development, or the director of the correspondence program contacts the relevant department and associate dean of the faculty. Despite this arms' length arrangement, there are few situations in which courses are not completed as scheduled.

Outcomes

For students. Because of the relative simplicity of preparing course materials, the University of Waterloo has developed a very large repertoire of course offerings, now over 300 courses, and can students can obtain complete general degrees or specialized degrees in 14 different disciplines at a distance. This diversity of offerings also attracts students pursuing degrees at other institutions, face to face or at a distance, who may require one or two additional courses available only through the University of Waterloo. Completion rates are a fairly consistent 65%, and students stay with the program, returning students represent two thirds of the annual enrolment. More than 1300 students have obtained degrees by distance from the university since the program began. Enrolments have held at 18,000 courses per year, despite the increasing number of Canadian institutions available to serve distance students. Perhaps one of the most important outcomes for students is the relative transparency of the technology used. Because audio and print are seen as natural extensions of familiar modes of teaching, the majority of courses do not require mastery of

the technology, either for the instructor or for the student, and this is reflected in an ease of presentation style and human-ness which distance students value.

For faculty. Although there is no doubt that preparation of a distance education course represents a formidable amount of work, course authors have commented on the benefits for them personally, in terms of expanding their range of teaching skills, and for their students. Because course preparation is seen as an extension of teaching approaches used on campus, the techniques developed for distance course development can in turn be applied to on-campus teaching. Many course authors note that their classroom teaching benefits as a result of distance development process of taking a step back, conceptualising a course from start to finish, and building on this framework. Also, as on campus teaching is increasingly geared towards providing resources for a more independent learner, instructors find that the distance teaching materials they have developed can be used on-campus resources, either instead of regular lecture sessions, or as additional reference material. A number of course authors have also used the distance course materials as the starting point for texts which have been subsequently published commercially.

For the institution. The "low intervention" approach to course development requires the provision of administrative and technical support, but in a way that acknowledges that experience and expertise resides both with faculty members and with administrators, and can be mutually accessible through the usual formal and informal channels available in an educational institution. This approach is more reflective of the reality of academic institutions in which many people handle many tasks at the same time, than the dedicated course team system, which tends to categorise individuals according to just one area of expertise. Because there is no separate academic structure, and distance course work is woven into the academic organisation, and there is a relatively compact administrative structure, the cost of developing and offering courses remains quite low, between $8000 and $20,000 Canadian, including faculty and administrative time, production costs and materials. This means that the institution can afford to sponsor the development of distance courses which may not have a large market, and has the flexibility to develop courses "on spec", which sometimes has led to the development of some very successful programs. The Classical Studies department, for example, has 23 course offerings and 250 students at a distance including 60 majors and honours students, in an era in which few North American undergraduates specialise in this field .

## What makes it work?

While it is challenging to summarise over twenty years of experience in such a diverse enterprise, one can identify some common threads which seem to make the "low intervention" system work well. These are:

1. Mutual respect for academic and administrative/distance education experience and expertise. A course author who had recently completed an anthropology course which included a video from her own field footage acknowledged the level of support she had received, especially for the video production and for print materials development, and commented, "It really is a team process."

2. An aversion to bureaucracy. The "team" noted above was very informal, consisting of the author, an administrator, a video producer and an editor, who were all working on a number of different projects as well as that particular distance course, who never held a meeting together, and never needed to, because the individuals involved communicated directly when needed.

3. A relatively stable environment with predictable patterns and an established institutional culture. The theoretical principles and logistical framework identified earlier provide a reliable system which serves as a useful basis for any course development. A new course author does not have to conceptualise a new curriculum or decide on the duration or credit weight of the course.

4. Open mindedness and a willingness to try new approaches. The stability of the structure actually also provides a point of departure for innovation, because the existing framework provides a reference point. For example, a course author may decide to experiment with computer mail for assignments, and can set up an experiment comparing assignment turnaround and student outcomes between electronic submission and the standard postal system. Also, it is easier to try new approaches when one does not have to develop everything from scratch and there are a certain number of givens. Sometimes discussions about course development venture into the Candide model of education (what one would do in the best of all possible worlds), and these discussions are useful for stretching the bounds of flexibility before all agree to the realities of "the art of the possible".

5. Integration with mainstream teaching and learning activity in the institution. In the largest faculty of the university, developing and teaching distance courses are included as part of the regular teaching load. It is generally acknowledged that correspondence activity is an important institutional endeavour; distance enrolments represent approximately 20% of the total undergraduate enrolment. The academic structures also serve to confirm the seriousness of commitment to distance course development and teaching. Although there are few administrative systems for enforcing deadlines, the situation for course authors who do not fulfil their commitments to develop courses on schedule is regarded as analogous "to not showing up to teach a class at the beginning of term" as one dean puts it.

New directions?

As Waterloo's distance education program approaches its twenty-fifth year, it seems likely that it will continue to develop as an incremental, rather than a revolutionary factor for change. Some of the current trends point to the directions it may take in the future.

1. More highly customised courses are being developed, especially for senior honours courses, in which students pursue individual project based studies, rather than each student completing an identical course of study. These course packages are not as extensive as introductory level courses, but nor are they as skeletal as the "read this and do that" type of syllabus course previously associated with correspondence study. Moreover, these resource-based packages are equally usable on campus, and may make it feasible to offer low-enrolment senior courses as reading courses.

2. The use of electronic media may play an increasing role, although perhaps not in the obvious direction of computer interaction. There is already one computer course which uses electronic mail for submission of assignments but the modest, relatively low tech medium of fax offers promising possibilities for decreasing assignment feedback time, transmitting queries to instructors and responses to students, and generally serving as a concrete, asynchronous substitute for the telephone.

3. At Waterloo, as in most Canadian institutions, within the next five years there will be a large influx of new faculty replacing those originally hired in the 1960's and now reaching retirement age. The new faculty who are embarking on distance education already bring a new approach and experiences to the task: they have an easy familiarity with most media and with computers, are accustomed to using these tools for preparing course materials for on campus use, and can apply these skills readily to distance course development.

Are there possible applications of this experience for other settings?

Many distance education endeavours represent what Stufflebeam would call "neomobilistic" change, in that they challenge the values, structures and assumptions of an established system. The initial phases of the Open University of the United Kingdom, with its concept and strategies of

overcoming social barriers to further education, could be seen in terms of neomobilistic change. This type of change typically requires rethinking and redeveloping structures based on alternative values that challenge the status quo.

The University of Waterloo's distance education program can be classified as "incremental" change, which works within an existing system, but it is change nonetheless, serving to challenge traditional assumptions about who should be university students and how they should be served; the relationship of learning and life experience, and the development of independence in teaching/learning interactions. Interaction among academics, administrators and students engaged in distance education over a period of time serves to introduce new perspectives about these issues, and these perspectives can and do filter through the university as a whole.

The relatively lower cost and lighter administrative structure entailed in the "low intervention" approach to distance course development are benefits, but should not be the primary reason for choosing this approach. The important philosophical underpinning is the belief that distance education is not a separate professional sphere, but is simply another extension of the spectrum of teaching and learning activity. It is another string to the bow, not an entirely new instrument. It is this perspective which makes everything else possible; the integration into the academic and administrative structures, the development of an institutional culture about distance education, the building of a set of experiences and procedures which provide a reliable context and a framework for innovation. Depending on the context and values, the benefits to any institution or educational system are recognition for distance teaching and learning for instructors, because distance learning is a part of the whole teaching/learning enterprise, and the flexibility it offers in terms of providing distance education opportunities by building on existing structures as needed, rather than setting up (and perhaps later dismantling) administrative systems. But it is strongly recommended that no institution adopt this approach just to save money; unless there is a commitment to the concept of teaching and learning as wider endeavours that happen to encompass distance education, "low intervention" distance education may also turn out to be "low impact" education.

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# Course planning

<u>1. How is course taught in face to face situation?-</u>

-a. Where do students begin; what background are they expected to have?

-b. Where are the students expected to be at the end- in knowledge, understanding, skills, etc.

-c. How do they get from a to b?

-How is information presented?;

-How do they work with the material?

-How do they demonstrate they know/can do what is expected?

-What resources are used-

-texts
-articles from books and journals
-library- expected or not?
-films, videos, slides.

1.i <u>Is the profile of distance students the same as that of classroom based students?</u>
If not, how does it differ?

<u>2. How best to teach the course to correspondence students:</u>

-How best to handle presentation of information

-How best to provide opportunities for working with the information

-Resources needed- texts, print, visual material, etc.

-Additional resources to include if possible: visual material, etc.

### 3. Course development planning schedule: who does what

| course author(s) | educational institution |
|---|---|
| 1. develop course plan, including list of resources needed, logistics of course delivery- home study, study centres, tutors, etc. | |
| | 1 a. Develop budget for course development and course delivery. <br> 1. b. work on logistical arrangements for delivery (hire tutors, supply radios, tape recorders to study centres, etc.) <br> 1.c.-work on obtaining permissions for © articles, visual material, etc. |
| 2. begin development of course units -(write/tape, etc.) | 2. a. -prepare draft unit for review <br><br> 2. b. -present finished copy for review. |
| 3. complete development | 3. complete production of student copies of course materials. Distribute materials to students. |
| 4. monitor first offering- either by teaching course directly, working with tutors, sampling assignments, etc. | 4. provide feedback to course authors about how well course is working. |

5. Evaluate course effectiveness at end of first offering. Review evaluations, determine if course materials or delivery should be changed. Develop and implement plan for course revisions.

# STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES IN INDIA

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## INTRODUCTION:

Distance Education in India has a history of only three decades. It has been developed as an alternative to the formal system, to offer courses in higher education, specifically at the tertiary level. The major consideration for starting Distance Education courses was that it was expected to be accessible to those who could not enter formal institutions and for those who got rejected by the system. The primary reason for launching the Distance Education courses was the ever increasing demand for higher education and to cater to the educational needs of all those who for one reason or other could not enter the formal system. The late 60s and 70s saw an extensive expansion of Distance education system. By 1989 in India the number of students studying through correspondence and Open University system had risen to 0.4 million ( Menon, 1989).

The Distance Education system is not only suitable but also relevant for India. The geographical vastness of the nation as well as its ever increasing population makes it impossible to provide institutions of higher learning in all places where there is a need and demand. Further the cost of higher education is so forbidding that it is beyond the reach of many a million aspiring students. A considerable number of students drop out at various levels starting from the primary to the tertiary level because of economic and social compulsions.

The popularity of the Distance Education courses and the rapid strides the Distance Education system has taken in such a short span of time in India exercise strenuous demands on the institutions. The success of the experiment largely depends on the availability of all kinds of infrastructure, especially the student support system. The question before us is whether there are sufficient support services for offering the courses effectively in the Indian context. This presentation proposes to examine in a general way the support systems available in India in comparison with those found in other countries and offers suggestions for improving it.

## SUPPORT SYSTEMS

One of the six characteristics of Distance Education delineated by Kegan is "the use of technical media, often print, to unite teacher and learner". A corollary of this description is that distance Education must have the capacity to bridge the seperation and to ensure a twoway communication (Daniel, 1984). The technical support through media is one aspect of the support system in Distance Education. Personal Contact Programmes, Study Centres, Students Assignments and Resource Centres will constitute the second category of the support system.

David Seligman explains the use of non-print materials in Distance Education. He lists the following as important media possibilities available:

Audio:

- Radio is the most widely used and has, in Distant Education terms, a venerable history.

- Audio cassettes have followed from radio and are now in common use.

- Audio vision, that is combining either of the two above with print, picture, objects etc. has been used to good effect.

Visual:

- Still pictures from whatever source, whether it be print, photography, slides or film strip.

Television in which programmes are transmitted at given times.

- Video cassettes which carry the same audio-visual message of the T.V. programme, but have greater flexibility of use.

- Video discs which are even more flexible than video cassettes but are not yet readily as available.

- Film which is usually used institutionally or is transferred to video tape to be part of a television programme or video cassette.

Satellite and Cable:

- These are essentially distribution systems but can have implications for interactive elements.

Computers:

-Micro computers which can be home based.

- Computer terminals which work to a distant main frame.

Home Kits

- These can cover the whole range from home laboratories down to small pieces of equipment often cheaply produced.
( Seligman, 1984)


The choice of these media depends on eduactional intention, the best method of delivering that intention, the skill of the people and the technology available. In addition the costs of initiation, production, distribution, utilisation and maintenance are also to be taken into account.

In the short span of history of Distance Education, we find different countries preferring different media. For instance the Radio has been in use for many years and as early as 1976, studies had been made on the effectiveness of the use of Radio in Japan in Correspondence Courses. Thailand's Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University has been using Audio-Cassettes effectively for many years. New Zealand is another country which uses cassette tapes for its tutorial sessions. As for televised teaching Japan and Canada had been in the forefront. The satellite delivered T.V. was made accesssible in Canada in 1980.

The use of the print material in Distance Education has a very long history. They are generally used as a core medium in all Distant Education Systems, with electronic media serving as a supplementary system.

Experts in the field of Distance Education have recommended the use of mixed media approached with printed materials as core medium (Srisa-an, 1984). As it has been pointed out, the choice of the medium, other than the printed material is to be decided on the comparitive cost effectiveness. " The media costs drop steeply as the clientele rises. As a programme, once produced and viewed or heard by more people is more cost effective". ( Distance Education in Asia and Pacific- Vol.I) As such the electronic media can be made more cost effective if the materials produced are placed within the reach of a larger clientele. It is true that a developing country may find the use of T.V. to be very expensive initially but in the long run it should prove cost effective.


SUPPORT SYSTEMS IN INDIA:
    The student support system for Distance Education in India has heavily relied upon print materials. Bakshish Singh writing in 1988 points out that only 6 institutes out of 30 arrange radio talks for their students and T.V. support is not available at all. However, some educational programmes

are relayed from T.V. centres but these are not student-based, they are of very general nature.

The Personal Contact Programmes have been one of the back bones of the system but studies show that the Personal Contact Programmes are not very popular and attendance is thin. The reasons are many. One of them is that attendance is not compulsory at these contact sessions. " Attending these programmes involves travel and maintenance expenditure and leave from the place of work, being away from place of work. Only students from well-off families can afford it". (Distance Education in Asia and Pacific - Vol.II 1982).

The Assignments and Response Sheets system are two other instruments for reaching the students. Again the Response Sheet-Assignment System is not found to be very successful because submission of Assignments and Response Sheets is not compulsory in many institutions. They are not evaluated and they do not generally contribute to the grades awarded to students. Further there are administrative problems, especially in the institutes with larger clientele in receiving, checking and evaluating the Response Sheets and guiding the students.

In this connection it is worth mentioning the experience of the Institute of Correspondence Courses and Continuing Education of Madurai Kamaraj university, Madurai, with the evalutions of Response Sheets of its candidates. The Institute used to insist on the periodical submissions of Response Sheets on specific lessons of a course and experts evaluated them. The Response Sheets would be returned to the candidates with the comments and remarks of the experts. Marks obtained in assignments and periodical test form part of the internal assignment system for its B.Ed. and M.Ed. degree courses. Another pioneering attempt of the institute has been its radio broadcasts on a wide range of topics in different subjects using novel techniques which are well received and purposefully utilised by the students.

As for the study centres, most of the institutes have located them in big cities and they mostly serve as information centres. However the attempts of the Indira Gandhi National Open University to develop a purposeful support system must be referred to here. Students Support Services constitute a major component of its organisational structure. With the help of this component, students are provided with facilities leading to varied instructional experiences. As on today 108 study centres have been established all over the country. The centres provided with audio-visual'equipments get the students exposed to video and audio programmes. Further tutorial and counselling facilities are also made available. The most important development is its telecast launched in May 1991.

It is appropriate to analyse the reasons for the lack of growth in multi-media approach in India. The first constraint is the lack of resources. The second is the non-availability of trained personnel for producing appropriate softwares as well as coursewares. The third reason is that there is hardly any attempt to train teachers in the use of electronic gadgets.

## IMPROVING THE SUPPORT SERVICE:

The foremost consideration in improving the Student Support Service in India is that there should be an integrated plan on an All India basis. All the Distance Education Institutes should pool their resources, man power and financial. In this way duplication of production of materials can be avoided. The expertise of specialists in various fields should be made common for the entire nation. In the case of the production of software materials, there can be planned and organised co-operation among the institutiuons engaged in Distance Education. The materials can be shared by the institutions and thus the cost of production can considerably be lowered.

The Radio Broadcasts have to be strengthened as the Radio is within the reach of the poorest Indian in the remotest corner. The Personal Contact Programme enables the teacher and learner come face to face. It can be made effective only if the age-old method of delivering lectures at such programmes is given up. Instead it must be a proper interactive programme meant for advising, guiding and counselling the learners. Such programmes can be made more effective when the teacher employs various media.

The Response Sheet - Assignment system must be organised in such a way that the students really benefit from it. This can be made by making it the basis for counselling in the Personal Contact Programmes.

Lastly study centres must be fully equipped with hardware and audio-video cassettes in addition to the usual reference materials. A centrally organised media centre may produce modular packages with print and non-print materials for units that are not and cannot be delivered through print materials alone. They are meant for motivating the learner in self-study by providing the necessary infrastructure. These centres must be easily accessible to the student of a particular area irrespective of the institutions to which he is attached. Periodical visits of Resource Persons in various fields to the centres will be ideal for the learners to have

## CONCLUSION:

This presentation has started with the discussion of Distance Education in the Indian context and its need and then it made a brief survey of the student support services available in developed and developing countries and compared it with the support system in India. The suggestions made in the previous section for the improving of student support services deserves earnest consideration.

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# ACCESS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES:

## STRATEGIES TO REALIZE OUR PIOUS ASPIRATIONS

### (A CANADIAN PERSPECTIVE)

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*(This paper will be presented in a joint session with Roger Mills who has written a similar paper from a British perspective)*

The Problem:

The central arguments of this paper are

a)   that open universities, especially but not exclusively in the western world, are far less successful than they have purported to be both in attracting and keeping students from groups traditionally under-represented in university-level studies even though this aspiration is central to their mandate

and   b)   that they are going to have to change the way that they develop and deliver courses if this is to change.

While Athabasca University is the case study here, the paper is written on the understanding that Athabasca's example is not atypical of western open universities.

In common with just about every open university, Athabasca University was founded to extend access to and success in university level education to those who otherwise might not have such an opportunity.

While this philosophy has driven the institution since its inception as an open university, there has been some disagreement as to how it achieves such an objective and considerable evidence that it has been less than successful in attracting disadvantaged groups. This paper will present a brief synopsis of the debate about the means to these ends and, in the context of the evidence and based on individual successes in specific areas, suggest ways in which the overall mission of the institution can be more effectively achieved.

<u>The Mission</u>:

It is useful to start with the university's Mission Statement, the first sentence of which strongly reflects this aspiration:

> Athabasca University is dedicated to the removal of barriers that traditionally restrict access to and success in university-level studies and to increasing equality of educational opportunity for all adult Canadians regardless of their geographical location and prior academic credentials.

However, some of the tension between this aspiration and the traditional components of a university are evident in the second (and final) sentence which reads:

> In common with all universities, Athabasca University is committed to excellence in teaching, research and scholarship and to being of service to the general public.

During 1987, the university embarked on a major strategic planning exercise which culminated in a five-year Strategic Academic Plan. The plan has driven the university's development since 1988 and most of its objectives have been achieved on schedule. Superficially, at least, the plan achieved a great deal by diverting attention away from the endless debates about what kind of institution Athabasca should be to more practical concerns about how to implement its strategies of new programme development, enrolment growth and a focus on the quality of services to students.

However, the process at arriving at the plan was anything but smooth and there were major disagreements as to what the Mission Statement really meant which lead to the collapse of the original steering committee and almost sabotaged the entire strategic planning process.

The essence of the disagreement was a political one. To what extent should the university emphasize its special efforts to attract and to keep disadvantaged students such as those from lower income groups, the unemployed, aboriginal peoples, or penitentiary inmates? Conversely, should the university adopt a more entrepreneurial approach, developing its abilities to respond quickly to demands for its services without undue concern as to the origins of such demands? The former perspective was most strongly represented in the Social Sciences, the latter in Administrative Studies.

While there need not be contradiction between these two approaches, prognosticators of each side saw it as an "either/or" choice in a struggle for control of the institution and its resources. Of particular relevance here was that while most of the institution's history had been characterized by a passive tolerance for considerable ambiguity, the planning exercise's requirements for clear priorities and choices produced fairly explosive results. This perhaps explains why university strategic plans are so frequently broad and general, for the process of establishing very specific goals and priorities will inevitably upset those groups whose concerns are consequently rejected or put lower on the hierarchy. The problem is not so much being of lower priority (even in institutions with "motherhood" mission statements, everyone knows from budget decisions what the real priorities are) as having it stated baldly and publicly in a formal document.

The Evidence:

As Roberts et. al.[1] have noted, while the concept of distance education as an overt tool for general social progress has not been central to institutional developments in the field, most of its proponents associate distance education with increased access, learner-centredness and special sensitivity to race, class and gender. The evidence from Athabasca University suggests that the university's clientele, apart from age differences, is not appreciably different from that served on traditional university campuses.

In its Statistical Handbook prepared for the President's Advisory Committee on Long-Range Planning[2], Athabasca University's Centre for Distance Education presents considerable evidence that the university's students are financially secure (62% of students in one survey described themselves as having "high" or "very high" financial security and only 10% said it was "low" or "very low"[3]), well supported by family and friends (59% said it was "very high"[4]), and employed (60% full-time, 15% part-time, 20% unemployed but not looking for employment[5]). Almost half of the students (and fully 79% of the graduates) had prior university post-secondary credentials[6]. In a separate study of 829 randomly selected new AU students in the fall of 1989 and spring of 1990, a full 55% had annual personal incomes of more than $20,000 and 35% earned more than $30,000 a year. A full 70% of students surveyed came from households with incomes of more than $40,000 a year.[7] These are hardly profiles of seriously disadvantaged Canadians!

Thus, while the university has, without doubt, extended educational opportunity to many, its student profiles are not significantly different from those of traditional campus-based universities. The majority of its students come from the upper half of the income bracket, have previous higher learning experiences and credentials which would be attractive to quite selective universities and clearly do not match the profile of underprivileged or disadvantaged clientele which the Mission Statement's emphasis on accessibility would suggest.

It is not difficult to understand why open universities have been less than successful in attracting and keeping disadvantaged students. Why should students who have faced alienation in traditional classroom settings be attracted to the relatively isolated and less structured setting of distance education? If motivation is a problem in a more interactive social setting, how can we expect such students to show much enthusiasm for home study? If a major variable affecting the success of distance education students is the personal support they receive from family and friends[8], why would we expect a disproportionate representation from groups where educational aspirations are demonstrably lower?

Even if such students are attracted to distance education by open admissions, flexible time tables and at least the illusion of being an easier way to learn, it should be no surprise that their success rate is very low. Home study makes tremendous demands on the individual student, notably in terms of his or her self-confidence, time management and study skills and, most fundamentally, on reading and writing skills.

In 1980 at Athabasca University, for example, the success rate of students in individual courses was less than 30%[9] and, even ten years later after a great deal of focus on this problem, only slightly more than 50% of its students successfully complete their courses of study. By far the biggest drop-out rate comes from first-time homestudy students, a majority of whom drop out without completing more than one or two assignments.

This is not to deny that open universities have provided unprecedented access to university education for a significant group of students previously denied admission. Through open admissions, flexible timetables and distance delivery systems, they have helped those who lack formal credentials, the opportunity or motivation to attend university at a younger age, or the ability to attend full-time on campus in a given place and according to a fixed timetable.

Thus, the university has apparently succeeded in removing the geographical and time barriers for many students and at least some of the financial barriers (primarily by enabling students to pursue an education while working full or part-time). It has not, however, done very much to remove social barriers, except in the instances of several innovative programmes. It is to these that the discussion now turns.


## Successful Examples: Programmes for Aboriginal Peoples:

The most hopeful areas for further exploration at Athabasca are the university's relative successes with aboriginal peoples and, to a lesser degree, prison inmates. Information on each is sketchy but what is known offers some hope for the future.

