

UTILIZING CORRESPONDENCE STUDY IN
TEACHER IN-SERVICE EDUCATION IN EAST AFRICA

A Comparative Analysis of Selected Teacher Correspondence Programs
Conducted by the Correspondence Units at the University of Nairobi,
Kenya and Makerere University, Uganda, Between 1967 and 1973

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By

Frank Wilberforce Nabwiso-Bulima

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School of the
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN, MADISON
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
in
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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

The overall purpose of the study was to generate more information about training and retraining primary teachers in East Africa by correspondence. Four primary teacher correspondence programs were studied.

- (1) Grade I Teachers Upgrading Program (Uganda);
- (2) Licensed Teachers' Training Program (Uganda);
- (3) P3 Teachers' Program (Kenya);
- (4) UQT (Unqualified Teachers' Program) (Kenya).

The first two programs were conducted by the Correspondence Unit at Makerere University, and the last two by the Correspondence Course Unit at the University of Nairobi.

The objectives of the study were to indicate the major differences and similarities among the programs, to assess the teacher-respondents' evaluations of the programs, and to make suggestions for future primary teacher correspondence programs in East Africa.

Data were collected in 1975 through documentary research, interviews, conversations, letters, and questionnaires sent to a total of 400 teachers (i.e. 100 teachers in each program).

The comparative approach was selected for the purpose of making the study more analytical than would have been the case if each of the programs was described separately. The Bereday-Rosello comparative approach was used in the analysis and comparison.

The programs had much in common. They were initiated by the Ministries of Education in Kenya and Uganda and supported by foreign technical assistance. The broad goals of the programs were to improve the academic

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and/or professional efficiency of the teachers to enable them to cope with the changing primary school curricula in Kenya and Uganda. The programs involved the lowest categories of teachers in the two countries. Correspondence lessons were supplemented by radio and/or residential courses. English was the major language of instruction. English, Geography, History and Mathematics were taught in all four programs. The final examinations in each program were set and marked by external examiners, i.e. persons not involved in administering the programs. The correspondence lessons were generally well-edited and illustrated.

All the courses included self-marking exercises, written assignments and/or assigned experiments designed to promote the teachers' learning in small steps the contents of the correspondence lessons. Several textbooks were recommended to the teachers in each program.

The Kenya programs did not include the subject of education as was the case in the Uganda programs. So, the Kenya teachers missed the opportunity to increase their knowledge of child psychology and the principles of teaching. Kiswahili was taught only in the P3 Program. The UQT and the Uganda programs had more impressive results in the final examinations than the P3 program. The UQT and the Uganda programs were rigidly controlled, single-purpose, and "closed" programs while the P3 Teachers' program was flexible and multi-purpose. The P3 program involved more correspondence lessons than the other three programs.

Some respondents were dissatisfied with the programs. Certain of the correspondence lessons were unclear to some respondents. Environmental problems caused some of the respondents not to submit their written assignments, fail their final examinations, not to listen to the

radio broadcasts, and not attend the residential courses. Some of the tutors delayed with the respondents' written work, made discouraging remarks on the written work, or showed disrespect to the respondents during residential courses. Accordingly, some respondents found it difficult to study by correspondence.

Nevertheless, the majority of the respondents judged the programs favorably. They found it easy to study by correspondence. They claimed that their classroom work improved greatly as a result of the programs. One of the major goals of the programs was achieved. The majority of the respondents increased their self-confidence as teachers and are now keen to increase their education through correspondence study. They also feel that correspondence study could be used in teaching school pupils in Kenya and Uganda.

The study makes a number of suggestions for future primary teacher correspondence programs in East Africa and identifies areas where further research is needed.

The study stresses that the needs for well-trained primary teachers in East Africa are likely to remain insatiable in the foreseeable future. Therefore, East African Governments should increase their support for primary teacher correspondence programs.

Charles B. Swedemeyer