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**ABSTRACT**

Extensive fieldwork and a questionnaire were used to study the population served by primary distance education (k-6), the perceived needs of home tutors, and the adequacy of support services provided by distance primary schools in New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia, and the Northern Territory. The fieldwork phase found two major types of primary distance schools--metropolitan correspondence schools and regional schools of the air/correspondence units. Schools were characterized by the permanence/transience of their student population and the stability/duration of their enrollments. Fieldwork confirmed the notion that the isolated child's success depends on active involvement of the home tutor--nearly always the child's mother. A questionnaire mailed to 1,800 families (all those in the study area having at least one child enrolled in primary distance education) yielded 1,226 valid returns from families for a total of 2,072 students. Support services were unevenly available for home tutors and depended on school type, family permanence/transience, and home utilities--electricity, mail, telephone. Support services involving face-to-face meetings with teachers and other home tutors were rated highest. This report included the 20-page family questionnaire, detailed analyses of student populations by region, and a chapter evaluating electronic mailing and other possible new directions in primary distance education. (JH2)

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# primary distance education

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# **Primary Distance Education Population, Problems and Prospects**

A study of the pupil population served by primary distance education, the perceived needs of their home tutors and the adequacy of support services provided by distance primary schools in New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory

**Peter Taylor  
Derrick Tomlinson**



**NATIONAL CENTRE FOR RESEARCH ON RURAL EDUCATION**  
The University of Western Australia, Nedlands, W.A.  
1984

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## Synopsis

This study was initially established to determine possible roles for new communications technology in the education of geographically isolated children living in remote parts of rural Australia. During preliminary fieldwork visits to correspondence schools and schools of the air in New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory, practical constraints associated with obtaining data from schools' enrolment records were experienced. Problems of access to relevant data and uncertainties about its reliability were instrumental in restricting the study to primary distance education. The fieldwork also revealed a complex national picture of primary distance education, comprising a range of procedures and provisions which reflect the independence of each state and territory government department of education.

Two major school-types emerged. Distance primary schools were described as being either 'metropolitan' or 'regional' depending on their geographical locations. They are characterised by the nature of their pupil populations (permanently resident, travelling) and the stability of their enrolments (shorter-term, longer-term). Within the 'regional' classification a distinction is made between 'schools of the air' and the 'decentralised correspondence units' of New South Wales. This distinction is based on the means of communication available for isolated families to make contact with their distance education teachers (radio contact, school visits).

Extensive fieldwork confirmed the notion that the education program of the isolated child is dependent for its success on the active involvement of the home tutor. Support for the home tutor, particularly in respect of her (his) teaching tasks, was unevenly available and, in some cases, seemed to be of questionable effectiveness. The observation that the home tutor performs some of the teaching duties of a professional classroom teacher was strongly supported by many teachers and home tutors but disputed by a few. Documented policy specifying this aspect of the home tutor's role was non-existent. The focus of the second phase of the study was then directed to the needs of the home tutor and the effectiveness of educational services in providing her with the necessary support.

The survey of isolated families revealed that many home tutors had unresolved needs relating to concerns and difficulties associated with both personal issues and their teaching tasks. Support services were not equally available to all families. They depended on factors such as school-type (metropolitan or regional), residential status (travelling or permanently resident) and utilities associated with the home-setting (electricity, mail and telephone services). Support services which were available and which were utilised by home tutors generally were favourably regarded. In particular, those services which involved direct personal interaction with teachers and other home tutors were rated highest.

Planning for the provision of future primary distance education services to geographically isolated families will be influenced by the future role of the home tutor. Within the traditional framework of primary distance education the home tutor will require support from the school to ensure the effective implementation of the education program in the home-setting. This will require improvements in the availability and utilisation of existing services. Distance primary schools must choose the combination of services most appropriate to their particular circumstances. Financial constraints will be the major obstacle to redressing the current imbalance in the availability of support services.

The adoption of a form of communications technology called 'electronic mailing' could signal a new approach to primary distance education. This approach would involve the distance education teacher more closely with the isolated child at the 'point of learning' and have wide-ranging implications for the provision of education services. In particular the teaching role of the home tutor might diminish with a consequent alteration to the requirements for support services. Further research is essential to assist planners with the development of curriculum materials which might be transmitted as electronic data rather than in the traditional 'print and post' mode and which might require the incorporation of different teaching methods and learning strategies.

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This research study was guided by a national steering committee whose members included:

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Dr Norm Bowman, Assistant Director, Research and Planning Section, Northern Territory Department of Education;

Dr Jim Fitzpatrick, Education Officer, Research Branch, Education Department of Western Australia;

Dr Ted Hobbs, Senior Education Officer, Research Services, Queensland Department of Education;

◦ Mrs Marlene Sheppard, Inspector of Schools, Policy Advisor, New South Wales Department of Education;

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Peter Taylor  
Derrick Tomlinson

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# Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background to the Study

1.1.1 In the remote parts of rural Australia many school-age children do not have daily access to a conventional school. For these geographically isolated children a correspondence school or a school of the air provides an education program comparable with that available to urban children. Traditionally it has comprised written lessons delivered by the most appropriate postal services. The exchange of materials between teachers and students has been by mail, or 'correspondence', and hence the names 'correspondence schools' and 'correspondence lessons' tend to prevail.

1.1.2 More recently support services, such as itinerant teachers, together with other communications media have been employed. Of the latter some enhance learning materials, for example through the use of audio and video-cassette recorded programs, while others enable more direct spoken exchange between teachers and students, notably through school-of-the-air lessons and, increasingly, through telephone tutorials. The shift away from conventional correspondence services towards more diverse methods of delivering lessons has occasioned a growing preference for the name 'distance education'.