The profile of aboriginal peoples in Canada does not match the demographics cited for the university's clientele above. For example, Oddson and Ross cite statistics showing that the average family income of aboriginal peoples in Canada was about half the national norm, that only one quarter over the age of 15 have completed high school and that 40% have less than a grade nine education[10]. Figures for Alberta are slightly more favourable but still well short of the Canadian norm.

Oddson and Ross also provide interesting profiles of the students attending the university's cooperative programme with the Yellowhead Tribal Council (YTC), almost all of whom are aboriginal peoples (treaty indians, or *Metis*). A full 80% of the students are female and a high proportion are single parents. Two-thirds of the students report that their permanent residence is a reserve.[11]

While the evidence would suggest that such students would perform significantly below the levels attained by the more advantaged AU students described earlier, such is not the case with specially designed programmes such as YTC.

Athabasca University is increasingly being recognized for its successful programmes for aboriginal peoples, not only because of the relatively high percentage of native students but also because of their success. With completion rates above 70%, students in these programmes actually exceed the university's norm and appear to have success rates considerably beyond those experienced by their counterparts on traditional university campuses.

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The Athabasca approach is to offer these programmes in selected native communities in Alberta (Blue Quills in St. Paul; Sunrise in Slave Lake, Yellowhead Tribal Council in Stony Plain and a smaller programme in Morley). Students are usually full-time (which is not the norm at AU) and attend classes regularly. Each programme has a vital component of strong student support from among local staff not in the employ of the university and without whom, the programmes would be almost totally ineffective (see example of prison education, below).

This approach contrasts with two available alternatives -- full-time attendance on a traditional campus, which the majority of aboriginal students find a very difficult and alienating experience even if they can meet the entrance requirements or open admission to a non-paced homestudy programme with telephone tutor as offered by Athabasca University. Few aboriginal students succeed in either.

AU's success in federal penitentiaries has not been as evident, primarily because Correctional Services Canada, the relevant division of the federal government, withdrew almost all subsidies from prison education several years ago, thus jeopardizing the most important component of the AU programme -- subsidized local support within the prison (at least a local advisor who took responsibility for overcoming prison bureaucracy in supporting studies, special facilities locally such as library and study space, special privileges for inmates pursuing a higher education). This removal of local support serves as an unfortunate example as to how critical this is, both for attracting and keeping students under such conditions.


Learning from Success:

It is interesting that AU's successes in these areas has contributed to reconsideration of the whole way in which its courses are delivered across the institution. What started as an attempt to respond to the obvious problems experienced by aboriginal students and prison inmates in the distance education environment led to a redefinition of the university as an open university for which distance education was merely a means rather than an end in itself. The repercussions are still being felt as the institution struggles with the implications of new delivery models for its existing technology, systems and resource levels.

Goulet and Spronk[12] distinguish between the "independent" learners for whom most home study systems have been designed and the "interdependent" learning styles characterizing most aboriginal students. The lesson seems increasingly to be that a majority of students served by open universities are more interdependent than independent and that the institutions have a tremendous responsibility to take this into account in the design and development of their course delivery systems.

At Athabasca, the development over the past ten years has been very much away from applying the single home-study model of distance education to enhancing the course presentation systems with special arrangements for specific groups of students. Hence, the capstone model offers classroom instruction on a full-time basis using the basic course materials in rural college classes and the new B.Comm. programme offers a personalized combination of independent study and in-person tutorial support in a regional office.

An obvious concern about this trend is the net cost of such programmes. To the extent that the basic home-study model is retained and enhancements and special arrangements are added on top of this, marginal costs will continue to rise. The crucial ingredient here, however, is success. The appropriate costs to compare are . "costs per course completion" or "cost per degree". While it may be more cost efficient to restrict activities to the homestudy model, the accompanying high dropout rates, especially those for "disadvantaged" students, belies this efficiency.

Ultimately, it comes down to the importance attached to serving disadvantaged students. It is probably naive to believe that an open university can receive strong political support for focussing only on these groups, but almost every institution can do a great deal more to help citizens overcome the barriers to their own learning.

Tough fiscal times are not always conducive to progress on this front. Decision-making becomes more conservative, "helping" services (counselling, staff development) and experimental programming are usually the first things to go when cuts are made. There is more talk about "standards" and the need to raise admissions requirements or weed out those who are not benefitting fully from the institution's offerings. Academic regulations are adjusted to be less tolerant of failure, extensions or suspensions. Class sizes or tutorial group sizes are increased, multiple-choice tests replace essays, and other measures are taken which suggest that there is an inverse correlation between fiscal security and elitism.

The central argument of this paper is that open admissions alone is insufficient to respond to the needs of disadvantaged learners. Isolated homestudy programmes which place a premium on reading, writing and time management skills are insufficient. The only appropriate response is a fully developed programme aimed at the specific needs of specific target groups, and one which is fully integrated into the educational institution. Even at the most basic levels, not considering much deeper issues of curriculum and knowledge control, this is a considerable challenge.

## Living up to Pretensions: Some Suggestions for the Future:

The steps to reducing the gap between our aspirations and our achievements are straight forward, but not easily achieved. They are:

1. Recognition of the problem, through effective institutional research which forces open university leaders to recognize the large gap between their aspirations and reality;

2. Clarifying within the institution the extent to which serving disadvantaged groups is central to its mandate.

3. Designing specific programmes with strong local community support which take full account of cultural differences and which are subsequently fully integrated into the educational institution;

4. Increasingly recognizing cultural and student support factors not as marginal but as central to the success of any programme.

If institutions like Athabasca University are to be more successful in the future in attracting and keeping disadvantaged students, they must emphasize practical solutions to overcoming the barriers to learning faced by specific populations rather than attempt to apply a fixed technological solution to every problem.

This approach blurs distinctions between "distance" education and other forms of education (it is ironic that increasingly large class sizes on traditional campuses are increasing the "distance" between teacher and learner and many of the lessons of open learning are equally applicable on campus). It starts with the student in his or her own environment, identifies the barriers to learning and seeks the best ways of overcoming them. Predesigned course packages offer an enormous advantage to this process and most solutions will be built around them. However, the lesson at Athabasca University has been that course designed for home study have to be thoroughly redesigned for a different delivery mode or for a combination of modes and for different student groups.

Progress will be slow, for reaching those for whom educational attainment is not an automatic and relatively easily achieved aspiration faces a whole host of barriers -- cultural, economic, social, psychological and practical. A guerrilla model, whereby individual staff members ignore policies or break rules to help specific students, may be the most effective, sometimes to the extent that the institution is succeeding almost despite itself. What's more, success is elusive -- what works one year may no longer be as effective the next. This demands an institution that is flexible, open and forever requestioning the way it operates. An open university will not live up to its name very long if it institutionalizes its technology -- if, as is so often the case, its way of doing things becomes as rigidly applied as traditional classroom teaching.

The proof will be in the pudding. If open universities continue to attract the same sort of clientele who are served by more traditional institutions, they will still be performing a useful service to society but they will fall a long way short of living up to the high ideals so often held for them. Only if we manage them as openly as we define them will we have a chance to provide the real service to society which is our ideal -- to provide genuine access to AND SUCCESS IN university-level studies.

In our joint presentation at the Cambridge Conference, Roger Mills and I hope to focus on common concerns in our two institutions (and two countries) and hence find some agreement as to the most effective way to proceed in order to have open universities which are really open -- open to disadvantaged students and open to their success.

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# THE STUDENT, COMMUNITY AND CURRICULUM - THEIR INTEGRATION.

# POLISH PERSPECTIVE AND THE CASE OF COMPARATIVE EDUCATION COURSE

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# THE STUDENT, COMMUNITY AND CURRICULUM - THEIR INTEGRATION.
## POLISH PERSPECTIVE AND THE CASE OF COMPARATIVE EDUCATION COURSE
### EUGENIA POTULICKA - ADAM MICKIEWICZ UNIVERSITY

The present paper deals with axtra-mural, adult students of education at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland. I have been teaching them comparative education since the academic year 1983/84.

The context they inhabit is connected with the period 1980 - 1991 in Poland. The most important events and changes during these years have been:

- the abolition of the communist government,
- the beginning of changes leading towards a democratic society.

This context is very closely connected with the community which our students inhabit. Community is meant here as the Polish society. Older members of this community used to live in a totalitarian society for nearly fifty years. The present is a post-totalitarian one.

All issues discussed in this paper are part of broad and complex socio-cultural movements relative to political /first of all/, economic and strategic problems in our country - like in other countries. The challenges for education require considerable analysis and refinement. "What must be recognized, above every other consideration, is the public profile of education: its prominence in the public consciousness; hence its political salience"[1].

What are the implications of weaving these concepts together and their integration?

According to the suggestions of the conference organizers, let us begin with the implications for providing true access to higher education.

During the past decade the conditions of extra-mural higher

education for adults in Poland have been changing steadily for the worse. The fees for examining students and commenting their tutor-marked assignments have been cut, for example. As a consequence of these negative changes the quality of learning-teaching process and its effects have been reduced. As a futher consequence part of academic teachers at our University suggested the liquidation of extra-mural studies for adults. Such suggestions have been formulat ł by members of such faculties as physics or mathematics. Thus, at present true acces to higher education is in danger. At the Institute of Education the number of students who have been admitted for the new academic year is lesser than last year.

Above mentioned consequences are connected with the implications for ensuring equal opportunity in higher education. Paradoxically, during the decade of institutional reorganization to promote democratization in our society, democratization in higher education, "access and equity have not disappeared, they are now milder, more sporadic. They have been overtaken by the economic and technologica. imperatives. The note of "efficiency" sounds more frequently then "equity"[2].

There exists another paradox. The words above are quoted from Malcolm Skilbeck's paper: "A Changing Social and Educational Context" which deals with the OECD countries, but they are suitable for the current Polish context as well.

Further implications for ensuring equal opportunity in higher education are connected with the learning-teaching processes and they will be dealt with later.

The issue of a curriculum response to students' educational needs has to be analysed separately for two stages: before the elections to the Polish Parliament on 4th July 1989 and after the elections. The curriculum of comparative education course is dealt now.

What is meant by students' educational needs? Are they the needs

as expressed by students themselves or are they the needs of a course?

Comparative education is a compulsory subject taught during educational studies. Before the elections the course was called "The educational system of Polish People's Republic on a comparative background" and a handbook under the identical title written by Mieczysław Pęcherski existed. That syllabus was under a strong influence of the Marxist-Leninist ideology. But for the benefit of Polish universities during those times and for the benefit of our students /I think/ our universities were very traditional in their teaching modes and old-fashioned from the point of view of educational technology. In our universities teaching is conducted by academic teachers and is their "private responsibility"; it is not conducted by "institution" like in industrialized distance teaching universities. An academic teacher in Poland had some autonomy in pedagogical practice and the scope of his/her autonomy depended on the courage of the teacher's opinion on the one hand and on the tolerance of his/her colleagues at the institute on the other hand. I rejected Pęcherski's handbook.

Now that more about the educational context of the course which I teach is known, I would like to add some information about colleagues and students.

From a curriculum perspectives, questions of what kind of knowledge, who determines it and how it is articulated are crucial. The curriculum for the comparative education course at Adam Mickiewicz University, Institute of Education, was prepared by myself and discussed with the head of the History of Education Department and with colleagues.

To what extent was that curriculum defined?

There were topics and questions for every lecture and every class as well as literature: compulsory and suggested further reading

Thus it was not a self-contained type of curriculum but study-guide type, according to Börje Holmberg[3]. Each teacher /there were three of us teaching this subject/ had some freedom in determining the content for each face-to-face meeting with students.

That curriculum was compulsory for students but each student would choose one additional problem according to his/her interests. That chosen problem was also compulsory.

Thus it may be said, that comparative education course curriculum was determined according to my perception of the subject's needs but it was connected with my perception of the needs of the Polish society as well.

I think that comparative education course creates many possibilities for developing students' critical thinking. Through comparative analysis of educational systems, the ways of solving similar educational problems and trends in the development of educational systems in different countries, it was possible to reveal a hidden curriculum carried out by the Polish socialist system of education; to disclose the gap between the declared aims and objectives of educational policy - the rhetoric - and between the reality in schools. For example, our homogenous system of compulsory schooling is functionally ununiform. Pupils from schools in rural areas are educationally disadvantaged, because schools in which they are taught are worse then schools in urban areas. Village schools work in worse conditions: without adequately qualified teachers, without teaching aids, etc. Difficult "new mathematics" taught in such conditions exposes pupils to a risk of failure.

My aim was to create students' /mostly compulsory school teacher criticism, to stop making a fetish of the curriculum "baked" by the department of education in the socialist government given out for obedient realization. But I saw a long-term aim before me as well - speaking as J.A. Lauwerys and R. Cowen[4]. For me - like for

G. Papadopoulos - "education itself is a factor of change. Education has its own life, has its own objectives very often, and is an instrument in societies for bringing about change"[5]. This long-term aim was known for teachers working on every level of the Polish school system, who were involved in the opposition against totalitarian political system.

How many teachers saw that kind of long-term aim?

I am not going to give a detailed answer, but I will speak on the basis of my own experience. My colleague asked me in a friendly way for example: "Why do you talk to students about such dangerous political matters? Somebody may denounce you". On the other hand, students who I taught during my first years as the comparative education lecturer were surprised to hear critical comments on our educational system or about the curriculum in Polish schools. Later on they were grateful for arguments useful in a discussion with inspectors or school headmasters.

So far I have dealt with the issue of teaching comparative education course before the abolition of the socialist government in Poland. What are the implications of weaving the concepts of student, society /community/ and curriculum in the second stage of Polish modern history - after the 1989 elections?

"The school curriculum is seen as the meeting place of a large number of legitimate interess, for example those of pupils, teachers, parents, employers, trade unions /.../. The central problem of curriculum is therefore to develop mechanisms for the expression of those interests and clearer conceptions of the rights and duties of the parties concerned". /.../ It is "obvious that teachers are ill-equiped for the task of mediating conflict, setting up dialogue at an ideological level /for questions of curriculum design are ultimately profoundly ideological/"[6].

The political and educational context in our country have

changed. The state has lost its educational monopoly. Polish educational thinkers and leaders ask themselves how to change educational institutions from instruments making pupils and student dependent and changed into objects, to the medium facilitating people's development and expanding their participation in the great social transformation according to our expectations, hopes and possibilities[7]. There is a place for comparative education which would look for answers to this huge problem.

The end of state monopoly on education in Poland means the beginning of a dual school system, because private and public schools are created alongside the state-run schools. New aim for general education in Polish compulsory and post-compulsory education was announced by the Department of National Education in April this year. The aim stated is the preparation of students for life, not for higher education as it has been in our secondary grammar schools. New curriculum is prepared for the first and the second level of education. In compulsory schools the curriculum will not be unified as it is now, but will embrace two parts. The first one will be the same for all pupils in each class - from the first to the eighth, the last one in compulsory school. At least two versions of that part of the curriculum are prepared to choose between them. The second part of the curriculum will be chosen by pupils according to their interests, the level of their knowledge and competence. That part of the curriculum is not going to be taught in stable class groups[8]. This kind of situation is completely new for the Polish pupils, students, teachers, schools, etc. It creates a lot of new problems for the comparative education course during the next academic years. We will try to gather the experience of other countries and learn - partly - from that experience.

I have not dealt with the whole, rapidly changing, context of Polish education. The four of us who teach comparative education

at Adam Mickiewicz University, have been updating our curriculum every year. Now it is difficult to follow the needs which stem from the needs of our society-in-transition. In Poland there are stronger "tensions with pararels in all countries: control, order and direction to meet common and shared social needs, and humanistic values to satisfy the aspirations of the individual person: the harnessing of economic growth and technological change in the interests of an enlarged not diminished humanity"[9].

What are the needs: of an individual student and students, of the Polish society and of comparative education as a subject in the present situation?

I think that during the new academic year and in future years we should examine - even more thoroughly than so far - the advantages and disadvantages of the dual system of education in order to warn against possible dangers of democratization of schools. "It seems an inescapable conclusion that different categories of schools will attempt to differentiate themselves by what they offer" /.../ beyond the general, uniform curriculum,"and that a hierarchy of status will emerge baked by additional funding from parents /../, Perhaps the general, uniform curriculum "is a facade behind which differences can multiply"[10].

We should analyse the meanings of the "preparation for life" in different countries, the ways in which these kinds of objectives are implemented in school practice. The most important in preparation for life  in the present Polish conditions is to make our pupils and students free and responsible citizens.

The anxiety raised by so difficult situation remains. Is it reasonable to expect the changes in Polish education during our economical crisis to achieve derived aims in the light of the internal contradictions of the aims and a very difficult reality? "Is the danger of institutional and political innovation likely to

be capable of realization? /.../ Behind all these questions lie the fundamental issue for democracy: how the power of State should be directed so far as the public funding and provision of education are concerned. Should it be directed towards a secular process of enfranchisement, or to reinforce and widen differences?"[11]

Can we use effective modes of teaching in so difficult situation at all?

The lack of pre-produced courses designed with an adult, extra-mural student in mind, and the lack of adequate number of books and periodicals in our libraries causes that face-to-face meetings of academic teachers with students during lectures, seminars, classes and consultations are of very great importance. We - teachers - are the "speaking syllabuses", lecture comprise the most updated information and expose urgent problems which need to be solved. That kind of teaching help that you in distance teaching universities give students in pre-produced teaching materials, we give to our students during face-to-face meetings. Our aim is to guide and to structure students learning, to promote their independent learning. During face-to-face sessions - especially during seminars - we also discuss with students the most complex problems encompassed by the curriculum. Our face-to-face meetings with students are first of all collective consultations. Counselling and advising are really an integral part of teaching and learning, but we have not a special category of counsellors among our staff.

Besides face-to-face sessions all teachers have their duty hours twice a week. This is the time for individual consultations through the telephone or in direct contact with the teacher.

Our work during these times of great change in education and in Polish society /as well as changes in education across the world/ is a little like the work of journalists. For example, we are going to introduce a new module into the comparative education course on

on the 1988 Education Reform Act in England and Wales. We will try to learn from comparative experience of national developments.

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THE CURRICULAR EFFECTS

OF COMPUTER-MEDIATED COMMUNICATION

IN SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING

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THE CURRICULAR EFFECTS
OF COMPUTER-MEDIATED COMMUNICATION
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The introduction of telecommunications - specifically Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) - into the field of distance education has raised expectations concerning the development of more effective communication between instructor and student and among students themselves. This communication is believed to increase the possibilities for a learning community and improve the likelihood that students will become more self-directed within that context. This paper will review the assumptions which underlie this belief drawing a distinction between self-direction in terms of learning specific course material, the broader question of self-direction in terms of developing autonomy as a learner and how telecommunications systems might contribute to or inhibit these assumptions.

But, before proceeding with this discussion, an initial clarification of CMC is needed. CMC is a communications system which is telecommunications based; that is, it primarily uses electronic mail and computer conferencing software to connect dispersed individuals asyncronously. Such a communications environment has a number of unique features which have generated a significant body of literature (Rice,1984; Hiltz, 1986; Steinfield, 1986; Culnan and Markus, 1987). While most of this literature focuses on overcoming the traditional distance learning barriers of time, place and isolation, an increasing number have begun to address the issues of curriculum and learning strategies. As Clark and Salomon have noted in evaluating the impact of technology on education, ". . . it is not the medium per se which caused (sic) the change but rather the curricular reform which its introduction enabled."[1]

The paper will be divided into three sections. First, a discussion of distance education and self-direction in terms of the application to course management and learner autonomy. Second, to place the use of computer-mediated communications in perspective as an independent (and in this case, distance) learning huristic device. Lastly, some possible scenarios will be put forth concerning the relationship between CMC and self-direction.

The importance of developing student autonomy has been a significant concern since the emergence of epistemology in Western culture. While the general concern transcends all variants of education, the concern here is with discussions

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of its importance to distance education. Recent research, as noted by Calvert[2], has stressed the importance of understanding what fosters independent achievement and the degree to which the ability to work independently, and more importantly to develop learner autonomy, can be fostered in distance education. This discussion has been informed by Brookfield's[3] recent work on critical thinking and adult learners.

Parallel to these discussions has been a prolificacy of works on the importance, the impact, and the potential of CMC technologies for distance education; Hiltz (1983), Kerr (1986), Harasim (1986 and 1987), Phillips and Pease (1987), Body (1987), Levinson (1988) among others. These studies represent a range of approaches to the use of this technology, with the primary focus concerning the effect on learner communications. Most of these studies assume a model in which the instructor plays the central role of directing the learning process, although Body[4] sees an inherent ability in the technology to "liberate" students. Only recently, however, has there been any systematic analysis of the use of computer-mediated communication with the development of learner autonomy[5].

Before proceeding further, it is important to draw some distinctions between distance education and independent learning as they relate to the concept of self-directed learning.

We might begin with Keegan's[6] formulation of distance education which focuses on the separation of the instructor and the student. That this separation occurs in varying degrees is recognized by his use of the term "quasi-permanent separation" of the student and teacher, or the limitation of face-to-face encounters. Keegan makes an important distinction between this type of learning which is institutionally rooted and self-instructional learning which is free of institutional constraints. This distinction forms the basis for a clearer formulation of the continuum on which a student's "independent" education can take place.

Both in Keegan's formulation, and later in a reformulation by Verduin and Clark[7], there is no direct incorporation of independent or self-directed study as an inherent part of the conception of distance education. This is as it should be. Even a cursory review of the currently available courses and materials within the field of distance education would support such a conclusion.[8] Many of the distance education courses available in the United States have rather systematic and well defined sequences of learning as well as sharply delineated content areas. Whether these be telecourses, correspondence courses, or directed study courses, management of the content and

process is structured in terms of the institution and instructor. Students may be at a distance from the college offering the courses, but what they learn, the sequence in which they are learning and even the time frame are all defined (obviously in varying degrees) by the institution. The very process by which American colleges and universities approve most courses necessitate such an approach. Thus, while distance education is often thought of as independent learning due to the physical separation of the learner from the institution, pedagogically it need not be.

Juxtaposed to the concept of distance education is the concept of independent study. Independent study, with its broader conceptual basis, encompasses both the aspect of physical separation and greater pedagogical control by the learner. Percy and Ramsden[9] note that such independence occurs along a continuum varying from place of study to pace of study and from course content to assessment of outcomes. The essence of this distinction is in terms of the degree of learner control over what, when and how learning takes place. The greater the degree of learner control, the greater the learner's independence[10]. This makes self-directed learning a form of independent study, but not its exclusive domain. As Phillip Candy (1991) clearly points out, independent study can be viewed as another "method of conducting instruction" rather than the activity of an autonomous learner. He goes on to note that it is important to draw a distinction between learning which takes place within an institution context (education) and that which takes place outside such context (autodidaxy).[11] Our attention will focus on the former.

Computer-mediated communication has become a significant technology in distance education during the past decade. It has been sighted as overcoming learner isolation (Seaton, 1989; Turoff, Kimmel and Kerr, 1989), facilitating communication between students and instructor (Verduin and Clark, 1991), creating a more egalitarian environment (Roberts, 1988) and increasing the learner's recourse base (Mayor and Dirr, 1986).

CMC, more than any other medium outside of print itself, has been credited with enabling learners to take control of their own learning. Does this mean that a learner need only sit down at a terminal, dial into a local telecommunications network and begin learning? Well, yes and no. One needs to consider the stage of development of the learner and the context in which the learning is taking place. Is the student a critical thinker (cognitively mature)? Is the learning environment institutionally based or institutionally independent? What contextual knowledge does the student possess?

Students who are cognitively immature are not as likely to be active participants in CMC learning situations[12]. They are likely to want faculty to provide the "right answer" viewing knowledge not as critical thinking but as a collection of information. The cognitively mature student (or self-directed learner) will more critically analyze and apply alternative interpretations to information and develop criteria for judging which are the relatively better ways of understanding. Assisting a student in becoming a self-directed learner remains a central role for faculty within the context of CMC based curriculum reform.

As Brookfield has noted[13], critical thinking is central to the development of self-directed learning. Critical thinking is both a skill which can be taught and learned, and an outcome of the learning process itself. The former focuses on the instructor teaching the skill and the students learning it. The outcome, if successfully taught and successfully learned, is a student capable of self-directed learning. However, Candy has noted that there are questions about how transferable such skills are from one area to another.

> This means that no self-directed learner can be equally competent across the range of all potential learning situations. While he or she may possess an extensive repertoire of strategic or general learning skills, each new domain will have its own domain-specific vocabulary of concepts that must be mastered before more advanced ideas can be tackled.[14]

Thus, autonomy in learning is developmentally rooted within content mastery and not inherently transferable from one area of knowledge to another[15] [16]. Because knowledge is socially constructed[17] [18] [19], a community of learners must exist in order to establish cognitive understanding and critical thinking. CMC offers distance learners an opportunity to establish such a community.

One of the most successful uses of CMC in establishing such learning communities at a distance is through collaborative learning. Collaborative learning requires the active involvement of the student and the student's willingness to assume responsibility for actively engaging in the learning process with others. As Whipple notes:

> Education does not consist merely of "pouring" facts from the teacher to the students as though they were glasses to be filled with some form of intellectual orange juice. Knowledge is an interactive process, not an accumulation of Trivial Pursuit

answers; education at its best develops the
students' abilities to learn for
themselves.[20]

Thus, knowledge emerges from a collaborative process of
active dialogue among those who seek to know. Such
situations have been unavailable for most distance learners,
who have approached learning from a much more
individualistic mode. CMC allows for the transcendence of
this individualistic mode and the emergence of self-directed
groups of learners. Does this then imply that CMC
technology is a transforming force itself?

The debate over the effects of educational
technologies, like the debate over self-directed learning,
has a long history dating to at least the advent of
printing.[21] As related to CMC, one aspect of this debate
focuses on whether CMC itself will inherently change
curriculum and alter the learning process, or whether it
will merely extend the university in its current form.

Miller[22] argues that while the need for change in the
curriculum emphasis from information transference to
critical thinking is necessary, the current use of
technology has not accomplished this. Likewise, Holmberg[23]
notes that ". . . mediated communication has always been the
basic characteristic of distance education; this applied
also when it was called correspondence education." Thus,
the implication that the technology itself is not inherently
transformative.

These arguments are supported by much of the literature
on CMC which focuses on its telecommunication
characteristics rather than its curricular implications.
From this perspective, the instructor defines what is
learned, how it is learned and when it will be learned.
This is often expressed in a concern over the nature of CMC
communication; that it necessitates some time constraints on
interactivity such that discussions do not remain
indefinitely open-ended.[24]

This highlights the social or group nature of CMC based
learning. The group structure in and of itself
differentiates CMC distance education from the traditional
individualistic approaches. The resulting conceptual debate
over the definition of distance education[25] [26] emphasizes the
potential importance of CMC in creating a community of
learners at a distance.

The community of learners focus is reflected in the
works of Hiltz (1990), Davie and Wells (1991), Feenberg and
Bellman (1990) and Lauzon and Moore (1989) among others.
They note the opportunity for students using CMC

technologies to connect with each other and initiate collaborative learning. It is within the group structure of CMC that the process of collaborative learning becomes a distinct possibility for distance learners. As Roberts[27] states:

> It permits the student to benefit from the shared experience of a group engaged in the same study and the opportunity to measure his or her ideas against those of others in the group.

As discussed above, learners must go through a developmental evolution to fully participate in self-directed learning. The early stages of learning any field of knowledge are likely to be more instructor directed, but as students mature and if critical thinking skills are acquired and applied to the field of knowledge being learned, participation in a community of self-directed learners is appropriate. CMC can facilitate this entire spectrum of learning development.[28] However, such a transition of student learning can take place only when the teaching and learning styles of both faculty and students are transformed from information dissemination to critical inquiry and from instructor dominated to collaborative learning. For this to occur within any context other than a few isolated situations it must be embedded within a curricular structure supportive of such an approach.[29]

Although CMC can be considered to be a "narrow-band" medium of communication, the fact that communication is written and asynchronous also opens up new possibilities for enabling all students to actively participate in structuring their own learning. CMC as a mode of distance education can only provide its full potential benefits if both faculty and students redefine their roles to actively encourage participation in a collaborative learning experience.

As learning is transformed toward a learner directed activity, CMC will likely become imbedded in this transformation and act as a catalyst toward future developments. The potential of CMC lies in its ability to function as a gateway; a gateway to resources, collaborative learning and individual achievement. While its is true that CMC is not a necessary component to the development of self-directed learning nor is it sufficient in and of itself to cause the emergence of such learning, it does provide a mode of communication which increases the possibility that such learning can, in fact, take place at a distance.

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## BACKGROUND TO DISTANCE-LEARNING COURSES

## IN MODERN LANGUAGES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF UMEA, SWEDEN

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# BACKGROUND TO DISTANCE-LEARNING COURSES IN MODERN LANGUAGES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF UMEÅ, SWEDEN

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The University of Umeå serves a region that covers half of Sweden, a large area with a sparse and scattered population. Apart from the towns on the Baltic coast and some centres inland, the population is to be found in small villages and hamlets. Umeå is the only university in the region, but there are a number of colleges of higher education, most of them situated in the coastal towns. Depopulation is a serious problem for the inland area, and giving people the chance to participate in distance-learning courses is seen by both the University of Umeå and the central government in Stockholm as one way of encouraging people to stay and of slowing down the "brain drain".

Access to further and higher education in Sweden is offered to a much higher proportion of the population than in Britain, for example. Attitudes concerning the rights and needs of the citizens as regards education are deeply embedded in the political consciousness of the nation. The universities have an obligation to respond to these needs.

Unemployment is endemic in the region and offering university courses on a distance learning basis is part of a larger programme to alleviate the problem. The Ministry of Industry has recently financed a Distance Learning Project at Umeå University as part of a larger plan to help the sparsely populated areas. The Departments of English and German received financing from this project which has enabled them to develop their existing distance learning courses in various ways, principally by extending the use of modern technical equipment.

For those who are not familiar with the way in which higher education is organized in Sweden we should, perhaps, point out that courses are built up on a credit system. The academic year is divided into two 20-week terms, and one credit is given for the equivalent of one week of work. Most language courses last for one term and therefore give 20 credits. Additional courses can be taken until a student has accumulated 80 credits in a language, after which study continues at the graduate level. In English and German distance-learning courses are run at half speed, i.e. 20 credits over two terms, and are considered to be the exact equivalent of full-time day courses over one term.

Distance learning in the language departments has developed more on an ad hoc basis than as a result of a carefully planned programme. The teachers involved from the beginning were those who normally taught on the full-time day courses and they received no special training or concessions because they were involved in distance teaching. The distance learning courses grew out of the courses taught in towns throughout the region, so-called decentralised courses. Participants in such courses met once a week, usually on Fridays and Saturdays, and members of staff would travel to the course centre from Umeå - often reluctantly! The Department of English ran such courses from the mid-sixties to the mid-seventies. The German Department experimented in 1970-71 but did not continue. Distance learning courses proper started for English in 1975 and for German in 1982. By and large, it is still the same people who are involved in the teaching, which perhaps explains a certain reluctance to launch ourselves wholeheartedly into the new "high tech".

Teaching foreign languages through distance courses involves special difficulties mainly connected with the acquisition of spoken proficiency. It is difficult for an isolated student to improve his/her fluency, but not impossible. As regards English, most of those who enrol for a university course already have a fairly high level of spoken proficiency. Their passive knowledge is augmented by the amount of English they hear all around them - from the television, radio, cinema screen, etc. What is missing is an opportunity to practise their skills. The students meet at the Department in Umeå for 3 x 2 days per term where they are taught in English and are expected to hold talks and discussions in English on both prepared and unprepared material. During these days they can also receive help with pronunciation problems.

Each student is also required to send in an audio tape containing a reading from a book and an unscripted talk. The tape is commented on and remedial work suggested where necessary. Practice tapes for pronunciation and intonation have been made by the teacher in the Department responsible for most of the oral proficiency courses. English did experiment with the use of telephone conversations but found that so much time, and money, had to be spent calming the students' nerves before any useful work could be done that the whole activity was deemed inefficient. Listening to and commenting on audio tapes, while time-consuming, is cheaper and more effective.

The German Department also bring their students to Umeå for teaching and training but their difficulties with the spoken language are greater than those experienced by the English Department. German is not taught to such a high level in school and is heard much less often than

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English. In our talk we will take up the various methods employed by both departments in teaching spoken proficiency and fluency and the different responses and results we have experienced.

The type of student who enrols for a distance course in a foreign language is not at all the same sort of person as a full-time day student. As has been found in other places, we see that the majority of distance students are women, in their late thirties to forties, with full-time jobs and often family responsibilities. We only know about their jobs informally, but many of them are teachers who are trying to upgrade their qualifications. There is a sprinkling of journalists, secretaries, people who run their own businesses and even a farmer or two. The entry requirements for distance courses are the same as for day courses, but the range of ability among the distance groups is much greater than among the full-time groups. There is quite a serious drop-out problem, especially with third-term courses in which students are required to write a short dissertation. The reasons for this may be purely practical - inaccessibility of library facilities, lack of longer periods of concentrated time for writing etc. The English Department has recently been given funding to develop a new third-term distance course and this is one of the problems that will be looked into.

In our talk we will take up the ways in which the extra financing we have received has enabled both departments to develop different ways of teaching. These methods are new for us, and we have not yet had time to evaluate them or to use them to their fullest extent. We would also like to mention some of the difficulties we experience in connection with distance teaching and what we feel will be needed in the future. Those of us who are giving the paper are involved in the teaching and administration of distance learning at the departmental level. We have not done any research into the wider implications, social, economic or political, of distance learning. What we can tell the conference about is the students we deal with, the type of community they live and work in and the curriculum offered to them by the Departments of English and German at the University of Umeå.

# NOTES ON APPROPRIATE ENGLISH FOR INDIA

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# NOTES ON APPROPRIATE ENGLISH FOR INDIA

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I

Until about fifteen years ago English Literature was a very
popular subject among arts undergraduates in India. Today its
popularity has declined. The reasons could be manifold. The ind -
ustral expansion in the country and the resultant increase in the
demand for expertise in the various industrial sectors, both in
the professional and managerial fields, could be one. English today
is no longer the medium of the prestigious civil service examinations.
They can be taken in one of the several Indian languages. There are
two compulsory language papers in those exams. One of them is English
and the other one an Indian language.        Candidates have to
score a certain minimum marks in order to be evaluated for the per-
formance on other papers. The marks, however, secured by the can-
didates on the language papers do not go into the aggregate. Earlier
it was not so. Hence the importance of English for the average
Indian has gone down. Many students earlier offered English literature
at the B.A. level only to improve their proficiency in the English
language; study of literature was not their main aim. Today such
students take more specialised English language courses at the
university and also outside.

This is not a discouraging      development for the teachers
of literature in English though it demands greater attention to-
wards the courses that they offer.In certain ways the fall in the
clientale could also mean that those who study literature now are
seriously interested in it. However their expectations from the
courses are also different from what they used to be in the past.
This the students may not be able to                 articulate.
Hence it becomes important for the teachers of English to analyse,
evaluate and plan their syllabuses afresh.

When we examine the English literature syllabi for B.A.(Hons)
and M.A. degrees in India, barring a few exceptions, we notice that
they have not changed very much in the last forty years or so. What
has happened is that in the place of 'Matthew Arnold' as special
paper we now have 'T.S.Eliot'. In the places of 'Restoration Drama'
and 'Nineteenth Century Thought' we now have Linguistics, American
Literature and Indian Writing in English. Tragedy and Literary
Criticism have remained as strongly entrenched as ever before. The
new courses in American Literature and Indian Writing in English
offer only a selection from their respective areas , without trying
to impart a deeper understanding of those literatures, their traditions,
their moving forces, and their backgrounds. Earlier, 'Restoration
Drama' and 'Nineteenth Century Thought' related to the core courses
in English Literature. The new special papers don't relate to
the courses in the main stream. They are aliens from across
the borders in the territory of English Literature. They need
to be naturalized. In short, what we discover is that in the
B.A.(Hons) and M.A. courses of English in India there have been
a few, inadequate piecemeal changes without bringing about a
meaningful change in the content. without influencing our literary
outlook and perception. It is education,however, at makes us        the/
what we are and we perceive the world around us as we have been
trained to. The changes in our perception,besides,ought to in-
fluence the study of English not only at the tertiary but
also at the primary and secondary levels. Only then can English

be studied more meaningfully. Only then can English become a factor influencing our cultural life in India today.

In the remaining part of this paper we will analyse three things and suggest the introduction of:

a) culturally suitable pieces for study at all levels,from the nursery to the tertiary;

b) courses in Indian literature in English translation; and

c) evolution in the process of teaching an appropriate literary criticism for the reoriented literature courses we wish to have.

## II

Toddlers now in India learn English along with their mother tongue. This will remind you of what Samuel Johnson(1709-'84) in his Dictionary (1755) said about the influence of the study of two languages on speech. 'A mixture of two languages' he wrote, 'will produce a third distinct from both, and they will always be mixed where the chief part of education, and the most conspicuous accomplishment, is skill in ancient or in foreign tongues.'Johnson went on, 'He that has long cultivated another language will find its words and combinations crowd upon his memory; and haste or negligence, refinement or affectation, will obtrude borrowed terms and exotic expressions.'[1]The result will be the gradual alienation from the wisdom of the ages preserved in a particular language. Nonetheless Johnson opined two and a half centuries ago, perhaps more,that in his state of the world the state of affairs could not be obviated. Today,however, the world has become a still more complex place and the languages we use change at a much faster rate.

However,there is still a case for the preservation of the mother tongue. Through it one benefits from the whole range of experience of the nation,its record of its interaction with natural,social, political and cultural environment. When a child learns a foreign language he learns not only that language but also imbibes its cultural standards.

Let's examine the idea with the help of some nursery rhymes in Hindi and English. Here is a nursery rhyme in Hindi that a child learns at school :

Meethe wachan sada tum bolo,
Muh mein misri gholo;
Koil meethe bol sunati,
Sab ke man ko bhati.

Kaua kan kan shor machata
Kya wah tum ko bhata ?
Kaue ko ham door bhagate,
Kankar mar use urate.

Meethe wachan sada tum bolo,
Muh mein misri gholo.

It says, to translate literally, that the child should speak 'sweet words' and 'dissolve sugar-candy' in his mouth. For the cuckoo 'utters sweet words and diverts us all. The crow with its caw caw repels us and forces us to drive it away. Hence the exhortatory refrain -'always utter sweet words and dissolve sugar-candy in your mouth! The cuckoo of the nursery rhyme sets an example of good conduct for the young child. In another poem the child is exhorted to learn different things from both animate and inanimate objects :

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Phoolon se nit hasna seekho,
Bhauron se nit gana.

Phal ki ladi daliyon se nit,
Seekho sheesh jhukānā.

Seekh hawā ke jhokon se lo,
Komal komal bahnā.
Doodh tatha pani se seekho,
Mel-jol se rahnā.

Sooraj ki kirno se seekho,
Jagna aur jaganā.
Lata aur peron se seekho,
Sab ko gale lagānā.

Deepak se seekho bachcho tum,
Andhakār ko harna.
Prithvi se seekho bachcho tum
Sab ki sewa karnā.

In the beautiful nursery rhyme above the child is exhorted to learn
different things from different objects : to smile from flowers; to
sing from the bees; humility from the branches laden with fruits; to
blow softly from the breeze; coexistence from milk and water; to wake
from sun rays; to embrace everyone from trees and creepers; to drive
away darkness from the oil lamp;and to serve everyone from the good
earth. There is a short step from the lesson of the nursery rhymes to
the Mahakaruna of the Enlightened One.
    The Indian child learns nursery rhymes in English and his mother
tongue simultaneously. Some of the familiar rhymes are  - 'Humpty
Dumpty','Jack and Jill', 'Simple Simon', 'Old King Cole', 'Peter Peter
Pumpkin Eater'. The child finds them funny and diverting. 'Ferry me
Across the Water' is another amusing piece. The ferryman in the verse
asks the girl,.

        Step into my ferryboat,
        Be they black or blue;
        And for the penny in your purse,
        I will ferry you.

The boat man responds not to beauty but to his material gain. My Sanskrit
teacher responded coldly to it and said it was a kavya  of Rasa Vighna.
Such is cultural prejudice. In another nursery rhyme on Mary's lamb we
learn :
        He followed her to school one day;
        That was against the rule.
        It made the children dance and play;
        To see a lamb at school.

The nursery rhymes are expressions of a pragmatic and practical people;
of a society that values order and discipline for they bring about
progress - first material and then cultural.
    This attitude is not entirely foreign to Indian culture. We find
it among the grammarians; Charvaka's  Lokayata philosophy was a power-
ful expression of it. However, it was neglected. In some ways this was
harmful for the material progress of the society and today English is
the language of material well being and upward social mobility. Its
greatest influence is on the cultivation of an outlook based on reason
and commonsense. However, it is Buddha's Mahakaruna that for us is the
superior and more desirable way of life . But our history of the last
millenium tells us that sheer survival demands something less desirable

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also. 'The everyday life of Indians' observes Hajime Nakamura the
Japanese philosopher, 'is regulated in the most minute details by
their religion.'[2]Nursery rhymes are only an expression of it but
significant ones. Because we need to inculcate a disciplined
materialistic outlook based on reason and commonsense we need the
English nursery rhyme as a healthy corrective to our own temper.

This relates to the          texts for study at our schools
and colleges.There are certain texts that are so remote for the
student of English in India that they may notbe studied at the
undergraduate level. For instance Addison's Spectator essay 'Medi-
tations on Westminster Abbey' and Lamb's 'Old China' can both make
difficult reading. For, a majority of Indians/conceive the idea      *cannot*/
of the burial of the dead in a house of worship; nor do they share
the West's fascination for the chinaware. There was a piece in
our Essential English[3] part III at school, thirty years ago which
was never taught then. Lesson 27 was on the Caernarvon Castle. There
are lines in it from the Welsh poet Goronwy Owen's 'The Day of
Judgment' which must be very beautiful but I still can't read them.
There are names of Towns  - Harlech, Criccieth, Beaumaris and Conway -
poetic in their beauty but the teachers at school can hardly pronounce
them. The result, as it would be expected, was that the teacher did
not teach us that lesson then and we did not do the grammar exercises
based on the piece either. If one of the passages from the familiar
Jim Corbett been used or some remote Rosie Llewellyn-Jones's descrip-
tion of Safdarjang's (1739-1754) uncle Saadat Khan (1739-1739)/in (See,Appendix I
India we might have done even the grammar exercises based on the
text. Edward I was too remote. At school and upto the intermediate
classes texts should generally be used from Anglo+Indian writers
or the Indo+English ones.

I have had the experience of teaching Wordsworth's 'The Daffodil'
and explaining the joy and ecstasy that Wordsworth must have felt at
the sight of the flowers without knowing about their actual colour.
The same problem would not have been faced if Sarojini Devi's 'Village
Song' had been the text :

>     Mother mine,to the wild forest I am going,
>     Where upon the champa boughs  the champa buds are blowing;
>     To the Koil-haunted river-isles where lotus lilies glisten,
>     The Voices of the fairy-folk are calling me, O listen ! [4]

We respond to the nightingale just as Fielding the Principal in
Forster's Passage  responded to the Bulbul of Urdu poetry. The Koil
is by far the happiest choice of a bird for the young Indian student.
We would respond instinctively/to the palanquin 'like a pearl on a      *also*/
string' :

>     Softly, O softly we bear her along,
>     She hangs like a star in the dew of our song;
>     She springs like a beam on the brow of the tide,
>     She falls like a tear from the eyes of a bride.
>     Lightly, O Lightly we glide and we sing,
>     We bear her along like a pearl on a string. [5]

The Indian student has seen the palanquin in films and on wedding
cards if not also in use in his neighbourhood. He cannot even imagine
the string of ruins of castles built by Edward I. While we should
use the immortal writings of western writers such as Addison's'Vision
of Mirza' and Lamb's 'Dream Children' and even the enertaining pieces
of an unknown John Beames on dacoity or robbery or the old daroghas (See,Append
we must remember that we progress from the concrete to the abstract,   *ces II & III*
from familiar to unfamiliar.

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While we need what is universal and familiar in English for young
learners we need what is not necessarily so for adults. We need certain
pieces of prose and poetry because they will foster certain qualities
of the mind - reason and common sense, insight into the social dynamics,
an ability to look at the contents of popular superstitions scienti-
fically. Let's take for instance some of the essays in Bertrand
Russell's The Conquest of Happiness. We will appreciate their value
if we compare them to the essays in Hazari Prasad Dwivedi's Ashok
ke Phul , especially the last one on Indian astrology. We need
Russell's essays if religious superstition is to be driven away
from the mind of the people. Niral was a radical by Indian standards.
And yet he uses the myth of Ram offering 108 indigo coloured
lotus flowers to propitiate the goddess in his poem 'Ram ki Shakti
Puja'. Even if it is just an objective corelative to convey the
poet's sense of frustration and the incipient will to establish
his language in the end  it will have the harmful effect of pro-
moting religious superstition. Another shortcoming in the Indian
character is the acquiescence to the powers that be. What such an
attitude can lead to is clear from The Impact of Science on Society
and Orwell's 1984  and so they will make good course material.

To conclude, we find that we should have culturally suitable
texts for study. For young learners pieces should not be geograph-
ically, historically, socially and culturally foreign and alien to
their experience. For both adult and young learners selections
should not only be interesting and amusing but also very often
conducive to the growth of a scientific habit of mind .


                              III


Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world, wrote
Shelley. We need to read the literature of our country because our
novelists and poets have looked hard at our life and society and
offered their criticism of it. It is only to our own peril that we
would ignore them. There was a time when Sanskrit was the language
of the elite throughout the country. Now it is English in which the
intelligentsia exchange their views. Hindi has not been able to
replace English. In this circumstance it is through English and also
through our national languages that we can know the mind of the country.
Some years ago an important step was taken in this direction
when Indo-English literature came into prominence in the English
departments of the universities in India. However, Indo-English
literature             is the literature created by the upper middle
class; very often to inform the west about our life. Not infrequent-
ly it does no more than scratch the surface of Indian life. If we
want to see deep into our society we will go rather to Premchand
than to R.K.Narayana,  Tagore rather than Raja Rao, Akhilandam rather
than Mulk Raj Anand.
What is true of the novel is also mutatis mutandis true of
poetry. Poetry written in our languages uses our mythology and
history and the rhythms of our speech. These can eventually be
understood best in our national languages. Still so long as we do
not learn some of the languages of our country English can help us
in getting a peep into the unity of Indian culture which finds its
most eloquent voice in poetry.

'The history of Indian literature in the most comprehensive sense of the word' wrote Maurice Winternitz, the German Sanskritist, 'is the history of a literature,which not only stretches across great periods of time and an enormous area but also one which is composed in many languages.'Even before Winternitz it was Amir Khusrau, the father of Hindi poetry, who realized this. Indian literature, he wrote in the third chapter of his <u>Sultan Nameh</u>, was written in Sindhi,Lahori, Kashmiri, Kubri, Dhur-Samundri, Tilangi,Gujar,Maabri, Ghouri, Bengali, Oudhi and Dehlvi. The realization that India was one despite being divided by political boundaries and linguistic barriers was one of our earliest realizations as a cultured nation. It found expression in the'Shanti Parva' of the Mahabharata. No student of literature in India can afford to keep himself away from this Ganges of literary tradition and still be pulsating with literary vigour. The Indian student of English literature in the north and the south, the east and the west has ignored this tradition entirely and has thus kept himself cut off from life here. A handful of them feel more at home in the west than in the country of their birth. A large majority learn very little, if anything and remain a stranger to any literature all their life. Education , it has often been said, is what survives when what has been learnt has been forgotten. Most of our English literature graduates are not educated in this sense.