1.1.3 Even though the general provisions for distance education described above might suggest a potentially rich variety of services for geographically isolated children, there is a popular belief that they are in some ways disadvantaged in their education. Quite clearly they do not have direct daily access to a teacher and they do not enjoy the social and learning environment, or the resources, of conventional classrooms. It is on these sorts of issues that discussions of shortcomings in their education focus.

1.1.4 High expectations have been aroused in some quarters about the potential of electronic media to enhance distance education. For example, the Working Party on Educational Use of a Communications



Satellite<sup>1</sup> suggested that improvements might be facilitated in teacher-student communication, learning resources and the breadth of curriculum offerings. Satellite communications systems have the capacity to solve the sorts of communications problems which, in the past, may have imposed limitations on the educational opportunities of children living in remote and isolated communities. Now audio, video and computer assisted facilities linked with a satellite system might enhance their education by transmitting a richer curriculum.

## 1.2 The Starting Point of the Study

1.2.1 Before such innovations are attempted there are some fundamental issues which must be resolved. Human and financial resources for education are limited, and planning for the use of the new technology must be directed towards applications which meet high priority needs, satisfy criteria of quality as well as quantity and have system integrity in their inter-relatedness with each other and with established forms of distance education. Therefore it is important to identify the specific needs of distance education so that innovations using new technologies, singly or in combination with conventional correspondence lessons and support services, might be evaluated.

1.2.2 This study was developed with these factors in mind. The aim was to provide interested parties involved in the planning stages of organisation and curriculum development with information central to decision-making and policy formulation. The principal initial focus was the educational needs of students rather than the systems of delivery. Experience in Australia and elsewhere had demonstrated the technical feasibility and intrinsic limitations of correspondence lessons, 'air' lessons, itinerant teachers and educational applications of electronic communications systems. Furthermore, it had been shown that these elements can be combined successfully in various ways. Therefore this study began by recognising that flexible strategies were possible, and addressed their usefulness in meeting the educational needs of

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1. Working Party on the Educational Use of a Communications Satellite, Report, Conference of Directors-General of Education, May 1981, Department of Education, Victoria, p.8.

individuals and small groups studying through correspondence schools and schools of the air in New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

1.2.3 Information about the numbers and characteristics of the users of an educational service is instrumental to planning improvements in that service. In distance education it would be useful to know how many geographically isolated families are being catered for, how stable their numbers are and what factors are, or may be, influential in affecting that stability in the future. The collection of such information proved to be a major exercise in this project.

1.2.4 The second major component of the research was to be a survey of the general and specific needs of students, and the extent to which they are met by existing services. Where it was demonstrated that there was a gap between need and the services which existed, alternative strategies might be proposed to reduce the gap.

1.2.5 In summary, therefore, the project had three parts:

- (i) analysing and describing the populations served by correspondence schools and schools of the air in the participating states and the Northern Territory;
- (ii) surveying the general and particular needs of students, and assessing the extent to which existing services meet those needs; and
- (iii) considering alternative strategies which might incorporate conventional correspondence services and new forms of communications technology.

However, after preliminary fieldwork, these initial objectives were modified.

### **1.3 Preliminary Fieldwork**

1.3.1 The fieldwork was conducted over a period of six months from February until August, 1983. Primary and secondary correspondence schools, schools of the air and the homes of geographically isolated children enrolled in these schools were visited. The itinerary is summarised in Table 1.1. The fieldwork yielded invaluable data from a variety of sources.

**TABLE 1.1: Fieldwork, February-August 1983**

**VISITS AND MEETINGS**

February	<u>Education Department of Western Australia</u> Distance Education Centre, Perth pre-primary, primary, lower-secondary, upper secondary schools
March	<u>Education Department of New South Wales</u> The Correspondence School, Sydney primary and secondary departments
March 14	<u>SAT Users Conference and Exhibition, Sydney</u>
March	<u>Education Department of Queensland</u> The Pre-School Correspondence School, Brisbane The Primary Correspondence School, Brisbane The Secondary Correspondence School, Brisbane Research Services, Brisbane Production Services, Brisbane Isolated Childrens' Special Education Unit, Brisbane
March	<u>Priority Country Areas Program, Coordinator, Brisbane</u>
March	<u>Education Department of the Northern Territory</u> Secondary Correspondence School, Darwin Research and Planning Section, Darwin Professional Services Section, Darwin School of the Air, Katherine School of the Air, Alice Springs.
April	<u>Education Department of Western Australia</u> School of the Air, Meekatharra School of the Air, Kimberley School of the Air, Carnarvon School of the Air, Port Hedland
June	<u>Education Department of Western Australia</u> travelled with itinerant teacher based at School of the Air, Meekatharra, WA, and visited ten families
June	<u>Education Department of New South Wales</u> School of the Air, Broken Hill travelled with correspondence teacher and visited two families and met two families
July 13-15	<u>National Workshop on Distance Education, Perth</u> participated in the workshop with parents, teachers and administrators
July/August	<u>Education Department of New South Wales</u> travelled with staff of the Correspondence School and visited four decentralised correspondence units, visited two families; School of the Air, Broken Hill, met two families

1.3.2 There were three major outcomes, each contributing to a modification of the initial objectives of the study. They are summarised here but are discussed more fully in chapter 2. The major outcomes were:

- (i) a complex national picture of the organisation and administration of primary and secondary school levels of distance education was revealed. A range of procedures and provisions reflected the independence of each state and territory government department of education;
- (ii) practical constraints upon data from schools' enrolment records about geographically isolated children were experienced. The data were unavailable, not readily available, or available but unreliable in many cases;
- (iii) at the primary level of distance education it was revealed that a 'home tutor'<sup>1</sup> had an essential role in the implementation of the education program in the home setting. The existence of the home tutor was not only an eligibility criterion for enrolment in distance primary schools but also ensured that the child's lessons proceeded in accordance with the school's directions and that the daily learning needs of the child were fulfilled. Furthermore it was revealed that the role of the home tutor was a subject of some confusion and contention among parents, teachers and administrators and that services provided by schools to support the home tutor were unevenly available and, in some cases, seemed to be ineffective. There was little evidence of documented policy specifying the home tutors' teaching role and directing support accordingly.