If this problem has to be solved, what needs to be done is to introduce Indian literature courses in English translation. Two such courses have been introduced into the Hindi curriculum of Indira Gandhi National Open University - one on Indian Literature of the Bhakti Movement and the other on the Indian Literature of the Freedom Struggle. It has been done under the leadership of a Hindi scholar of Tamil origin.

It is curious to note that quite a number of scholars who have taken interest in Indian Literature are or have been teachers of English - T.W.Clark, V.K.Gokak, Ayappa Panikker, Amiya Dev, Sujit and Meenakshi Mukherjee and Veena N.Dass, to name only a few. May their tribe increase. These scholars, however, are few and far between and it is still difficult to have a department of Indian Literature in English at any one university. (The Department of Comparative Literature at Jadavpur University is a notable exception.) Most of the faculty in English departments of the universities specialise in British or American literature or Indian Writing in English.

It is,however,possible, perhaps it is helpful for an open university such as the IGNOU to run a programme with the help of scholars in a budding discipline spread over the lengths and breadths of the country. Because they can come together to converse and plan the curriculum and disperse to write the course material, and guide students at the counselling sessions and on individual research projects. A comprehensive course run by IGNOU will in a few years bring about a silent revolution in literary studies in English.

To be a little more specific, what is proposed is a module of three or four courses which can be combined with another module of courses on British, American, European or some other literature or one exclusively on the World Classics or World Fiction to form a programme of M.A.in English. Such modules can multiply over a period of time and with the economies of scales in its favour IGNOU can look forward to encouraging literary studies in English in India.

It may not here be forgotten that way back in 1969 the UGC

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sponsored a summer school at Mysore University. V.K.Gokak (The Concept
of Indian Literature New Delhi,1979; Pathways to the Unity of Indian
Literature, Delhi,1989) and Keshav Malik (editor of Thought, Indian
Literature and Art and Poetry) have done the spade work for such
studies at the universities. The Sahitya Akademi has just published
the eighth volume of A History of Indian Literature. As such there
has been ample work done outside the university both in terms of
translation and critical enquiry and historical surveys to enable us
to prepare courses in Indian Literature in English Translation.

IV

There is a noticeable feature of the various M.A. courses
in our native languages. They invariably have a literary criticism
paper divided into two parts. In the first part are studied the
oriental critical works and in the second occidental. The students
would study the six schools of Sanskrit literary criticism called
the Alankar Shastra (or the Study of Ornaments) viz. Rasa, Dhvani,
Alankar, Guna or Riti ,Vakrokti and Auchitya. They would also study
some of the writings of the leading critics in the language. For
instance the student of Hindi would read some of the works of
Ramchandra Shukla, Hazari Prasad Dwivedi, Namwar Singh, Ram Bilasa
Sharma and Nagendra. In the second part of the literary criticism
paper would be studied the ideas of Aristotle, Croce, T.S.Eliot,
and I.A.Richards.
However limited a fare it may offer, it is better than the
state of affairs in English departments. We would study Aristotle,
Horace, Longinus, Croce, T.S.Eliot, I.A.Richards and E.M.Forster.
A few dynamic departments may also talk about the influence of
Psychology , Anthropology, Linguistics  and Marxism but these
would be an exception rather than the rule.
It would be largely true to say that the student of English,
whether in Kashmir or at Kanyakumari, whether at Kavaratti or at
Port Blair would be completely innocent of the theory of
Sadharanikarana or'universalization' in literature of which there
is a long tradition originating from the commentary of Bhatta Nayak
on Bharata's Natyashastra.
Bharata's work deals not only with literature but with most art
forms - drama, dance, music, painting, and sculpture. Hence 'Yamak'
an ornament  or alankar in Bharata is applicable both to literature
and music and the student of English literature finds himself
unresponsive to it as much in literature as in music. Although our
litearatures still bewail their infancy our music since independence
has come of age and to be ignorant of certain critical terms is to
miss out on some of the most powerful expressions of our culture in
contemporary India. Our physical distance from Europe and the United
States and our economic backwardness make  it necessary for us to
wait for the subsidized editions of your books or supply to the
American Centres or British Council Libraries, to be aware of the
progress you make. Our lack of understanding of our critical tra-
dition stands in the way of our appreciation of our own culture.
Besides appreciation, if we understand the varied  expressions of
our best emotions, our choicest feelings and our highest flights of
imagination in the music of Ravi Shankar and Bhim Sen Joshi, the
brothers Dagar and Bal Murali, Ustad Bismillah Khan and Hari Prasad
Chaurasia we would have contributed to the emotional integration of
our country in which have appeared today so many cleavages.
Hence it is necessary that the courses on literary criticism
in English in Indian universities take account also of the six
schools of Sanskrit criticism. They will help Indians appreciate
not only their own literature and music but also western literature
better. For as T.S.Eliot said, 'each generation brings to the contem-

plation of art its own categories of appreciation, makes its own demands upon art, and has its own uses of art.' What is true of a generation within a nation is still more true of another nation. If the Indian nation is to appreciate Western literature it must do so on its own terms. This would prove the universality of great works of art. As Goethe (1749-1832) could enjoy *Abhigyana Shakuntalam* we can enjoy Shakespeare (1564-1616) but we must be able to taste certain *rasas* and hear certain *dhvanis* which the Europeans did not. Then only can we contribute to the common stock of the knowledge of mankind.  Before that happens we must  rediscover our tradition. A course in oriental critical theories will help such a rediscovery.

V

John Dryden the seventeenth century English poet wrote,

By education most have been misled;
So they believe,because they so were bred,
The priest continues what the nurse began,
And thus the child imposes on the man.  ⅋

In English studies in India also we notice an unhealthy continuity of the syllabus of yesteryears. Although it has led to a decline in the interest in English Literature not much has been done to check the rot. The UGC,of course, have suggested new and interesting courses (See *Report of the Curriculum Development Centre in English*, 1989 ) but it is unlikely that they would get implemented on an impressive scale.

In this paper it has been pointed out that there are three principal types of shortcomings in the syllabuses. They as below :
     a) the inappropriateness of texts for study;
     b) absence of the literary experience that literature offers by relating the reader to his society and its natural , social,political environment, their problems and opportunities, moments of happiness and hours of gloom;
     c) neglect of the Indian tradition of art criticism that found its earliest expression sometime between the third century B.C. and the third century A.D. in the work of Bharat and its most recent in the works of Ram Chandra Shukla (A.D.1881 - 1941) and Professor Nagendra (A.D. 1915 -  ).

In the first place, with the help of certain texts from Indian and English Literatures the differences in the *Zeitgeists*  of the two nations were shown.The examples from English were shown as expressions of a society that values order and discipline, reason and common sense, and a scientific attitude. It was suggested that pieces that promoted such qualities of the mind may be retained as a corrective to our general outlook. With the help of certain other examples of texts provided for study it has been demonstrated that they could stand in the way of our study of English. In their place certain other texts were suggested that could be more appropriate geographically, socially and culturally.

In the second place attention was drawn to the burgeoning field of Indian Literature in English Translation and it was pointed out that because an individual in India today did not have proficiency in more than one Indian language English could be used to study the literatures in our various languages which have a lot in common. It should be realized that without including Indian Literature      in our curriculum literary studies in English would become increasingly irrelevant if not alien. And Literature must connect us .

In the third place it was ı shown how literature through the
ages has been treated in India as an integral part of our artistic
experience. Bharata's Ratya Shastra talks of literature,dance,drama,
music,painting, sculpture and architecture in the same vein. The
concept of the eight or nine rasas is uniformly applicable to all.
Due to the flowering of classical dances and the Hindustani and Car-
natic music in post-independence India Sanskrit critical terms have
come to be used quite frequently to which the student of literature
in English remains alien. It is suggested that the problem can be
solved by the introduction of the classical Sanskrit critical tradi-
tion into English courses at the tertiary level in India. It would help
the student appreciate not only the classical dances and the various schools
of Indian music and literatures but also western literature thus
making even the latter culturally more relevant.

While all the three drawbacks pertain to courses in our educate
ional system in general the solutions can best be implemented with the help of
the mechanism of distance education adopted by the open universities
in general and the Indira Gandhi National Open Universitĭ , in parti-
cular. This is because it can bring together talents from diverse
fields such as the universities,the theatre, the radio,the television,
to name only a few. The experts can confer and plan by sitting to-
gether and then disperse and prepare the course material in their
spare time. They can also tutor the students in our various study
- centres and supervise their researches in the new areas and thus
supply the mainstream of our educational system with the newly trained
hands. This it is hoped will bring back life to English studies in
India.

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As the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb lay dying in 1707, a Persian nobleman from Nishapur arrived in India. His name was Saadat Khan, although he was sometimes known as Burhan-ul-Mulk, and he was to found the nawabi dynasty of Oudh. Saadat Khan had come from a Shi'a family in Persia whose fortunes had declined, and when he learnt that Aurangzeb's successor to the Mughal throne was a Shi'a he decided to leave his native land and seek employment at the Delhi court.

Although quickly accepted at the court Saadat Khan was slow to achieve promotion in the Mughal hierarchy and it was not until 1719 that he found himself *faujdar* (superintendent) of a district in Agra. But having achieved this position he quickly established a reputation for suppressing lawlessness and the ability to put down rebel zamindars or landlords who were reluctant to make revenue payments to the Mughal emperor. It was Saadat Khan's job to collect the revenue payments and so successful was he that three years later he was appointed Governor of the province of Oudh in north-western India. Oudh was described at this time as being full of 'semi-independent feudal barons of varying degrees of strength and political importance', each 'baron' having his own army and civil establishments as well as exercising judicial rights over his subjects, his authority only being limited by the presence of rivals. It was symptomatic of the barons' semi-autonomous rule that on taking up his new position of Governor, Saadat Khan literally had to fight his way into the city of Lucknow, aided by a party of local noblemen who had come to his defence.

Llewellyn-Jones, Rosie, *A Fatal Friendship* (1985), p.1

Note : Above is a short passage on Saadat Khan, a Persian immigrant, who became the Governor of Awadh. He founded the Nawabi Dynasty there. Safdarjang was Saadat Khan's nephew, son-in-law and able successor. Wajid Ali Shah, the last ruler, of the dynasty was deposed by the British in 1856. Safdarjang's tomb is in New Delhi. Premchand (1880-1936),the Dickens of Hindi Literature , made Wajid Ali Shah the subject of his short story -'The Chess Player'- on which Satyajit Ray based his film. Conquest of India from the west has been a recurrent feature of Indian History. While the passage will be used to give the student some reading material in English it will receive better attention because of its historical relevance to the student in India.

## The Old Daroghas

The old Daroghas were a remarkable class of men, of a type now quite extinct. They ruled as little kings in their own jurisdiction, and reaped a rich harvest of bribes from all classes. The Darogha of the Purneah Thâna was a good specimen of the class. He was a tall, portly Mahommedan, grey-bearded with a smooth, sleek look, crafty as a fox, extremely polished in manner, deferential to his superiors, but haughty and tyrannical to his inferiors. With his huge scarlet turban laced with gold, his sword hung from a gold embroidered baldric, spotless white clothes and long riding boots, he bestrode a gaunt roan horse with grey eyes, a pink nose, and a long, flowing tail. The beast's legs, up to the knees, and the lower half of his tail were dyed red with henna, which was explained to imply that his rider had waded in the blood of his enemies! Thus he rode in state about his jurisdiction, followed by a crowd of barkandazes and village watchmen carrying his luggage on their heads. Everyone trembled before him, for if you offended him he could report to the Magistrate that you had committed some offence,

that he suspected you of harbouring bad characters, or that you had refused him assistance in arresting criminals, and then, woe betide you! The Darogha Sahib could command as many witnesses as he wanted, all of whom would swear to anything he chose to tell them, and unless the Magistrate were uncommonly keen at detecting false evidence, your doom was sealed. In a lesser degree the Muharrir and the Jamadar imitated their chief and the barkandazes followed suit. These latter were a ragged crew getting five rupees (10/-) a month wages and eking it out by bribes. Under them again were the chaukidars or village watchmen, one or two to each village. These nominally got three rupees a month, raised by levying a few annas from each householder, but they were mostly left unpaid for months, or even years, and did not dare to incur the odium of the villagers by applying to the Magistrate to compel them to pay. In some cases instead of money they had a small plot of land given them and supported themselves by tilling it. They wore a little brass badge on a belt of coarse scarlet cloth, and were armed with an old-fashioned spear, or a rusty sword, or with an iron-bound bamboo staff. It was their duty to patrol their village by night, and if any crime was committed they were bound to go off to the Thâna at once and report it. Thus they wielded, poor and despised as they were, considerable influence. If it suited an influential zemindar or a leading villager to conceal a crime the chaukidar must be bribed or bullied to hold his tongue. Everybody was interested in keeping the matter quiet, for a visit from the Darogha was a thing to be dreaded. It cost, of course, far more to induce the Darogha to hush up a case, not to mention the cost of feeding the great man and his followers and the loss of time to villagers who were pressed into the service to carry his luggage and that of his ragged regiment. Moreover, the police seldom visited a village without practising a little torture on persons whom they pretended to suspect in order to get money out of them. Undoubtedly a great amount of crime was concealed, innocent men were tried and sentenced on false evidence dexterously got up by the police, while guilty ones got off by paying the same potent body to screen them. On the other hand the Daroghas were often splendid detectives, and they certainly knew all the criminals and suspicious characters, and could lay their hands on them whenever it suited them to do so. Under a strong-willed, active Magistrate whom they feared they did excellent work. If honest, or passably honest—and there were, here and there, some who were so—they kept their Thânas in capital order, and from the powerful personal influence which they wielded, and their profound acquaintance with the people, they were able to do much that their over-drilled and over-regulated successors cannot do, and apparently never will be able to do.

Beames,John, **Memoirs of a Bengal Civilian**, (1984), pp.140-142.

Note : Here is a short essay on a common subject for an Indian reader. Although the darogha still wields a lot of influence in the rural areas now he finds himself competing against the local politician and his henchmen. Thus the picture of the old darogha now dates but the exploitation of the poor continues and in that sense it is still of interest. Because of its relevance to the lives of the people it will be anxiously read. There is another interesting point. Beames talks of 'the loss of time to the villagers'. Loss of time is hardly seen as any loss to the villager in rural India. This will be a corrective to our outlook. Hence this passage will make a good reading material for the young learner.

## Dekaiti

Dacoity (correctly 'dakàiti') is robbery by a gang organized in a peculiar way. Living ostensibly as mere ordinary peasants, there are in every district in Bengal, numbers of men generally of low caste who really earn their living by this crime. They are all known to one or two experienced old hands who act as organizers and leaders. The leaders are constantly on the watch and find out some house where there is property to be plundered. When the house is fixed on, two or three of them meet and plan the job; then they go round separately and privately to the various rascals whom they select to help them, choosing purposely men living as far apart as possible, and by preference unknown to each other. These they bid to be present at a certain time and place. At the appointed hour, generally a little before midnight on a dark and rainy night, fifteen or twenty men assemble in a lonely spot. All are armed with sticks with perhaps a sword and a gun or two. They carry torches and usually have their faces muffled in black cloth. When all are assembled they march to the spot and on reaching it surround the house to be attacked, light their torches and rush into the house shouting aloud, whence the name of the offence (*dāk* means 'shout', and

*dakait* 'shouter'). All the villagers roused from their sleep, often also the village watchman (who ought to be patrolling the village but who is frequently an accomplice) barricade themselves in their houses from fear, and the dacoits break into the house, bind the inmates, striking and wounding all who oppose them and plunder everything they can lay their hands on. They then carry off their booty, and hearing them depart the villagers come out and follow them at a respectful distance in hopes of being able to recognize one or two of them. But a shot or two, or even some threatening shouts from the dacoits, usually suffice to prevent them from coming too close, and the band runs off with its plunder to some lonely place where the booty is divided. Each man takes his share and they disperse in different directions, usually burying the plunder in some quiet place where they can find it later on. Some are careless enough to take their share home.

Such a crime is obviously very difficult of detection. The Daroghas of the old school, unscrupulous as they were, knew the people well and were often very successful in detecting crime. Many of them knew the leaders of the dacoit gangs and tolerated them in return for such share of the proceeds of their robberies as might be agreed upon. But if it happened, as it occasionally did, that the Magistrate insisted on any particular dacoity being detected, the Darogha would send for the leader and tell him that he must positively arrest someone this time. The leaders would then meet and selecting three or four of the younger members of the gang would tell them that it was their duty to suffer for the rest. A few of the least costly articles plundered, such as brass lota (drinking pots), platters, and a bracelet or two of coarse silver, would be placed in the houses of the selected victims and duly found by the Darogha who had been previously informed of the arrangement. Then the culprits would be arrested, tried and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. After their release they were received back into the gang with honour as men who had given their proofs and passed their apprenticeship to the trade. Thus the gang flourished unmolested, the Darogha acquired a reputation for ability, the Magistrate and Judge were satisfied, and everyone was happy.

Beames,J., **Memoirs of a Bengal Civilian**, (1984), pp.143-144.

Note : Dacoity has been an old form of crime in India. It is as rampant in the countryside today as ever before. Still the common people do not know about its operational aspect. If a simple passage such as above is prescribed for study it will be read because it is so relevant to their daily experience. The passage may thus be used to discuss the grammatical points with advantage.

## TO INDIA—MY NATIVE LAND

MY country ! in thy day of glory past
   A beauteous halo circled round thy brow,
And worshipped as a deity thou wast.
Where is that glory, where that reverence now ?
Thy eagle pinion is chained down at last,
And grovelling in the lowly dust art thou :
Thy minstrel hath no wreath to weave for thee
Save the sad story of thy misery !
Well—let me dive into the depths of time,
And bring from out the ages that have rolled
A few small fragments of those wrecks sublime,
Which human eye may never more behold ;
And let the guerdon of my labour be
My fallen country ! one kind wish from thee !

## THE HARP OF INDIA

WHY hang'st thou lonely on yon withered bough?
   Unstrung for ever, must thou there remain ;
Thy music once was sweet—who hears it now ?
  Why doth the breeze sigh over thee in vain?
  Silence hath bound thee with her fatal chain ;
Neglected, mute, and desolate art thou,
  Like ruined monument on desert plain :
O ! many a hand more worthy far than mine
  Once thy harmonious chords to sweetness gave,
And many a wreath for them did Fame entwine
  Of flowers still blooming on the minstrel's grave :
Those hands are cold—but if thy notes divine
  May be by mortal wakened once again,
Harp of my country, let me strike the strain !
  *March, 1827.*

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# THERMOPYLÆ

IS there none to say, 'Twas well'?
Shall not Fame their story tell,
Why they fought, and why they fell?
                    'Twas to be free!

O! who would live a crouching slave,
While yet this earth can give a grave?
Who would not rather death than shame,
While thinking on thine awful name,
                    Thermopylæ?

Small their number, high their pride,
Great they lived, and nobly died,
Friends and brothers, side by side,
                    Within that pass:

His barbarous hordes, and countless hosts
The Persian brought from distant coasts;
Like hunted deer those hosts were slain;
Before thine arm their might was vain,
                    Leonidas!

Curse on him who did betray
Sparta's sons, and showed the way
Where every hope of victory lay
                    To Persia's bands!

But Sparta's sons, a hero each,
Did, on that day, a lesson teach

How liberty in death is won,
What deeds with Freedom's sword are done
                    In freemen's hands!

Circled by a sea of blood,
Pressed by thousands, still they stood,
Fighting, falling, unsubdued,
                    Unconquered still.

They scorned to breathe the breath of slaves,
They fought for free and hallowed graves;
And though they fell in glory's hour,
The Persian overcame their power,
                    But—not their will!

Let them rest—nought could appal
Those who armed at Honour's call:
Fell they not as heroes fall—
                    For Liberty?

Then, let them rest—their race is run;
O! let them rest; their day is done;
They found them each a glorious grave,
But still their fame is on thy wave,
                    Thermopylæ!

*December, 1826.*

Derozio,H.L.V., Poems, Bradley-Birt, F.B. and Das Gupta, R.K. eds.
(    ), pp. 1,2, 11-12.

## Note

Henry L.V.Derozio (1809-1831), a Eurasian clerk, teacher and journalist of Calcutta, was the first Indo-Anglian poet. He was a contemporary in India of the Romantic Poets.

Here are 3 poems of Derozio. Two of these, the sonnets, are passionate poems on India charecteristic of the patriot that he was. They would be suitable for less advanced (the intermediate level) students. For the more advanced students I should recommend 'Thermopylae' because it stretches our imagination back in time to a different geographical region and strategic landscape. The four-and-a-half-mile pass will remind the Indian student of the Khyber Pass, now in Pakistan, and of the line of invaders from Alexander (356-323) to Ahmad Shah Abdali (1722-1772) who came through it. It tells us of the Spartan Leonidas who defended his country against the invading army of Xerxes in 480 B.C. It tells us indirectly that Ancient Greece also had its share of Mir Zafars - Ephilates.

'Thermopylae' is a less well known poem of Derozio, compared to the other two and one can analyse the poem - or simply understand it - at several levels. One will require to refer to the other two sonnets because the reference will give us a better insight into the 'meaning' of the poem.

Tt is significant to remember that they were written in the 20's of the last century before even the Sepoy Mutiny or the First War of Indian Independence was fought.

# AN ASSESSMENT OF THE RELEVANCE OF THE CURRICULUM

# IN A DUAL MODE UNIVERSITY

Richard Siaciwena
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# AN ASSESSEMENT OF THE RELEVANCE OF THE CURRICULUM IN A DUAL MODE UNIVERSITY

BY

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## INTRODUCTION

It is recognized that most of the conventional higher education institutions have not yet adapted their entry requirements, curricula, schedules, modes of delivery, or support services to the needs of the adult student.[1] One of the reasons for establishing distance higher education institutions, therefore, is to widen access to education to adults who for various reasons find it difficult to enter conventional institutions:[2]

> The principal aim of these autonomous institutions
> is... to provide opportunities at the higher
> education level to all those who are unable to
> pursue such opportunities within existing institu-
> tions, in particular adults with work or family
> obligations, and/or living in remote areas.[3]

The establishment of distance higher education does not always necessarily guarantee an increase in adult participation in higher education. A study in Swedish institutions revealed that:

> despite a wide selection of courses which were
> offered, a large group stated that they had no
> opportunity to study the course they desired.
> An examination of the actual curriculum in the
> region showed that these statements were not
> completely attributable to ignorance of
> opportunities, they also reflected real defi-
> ciencies in the range of opportunities.[4]

The issue of curriculum appears to be more contentious in dual mode universities/institutions which offer identical courses to full-time and distance students. At the University of Zambia questions have been raised about the fairness of offering the same courses to both internal and external students. This necessitated an enquiry into the relevance of courses offered to distance learners - as a part of a broader evaluation study of the distance learning programme at the institution.[5]

## CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

During the early 1970s the University of Zambia offered courses leading to six different qualifications. Since then the number of degrees and courses available by distance study has decreased. Currently only courses leading to the award of the Bachelor of Arts (B.A), Bachelor of Arts with Education (B.A Ed) and Diploma in Adult Education are offered to distance students.

The total number of courses distance students could choose from dropped from 60 in 1972 to 29 in the 1989/90 academic year. On the other hand the number of students has increased by 284 per cent from 152 in 1967 to 583 in the 1989/90 academic year. The reduced range of courses available to distance students has been associated with staff shortage in teaching departments:

> ... the shortage of staff in the Schools that
> provide correspondence courses (resulting from
> the Schools'. inability to recruit or the Univer-
> sity's decision to freeze some of the posts)
> affected the Department's programme.... The
> range of courses offered by correspondence was[6]
> not as wide as one would have liked to see...

Significantly, the University of Zambia Senate suspended all third and fourth year level courses as a means of reducing distance learning courses to manageable levels vis-a-vis the administrative and production/printing capacity of the Department of Correspondence Studies, in 1981. They were to be reinstated after two years but the situation has remained the same.

The increase in the number of distance students against the available courses raises the question of whether the current courses cater adequately for the learners' needs. This question arises from the observation made by Duncan[7] that as the number of students increases so too does the range of needs to be met. The reduction of courses has also meant that the available courses are oversubscribed and this increases the student/lecturer ratio. It can affect the staff morale and their attitude to distance education as a whole.

## RATIONALE

The offering of identical courses to full-time and distance students has been a source of contention regarding the present model of distance education at the University of Zambia. According to the 1980 report of the University of Zambia Senate Ad-hoc Committee on Correspondence Studies, it is not always possible for full-time and distance students to follow necessarily exactly the same curriculum and take exactly the same examinations. It observed that although both groups of students have followed the same curriculum it appeared that they have seldom in practice received the same standard of tuition.

The Report therefore proposed that courses be developed specifically for distance students "and not merely be attempts to provide a correspondence equivalent of an internal course."[8] This proposal is supported by Harper and Kember[9] who suggested that perhaps now is the time to question whether distance learning courses "need the prop of legitimacy from their internal counterparts." Harper and Kember also submitted that the differences between the internal and distance learning courses would permit adult distance students to choose subjects which appeared to be suited to their individuals and career needs.

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The issue of relevance of courses is important because it is directly (but not exclusively) related to distance students' motivation and persistence in their courses. Wakatama[10] and Perry[11] argued that in any distance system (DLS) motivation is the most powerful factor determining success. One of the ways of motivating adults is by providing for their needs particularly in the form of relevant courses.[12] Neil summarized the relationship between courses and motivation:

> Observely, (sic) and from experience, when
> opportunities arise for relevant learning,
> adults in a DLS can demonstrate levels of
> motivation far higher than those usually
> encountered in students attending con-
> conventional institutions.[13]

Perry emphasized the point that distance learning is not an easy way of getting a degree. It is particularly so for the University of Zambia distance learners who require a minimum of six (6) years to complete a degree. This means that they need tobe highly motivated in order to persist for such a long time and be able to complete their degree successfully.

**METHODOLOGY**

The study was conducted between 1986 and 1988. The target population was the 586 students enrolled in distance learning courses in 1986 and all the lecturers who were responsible for the tuition of these students. On the basis of the principle of disproportionate stratified sampling aimed at including all the student population subgroups in the study 150 students were sampled for the study. Data collection was done by a mailed questionnaire sent to the 150 students and all the 26 lecturers.

There are both conceptual and practical difficulties in determining what is highly relevant to the needs of the learners. As a means of circumventing this problem, the researcher focussed on the relevance of courses in terms of students' occupational needs or interests, for reasons given later in this section. It was, however, found necessary to first establish the adequacy of the courses for distance students and whether it was fair, from the institutional point of view, to offer the same courses to both young internal students and the older adult distance learners. There are two reasons for this approach. First, some organisational and financial constraints have led to the reduction of degree programmes and courses available to distance learners at the University of Zambia. Secondly, the needs of adult students studying at home are different from those students in a conventional university for whom a university education is the culmination of an unbroken linear progression which began in nursery school.[14]

The focus on students' occupational needs can be justified on the grounds that the distance teaching system at the University of Zambia was established to contribute to the supply of high level manpower through the upgrading of various categories of employees especially in the public and teaching services. Also, recent studies in various parts of the world have shown that the vast majority of adults in higher education study mainly for job related reasons.[15] Thus "job related goals play a major

motivational role for all groups of adults."[16]   In his study of
correspondence education in Central African (including Zambia) Wakatama[17]
concluded that employment seemed to be the first priority in choosing
their courses of study.   An analysis of 'Basic Information Cards' for
the 1980 cohort of distance students at the University of Zambia revealed
that job related reasons were a major determinant in their participation
in distance education.   Out of the 176 distance students who entered the
University of Zambia in 1980, over half, 56.8 per cent (N=100), gave
job related reasons for undertaking courses by distance study.

## DISCUSION OF THE RESULTS

As mentioned above, this aspect of the study was a part of an
evaluational study of distance education at the University of Zambia.
Eighteen (18) out of 26 lecturers (69.23%) responded.   A total of 122
students, out of 150 (81.3%) responded.

Almost all the lecturers who responded to the questionnaire,
88.9 per cent (N=16) indicated that the range of courses available to
distance students was not wide enough.   However, all but two lecturers
thought that it was fair for distance students to do the same courses
as internal students.   This finding reflects on the University of Zambia's
commitment to the principle of the parity of standards between internal
and external students.   It also illustrates the worldwide concern for
the worth, credibility and comparability of degrees awarded by distance
teaching institutions in relation-to those awarded by conventional
institutions.

The students' questionnaire results showed that in all the majority
of the students, 90 per cent (N=110), found their courses relevant to
their job.   Of course there were differences in the degree of relevance,
with 58 per cent (N=71), indicating that they found them "Very relevant."
This result lends support and credibility to the observation made by
Seidman and Seidman about the distance students at the University of
Zambia:

> ... In many ways, they perceive that the
> courses they take have immediate relevance
> to their day-to-day work.   They frequently
> seek to utilize the knowledge and methods
> they learn to improve their own contribu-
> tions to their communities.[18]

As a means of verifying the above result, it was necessary
to establish whether any students had changed or had applied to change
their degree programmes or major and minor subjects.   And if they had
whether this was because they found their previous or present courses
to be irrevant.   Nearly a quarter of the total student respondents,
23.8 per cent (N=29), indicated that they had changed or applied to
change for reasons relating to the relevance of the courses to their job.

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However, most of those 29 respondents who were seeking to change wanted to do courses that were available by distance learning. Nearly seven (7) respondents wanted to change or had changed courses because the ones they had applied for were not offered by distance teaching.

On the basis of the questionnaire findings alone it can be concluded that the courses were relevant to distance students despite the reduction of courses available to them over the years. However, it is not known whether any of the 13.2 per cent of the students who had dropped out from the programme before this study, had done so because they did not find their courses attractive or of any value.

It has been explained above that the adult students' motivation to participate in distance higher education is mainly job related. It may therefore be possible that potential students who do not see much value in the courses offered on the distance programme do not apply when courses are advertised in the Press. What Kaunda wrote about the Law courses could be a strong indicator of this possibility:

> I am sure that many others who might have
> applied were discouraged from doing so by
> the fact that no correspondence courses
> are available in Law at present.[19]

Notwithstanding this statement, however, the fact is that the majority of the students who were registered during the year the study was undertaken found their courses relevant to their job. Since most of them were motivated to study by job related reasons they were therefore more likely to persist and complete their degree programmes. And this is an important pointer to the effectivenss of courses.

**CONCLUSION**

The establishment of autonomous distance teaching institutions is a response to the educational needs of adults which are not adequately catered for by conventional Universities. However, there are conventional institutions such as the University of Zambia in Africa which have incorporated distance education into their normal academic functions.

One distinct feature of such institutions is the offering of identical courses to both internal and external students. But this raises a question of whether courses designed for young internal students are relevant to older distance students.

The results of a study at the University of Zambia indicate that this is not a major problem. The findings should, however, be treated with caution because there is a possibility that many prospective candidates do not apply for adimission because of the inavailability of suitable courses. This possibility is strengthened by the fact that all applicants for distance learning courses at the University of Zambia are given an information sheet on the available courses.

Nonetheless the fact that the majority of students found their courses relevant to their jobs is an important positive aspect of distance education at the University of Zambia.

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DEVELOPING AN ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGY FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES:

STUDY FROM THE OPEN UNIVERSITY, U.K.

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# Developing an Organizational Strategy for Equal Opportunities: a Case Study from the Open University, U.K.

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## Introduction
The Open University is committed to equality and openness by nature of its Charter and activity. This paper describes a recent initiative to review policy and practice in equal opportunities, prepare a five year action plan and steer institutional agreement of the plan through the university. Some observations are made as a result of the initial work about successful factors in ensuring strategic change in this area within a university context. The need for more research is logged.

## The Open University
It is important to set the Open University in context. Established in 1969, the Open University has pioneered university-level distance education in the United Kingdom. It is the U.K.'s largest single teaching institution. Over 100,000 students a year are registered, and a similar number buy self-contained study packs. There are 72,000 students in the undergraduate programme, with more than 100,000 graduates. The University aims to keep a broad balance between the number of students on arts/social sciences and maths/science/technology course, and to keep students numbers in line with the distribution of population throughout the U.K. The University offers courses, diplomas, and study and training packs in the fields of education, health and social welfare, scientific and technological updating, family and personal education and leisure interests. The Open Business School is one of Europe's largest provider of management education. The University has always had links with other European distance teaching universities, and is now expanding its programme in continental Europe.
The University has around 3,000 full-time staff at its central headquarters and 13 regional centres and over 5000 part time tutorial and counselling staff.

To summarize, key points about the Open University include:
1. its relative **youth** as an institution
2. the **distance learning approach**, including modular courses and a mix of teaching methods.
3. there are **no formal entry qualifications** (except for postgraduate courses);admission is on a first-come, first-served basis
4. virtually all students are **part-time** and the median age-group is mid-30s
5. it is a **high volume** activity in terms of course production and number of students
6. there have always been **good institutional review** mechanisms, including detailed monitoring

## Equal Opportunities at the Open University
The Open University was founded on principles of openness and equality. In formal terms, the Charter expressly forbids direct discrimination on the grounds of religion, race or political belief, and declares that men and women are equally eligible for courses of study or office within the University. These fundamental but rather limited declarations of intent were re-defined and set in a more pro-active and wider ranging context in succeeding years, and the reality of educational inequality acknowledged with the University's fundamental role in combating it, particularly in terms of student access.
During the 1980s, a number of groups within units were formed with specific equal opportunity remits. Like many other organizations, the University published a statement of Equal Opportunity and Employment in 1988. Later that year, the University Senate called for a formal review of the University's policy and practice in equal opportunities

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## Review Findings
A major review report was published in April 1990, including a statistical digest analysing student and staff figures against various equal opportunities measures and proposals for a five year action plan.
What did the Review find? Broadly speaking, the results are as follows:
## Women
The University is recruiting just about half its undergraduate intake from women, although the proportions in Maths,Science, Technology and Management areas are considerably lower than in Arts, Social Sciences and the Health and Social Welfare and Community Education areas. The University has a majority of women staff, but they predominate in the lower paid categories and junior grades of staff.
## Ethnic minorities
Recent data indicates that the University attracts new black and ethnic minority students into the undergraduate population in proportion to the population (around 5.5%). There are lower proportion of staff from black and ethnic minority backgrounds than in the population.
## Disability
The University has established itself as a leader in terms of provision for students with disability, with over 4% of the undergraduate population (3000 students) having some form of disability. The University has less than 1% of staff with disability.
## Courses
The University has developed a number of courses focussed on issues concerning ethnic minorities, disability and special needs.Courses dealing with gender issues, and targetted specifically at women include *The Changing Experience of Women,* and *Women into Management* ,an access course for women managers to the Certificate in Management.

## The outcome of the Review
Formally, the outcome of the Review covered four areas:
1. A new statement of principle, integrating issues concerned with the curriculum, staff and student access and support across all areas of perceived disadvantage (issues concerning gender, age, religion, black and ethnic minorities, people with disabilities,and gay and lesbian people) under the slogan "Open and Equal"
2. A five year action plan covering the following areas:
- The curriculum
- Employment
- Student access and progress
3. The establishment of a new organizational structure within the Open University to deal with equal opportunities issues, including the setting up of an Equal Opportunities Unit and a Steering Committee
4. Proposals to progress and monitor the 5-year action plan

## The process
The process of agreeing an institutional action plan in this area reflects the collegiate corporate management philosophy underlying the Open University, like most other universities. It was necessary for the University Senate to call for the initial review. Once that was agreed, the setting up of the Review Team was legitimated, funded and supported formally. The Report went to the Academic Board, having received support from the Vice Chancellor, and was then processed through the wide-ranging consultative process common for all new proposals. Full costings were undertaken. Staff were directly consulted or informed three times during the review process. Initially, their opinions were sought via an information flyer sent in the pay packet. Once the report was issued, a summary of the Strategic Action Plan was circulated with a supportive cover note from the Vice Chancellor, inviting comments. Finally, a leaflet was mailed to all staff with the new Statement of Principle letting them know the outcome, and giving key points of the agreed action plan.

**Observations on Equal Opportunities in terms of strategic change**
The following are offered as observations. The University has agreed a plan, as outlined above, and is into the next phase: the preparation of unit action plans. Therefore, some measure of success can be claimed for the review and preparation of the action plan. Success over the next five years will be measured according to achievement of targets within the plan. Changes may be introduced as thinking develops.
Pre-requisites for the successful introduction of an Equal Opportunities strategy seem similar to those of other change strategies. The difference may lie in the perception of Equal Opportunities as an emotive issue. Joanna Foster, the Chair of the Equal Opportunities Commission says that Equal Opportunities engage people both at a head and a heart level, and judgements are often blurred by this dual reaction.

I would list the following key points in terms of the development of and institutional agreement of the Open University's Equal Opportunities action plan.
**1. Establishing the framework**
*The scope and framework of Equal Opportunities policy and practice must be recognized.*
Establishing the relevance of the issues in an integrated fashion to all facets of the institution's work was crucial. The inter-relationship of employment and "service delivery" or "product" activities (in the OU's case, the curriculum and student access and support) was recognized from the outset, and provided a valuable framework for strategic consideration of the issues. Separating out the issues, as often happens in institutions, particularly in terms of employment and the needs of particular groups can weaken the overall structure of the argument and framework for strategic action.
**2. Leadership and support from the top**
*It is necessary to have leadership from the top of the organization.*
Key points here included the Vice Chancellor's willingness to endorse the Strategic Action Plan as the basis for discussion, and his successor's willingness to chair the Equal Opportunities Steering Group. This indicated commitment from the top of the organization. A seminar led by an external facilitator for senior University and lay staff led to a sense of ownership by most senior staff of the policy . The Chancellor coined the phrase "Open and Equal" , which is now in common usage as a slogan for the University's work.
**3. A well-researched action plan**
*The arguments need to be well-marshalled, and data provided to back them up.*
The University was prepared to invest in a senior member of staff to lead a team for a ten-month period to produce a full report on the area. Monitoring is the cornerstone of any equal opportunities policy, and the detailed statistical work provided the foundation for a major new policy proposal to increase access. The Report itself was well-received and provided the basis for discussion; whether members of the University agreed or not with the proposals in the strategic action plan, they had the background information on which to base informed debate.
Another key point concerned realism in the proposals being presented: they needed to be strategic, yet point to short and medium term goals which could be seen as complementary to other strategic goals of the institution. They had to be realistic in terms of feasibility and costing.
**4. Champions**
*Introducing a change issue requires champions.*
There were Equal Opportunity groups already up and running in most faculty and regional centres, of varying importance within the government structure. Depending one's standpoint,they were both difficult to ignore and useful in developing and furthering the discussion. It meant that there were "champions" in all units to spearhead debate on the proposals in the Report.
It was also important for the University community to have confidence in the Planning Director (Equal Opportunities).

## 5. Building a sense of ownership of the policy
*Members of the institution need to "own" the policy.*
Considerable efforts were made to create and build a sense of ownership of the policy, ranging from informing staff (full and part-time) of the review and subsequently the strategic action plan to seminars mounted on issues of concern to inform the debate. Support given to minority staff groups, such as the Black staff group and Gay and Lesbian group. Meetings were held with all Heads of Unit, and with a variety of staff and student groups, both formally and informally.

## 6 Resources
*Recognition of the implications for both staff and non-staff resource must be given.*
Apart from the investment in the Equal Opportunities planning exercise (£50k+), all the proposals in the action plan were costed. It was then necessary for the institution to make allocations over the next five years to reflect the priorities within the plan, and in line with other university commitments. Equal Opportunities initiatives are rarely inexpensive, but an analysis can be made of both sides of the balance sheet, for example the cost of recruiting and training a replacement staff member as opposed to the cost of introducing flexible working practices (or childcare vouchers).

## 7. Organizational climate
*The organizational"mission" and organizational climate are key.*
Unlike other U.K. universities, the Open University has as part of its mission statement a commitment to openness and equality. Therefore, arguments based on principle related to Equal Opportunities were met favourably, and the relationship between the principle of increasing access for, say, black and ethnic minority people and the need for a higher proportion of black and ethnic minority staff could be seen. However, in order to achieve real change, the institution must be genuinely open to change as part of its normal working practices.

## Conclusion
The Commission for Racial Equality recently published a report entitled "Words or Deeds" about the introduction of equal opportunities into higher education in the U.K.. It remains true that few institutions, particularly in the university sector, have moved beyond the stage of developing statements of principle, and other reports such as the recent Hansard Commission Report on Women at the Top have criticised the lack of progress in the area. However, the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals has recently issued guidelines on employment, and work is underway across the binary line to share good practice and translate policy into practice.

The experience at the Open University may be useful for other organizations and the University intends to continue to monitor the implementation of its Equal Opportunities programme both qualititatively and quantitatively. This initial critique raises a number of points about the successful introduction of equal opportunities policies into universities.More research is needed. Comparisons both within the higher education sector, other public sector organizations such as the health service or local government and the private sector would be useful.

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# DENIED VISUAL CUES -

# TEACHING AND LEARNING BY AUDIOTELECONFERENCE

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# DENIED VISUAL CUES -
## teaching and learning by audioteleconference

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Talk: an "integral part of learning".[1]

*Since 1983 teletutorials (the Deakin term for audioteleconferencing) have been used at Deakin university and are now a significant part of off-campus teaching. Introduced as a small pilot program in one faculty, they are now used by all of the six faculties which have substantial off-campus enrolment. In 1990, 371 teletutorials occurred with a total of 1,943 student connections. Already this year has seen considerable development in the program with a 58 per cent increase in the number of students connected when the first quarter is compared with that of 1990.*

*From 1988 I have undertaken an evaluation of the teletutorial program with the Institute of Distance Education. In the case studies at Deakin university that have formed the basis of this research a number of processes of inquiry have been pursued more or less concurrently: a survey of relevant literature; listening to teletutorials - occasionally being connected as a member of the group but not as a participant; observation of face-to-face tutorials with the same tutor and in the same subject area; a survey of student opinion and response to teletutorial experience by questionnaires; unstructured responses from students in a journal style; telephone interviews with selected students both before and after individual teletutorial sessions; face-to-face interviews with academic staff involved in the teletutorial program. Central to the study is an analysis of the teletutorial as text in the context of user attitudes and perceptions. Each of these methods of gathering information has made a specific contribution and one method of data collection enriches another.*

*Over the four years of the study, a considerable data bank has been established. Over 500 questionnaires have been collated and analysed; 86 teletutorials have been tape recorded; 74 students and 45 academics have been interviewed.*

\* \* \* \* \*

I have discovered after many telephone interviews with off-campus students that, although there may be a core of similar attitudes and beliefs, almost invariably there will be something new. Thus what has been given an aura of "truth", "validity" because of replication and because the contrary case has not been presented - or even thought of by the researcher concerned - is challenged. So it was for me last year when I contacted a student living in a fairly remote part of Tasmania. The interview prior to the teletutorial followed what I by then considered normative patterns: she was looking forward to this, her first teletutorial experience; she did not know really what to expect but was hopeful that it would be valuable for her; there was some anxiety. It was the interview following the teletutorial that again indicated for me the joy of research where the idiosyncratic response can force re-thinking. Before this call I would have accepted as axiomatic that if a student responded positively to the teletutorial experience then her attitude towards her studies and what the university was providing off-campus students would be enhanced. Not so! For this student her pleasure in the teletutorial was in direct proportion to the bitterness and sense of betrayal she

felt about the rest of her undergraduate studies. For the first time she had experienced direct spoken contact with her lecturer and her peers and she had discovered a significant new dimension to tertiary study.

I would not wish to have it inferred from this instance that I believe that students cannot successfully complete tertiary studies without the benefit of language interaction. Thousands of students have gained their degrees by correspondence study alone and many would describe their learning experiences as satisfying and fulfilling. I wonder, however, (as was the case with the student referred to above) had they been given opportunities to communicate orally if they, too, may have had some doubts as to whether their learning was in some way incomplete. While many off-campus students do have face-to-face contact in study centres and residential/weekend schools, for instance, these do not entirely replicate the campus-based experience of teaching and learning.[2] Moreover, for those students whose geographical location, initial inclination, physical/domestic situation etc preclude attendance at such sessions, the learning experience that is traditionally provided for on-campus students by the seminar/tutorial is entirely lost.

My point of view is that formal small group discussion is an important dimension of higher education. While students may find opportunities to verbalise outside formal teaching sessions, I have sympathy with Prenzler's position:

> A university degree without the development of verbal skills is an incomplete degree. ... In three or more years students may produce top quality writing while their verbal capacities remain dormant. This is an entirely unsatisfactory situation because effective knowledge is communicable knowledge. Learning should involve a constant verbalising of new knowledge to gauge peer responses in an interactive process. Oral skills are fundamental to democratic participation and to the applied sharing of knowledge.[3]

Similarly another lecturer claims:

> A university education should challenge students to think for themselves and develop a critical attitude. Part of the teaching method of a university should be to put students in situations where they have to articulate their ideas and defend them. This is the function of the tutorial. Without such experience external students are deprived of an essential part of the university experience.[4]

Where such values are held, it is incumbent on curriculum developers to provide a framework for their realisation. Thus some infrastructure for dialogue is required. So many tertiary institutions have seen a solution in audio telecommunication that it is claimed that audioteleconferencing is now the most widespread application of information technology in distance education.[5] It is considered an effective, efficient and reliable way of providing two-way interactive tutorials for students who cannot attend regular face-to-face sessions. Such students have, in most cases, responded positively. Typically:

> Teletutorials add that other dimension to learning: rather than receiving static information in print or even video, with teletutorials there is an immediacy; an exchange of information. ... We are given opportunities to test, to explore ideas.
> (Interview with student, faculty of Education.)

Almost invariably, however, this solution is regarded as a compromise: better than no contact at all, but inferior to face-to-face teaching and learning. And the hallmark of this alleged inferiority is the denial of visual cues.

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There have been many studies that have attempted to provide objective analysis of face-to-face and audio interaction, seeking to determine as "scientifically" as possible the strengths and weaknesses of both mediums.[6] Not surprisingly, research comparing the two approaches to conferencing consistently report that people prefer the face-to-face condition. It is the normal, accepted mode. Consequently there is a popular belief that communication by telephone is inferior to face-to-face communication. Research findings from both laboratory experiments and field trials of audioconferencing according to Fowler and Wackerbarth do not support this "simplistic notion". They conclude that "in many respects audio communication is equal, if not superior, to face-to-face communication", citing such features as accuracy for conveying objective information; accuracy and rapidity in problem solving; achieving desired attitudinal changes and interviewing. Significantly for those concerned with educational applications they specifically refer to "discussion of ideas".[7]

Where audio communication is clearly inferior is when visual input is an integral part of the teaching and learning involved. While I have observed both video and face-to-face sessions where the claimed vital diagrammatic support was minimal in its effect on the development and success of the session, there are disciplines that do not translate readily to an audio only medium. In such cases technological advances can ensure that those at both ends of the telephone connection can receive graphic material. This, however, means that the advantage of taking the tutorial to the locations of individual students is lost - a critical component of the Deakin model of teleconferencing - as it is impossible to provide such expensive and sophisticated equipment for all students. Where the pictorial information is of a fairly basic kind, tutors can send this to students before the session and sometimes grid references are helpful. In such situations strategies can reduce the effect of reliance on an audio mode of communication but they are clearly less satisfactory than fully interactive involvement with the visual material.

Where the discipline depends solely, or to a very substantial extent, on language then, theoretically at least, the loss of the visual channel should not be prohibitive. If, however, and my research certainly has found this, most people, irrespective of discipline, believe the denial of visual input is a limitation then this has a pervasive influence on how they regard teaching and learning by audioteleconferencing. At its extreme it is an insurmountable barrier to participation: "It's no good me trying it. I know it wouldn't work for me. I simply have to look at people I'm talking with." In some cases those who attempt teleconferencing find that their initial negative perceptions are reinforced:

> It (audioteleconferencing) is certainly better than nothing but I knew I wouldn't like it and I don't. Because I can't see faces I can't judge how people are responding to what I and other people are saying. It's like having an invisible audience. I can't gauge anything with confidence and find it really difficult. (Interview with tutor, faculty of Nursing.)