## 1.4 Revised Objectives

1.4.1 As a consequence of these observations it was decided to restrict the scope of the study to the primary level of distance education where enrolment records were more accessible and to shift the focus of the survey from the geographically isolated children to their home tutors. Figure 1.1 provides a summary of the data collection for the two ensuing phases of the study.

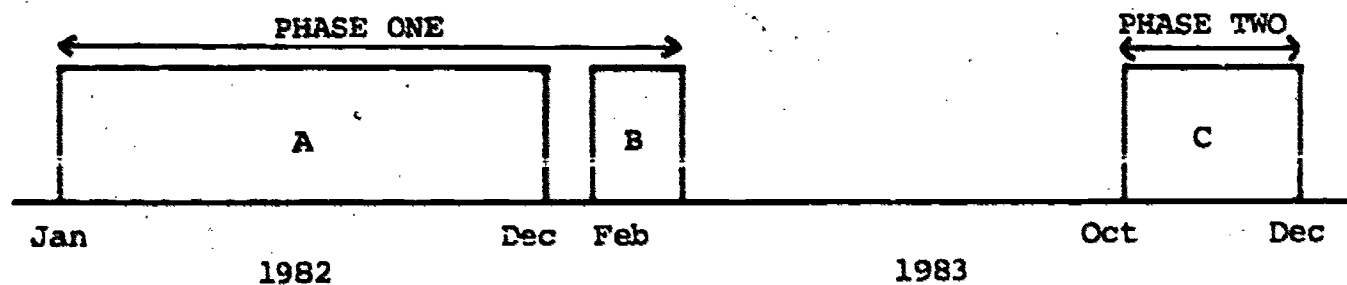
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1. See Chapter 2, paras 2.4.3 - 2.4.6, for an explanation of this term.



1.4.2 The first phase of the study was designed to provide information about the numbers of geographically isolated pupils, the characteristics of their families and the degree of their commitment to their distance primary schools.

FIGURE 1.1: Data Collection - Revised Objectives



- Phase 1:    A: Longitudinal Analysis of Enrolment Trends, 1982  
              B: Cross-sectional Analysis of Enrolments, February 1983
- Phase 2:    C: Survey of Home Tutors

1.4.3 The second phase of the study, a survey of isolated families, was intended to provide further indications of the characteristics of the family and the home setting as well as determining those factors affecting the availability and usefulness of educational services, particularly those aimed at providing support for the home tutor. The survey was also intended to gauge the perceived needs of home tutors and the extent to which those needs were being met by support services.

## 1.5 The Report

1.5.1 This report has been written for a wide readership, including teachers, parents, administrators, academics, and so on. In the following chapter the approach to the research is explained in more detail. Understanding of how the research was undertaken is essential to an appreciation of why it was necessary to modify the initial objectives. The second chapter also presents more detailed proceedings and outcomes of the preliminary fieldwork and their implications for the

evolution of the study. The third and fourth chapters present discussions of the results of the population analysis (phase one) and the survey of isolated families (phase two), respectively. The final chapter addresses the educational issues concerning the possible adoption by distance primary schools of alternative strategies for the improved delivery of educational services to the homes of geographically isolated children.

## Chapter 2: THE APPROACH

### 2.1 The Study As An Evaluation

2.1.1 The aim of this study was to provide an informed rationale for the adoption and use of new forms of communications technology into the curricula of distance education. Such a study would assist teachers, parents, curriculum writers, administrators and others who are involved in distance education and who are responsible for ensuring that these services are universally available, useable and effective. The study, which took the form of a 'pre-development' evaluation, was designed, therefore, to determine the perceived needs of distance education users, to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of existing services in meeting their needs, and to consider alternative strategies for improving the delivery of services. Implicit in this style of evaluation is the goal that the findings will facilitate the processes of planning, decision-making and policy formulation in respect of organisation and curriculum development rather than usurp them.

2.1.2 The geographic spread of the target population, the remoteness of its location and the diversity of organisational structures providing the education services made necessary extensive preliminary fieldwork (refer Table 1.1 for visits and meetings). The approach adopted was influenced in part by the 'illuminative model' of evaluation in which the evaluator:

makes no attempt to manipulate, control or eliminate situational variables, but takes as given the complex scene he encounters. His chief task is to unravel it; isolate its significant features; delineate cycles of cause and effect; and comprehend relationships between beliefs and practices and between organisational patterns and the responses of individuals.

2.1.3 During the fieldwork information was collected in a number of ways. Discussions were held with teachers, administrators, parents,

1. 'Evaluation As Illumination A New Approach to the Study of Innovatory Programs' in Hamilton, D., et al, 1977, p.10.

geographically isolated children and other interested parties (for example, members of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association, officers of the Country Areas Program). In distance primary schools the preparation and presentation of correspondence lessons and 'air' lessons and the correction of completed work by pupils were observed. Homes were visited to monitor the involvement of parents, other home tutors and children in 'air' lessons, correspondence lessons, video programs and itinerant teacher activities. At the same time factors associated with the home setting and the curriculum materials which affected both the implementation of the education programs and the utilisation of services provided to assist the children and support the home tutors were noted. School publications outlining policy and provisions for the benefit of teaching staff, parents and other home tutors were also obtained.