Accustomed to visual cues to set the pace and tone of their teaching; reliant on body language to guide their interpretation of the session, the loss of vision is assessed as deprivation. Some students share similar perceptions:

> A lot of time in the teleconferences is very much about working out who is saying what so that you can place it, rather than listening to the ideas. You miss a lot the body language that lets you see how others are reacting. (Interview with student, faculty of Education.)

Thus, for those who rely on visual modes of perceiving and processing information, audioteleconferencing will inevitably be less satisfactory.[8]

Sometimes, however, perceptions of deprivation are not so well founded. There is a tendency, for instance, for tutors who feel that their teletutorial sessions are less satisfactory than their face-to-face classes to blame this on their inability to see the reactions of their students. In some cases observation of such tutors in face-to-face sessions and listening to tapes of their teletutorials lead me to conclude differently. Often proffered responses that rely on body language, rather than voice, are ignored by those tutors who dominate language exchange; tutors ask questions of students who are busily recording a previous response, so failing to respond to the activity they presumably could have observed. A tutor who illustrated her disappointment with teletutorials by saying that she was shocked to be told that, in response to her session, a student "walked in the garden for hours and hours because she didn't seem to have the same understanding as the rest" attributed her failure to react supportively to her not being able to see the student's face. Later the tutor commented about that particular student's reticence - a cue, in itself, that the student was not at ease with the situation - and further remarked on the pressure of her administrative workload that means she cannot prepare adequately for these sessions and so is inevitably under stress. Both these factors could also account for why she failed to perceive a particular student's discomfiture. There is also an assumption here that the student's face would have revealed her inner turmoil. Thus, where lack of visual input is seen as a problem it is instructive to put that perception in context to determine its probable validity.

One significant context in which to place attitudinal response is that of extent of experience with the audio only medium. Novices typically feel insecure, doubting that they will be able to teach and learn effectively without visual support. Such anxiety is a salient feature of early teleconferencing experiences but becomes insignificant as tutors and students adapt to the medium. While the time this takes vary according to a number of influencing factors, that the adaptation occurs readily in the vast majority of cases cannot be overlooked.

As students and tutor become more at ease with one another, as they learn to recognise and thus identify voices, so the lines of communication are more readily opened. It is generally helpful for speakers to link name with voice in the opening sessions, but, providing group homogeneity is retained and the sessions are not long periods apart, even by the second teletutorial this prop disappears as redundant. As with all communication, early encounters are more studied, more forced as the participants strive to establish acceptable and comfortable patterns of speech and action. I do not think it is just coincidental that as those participating become more familiar with the actual mechanisms of conducting a teleconference - as they find the event is very straightforward and non-threatening - that they discover they are at ease with speech protocol. I often have tutors and students remark on how surprised they are that voices do not override one another with the ultimate effect of garbled communication. Partly the technical switching of the bridge mechanism accounts for this as the bridge will accept one voice only at a time, but also natural speech patterns soon become evident.

Tutors who actively seek to compensate for the visual loss find it helpful to circulate photographs of the group's participants and then arrange these in a circle on the desk in front of them as a clear attempt to replicate the face-to-face tutorial image. Students also have indicated that they have found it helpful to be able to put a face to the voice - especially in the early stages. Their observations are very similar to the conclusions from experiments that have found that audio conferencing is more satisfactory once an initial face-to-face encounter has been made.[9]

Such passive substitutes cannot replicate the face-to-face situation as far as observation of body language is concerned. In a conventional tutorial the way students voluntarily indicate their desire to speak is frequently by sending readily interpreted body cues. Thus they move forward, perhaps raise a hand and, once they have the eye of the tutor, speak. Such a speech protocol is comfortable for all concerned. However (and this occurs especially in what I would term successful tutorials where the interaction is of a more dynamic, forceful kind) spoken language generally pre-empts, or

comes simultaneously and often redundantly, with gesture. The "But what if?" interjection is the kind of comment I mean. Here the tone of the voice is probably more significant than is the expression on the face. Thus, to the tutor who is orchestrating the debate, and the other students, the denial of visual cues is irrelevant to the development of the exchange.

It should not be assumed that having visual contact is invariably an advantage. One illustration that comes to mind to support this contention is that of a confident tutor I was observing in a face-to-face session. Looking directly as a student she said, "Now, Mary-Anne what do you think of this?" The recipient of the eye contact, Jane, indicated by her tone of speech that she was unhappy that she was not known to the tutor by this stage of the semester. Had it been a teletutorial "Mary-Anne" would presumably have responded and "Jane" would have been blissfully unaware of the confusion in the tutor's mind.

A further frequently mentioned advantage of teleconferencing is that reliance on the auditory sense tends to concentrate attention - "I find I can concentrate more deeply on the telephone and there's likely to be fewer distractions". (Questionnaire response from faculty of Management student.) Tutors commonly report that they cover more material and issues more quickly, referring to "quality time". There is, however, a related limitation. Without the distraction and variation of employing other senses to the same extent as would occur in conventional teaching, it is more difficult to retain attention for long periods. For this reason I believe that an hour is the outer limit for fruitful discussion. I have been bemused to hear tutors who have run sessions for 90 to 100 minutes say that there was just so much to talk about that they couldn't get the session ended - "They (the students) just wouldn't let me go". When I have spoken with students who have survived such marathons their response is not quite the same - "I had a red and aching ear at the end of it. I just thought he'd never call it quits." (Interview with student in the faculty of Social Sciences.)

To a large extent the degree to which lack of vision is seen as prohibitive depends on where priorities lie. For instance, a tutor who believes that her off-campus students are far more motivated, organised and well prepared than those in her on-campus classes will find her teletutorial sessions the more rewarding and stimulating. A student who finds that she does not have to leave work early and drive through heavy traffic to a study centre, but can take the call in her office at the end of the working day, sets the convenience of the teletutorial as her priority and so chooses this form of learning above the face-to-face sessions she could attend. And consider the tutor who rejoices in the fact the he can take his teletutorials in the bath, secure in the knowledge that his somewhat portly frame and ageing flesh are hidden from the eyes of his students and that, with his physical comfort assured, he can attain a psychological state that suits his teaching style. For him - and his students - lack of vision is clearly an asset!

Finally, while the *raison d'etre* for teletutorials is language interaction for students who cannot attend regular tutorials, it would be foolish to consider that all tutorials - whether face-to-face, video or audio - entail such interaction. Tutorials were recently described to me by one academic from the faculty of Humanities as "lectures with a pretence for Socratic dialogue". He considered that the energy required to stimulate "real" interaction was simply not worth it - he was not prepared to "massage students into contributing". Surely the key determinant here is the attitude of the tutor concerned. For him the success (or failure) of his teletutorials will not be attributable to the medium. His authoritarian style will prevail, irrespective.

Conversely, tutors whose emphasis is on collaborative learning will find in the teletutorial a valid way of bringing this experience to their more isolated students. And teleconferencing has much to offer these students. Ideally, they contribute to and negotiate the agenda for discussion; they have input into the "how" as well as the "what". They will have been consulted about the "when" and the "where" is at their discretion. For those who are interested and involved in teaching and learning and open to new approaches, while there may be some initial reservations the response will be

positive and, as has happened at Deakin, the program will develop in both number and quality. In such instances the teaching and learning experience is a rich one and for most participants the denial of visual cues becomes peripheral in the context of meaningful tertiary study.

The addition of "tele" to "tutorial" *is* significant. Probably the most critical differentiating factor is the lack of visual input, however the degree to which this is assessed as prohibitive depends on attitudes and priorities. For a few lack of vision is an insuperable barrier but for others perceived limitations may be overcome and many find that there are discernible advantages. When, as in the case of the Tasmanian student to whom I referred at the start of this paper, loss of visual cues is set alongside denial of speech and sound, the former is not considered deprivation at all.

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# ACADEMIC & NONACADEMIC SUPPORT FOR

# ELECTRONIC DISTANCE EDUCATION STUDENTS

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ACADEMIC & NONACADEMIC SUPPORT FOR
ELECTRONIC DISTANCE EDUCATION STUDENTS
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The author, in a recent presentation to professional adult educators
gathered in New Orleans at the 75th Annual Conference of the National
University Continuing Education Association, made a comment which, while not
causing a riot among those present, certainly created a vigorous exchange of
opinions. The subject being discussed was electronic distance education and
the statement had to do with what the author believes is an almost total
absorption by continuing educators with technology to the detriment of proper
faculty training and course development and an almost complete neglect of
adequate academic and nonacademic service to the outreach student involved in
electronic distance learning. Since that conference I have discovered little
to persuade me that my statement was not absolutely correct.

Continuing educators, delivering primarily credit and degree programs
off-campus to students, have concentrated their efforts, time and often vast
sums of money, at least on this side of the Atlantic, on the latest technology
with which to deliver the programs. With the high-tech equipment purchased
and in place, they have proceeded to serve the students with usually very
limited attention to course development, and with little or no concern to
other services required by the classroom student. The hope is, certainly,
that the students are able to keep up and complete an equivalent learning
experience as that given to on-campus students, but quite often this is simply
not the case, because the support system necessary for student learning is
non-existent at worst or inadequate at best.

If one looks back at the history of the continuing education programs as
practiced in the United States, one will find the most usual method of
instruction employed in off-campus classes has been face to face. The
physical transportation of the instructors out to the remote classrooms by
automobile primarily, but also, at times, using small aircraft, has been the
primary method used to deliver the programs. With the advent and rapid growth
of the telecommunications industry, a variety of devices has become available,
extending from audio and data networking through audiographics to full motion
with satellite delivery. In all cases, however, I would equate these devices
with the automobile or airplane. They are simply used to transport the
instructor (i.e. instruction) to the student. While certainly critical to the
operation, they still remain the least important member of what I term the
instructional triad. Richard E. Clark in a fairly early discussion of the use
of technology, sums it up rather nicely:

> The best evidence is that media are mere vehicles that
> deliver instruction, but do not influence student
> achievement any more than the truck that delivers our
> groceries causes change in our nutrition. Basically,
> the choice of vehicle might influence the cost or
> extent of distributing instruction, but only the
> content of the vehicle can influence achievement. [1]

Why then, if Clark's statement is accurate, do we spend more of our time, effort and money on that triadic member which matters least? In the next section of the paper let me clarify what I mean by the instructional triad in electronic distance education and how each member of the triad plays its part in the delivery of instruction.

INSTRUCTIONAL TRIAD

It is quite understandable why the recent past has witnessed the scramble for technology on the part of continuing educators. Seldom has one had so many choices of compelling "toys with which to play". Quite often, selecting and establishing the technology, provided one has the necessary capital, is the easiest aspect of getting into electronic distance education and therefore, taking that easy way out, one can be in business, so to speak, rather quickly. Mary Emery, Director of READI Computer Literacy of Adults, at Washington State University, warns most emphatically that when curriculum design and developments and support for rural learners are neglected, that "technology has not had a successful record".[2] She then goes on to back-up her statement with several compelling arguments and references.

If I were just getting into the electronic distance education business or making a recommendation to someone who was, I should encourage a three-pronged development approach; the instructional triad if you will. The mechanism or infrastructure to carry out the three aspects should be developed concurrently. They really are quite simple; the development, the device and the students (see Figure 1).
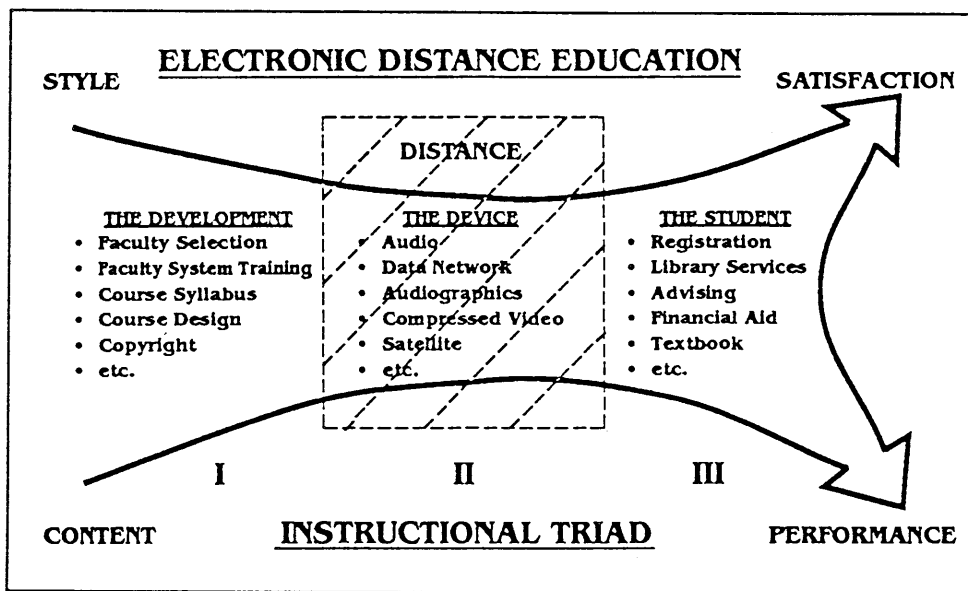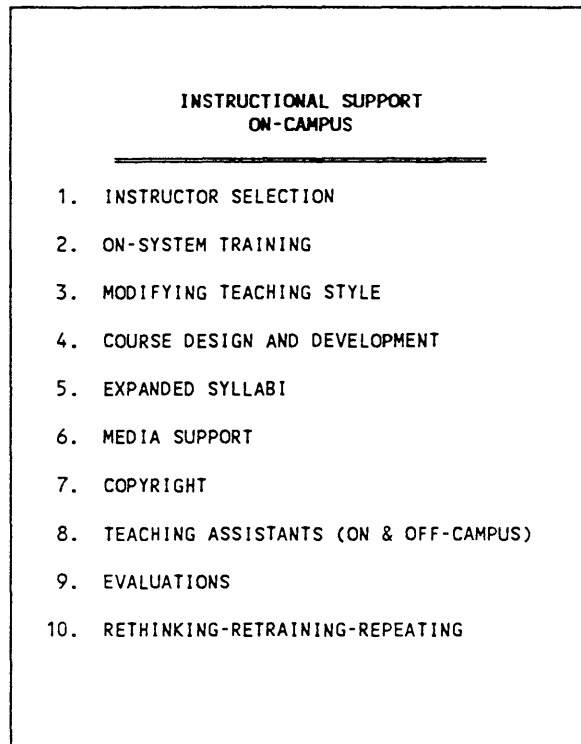


Figure 1:  Instructional Triad

## THE DEVELOPMENT

The development section of the triad implies faculty involvement, not as an afterthought, but at the very beginning of the project. Faculty must receive effective and timely training on the systems it is going to use. This should cast no aspersions on its expertise or teaching abilities. All that is recognized is that any new teaching environment requires some updating of teaching styles, instructional materials and visuals. Outstanding teachers have been known to flounder in electronic distance education without proper training. How serious faculty involvement is can be emphasized by the statement of Don McNiel when he placed the lack of faculty involvement as one of the contributing factors in the demise of the University of Mid-America[3]. The University of mid-American was an institution which delivered its courses and programs primarily by telecommunications.

If faculty members have been properly trained on the system, then they will recognize the need for extensive curriculum development. Media materials that are poorly reproduced and hard to read in a face to face classroom setting are literally impossible to use in electronic distance education. Expanded syllabi with instructional charts, overheads, slides, maps, etc. duplicated, becomes an important backup should parts of the technology fail. If voice contact can be maintained, then with an expanded syllabus in the hands of the students, the instructor can continue to teach.

This matter of media support can be a frustrating area for continuing education as it is impacted by the various copyright laws. These laws do vary from country to country of course, but in the United States one cannot assume that the laws governing fair usage of copyrighted material for traditional classroom teaching can be extended to cover the electronic transmission of media. On the contrary, copyright laws of the United States would usually be violated by transmitting films, slides, tapes, etc. by electronic means to multiple off-campus sites. Copyright permission must first be obtained from the owner to avoid placing the instructor, administrators and the institution at risk. This is a time-consuming, as well as an expensive task, but certainly is far preferable to an even more expensive and time consuming lawsuit!

The matter of teaching assistants to support the instructor must be considered, particularly if large enrollments are anticipated. Not only will the instructor on-campus require help in assignment and possibly test correction, but each of the off-campus sites will require an on-site assistant for test proctoring, assignment transmittal, technical troubleshooting, classroom decorum, and class evaluations. Continuous evaluation of the teaching process and equipment operations is required. This will, in turn provide feedback to faculty training and course development. The key words here are rethinking, retraining and repeating (see **Figure 2**). The repetition referred to has to do with an instructor's willingness to go back on the system for a second, third or more times. Even after a particularly disastrous first class, most instructors who persist and return to the system improve their teaching greatly, particularly if there has been adequate evaluation and retraining.

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│                                         │
│         INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT           │
│             ON-CAMPUS                   │
│         ═══════════════════             │
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│    1.  INSTRUCTOR SELECTION             │
│                                         │
│    2.  ON-SYSTEM TRAINING               │
│                                         │
│    3.  MODIFYING TEACHING STYLE         │
│                                         │
│    4.  COURSE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT    │
│                                         │
│    5.  EXPANDED SYLLABI                 │
│                                         │
│    6.  MEDIA SUPPORT                    │
│                                         │
│    7.  COPYRIGHT                        │
│                                         │
│    8.  TEACHING ASSISTANTS (ON & OFF-CAMPUS) │
│                                         │
│    9.  EVALUATIONS                      │
│                                         │
│   10.  RETHINKING-RETRAINING-REPEATING  │
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**Figure 2:** Instructional Support
On-Campus

## THE DEVICE

Having just mentioned continuing education practitioners apparent obsession with technology, perhaps I should indicate at this point that the device as a member of the triad is obviously important and should be selected with the mission and goals of the organization in mind as well as the demographics of the students being served. One must also take into consideration the monies available to the unit, not only for the purchase of the equipment, but also for its maintenance and eventual replacement. Too much money expended on the technology might leave insufficient for proper curriculum development and/or student services. Financial planning must be done for all member of the instructional triad in a balance appropriate to the mission and goals of the unit. Sue Spencer, University of Montana in an article on the selecting of distance education delivery systems, spends a great deal of time in a discussion of the budget necessary to support telecommunication delivery of programs. Her conclusions would also seem to support the notion that all aspects of the program need to have proper budgeting attention, not just the technology.[4]

**THE STUDENT**

The importance of the last member of the instructional triad should be quite obvious to anyone active in continuing education or education in general for that matter. That student needs should receive adequate academic and non-academic support is so clearly apparent that any discussion of its importance should be superfluous. Unfortunately, discussions on student support are not only needed, but more often than not, are only an after thought of units planning to start an electronic distance education program. In the Winter 1988 issue of continuing Higher Education Review, Mary E. Emery, from whom we've heard before, in reviewing three models for improving access to adult learners, speaks of training professional and para-professionals for a number of roles to better serve rural adult learners, to include: "recruitment of students, financial aid, advising, facilitation of local learning groups, technical assistance with distant learning systems, volunteer management, logistical coordination and implementation of reentry programs."[5] If fact, this entire issue of the Review contains articles of great interest to anyone serving adult students with educational programs, particularly those adults living in more rural settings. Ms. Emery in the aforementioned quote lists several areas in which outreach students need support in pursuing their educational goals. Reviewing the literature, I have made a more comprehensive list of the commonly mentioned services required by students in distant education programs. The list is not in rank order of importance and probably is not all inclusive nevertheless, it seems to represent those areas of highest and most frequent concern (see **Figure 3**).

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### STUDENT SERVICES REQUIRED
### OFF-CAMPUS

1. ON-SITE COMPLETE DEGREE PROGRAMS

2. REGISTRATION, ADD/DROPS, ETC

3. LIBRARY, LABS AND INFORMATIONAL SERVICES

4. ADVISING, COUNSELING AND TESTING

5. FINANCIAL AID

6. TEXTBOOK AND CLASS MATERIALS SALES

7. STUDENT INTERACTION

8. TELECOMMUNICATIONS

9. COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY

10. OTHER

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**Figure 3:    Student Services
                    Required Off-Campus**

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It has been our experience in serving adult students in the Western area of the United States, predominantly in a rural state with limited opportunities for campus-based education, that the students favor on-site complete degree programs over other educational opportunities. This would also seem to be the case in other sections of the country, where degree programs or credit classes are usually named as first or second choices by adults seeking educational programs in rural community. Gray and Sullins refer to this in an analysis of the barriers to rural post-secondary education and cite several other recent articles which would lend credence to the statement.[6]

The need to register off-campus students and add/drop classes is an obvious requirement. In face-to-face off-campus teaching the usual manner of registering students is to assign the often reluctant professor to take care of that duty during the first night of class. Obviously that procedure is not possible in electronic distance education. We have also relied in the past on the instructors to provide some advising and counseling and delivery of textbooks and other classroom materials. Once again, this is not possible with classes taught over the new technology. Financial aid to students is another service which is difficult to provide without on-site personnel. I have personally observed off-campus students, hundreds of miles away, who have attempted to obtain financial aid from campus personnel only to become so frustrated that they have terminated any attempt to pursue higher education. This obviously should not and cannot be allowed to happen if we are to successfully serve students at a distance.

Most credit courses and all degree programs require library, lab and informational resources beyond what the instructor might be able to carry to the students. This is certainly true if graduate degrees are offered. With the high cost of journal and book acquisition it is currently becoming more difficult if not quite impossible to provide duplicate services at various sites of an electronic distance education program. The transporting and storage of library holdings from the home campus to out-lying sites are not all that practical, even if the campus library has sufficient resource to allow such distribution. Once again, technology seems to offer a solution if, and only if, on-site personnel are available to assist. The technology to which I refer is that of the computer and CD/ROM reader. Providing this combination at each location with a compact disc of the institution's library holdings, both book and journal as well as other CD informational services available from business and industry, can provide the outreach students sufficient information for even graduate degrees. This informational resource must be readily accessible to students and at hours appropriate to their schedules. On-site personnel are also needed to assist the students in using the technology and ordering the desired materials.

It would not be out of place at this point to recommend to anyone creating an electronic distance education network to seriously consider the establishment of community educational centers in each location where an electronic classroom or receive site is to be established. The center staff (which might be as little as one para-professional) can be invaluable in providing or arranging for these services for local students. Continuing

Education at Utah State University has had an extensive educational center system for years before it become involved in electronic distance education in 1984. These centers contributed greatly to the exceptional success of its credit classes and complete degrees delivered over telecommunications systems. The Nebraska Center for Continuing Education at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln has recently announced the creation of such educational centers to support its electronic outreach programs. Increasingly, institutions engaged in electronic distance education are discovering that to neglect the third instructional triad member, that of student services, is to invite problems, dissatisfaction and ultimately poor student performance.

## OVERCOMING STUDENT ISOLATION

Patricia DeWees in an article discussing state policies to address the rural students, has a sub-section entitled "Overcoming Isolation", wherein she states: "For the rural learner who feels isolated to begin with, programs limited to the distribution of excellent software are less desirable than those which include live interaction with instructors or classmates".[7] She then proceeds to suggest ways in which the state and institution can work to alleviate this isolation? Telecommunications is, by its very nature, an isolating mechanism. This is simply a built-in condition and every effort must be taken by the continuing educator to overcome this isolation. Student interaction spoken of by DeWees is not only possible in electronic distance education, but in credit classes and degree programs is absolutely essential. Non-interactive electronic distance education maybe an excellent way to disseminate information, but education requires interaction.[8] At a minimum audio interaction between student and instructor is required. Students must feel that at any time they can interrupt the instructor to seek clarification or provide comments.

## STUDENT PERFORMANCE

If all portions of the instructional triad are in place and if proper attention has been focused on the students' needs and concerns, then electronic distance education can be a most successful instructional delivery mechanism. Not only will student and instructor satisfaction be improved, but student learning will be enhanced to the point that it will equal and in some cases exceed that of the campus student in the traditional learning environment. Several recent studies have confirmed past research on electronic distance education student learning. Alan Chute in a 1984 study for AT&T on instructional effectiveness compared two modes of delivery and their respective student achievement outcomes. The achievement of the groups, taught by either the traditional face to face instruction or remote telecommunication instruction were compared. The conclusion reached was that students learned from telecommunication instruction as well, if not better than they did from the face to face teaching.[9]

Tom Sopkiewiez, instructor in the Accounting department at Utah State University taught a yearly series of three basic accounting classes to students in a face to face campus setting; a face to face outreach classroom and classes on an electronic distance education system. He used pre and post testing instruments provided by the professional accounting association and compared the students scores for all nine classes and the three learning environments. His conclusion, after extensive analysis, was that there were no significant differences in student learning regardless of the mechanism used.[10]

A more recent study conducted at Utah State University by two biologists, David Medlyn and Laird Hartman, arrived at the same conclusion. Their study concluded that not only is it feasible to deliver both laboratory and non-laboratory general education science classes over an electronic delivery format, but that, if the classes were well structured and presented systematically, they could "effectively convey the basic principles and concepts of introductory science classes without a loss of academic integrity or equivalency."[11]

The reference of Medlyn and Hartman to well-structured and systematically presented courses is well taken. When proper attention is applied to course preparation and presentation and care is taken to provide necessary services to the student, then the learning experience over an electronic distance education system is equivalent to face to face instruction. This is not to imply that in all cases, student and instructor satisfaction with electronic delivery is as high as face to face classroom instruction. The constant contact and interaction between instructor and students in classroom instruction does eliminate the isolation found in electronic classroom and for that reason has to be more satisfying to the participants. When we look, however, at the studies which address the actual learning taking place in the electronic classroom, we find overwhelming evidence that learning equivalency is present in the electronic distance education experience, in so far as those responsible for the program adhere to the instructional triad concepts presented in this paper.

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# DISTANCE EDUCATION AND WOMEN IN EAST GERMANY

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# DISTANCE EDUCATION AND WOMEN IN EAST GERMANY

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## 1.    THE SITUATION OF WOMEN IN THE GDR

Compared to West Germany, the social system in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) had developed in a totally different way, resulting in divergent conditions for women in the two German states. These differences extended to the situation of women in higher education, including distance studies.[1]

### 1.1    Qualification and Paid Work of Women

As a State, the GDR promoted the participation of women in the workforce. Most of the measures introduced in order to achieve this goal were aimed at making employment compatible with family responsibilities, e.g. the reduction of weekly working hours for mothers (40 hours instead of 48), a paid "housework day", the possibility of working part-time, crèches and other childcare facilities. As a result, both the qualification and the rate of women in paid employment was very high and similar to those of men.[2]

As far as the participation in tertiary education is concerned, there has been a considerable increase in the percentage of women who have graduated from university or technical school. In 1989 the proportion of women in the workforce with an academic degree was 6.7% (men: 9.6%) as compared to 2.4% (men: 6.0%) in 1971. During that time span the proportion of graduates from technical schools had increased from 5.7% to 18.5% among employed women and remained stable at under 10% among employed men (9.0% in 1971 to 9.9% in 1989).

The rate of employment among GDR women was extremely high and at 83.9% even surpassed that of men (82.9%) in 1989. Overall nearly half of the work-force (48.8%) was female. If women in vocational and professional qualification programmes are included, the quotas of women and men participating in the labour market were equal and extremely high at 91.2% of the GDR population of working age.

While the rate of employment is equal, there are gender differences in the areas of work and in the positions achieved by men and women: To a much higher degree than men "women are found working in simpler, less qualified jobs with less competence and decision-making power, doing routine work, and being paid less" ("Frauenreport '90", p.62).

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## 1.2 Women in universities ("Direct Studies")

In addition to general measures to increase women's participation in the work-force, the GDR regime also introduced specific regulations to make academic study compatible with motherhood and family responsibilities, e.g.

- a legal obligation for universities to provide childcare, medical care etc.

- preferential placement in student dormitories or in family accomodation

- additional financial support, especially for single mothers or fathers

- leave of absence and special provision, such as dispensation from attending classes, for mothers who had children while studying

As a result a high percentage (50%) of students were women, and it was the norm for women to have their children while enrolled at university. While the overall enrolment figures show no differences between men and women, their patterns of degree programmes and subjects were dissimilar. As was the case in the Federal Republic of Germany (von Prümmer/Rossié 1987 and 1991), women in GDR universities tended to enroll less in the technical and mathematical subjects, more in the social sciences and economics.

The academic hierarchies in the GDR, as did the labour market in general, showed that women tended to be in the lower echelons. The percentage of women decreases as the level of qualification and position increases. For instance, relatively few women obtained the "Promotion B" which was the formal prerequisite for a full professorship. And fewer women who had the necessary formal qualifications were appointed professors, while it was common for men without these qualifications to obtain such posts on the strength of their "leadership experience" outside the university. Women, in turn, had less opportunities to gain such experience as positions of power in industry or government agencies were not easily accessible to them.

## 2. NOTES ON DISTANCE EDUCATION IN THE GDR

### 2.1 Organisation and Aims of Distance Education in the GDR

In the 1950's a distance education system was institutionalised in the GDR with the dual aims "of overcoming educational privileges and of providing people with an opportunity to make up for the lack of qualifications needed to do their job" (Dietze 1983). Thus distance education in the GDR served originally as a means for the reproduction of intelligence from the classes of workers and farmers and for the post-facto qualification of functionaries. As such is was valued as one of the great achievements of the young socialist republic toward equality in education, including equal educational chances for women and men (Stein 1990).

Distance education in the GDR was almost exclusively run by existing universities. In order to obtain a degree through distance study, GDR students needed the formal entrance qualifications

for universities. A full course of study required 4 1/2 to 5 1/2 years to complete. The prevalent method of learning was independent work on written material, but there also were extensive periods of face-to-face teaching. Students were required to attend summer schools, seminars and tutorials, to submit written assignments, and to sit examinations during these phases of "direct study".

The East German distance education system was geared to students in paid employment, with legal provisions for extensive leaves of absence, a reduction of working hours - both at full pay -, access to the firm's resources (such as computers) and payment of the costs by the firm. By the same token, distance study was closely tied to the student's place of work. Admission to distance education was dependent on the firm's delegating a worker and agreeing to a "qualification contract". This contract both stipulated the field of study (a qualification useful for the firm) and guaranteed a post-graduation job according to the newly obtained degree.

Distance study was only offered as full-time degree programmes providing professional qualifications. There was no room for continuing adult education, either for personal development or for obtaining further qualifications in one's field of work. In this the GDR system was quite different from distance education in Western European universities, namely the West German FernUniversität, the Open University in Milton Keynes (UK), and the Open Universiteit in Heerlen (NL).

There was a high acceptance of this form of study, and by the mid-1980's four in ten degrees had been obtained through distance education. Yet while distance education was a very important part of higher education in the early years of the GDR, its significance decreased during the last two decades. In 1969, for instance, 35% of all university students were enrolled in distance teaching programmes; in 1975 this proportion had decreased to 18%, and from 1985 on it remained constant at 16%.

This development was mainly due to a change in the role distance education had in the reconstruction of the East German economy after World War II. Increasingly, traditional universities were able to provide the necessary degree programmes and young people could obtain their degrees before entering the labour market. At the same time the number of people decreased who needed to study for positions and responsibilities they already held.

To the extent that firms were provided with qualified graduates from the universities and technical schools, their vested interest in delegating workers as distance students declined. Other factors contributing to the relative decline for distance education in the GDR were the absence of sufficient material rewards for graduates and the low prestige accorded to the "Intelligenz" or academics.

## 2.2    Women in Distance Education in the GDR

In 1988/89 a research project was conducted on "Social Determinants of Distance Education in the GDR" (Adler et al. 1989). The results of this project provide the only data specifically concerned with the living and working conditions of East German distance students, with their social and

educational background, and with their study motivation and goals. It is also the only source of information on the situation of women in East German distance education before unification.

The following section refers to data from this study which was collected from 852 first-year students in 11 universities and 1278 in technical schools. The response rate to the questionnaire was 66%, and the distribution of respondents in degree programmes reflects the course choices of newly matriculated distance students in general.

At the time of the research, students could enrol in over 80 subject areas in 30 universities and colleges. In addition, there were a large number of "consultation centres" providing "foundation courses" during the first two years of distance study.

Over the years the proportion of women in distance education in the GDR steadily increased, reaching 40% in 1989. It was consistently lower than the figures in traditional universities, where half the student population (50%) are women. As in other universities, women and men show different course choice patterns. Men were the majority of students in five of the eight subject areas covered in the study: in engineering and electronics (91% each), computer science (83%) and other mathematical and technical subjects (61%) and in philosophy (63%). The only subjects with a significant majority of women students were economics and the social sciences, especially library sciences.

The average age of the first year distance students was 26 years. Due mainly to military service, the men were slightly older (26.6 years) than the women (25.2 years). The younger women in the sample tended to register in economics, the younger men preferred technical sciences.

Both men and women say that they chose the distance mode of studying mainly out of the following considerations:
- it fits in with their personal situation
- financial reasons
- it is compatible with continuing employment
- it does not require separation from their families.

Family responsibilities and children are factors known to affect women more than men in their ability to take up and complete a degree course. The study showed that half of the respondents were married, one third were single, and 17% were living with a partner. There were differences betweeen men and women not only with respect to their marital status but also with respect to the presence of children in the household: Fewer women than men in the sample were married (40.0% vs. 53.4% men), many more were single (42.7% vs. 29.7% men), and fewer women had one or more children living in their household (45% vs. 57% men).

With 90% of the female population in paid work, the study thus seems to confirm that GDR women would find it more difficult than men to combine the responsibilities for a family with studying at a distance. Since 1978 research into drop-out (Burkhardt 1985) has consistently shown that women have primarily quoted family-related and health reasons for discontinuing their studies, while their male counterparts have referred mainly to aspects of the subject area, to work-related reasons, and to disciplinary problems.

# 3.     CHANGES AND OUTLOOK

## 3.1     Social Changes

The situation of all academics and scientists in East Germany changed drastically after unification. This is due partly to the extension of the West German legal system. It is also due to the wide-scale closure of whole universities or of university departments, institutes and other research bodies which resulted in large-scale unemployment of academics.

Women, both members of the academic staff and students, are especially affected by these developments: They were over-represented in those fields which are no longer viable, such as the GDR subject area "Ökonomie" or the social sciences. Also, the West German legal and economic system, with its comparatively low level of provisions for women in paid employment, is not conducive to the extremely high rate of women working outside the home or to full-time studying.

Even before the revolution in the GDR, studies showed women to be less career-oriented than men. Thus men stated as important life goals the wish to be recognized in their field, to pursue science and research careers, or to achieve academic success. Women, by contrast valued their family and leisure time (i.e. time spent not on work but on the family) more highly than their careers and would not wish the latter to interfere with the former. One of the possible reactions of women to the developments in East Germany might therefore be the retreat from a career orientation and paid work into a stronger family orientation.

## 3.2     Changes in Distance Education

Both the distance education system and the function of distance education at university level experienced drastic changes once the German Democratic Republic ceased to exist. With the restructure of universities and the shut-down of factories the distance education system of the GDR lost its foundations. On the one hand, the teaching institutions cannot continue the programmes. On the other hand, students who are unemployed or no longer afforded the special working and financial conditions previously provided for distance students have to give up their studies.

As far as their participation in distance education is concerned, women are more likely to be negatively affected by the new social and political system. Specifically, the closure of childcare facilities and the high level of unemployment among women - 41.3% in February and 54% in September 1989 - will act as a disincentive. Since highly qualified women with university degrees are most affected by unemployment, the value of an academic education becomes increasingly questionable for women in East Germany. This is bound to affect their motivation to enroll in a distance teaching university for professional qualification.

In accordance with developments just before and after unification, distance education in East Germany is in the process of re-orjenting itself toward providing continuing education for

-      people who were prevented by government restrictions from pursuing a course of study

-   people who need to learn subjects or approaches previously not taught in East Germany but necessary for working in the new social, political and economic system (e.g. market economy, business administration)

-   upgrading specific qualifications (e.g. computer science, electronics)

-   people who have been laid off long before reaching retirement age

-   women who are no longer in paid employment and therefore have no immediate need for further professional qualifications, but who want to continue to take courses for a variety of reasons.

## 3.3    The Role of the FernUniversität

The changes in distance education in East Germany affect both the contents and the organisation of the system. Some universities, such as Rostock (Mielke 1990), are trying to adapt their distance education division to the new circumstances, but implementation is severely hampered by lack of funds.

It has become clear that the West German FernUniversität (FeU) will have to provide the distance education which the East German universities are no longer/not yet equipped to provide. The emphasis is on subject-related upgrading and further education through the use of FeU materials. One method of delivery is the usage of FeU materials in lectures and seminars at traditional East German universities (Battis 1990). Other measures include:

-   co-operation contracts with individual universities

-   supplying university libraries with FeU course material

-   training of tutors

-   establishing FeU study centres in East German cities

-   developing specific study materials.

In addition, of course, students living in the former GDR - territory are free to register as regular degree students at the FernUniversität. They receive the same materials and support and study under the same conditions as do students in West Germany.

The "Preliminary Student Statistics" of the FeU for the summer semester 1991 shows an enrolment of 1,745 students from East Germany, including East Berlin. This is 4.3% of the total student population in this semester ( 40.492 ).

In one aspect, these new students differ significantly from their Western colleagues: The proportion of women at the FernUniversität has always been low and still is less than one third (29.7%) of the student population from the "old FRG". The proportion of women among the East German contingent at the FeU is much higher as half of these distance students (50.4%) are

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women. In their course choice, though, there are similarities, with both groups of women concentrating in education and the social sciences and under-represented in mathematical and technical subjects.

It will be interesting to observe how the enrolments of women and men from East Germany will develop, and whether the proportion of women will remain at this comparatively high level.

## Notes

[1] This paper is based mainly on a statistical report on GDR women ("Frauenreport '90") and on two presentations by colleagues from East Berlin on the situation of women at universities (Karin Hildebrandt 1990) and in distance education in the GDR (Ruth Heidi Stein 1990).

[2] The information on qualification and paid work is taken from the "Frauenreport '90", which was published in the summer of 1990 by the Equal Opportunities Officer of the last GDR government and is the first and only comprehensive statistical document on the situation of women in East Germany.

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# LEARNING AT A DISTANCE USING VIDEO LECTURE

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# LEARNING AT A DISTANCE USING VIDEO LECTURE

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## Introduction

The University of the Air is a new University having been established in April 1983. It began enrolling students in 1985, and started the broadcasting of lectures in April of the year. The University is characterised by transmission of lectures through its own radio and TV broadcasting facilities. In 1990 the University is offering 296 courses. During fifteen weeks of each term, 2-credit courses broadcast 15 forty-five minutes lectures, and 4-credit courses broadcast 30 forty-five minutes lectures from 6 in the morning to 12 midnight, eighteen hours a day, from January 1 through December 31. Because the coverage of the broadcast is limited to the Kanto area at present, the University has opened recently a new mode of study center, called "video study center" in non-broadcast areas which include Hokkaido, Hiroshima, Fukuoka and Okinawa. The video study centers began to accept students who enroll in a non-degree program in the second term of 1990. In the video study center, students can learn from recorded versions of broadcast lecture, so called "video lecture",watching video tapes or listening to audio tapes, principally "in the schduled fixed time", and gain academic credits by taking and passing examinations there.
Present investigation was concerned with student use of the video lecture at the video study center. It was found that quite a few student showed preference for learning "in the scheduled fixed time" rather than for learning "in free time". Student appraised the learning "in the scheduled fixed time" to be effective in both motivating and pace making, as well as carrying essential teaching material for student learning at a distance.

## Research details

Researches for the learning process using video lecture at the video study center were concerned with a joint research project of this Institute in cooperation with the University of the Air and Hiroshima University carried out in 1989.
A video study center was set up experimentally in Senda campus of the Hiroshima University. It consisted of a lecture room equipped with fifteen AV booths and shelves of the University of the Air video lectures. Monitored students(375 for the first term) were able to come to the study center to watch video lecture, either "in the scheduled fixed time" for ten booths or "in free time" for five booths. In the first term, seven
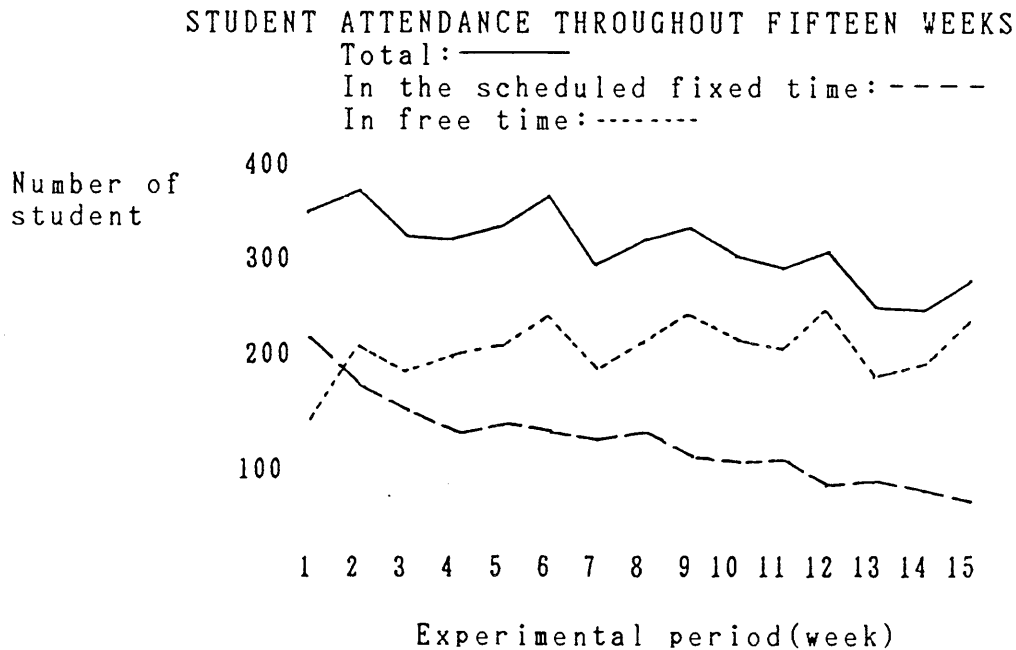
subjects having fifteen video lectures of forty-five minutes
each were presented "in the scheduled fixed time" so as to do
the same lecture once a day for a week during a whole fifteen
weeks. In the second term, however, fifty subjects were
presented so as to have an individual lecture once or twice a
week using the same facilities. Monitored students had to be
registered for the fixed time in the case of watching "in the
scheduled fixed time" because of the limited number of booths.
In the course of fifteen weeks learning from video lecture, there
were tutorials five times on each subject at three week
intervals.

Number of monitored student(first term 1989)

| | |
|---|---|
| Writing of Poetry | 53 |
| Development and spread of Culture | 57 |
| Japanese Economy, Industry and Business Enterprises | 59 |
| Nature in Japan | 28 |
| English IV | 91 |
| Food Science | 59 |
| Learning and Counseling | 28 |
| Total | 375 |

The total student attendance throughout fifteen weeks of
experimental period is shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1

STUDENT ATTENDANCE THROUGHOUT FIFTEEN WEEKS
Total:————
In the scheduled fixed time:————
In free time:————



Number of student

Experimental period(week)
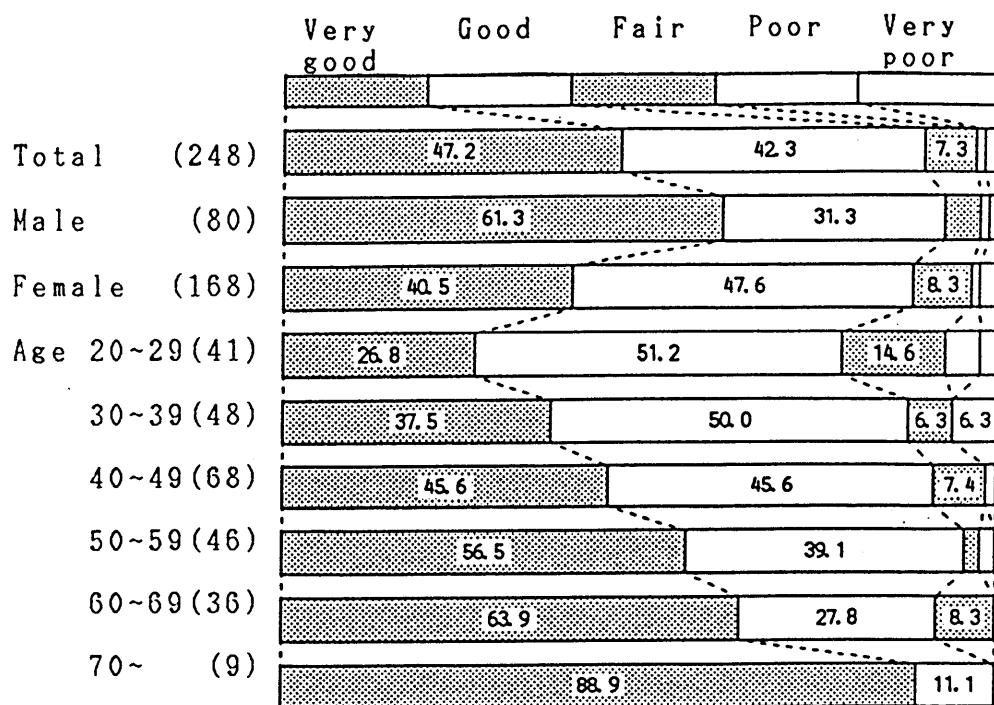
Student's evaluation with regard to experimental learning by the
use of video lecture at the video study center was quite
affirmative as shown in Figures 2 & 3.

## Figure 2

### MEETING OF MONITORED STUDENT'S EXPECTATION(%)



| | | Very good | Good | Fair | Poor | Very poor |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total | (248) | 47.2 | | 42.3 | | 7.3 |
| Male | (80) | 61.3 | | 31.3 | | |
| Female | (168) | 40.5 | | 47.6 | | 8.3 |
| Age 20~29 | (41) | 26.8 | | 51.2 | | 14.6 |
| 30~39 | (48) | 37.5 | | 50.0 | | 6.3 6.3 |
| 40~49 | (68) | 45.6 | | 45.6 | | 7.4 |
| 50~59 | (46) | 56.5 | | 39.1 | | |
| 60~69 | (36) | 63.9 | | 27.8 | | 8.3 |
| 70~ | (9) | 88.9 | | | | 11.1 |

( ) : Number of student

## Figure 3

### CONTINUATION TO THE NEXT TERM(%)



| | | Strong affirm- ative | Affirm- ative | Unsure | Nega- tive | Strong nega- tive |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total | (250) | 64.4 | | 14.8 | 11.6 | 7.6 |
| Male | (80) | 73.8 | | 12.5 | 10.0 | |
| Female | (170) | 60.0 | | 15.9 | 12.4 | 10.0 |
| Age 20~29 | (41) | 63.4 | | 22.0 | 9.8 | |
| 30~39 | (48) | 56.3 | | 14.6 | 12.5 | 14.6 |
| 40~49 | (70) | 64.3 | | 15.7 | 11.4 | 7.1 |
| 50~59 | (45) | 66.7 | | 11.1 | 13.3 | 8.9 |

60~69(37)  [67.6]  [13.5]  [10.8]

70~  (9)  [88.9]  [11.1]

( ): Number of student
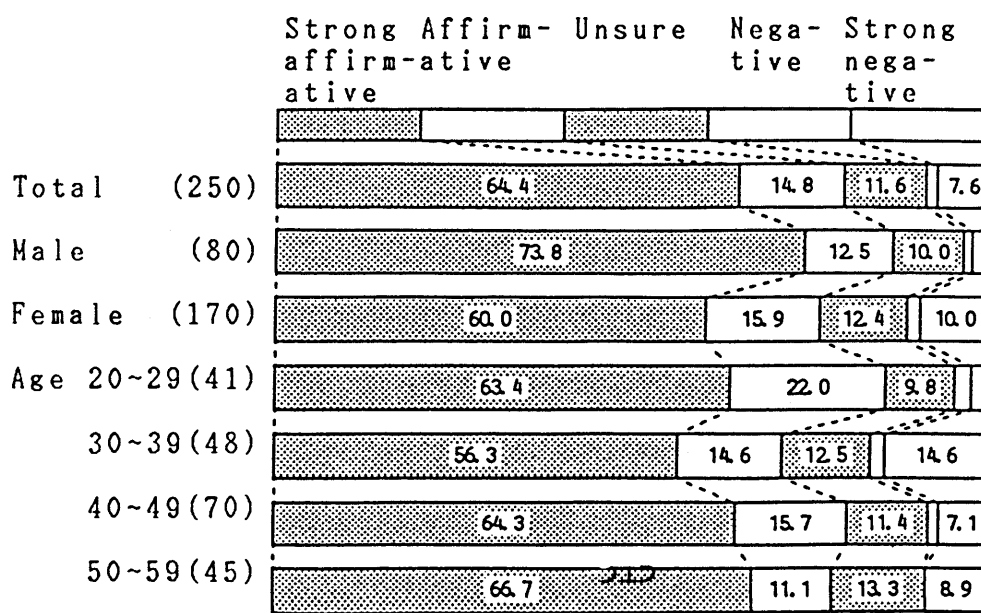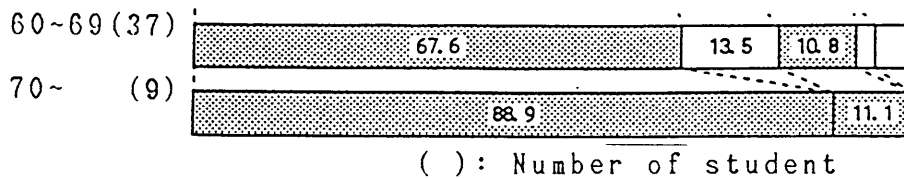
Student's attitude to learning process using video lecture "in the scheduled fixed time" after course finished is shown in Figure 4 & 5.