2.1.4 In this way a first-hand understanding of the organisation of primary and secondary distance education and the viewpoints of both the providers and users of the services was gained. Substantiation of the issues which arose was sought by reference to previous research. The major outcome was a revision of the initial objectives of the study. This is discussed in more detail in the following sections. Other outcomes included the involvement of New South Wales in the study (Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory comprised the other participants) and the cooperation of individual correspondence schools and schools of the air in providing enrolment data and in promoting the survey to 'their families' was secured.

2.1.5 The following sections of this chapter reflect some of the proceedings and outcomes of the preliminary fieldwork and the subsequent development of the study. The separation and sequencing of these sections masks the processes of analysis and synthesis which characterised the early stages of the study. However, in the interests of making the report succinct and readable the outcomes rather than the evaluative procedures are discussed here. Each of the following sections entitled 'the organisation of primary distance education', 'delineating the target population' and 'the survey of isolated families' may be regarded as individual 'threads' which have been 'unravelling' and presented separately.



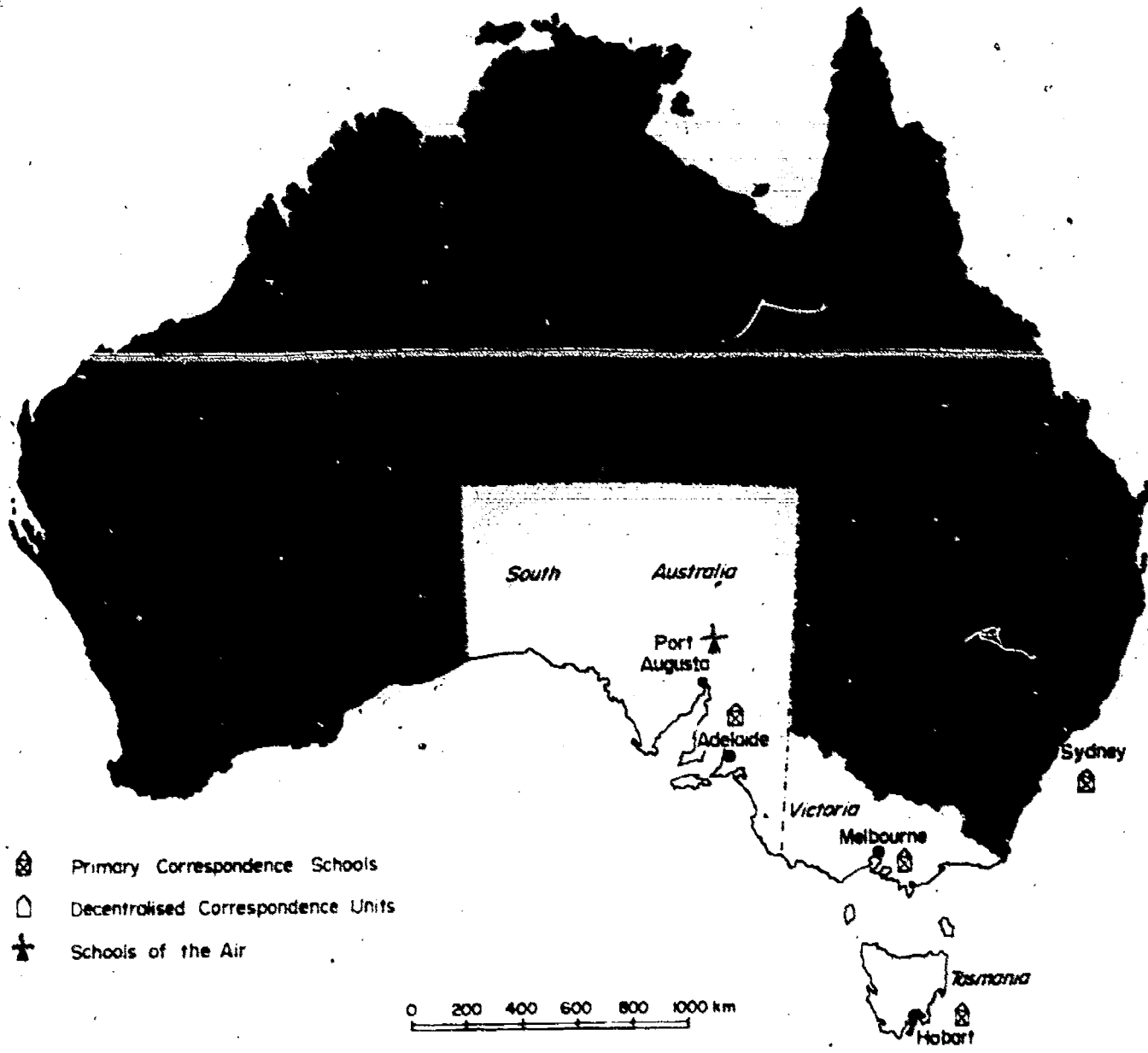
## 2.2 The Organisation of Primary Distance Education

2.2.1 Each state and the Northern Territory is responsible for its own primary distance education system. There are notable differences in their organisational and administrative structures. This section provides a brief summary of them based on information gathered in preliminary fieldwork and updated in September 1984. In the main, the State systems are organised around correspondence schools and schools of the air. The location of the several schools is shown in Figure 2.1. They offer an extensive range of courses to children who do not have reasonable access to schools, to special categories of incapacitated children who cannot attend school daily and must study at home or in institutions, to families who are travelling within Australia and overseas, and to adults who want to complete a primary school level education. This study was directed at those geographically isolated pupils resident or travelling within Australia. Other categories of pupils are referred to in chapter 3 where the total enrolments of the larger correspondence schools are considered.

2.2.2 While the organisational structure differs among the states, primary distance education is generally characterised by the following:

- (i) it provides a traditional 'print and post' correspondence course for all pupils;
- (ii) it supplements the correspondence lessons with one or more of school-of-the-air programs, home visits by teachers, school visits, 'camp' schools, library services, video-cassette recorded television programs and other audio-visual aids, and telephone or radio contact with teachers; and
- (iii) it requires, for every pupil, the presence of a 'suitable' adult to act as a home-based tutor. The 'suitable' adult is variously termed: 'home supervisor' in Western Australia, 'home tutor' in Queensland, and 'supervisor' in New South Wales and the Northern Territory. The term 'home tutor' is, however, used in this report.

FIGURE 2.1: Location of Distance Primary Schools



shaded areas represent states and territories that participated in the study.

2.2.3 In New South Wales eligible pupils may be enrolled with one of the following:

- (i) the Correspondence School (Primary Department), Sydney;
- (ii) the School of the Air, Broken Hill; or
- (iii) a decentralised correspondence unit attached to the government schools at Bourke, Cobar, Nyngan and Walgett.

The Correspondence School is organised around age levels with a pre-school section (before age 5 years), an infant department (age 5-7 years) and a primary department (age 8-13 years). A pupil may enrol in the infant department in the month of his or her fifth birthday, and is assigned to one teacher with whom weekly correspondence is maintained.

2.2.4 The 'Guide Book For Supervisors'<sup>1</sup> provides the following description of the organisation of the curriculum:

Courses are developed by teachers at the Correspondence School using curriculum guidelines which have been issued by the Department of Education to all New South Wales schools...The Correspondence School teaches all its pupils on an individual basis with work taught sequentially in each subject, making grouping into years (grades) unnecessary... Each child then proceeds at his/her own rate. Provision for acceleration or remediation is made...by the class teacher in consultation with executive staff

2.2.5 Close monitoring of the child's progress is facilitated by weekly correction of correspondence course work. The lesson materials, produced by the Correspondence School, consist of core 'leaflets' which are issued in conjunction with audio-cassettes and other audio-visual supplementary materials. The audio-cassettes are of two types: those which are integral to the correspondence course and which are to be used with the leaflets, and those which are used for personal communication between the child, the home tutor and the correspondence teacher.

2.2.6 The Broken Hill School of the Air organises its correspondence course in a similar way to the Correspondence School, Sydney, although it does use a nominal year-level grading system (K to 6). The correspondence course is based on the 'leaflets' from the Correspondence

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1. Guide Book for Supervisors. New South Wales Department of Education. The Correspondence School, Sydney; D. West, Government Printer, NSW, 1983, pp.11-12.

School and supplemented with materials produced by the school-of-the-air teachers. Pupils are also provided with a separate 'air' lessons curriculum comprising 'carefully planned core programs' and 'optional periods run by interested teachers.'<sup>1</sup>

2.2.7 Children enrolled in the decentralised correspondence units interact with one teacher who provides correspondence courses based on the leaflets of the Correspondence School, New South Wales, and who may visit the child at home. The year-level structure (K to 6) is similar to that of the school of the air. One of the main advantages of these units is their accessibility. Pupils may visit their schools regularly as the 'unit' is located in their region. (For further details see chapter 4.)

2.2.8 Pupils participating in the Loan Video Program receive pre-recorded video-cassette programs which are distributed fortnightly by their schools. Programs are in four categories: 'basic enrichment', 'special interest', 'lesson support' and 'local content'.<sup>2</sup> The Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) schools' television programs comprise the majority of the recorded material sent to pupils although other sources are also used. Individual schools are also experimenting with portable video equipment producing some programs designed to provide support for the child and home tutor.

2.2.9 Other services offered by the distance primary schools of New South Wales include a seventeen day residential school in Sydney every second year (Correspondence School pupils); regular publications including information on new directions in curriculum, policy and planning and a telephone answering service for pupils and home tutors (Correspondence School); annual school functions - picnic and sports day, Christmas party, and so on (school of the air, DCU's). There is little provision for home tutor training courses and home visits are restricted to pupils enrolled in the school of the air and the decentralised correspondence units. Pre-school is offered only by the Correspondence School in Sydney. The Correspondence School is currently (October 1984) conducting trials which 'involve the use of Videotex and Facsimile as an electronic mail system to overcome

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1. Handbook. School of the Air, Broken Hill, NSW: 1983.

2. Letter to Supervisors, the Correspondence School, Sydney: 1983 (see appendix F).

isolation in Distance Education'.<sup>1</sup> This system uses Telecom's telephone services as the medium of transmission of information between home and school.

#### QUEENSLAND

2.2.10 All distance primary pupils in Queensland are enrolled in the Primary Correspondence School located in Brisbane. It offers courses comprising correspondence lesson 'papers' structured on a year-level basis reflecting the organisation of the school:

- (i) Infants' Department, Years 1 and 2:
- (ii) Primary Departments, Years 3-7.

A child may be enrolled at the beginning of the year in which he or she turns five. A separate Pre-School Correspondence School located in Brisbane offers programs for pre-primary education.

2.2.11 The correspondence course 'papers' are designed in accordance with curriculum guides or syllabuses for the various subject areas for all primary schools in that state. Each year level has thirty-six sequential lesson papers requiring weekly correspondence between the pupil and the correspondence teacher. Tutorial audio-tapes prepared by the teachers accompany corrected course work returned to the pupils.