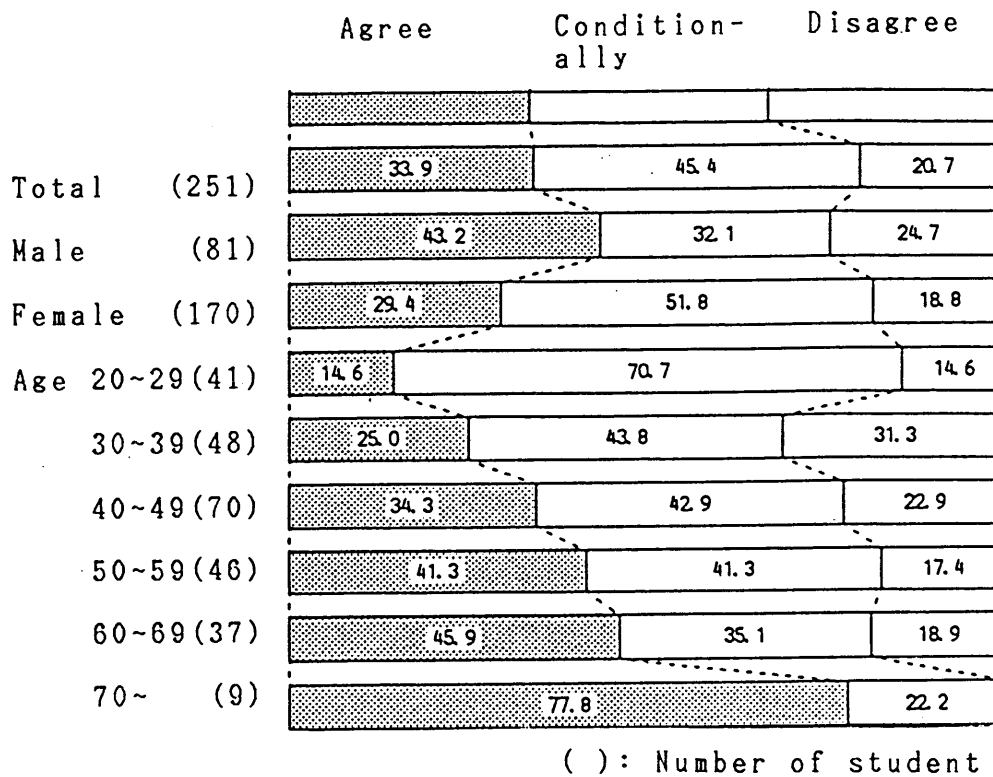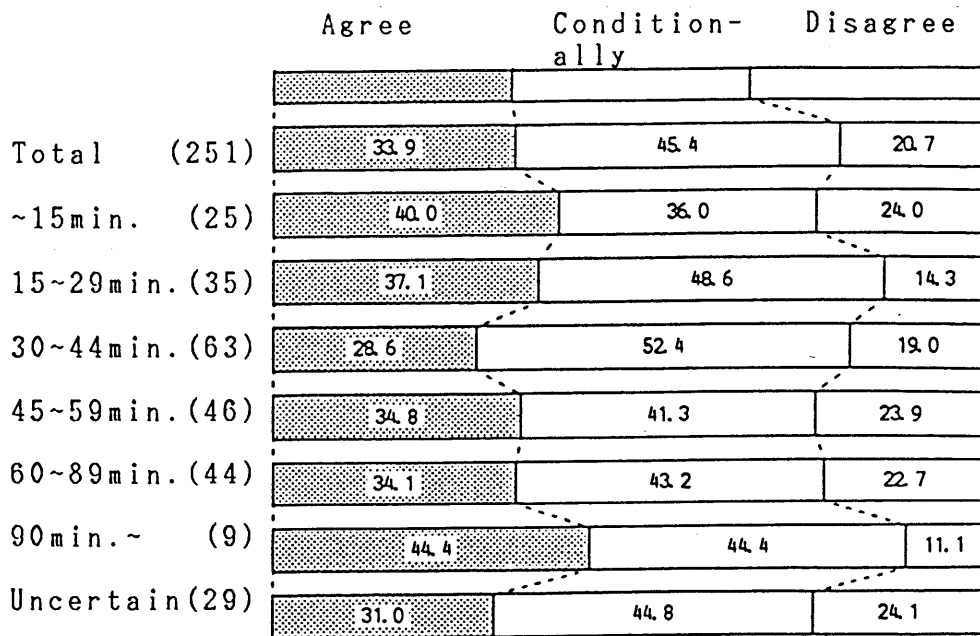Figure 4

STUDENT'S ATTITUDE TO LEARNING PROCESS USING VIDEO LECTURE "IN THE SCHEDULED FIXED TIME" (WITH EACH AGE GROUP)(%)

Agree          Condition-      Disagree
               ally

Total     (251)   33.9    45.4    20.7

Male      (81)    43.2    32.1    24.7

Female    (170)   29.4    51.8    18.8

Age 20~29 (41)    14.6    70.7    14.6

30~39 (48)    25.0    43.8    31.3

40~49 (70)    34.3    42.9    22.9

50~59 (46)    41.3    41.3    17.4

60~69 (37)    45.9    35.1    18.9

70~  (9)      77.8    22.2

( ): Number of student


The meaning of the "conditionally" attitude was that students would agree to use video lecture "in the scheduled fixed time" when they were able to watch the lecture on their favorite days of the week and/or to watch the lecture more than twice a week repeatedly.
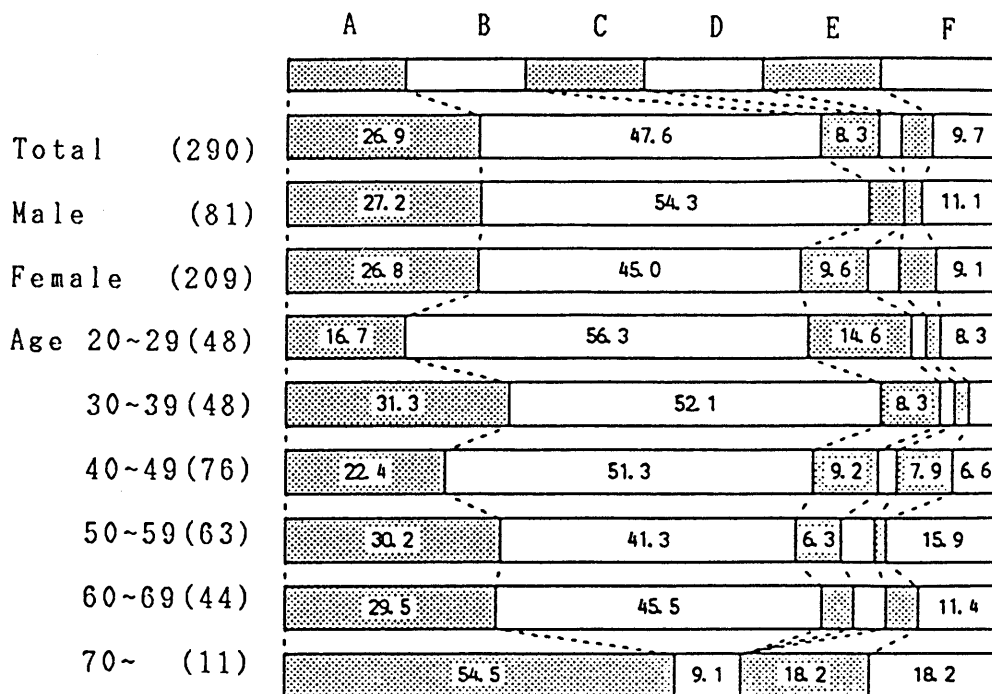

Figure 5
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STUDENT'S ATTITUDE TO LEARNING PROCESS USING VIDEO LECTURE "IN
THE SCHDULED FIXED TIME "(WITH EACH TIME TO GET TO STUDY CENTER)(%)

| | Agree | Conditionally | Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total (251) | 33.9 | 45.4 | 20.7 |
| ~15min. (25) | 40.0 | 36.0 | 24.0 |
| 15~29min.(35) | 37.1 | 48.6 | 14.3 |
| 30~44min.(63) | 28.6 | 52.4 | 19.0 |
| 45~59min.(46) | 34.8 | 41.3 | 23.9 |
| 60~89min.(44) | 34.1 | 43.2 | 22.7 |
| 90min.~ (9) | 44.4 | 44.4 | 11.1 |
| Uncertain(29) | 31.0 | 44.8 | 24.1 |

( ): Number of student

Figure 6

THE REASON WHY STUDENT AGREED TO USE VIDEO LECTURE
"IN THE SCHEDULES FIXED TIME"(%)

| | A | B | C | D | E | F |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total (290) | 26.9 | 47.6 | | | 8.3 | 9.7 |
| Male (81) | 27.2 | 54.3 | | | | 11.1 |
| Female (209) | 26.8 | 45.0 | | 9.6 | | 9.1 |
| Age 20~29(48) | 16.7 | 56.3 | | | 14.6 | 8.3 |
| 30~39(48) | 31.3 | 52.1 | | | 8.3 | |
| 40~49(76) | 22.4 | 51.3 | | 9.2 | 7.9 | 6.6 |
| 50~59(63) | 30.2 | 41.3 | | 6.3 | | 15.9 |
| 60~69(44) | 29.5 | 45.5 | | | | 11.4 |
| 70~ (11) | 54.5 | | 9.1 | 18.2 | | 18.2 |

( ): Number of student

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A: Learning intensively
B: Motivating and pace making
C: Learning together with company as a stimulus in the same room
D: Talking with company about the content to deepen
   understanding after the program finished
E: Having an opportunity to make friend
F: Others

The reasons why student agreed to use video lecture "in the scheduled fixed time" were summarized in Figure 6 based on midterm(during the seventeenth week)student's questionnaire.


Conclusion

In the course of the present work, it has been clarified that learning from video lecture "in the scheduled fixed time" at the video study center is quite effective in motivating and pace-making as well as of carrying essential teaching material. It is particularly impressive that the student who wants to continue learning, wishes to have the stimulus of watching video lecture "in the scheduled fixed time", rather than watching "in free time". It is thought to be that, for distance teaching institution which has broadcast lecture and its recorded version as principal teaching material, delivering the program at regular intervals could play an essential role in student learning at a distance.


Acknowledgment

# OPEN ACCESS ISSUES IN DISTANCE COURSES DELIVERED BY

## COMPUTER-MEDIATED COMMUNICATION (CMC)

Rosalie Wells
Centre for Distance Education, Athabasca University

# Open Access Issues in Distance Courses
## Delivered by
## Computer-Mediated Communications (CMC)

*Rosalie Wells*
*Centre for Distance Education, Athabasca University*

CMC is one of the most exciting new technologies to impact the field of distance education. But the open democratic nature of the medium may be compromised if variables like gender result in differential access to the necessary equipment. Institutions that are developing CMC courses should take steps to insure that this democratic medium does not become an elitist one.

Computer-mediated communications (CMC) is one of the newest technologies to be adopted for distance teaching. With this medium, students and an instructor who might otherwise be separated by time zones and physical distance can be linked together. Participants in a CMC class use their personal computers, communication software and modems to connect to a central host computer that runs the conferencing software. Communication may be synchronous (that is, two participants are simultaneously interacting with the host computer and with each other), but typically the interactions are asynchronous. As a result, participants may send or respond to messages at any time of the day or night that is convenient to them.

CMC offers an institution many exciting ways to improve distance study by facilitating access both between students and between instructor and students. CMC increases students' options for convenient access to their instructor, because participants are able to respond at times of their own choosing. And because CMC is faster than surface mail, it decreases the turnaround time in instructor feedback on assignments. CMC democratizes the educational experience, since all students have equal opportunity to contribute to class discussions. Students can make a contribution at any time, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Finally, CMC makes it possible for distance students to enjoy forms of interaction like collaborative learning, that were previously accessible only to face-to-face students.

However, the open access that is possible within a CMC class is impacted by important prerequisites: students' convenient access to computers, communication software, and modems, as well as to computer literacy training and ongoing user support. Unlike students in courses delivered by audio or video conferencing, students in a CMC course require frequent, flexible, and convenient access to the technology upon demand. While the decreasing costs of computer hardware and software increase the likelihood that students will already have access to a computer, what of those students who do not? And what of those students who may own a computer that is incompatible with any minimum computer standards established by their institution? If poorly conceived and implemented, CMC courses may become elitist and exclusionary to some students, place an additional workload on tutors who may be

required to provide user support in addition to content-related assistance, and generally tax the computing resources of an institution.

Issues currently being explored at Athabasca University (AU) include the effects on students and tutors of: requiring a minimum configuration of computer equipment, increasing the computer component in some courses, adding a CMC component to some courses for the purpose of decreasing the turnaround time in both assignment submission and in instructor feedback, and delivering some courses completely via computer conferencing.[1]

This paper will review considerations relevant to various levels of access to computers: access as ownership; convenient access within the home; access to an appropriate configuration of equipment that meets an institution's minimum standards; and access as computer literacy training and ongoing user support.

## Access as Ownership or Ready Access Elsewhere

Since convenient access to a computer either at home or work is a virtual prerequisite for successful performance in a CMC class [2,3] institutions who are planning to offer CMC courses should determine their students' current access to the necessary hardware and software. In a 1988 survey, the Open University (OU) determined that 1/3 of its students had access to a microcomputer, and that of this number, over 18% had access to one at home. Male students were more than twice as likely as female students to have access to a computer at home.[4]

A survey by the Dutch Open University showed that 56% of its students had access to a microcomputer. Thirty-six percent reported access at home, and twenty-six reported access to one elsewhere.[5] A recent AU survey of a representative sample of 151 students showed that approximately 82% had access to a personal computer. Of this number, 46% reported access through ownership or lease; 5% had access to a microcomputer owned by a family member; 13% and 18%, respectively, reported access to a computer at a friend's or at the workplace.[6]

At the present time, institutions have three basic options in facilitating student access to computers: a) have computers available at regional study centers; b) lease computers to students or c) offer them a preferential discount on purchase through a university-designated vendor. For example, the OU's Home Computing policy, effective in 1987, offers fee reductions on specified courses requiring computing. Students are expected to spend the money they save on course fees to purchase or rent a computer. The policy also allows students to purchase a computer through a University-designated vendor at preferential rates or to rent a computer from the University at a cost of 150 a year. This option is considered a temporary one that may not continue beyond the life of existing rental machines.[7]

Some evidence suggests that such policies may have a differential impact depending upon the gender of students. Preliminary data from the OU suggest that women are more likely than men to rent than purchase. Hence, the gradual phase-out of the rental option may have a proportionately greater impact on women students, who may lack the money to purchase a machine and have little possibility of renting one.[8]

As previously mentioned, another option to increase student access is to supply computers at regional study centers. However, very limited evidence suggests there may be performance differences between students who have convenient access at home or work, vs those who use computers at regional study centers. A pilot study by Denmark's Jutland Open University revealed that students with convenient access at home tended to learn the system more quickly and to set the agenda for discussion. In contrast, study center students logged on to find an overwhelming number of contributions to a discussion they had not had an opportunity to define. As a result, these students were more likely to read than to become active participants.[9]

Data regarding ownership of modems is less common. The Dutch Open University found that modems were still comparatively rare (no numbers reported), despite the fact that 56% of its students had access to a microcomputer.[10] In the AU study, roughly 1/3 of the students' computers were equipped with modems, with 19% of students reporting some use of the computers for communication purposes.[11] Because modems are relatively inexpensive, they are likely to be financially accessible to most students. However, their comparative rarity suggests that many adult computer users will have little or no experience in communication mediated by computers (81% in the AU sample). This inexperience will obligate universities to provide appropriate training materials and tutorials.

## Convenient Access to a Computer

While access to a computer is extremely important to successful performance in a CMC class, equally important but frequently less acknowledged is the quality of access. For example, Kirkwood notes that a student's performance may be impacted if it is impossible to locate the equipment in a quiet part of the home, if it must be assembled then disassembled after each use, if there is no convenient access for modem use, or if the student's work on the computer is disruptive to other family members.[12] In the DT200 course implemented by the OU, surveys revealed that 2/3 of the 1364 students were able to leave their computer workstation permanently set up. However, a sizable 1/3 were not.[13]

Another aspect to convenient access at home pertains to how many members of the family use the computer. An OU survey revealed striking gender differences. Over 50% of female students reported frequent use of the computer by their husband, while only 1/12 of male students reported frequent use of the computer by their wife. In

addition, more women than men reported frequent use of their computer by children. This finding suggests that the husband's machine is his, while the wife's machine is really the family's.[14]

## Access to an Appropriate Configuration of Equipment

Student access to an appropriate configuration of equipment can become an issue when computers are used for communication purposes. Communication moves the computer from the isolation of a student's home to an interface with the host computer running the conferencing software (typically the university's mainframe computer). At this point, students' ownership of different types of computers and communication software can result in a virtual Tower of Babel. In the AU study, students were interviewed regarding their computer equipment. Responses indicated 27 different manufacturers, including IBM (12%), Tandy (11%), and Apple (20%). Sixty-five percent of the computers were reported to be IBM-compatible. Most students were unaware of either the processing power of their equipment or its RAM-memory capacity.[15]

Convenient access to a computer may not be enough to enable students to participate in a CMC course, if their machines are not powerful enough to run the necessary software. In this respect, there are two basic scenarios in CMC courses, both of which relate to configuration of student equipment and open access. In the mainframe option, the student's computer acts like a dumb terminal. This means that the student's computer is loaded with communication software that is used to dial up the university's mainframe computer. Once logged on to the mainframe, the student can access the conferencing software, email, or any word processing or other software that is stored on the mainframe. In this scenario, the student can participate even with a low-powered machine, because the university's mainframe is loaded with most of the software packages that the student will need to use. However, one disadvantage is that while a student is logged on to the mainframe, the student is working online. Working online not only ties up one of the ports into the mainframe, it ties up a certain portion of the central processing unit (CPU). Depending upon the capability of the mainframe, too many online users can heavily tax the university's computing resources. In addition, the student may be sustaining large telephone charges, if the student's geographic location necessitated a long distance call to the university's computer.

In the microcomputer option, the disadvantages of online time and expensive long distance calls are minimized, because the student's computer is loaded with much or even most of the software that the student will use in the course. Students work offline then log on to the mainframe, upload their work, and log off after being connected to the mainframe for only a few minutes. However, this option means that students must have access to sufficiently powerful machines to run the necessary software.

At some point, universities offering CMC courses must either make a choice between

these two options or commit the necessary resources to support both. The mainframe option may increase student access, because less sophisticated and powerful machines are required. The trade-off is that the institution assumes a major responsibility for developing user-friendly interfaces and logons, sufficient ports to accommodate a number of online users, and sufficient CPU to support increased usage. In contrast, the microcomputer option could reduce the access some students have to CMC courses, because a machine that will act as more than a dumb terminal requires greater computing power. Which students will already own or be able to purchase these machines? Will there be gender differences within the family in terms of who will be justified in taking money for a new computer or upgrading an older one?

Institutions faced with these choices between mainframe and microcomputer need accurate information regarding the types of machines their students already own. Then this information needs to be interpreted in light of rapid changes within the computer industry. A computer that would once have been considered expensive and high-powered, may now be considered an average, even a basic machine.

The final decision between the microcomputer and mainframe options will ultimately be based upon some combination of: issues of student access, availability of institutional resources, expediency, and a value judgment regarding which party bears the primary responsibility in a CMC course. In contrast to other forms of educational technology, the issue of who bears primary responsibility for the technology seems to arise only with CMC.

### Access to Computer Literacy Training and Ongoing User Support

The issues of computer literacy training and user support are impacted by the computer hardware and software used by students. Other forms of technology like audio and video conferencing are supported by the institution and accessed by groups of students. In contrast, computer problems are typically faced by individual students who often encounter them outside of regular university hours.

Computer literacy training and documentation are two ways an institution can minimize the amount of individualized trouble-shooting required in a CMC course.[16] Computer literacy training for distance students may take the form of a face-to-face meeting, often at a study center. This training may be augmented with some combination of computerized tutorials, audio cassettes that coach a student through each of the computer procedures[17] or front-ends to the mainframe that include automatic logons and simple menus.[18]

While proper training and documentation are critically important, they do not eliminate the need for ongoing trouble-shooting. Institutions experimenting with CMC often select a computer science course for a pilot study.[19] In these courses, the students and

tutor are usually more than capable of trouble-shooting their own problems without the assistance of a university's computing services. However, as courses are developed in other content areas, a university will be faced with increased demands for convenient competent user support. Given the study schedule of many adult learners, these demands will frequently occur during evenings or on weekends when the computing services staff are unavailable.[20] (See Heap[21] for a discussion of other student support issues.)

One solution being explored by AU is to assign tutors the primary responsibility for trouble-shooting computer problems. While computer science tutors may require little or no special training, this is not likely to be the case with tutors in other content areas. As a result, a widespread use of CMC will require AU to train tutors not only to use the medium, but to trouble-shoot it for their students.[22]

The issue of user support is also directly related to the configuration of machine owned by students. As previously mentioned, students in the AU survey reported ownership of 27 different makes of computers, 65% of which were IBM compatible. This survey did not assess the types of software used by students, the versions of software, or the types and brands of modems. Universities interested in CMC for distance delivery have options in providing user support ranging from support for every make and model of computer to support only.for certain configurations specified by the institution. These decisions will, in turn, impact which students are able to take CMC courses.

## Conclusions

The various considerations discussed in this paper are not intended to signal the impossibility of insuring open access to CMC courses by distance students. Indeed many institutions around the world are currently offering education and training via CMC. (See Wells[23] for a list of some of these implementations.) Some institutions are even exploring the possibility of offering entire graduate degrees at a distance using this medium.

Instead, these issues are raised as a reminder that access to distance education courses is, in large part, related to the gender and socioeconomic status of our students. It is the responsibility of universities to insure that the openness within a CMC classroom is not compromised by an elitist access to the requisite equipment and support. The openness of CMC should not begin only after the equipment is in place.

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