2.2.12 Pupils enrolled with the Primary Correspondence School may also enrol with one of the three schools of the air located at Cairns, Charleville and Mt Isa. These schools provide 'air' lessons only, all correspondence work being issued and corrected by the Primary Correspondence School. The 'air' programs are structured so that each week, 'of the five school days, three are devoted to the reinforcement of correspondence lesson papers, and two to the promotion and diagnosis of oral language and communication skills'.<sup>2</sup> A school-of-the-air pupil

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1. Communications Technology And The Distance Education Provisions, paper presented by Marlene Sheppard, AAIIS Biennial Conference, Perth, 1984. D.West, Government Printer, New South Wales, p.8.
  2. Evaluation of Education Provisions for Isolated Children Enrolled with The Primary Correspondence School in Queensland. Evaluation Series, Research Branch, Department of Education, Queensland; 1979, p.35.



might interact with three school teachers; the correspondence school teacher; 'air' lessons teacher (school of the air); and an itinerant teacher.

2.2.13 Only schools-of-the-air pupils are eligible to participate in the Loan Video Scheme in Queensland. The Production Services Branch of the Department of Education records and distributes fortnightly a three-hour video cassette consisting of ABC educational programs and other material. These programs may be categorised as 'general educational', 'specific interest' and 'lesson support'. A special feature is the use by school-of-the-air teachers of selected video programs which pupils pre-view and which form the basis of 'air' lesson discussions. Home tutors are provided with 'Program Notes which describe content and suggest further activities as a guide or follow-up to viewing'.<sup>1</sup>

2.2.14 Other services provided for distance primary pupils throughout Queensland depend on the Priority Country Area Program region in which families reside. Such services might include home visits by itinerant teachers, mini-schools and activity days, mobile classrooms and summer schools. In addition the schools of the air offer some home visits, school camps and sports days. There are also some Departmental itinerant teachers employed in some regions. The Primary Correspondence School offers residential preparatory courses for governesses, some regional seminars for home tutors and an 'INWATS' telephone service whereby families can call the correspondence course teacher from anywhere in the state for the cost to them of a local call.

#### WESTERN AUSTRALIA

2.2.15 In Western Australia eligible children may be enrolled in either the Distance Education Centre (DEC) in Perth or in one of the five schools of the air: Carnarvon, Kalgoorlie, Kimberley (at Derby), Meekatharra and Port Hedland. Each of these schools has a similar year-level organisation:

- . pre-primary class for four or five year olds;
- . primary classes covering year levels 1 to 7.

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1. Handbook, Loan Video Scheme, Production Services Branch, Queensland Department of Education, 1982, p.4

Pupils commencing in year level 1 do so at the beginning of the year in which they turn six.

2.2.16 The core provision is a correspondence course which is structured so that pupils are required to complete fortnightly units covering 18-20 'sets' each year. Curriculum materials prepared for distance education incorporate standard materials provided for all government schools and are used extensively by the Distance Education Centre and schools of the air. Supplementary curriculum materials are prepared by DEC teachers and by the 'air' teachers. Pupils enrolled in the primary department of the Distance Education Centre return completed work to their correspondence teachers in Perth. School-of-the-air pupils return their work to the school-of-the-air teacher.

2.2.17 Correspondence lessons may be supplemented by audio-visual materials. Pupils participating in the Loan Video Program are sent programs recorded by the Audio Visual Branch of the Education Department in Perth. These are accompanied by booklets containing background information and activities based on each program. These programs are produced weekly from the ABC schools' broadcasts and mailed direct to individual Distance Education Centre pupils or in bulk to the schools of the air for further distribution to their pupils.

2.2.18 The Distance Education Centre has its own video studio where teachers may produce individual support programs for children and home tutors. Video programs at a more professional level are produced in conjunction with the Audio-Visual Branch. Schools of the air are supplied with porta-pak videos to enable them to produce their own video programs. Other services offered by the Distance Education Centre and the schools of the air include annual home tutors' seminars in the regions (since 1984 for the Distance Education Centre); reverse-charge telephone service (DEC families); an annual pupils camp in Perth for years 2-7 of the Distance Education Centre or at Port Peron for middle and upper primary of the schools of the air; and mini-camps in the regions. In addition pupils are visited at home by an itinerant teacher attached to each of the schools of the air. Currently (October 1984) teachers from the Distance Education Centre are visiting each of their pupils once a year.

## NORTHERN TERRITORY

2.2.19 There is not a discrete primary correspondence school in the Northern Territory. However eligible pupils may be enrolled in

School of the Air, Alice Springs, or  
School of the Air, Katherine.

The organisational structure is in two departments:

(i) Infants Department:

- . pre-school class (not before age four years);
- . transition class (not before age five years);
- . Years 1 and 2.

(ii) Primary Department

- . Years 3 to 7.

Pupils commencing in the transition class may do so in the month in which they turn five. The nominal date of admission to year-level one is on the sixth birthday, although this may be delayed 'to allow several pupils to advance together'.<sup>1</sup> A special class is provided by Katherine School of the Air for pupils who have special learning needs.

2.2.20 The schools function as both correspondence schools and schools of the air, providing correspondence courses, air lessons and teacher visits (patrols) to pupils' homes. Each school is responsible for its own curriculum and for the production of much of its own correspondence course materials. The correspondence courses contain a core curriculum as required by the Northern Territory Department of Education's Primary Core Curriculum, 1980. The schools operate a semester system. The core curriculum materials are contained in 'sets' and it is expected that nine sets will be completed each semester. These are supplemented for individual pupils with materials from the recommended curriculum. Regular return of completed coursework for correction and assessment is required every two weeks. The pupils interact with one teacher whose various roles include 'air' lessons teacher, correspondence teacher, and home-visiting teacher.

2.2.21 Both schools have their own video-tape recording and duplicating facilities and video studios providing their own families with ABC TV educational programs and school-produced programs. Other services

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1. Parents' Handbook, School of the Air, Katherine, NT; 1st Edition, 11/82.

offered by the schools include an annual home tutors' conference; an annual school camp, 'Get-Together Week', excursions; mini-camps; in-school classes and 'patrols' (home visits by the child's correspondence course teacher).

## 2.3 Delineating the Target Population

2.3.1 The original objectives of the first phase of this study were to describe the pupil populations served by distance education and to determine the stability of enrolments over a period of seven years primary and five years secondary education (that is, a full enrolment history of pupils at each level). The apparently simple question of how many pupils were enrolled in correspondence schools and schools of the air proved difficult to answer. Inadequate record-keeping together with the continuous changes in enrolments, particularly in some of the larger correspondence schools, combined to create unanticipated difficulties. Four successive processes evolved:

- (i) exploratory dialogue to ascertain the nature of enrolment information recorded by the several institutions;
- (ii) rationalisation of objectives and the development of instruments and procedures for data collection;
- (iii) data retrieval and preliminary processing for cross-sectional analysis of enrolments in a single month and longitudinal analysis by month for the preceding year; and
- (iv) self-evaluation and refinement of the outcomes.

2.3.2 Between February and March, 1983, preliminary discussions were held with people directly involved in the administration and implementation of distance education in the participating states and the Northern Territory. They included administrators and teachers at the several schools in Perth, Sydney, Brisbane and Darwin, and at other regional schools and officers of research, planning and services branches of the four departments of education. Practical constraints on the collection of data were identified. In brief, they were that enrolment records were not centrally located in each state, but were kept in individual schools; pupil records and school records of admissions and terminations varied in format from state to state; and records frequently were terminated, and in some instances destroyed, at the end of each year. The most readily accessible records for preceding



years were annual census returns, but these were summary data and because they represented enrolments for the census month only were not reliable indicators of annual trends. With few exceptions, school records were maintained in card-index systems which were not readily accessible for the data pertinent to this research. Manual processing was the only means of extracting information which, in some cases, did not prove to be reliable.

2.3.3 Two particular limitations on the data available imposed strong constraints upon their reliability and comparability among schools. The first was that some schools used the term 'effective enrolment' to measure the number of pupils actively returning course work to their correspondence teachers or, in the case of schools of the air, the daily attendance of pupils on 'air' lessons. Pupils who have delayed their regular return of completed coursework or who have been absent from 'air' lessons may have been excluded from the 'effective enrolment' of that school. Consequently pupils in this situation inadvertently may have been omitted from total enrolment figures.

2.3.4 The second limitation was that some schools, particularly the larger secondary correspondence schools with enrolments numbering some thousands and which cater for a range of pupil-type (overseas, travelling, medical, part-time and so on) did not differentiate among pupils in their central records. Central registers contained records of regular admissions and terminations only. Hence it was not possible to extract information referring specifically to particular characteristics of the pupils. This problem was obviated in small, regional schools (specifically schools of the air) where the population comprised a single pupil-type, the geographically isolated. The validity of comparisons among large and small schools using findings from these data depends on the proportion of the pupil-type in question in each school's total enrolments. Clearly the validity of such comparisons is highest where the proportion is largest and is lowest where the proportion is smallest.

2.3.5 This latter problem may also occur where schools have differences in organisational structure. For example some schools have a pre-school section integral to their structure, while elsewhere these form separate schools. In order to standardise the data obtained from individual



schools it was necessary to state the range of year-levels (or age levels) to be included. This necessitated the exclusion of pre-school pupils from the target populations of this study.

2.3.6 It was decided to limit the scope of the research to primary distance education and to seek information on 'currently' (that is February 1983) enrolled pupils directly from class teachers. A data pro-forma was developed and trialled in cooperation with the Distance Education Centre, Perth. Subsequently it was modified to cater for the differences among the states. (A copy of the pro-forma is contained in Appendix A.) In most schools each class teacher completed one form for every pupil on the roll for the month of February 1983. This included pupils who were continuing their enrolments from the preceding year, and those who were newly enrolled or had recently terminated their enrolments. In a few cases central registers were consulted by schools' staff appointed to provide the required data. The completed forms were encoded and the data entered into a computer file.

2.3.7 The data analysis provided a cross sectional profile of pupil populations of primary distance education for February 1983, according to 'residential status', 'enrolment type' and 'stability of enrolments'. Residential status was determined in most schools by class teachers by considering the occupation of the pupils' parents or guardians, the expressed purpose for the enrolment, the current length of enrolment, any previous enrolment, the number of schools attended, and so on. Each pupil was then classified according to one of the following categories:

- . PR - Permanently Resident, for example station manager/owner. Here the family home is permanently located.
- . TR - Travelling. Here the family home is not fixed to a particular location and the pupil may be mobile for all or part of a school day or week. This category was reduced to TW - travelling for work, for example shearing contractors, fruitpickers, plant operators; and TP - travelling for pleasure, for example long service leave, holiday trips;
- . O - Overseas. The family and the pupil are resident or travelling in a foreign country;
- . M - Medical. The pupil is town or metropolitan-based but is unable to attend a local school for medical reasons.

These data on residential status enabled the extraction of the geographically isolated from the total enrolments of larger correspondence schools and the assessment of proportions of types of pupils served by separate schools.

2.3.8 Information on the length of enrolment was processed to determine the number of currently enrolled pupils in four categories:

- (i) 'new enrolment', that is enrolled since the beginning of the school year (0-2 months)
- (ii) 'shorter-term enrolment' that is enrolled during the preceding school year (3-14 months)
- (iii) 'longer-term enrolment', that is enrolled prior to the preceding school year (15+ months)
- (iv) 'continuous enrolment', that is enrolled since the beginning of year-level one (excluding the current year-level one enrolments who were newly enrolled and some other enrolments. For a detailed discussion see Appendix D).

2.3.9 Using these numbers it was possible to establish a measure of the absolute stability of pupil enrolments, in the longer-term, for each school by plotting a graph of mean length of enrolment by year-level (or age-level) with a theoretically stable school enrolment superimposed. This provided a comparison of the relative stabilities of the pupil enrolments, in the longer-term, of the different school types, for example schools of the air, centralised and decentralised correspondence schools.

2.3.10 The second part of the data collection was directed toward a longitudinal analysis of enrolment records on a monthly basis for the school year of 1982. The original proposal had been to provide such analysis for the full enrolment history of pupils at each level of primary and secondary schooling. For the reasons already considered, long term retrospective enrolment data were inadequate. Instead it was decided to examine the stability of enrolments by measuring the fluctuations in the average annual enrolment caused by the turnover of enrolments during a single school year. Figures available in annual census and staffing returns, submitted to the departments of education provide 'snap shots' of schools' total enrolments, masking any trends

which may occur as a function of time and providing an undifferentiated picture with respect to pupil-type (geographically isolated, overseas, and so on).

2.3.11 A second form (see Appendix A) was designed to enable the tabulation of each school's monthly enrolment patterns, including

- (i) total enrolments - the total number of pupils considered to be enrolled at the end of each month;
- (ii) number of admissions - the number of pupils who were newly enrolled with the schools during each month;
- (iii) number of terminations - the number of pupils who left the school during each month.

These were extracted from weekly enrolment records in the larger schools and directly from teachers' class rolls in smaller schools. The form was developed after the researcher had spent some weeks sorting through records containing the weekly teacher returns for 1982 of the Distance Education Centre, Perth.

2.3.12 The analysis of data provided an annual mean total enrolment and a monthly mean turnover rate of enrolments for each school. The turnover rate was defined as

$$\text{turnover rate} = \frac{\text{No of (admissions + terminations)}}{\text{annual mean enrolment}} \times \frac{100}{1}$$

Care must be exercised in the use of this term as a turnover figure may include a pupil who has been admitted and terminated and has consequently been counted twice. This is more likely to occur when using annual rather than monthly enrolment figures.

2.3.13 From this information it was possible, using the same procedures as in the cross-sectional profile for February 1983, to establish measures of absolute stability and relative stabilities of pupil enrolments in the short term for each school and for comparison among schools. The validity of the comparisons depends upon the nature of the data as discussed above.

2.3.14 The findings from phase one of the study provided a basis for inferences about the likely stability of the pupil enrolments of the individual distance primary schools. In the case of the Primary Correspondence School, Queensland, the analysis was performed on the two groups of pupils comprising the total enrolment of the school: those enrolled in a school of the air and those not so enrolled. The inferences reflect, therefore, the likely stabilities of these two groups. These inferences were substantiated by a process of self-evaluation. Each school was sent a summary of findings and invited to comment on them and to respond to specific questions about their predictive validity. The questions were:

- Q1 Is the turnover of enrolments for 1982 typical of pre-1982 years and of 1983 and 1984?
  - Q2 What might be the expected pattern of stability of pupil enrolments in future years?
  - Q3 What factors regarding the nature of the pupil population might contribute to the turnover?
  - Q4 Are the proportions of pupils classed as travellers and permanently resident for February 1983 representative of the pupil population of your school in mid-1983 and early 1984?
- (See Appendix E for responses from schools)

## 2.4 The Survey of Isolated Families

2.4.1 The initial objectives of this phase of the research were to survey the needs of students and to assess the extent to which they were being met by existing services. During the first phase of the project, and partly in response to some of the successive observations, a strategy was devised for a national survey of isolated families with children enrolled in primary distance education. It involved six steps of development and application:

Step one - preliminary fieldwork:

This involved visiting schools and isolated families in their homes to learn about

- . the nature of the general utilities available to them, for example electricity and telephone;
- . the availability and utilisation of educational services, with special attention to the home tutors' perceptions of their effectiveness; and
- . the terms used by families when referring to these services.

**Step two - refinement of the rationale:**

- Taking into account the findings of step one, it proved necessary to modify the goals of the survey.

**Step three - development of a draft questionnaire:**

A draft questionnaire was constructed and its validity and reliability were assessed by:

- a pilot survey using a sample of families drawn from the total (survey) population. They were sent a copy of the draft questionnaire and invited to complete it and a specially designed evaluation questionnaire (see Appendix E); and
- reactions were sought from the principals/teachers-in-charge of all schools involved in the study, as well as from the steering committee members and other professional colleagues.

**Step four - development of the final questionnaire:**

In response to the findings from step three, a final form of the questionnaire was drawn up.

**Step five - operation of the survey:**

The machinery for the conduct of the survey was as follows:

- distribution - every family was sent one questionnaire accompanied by a personally addressed letter explaining the purpose of the survey;
- follow-up - a general letter was sent to all families both reminding them and thanking them for their participation. Individual schools were requested to promote the survey by means of newsletters and/or 'on-air' messages;
- return - completed questionnaires were returned in reply-paid, pre-addressed envelopes;
- a record of returns - this was facilitated by the colour and letter coding of the questionnaires at the time of printing. Individual responses were not identified.

**Step six - analysis of the returns:**

A computer analysis of the results of the survey was performed using the SPSS package.

2.4.2 The essential shift of focus of this phase of the project was away from direct assessments of the needs of the learners towards identifying the perceived needs of home tutors and, through an evaluation of those needs, to judgements about the effectiveness of related aspects of distance education procedures. The nature of the



shift is best illustrated in the design of the questionnaire. Preliminary drafts sought information about the services available, problems encountered in their use, and the effectiveness of support services in ameliorating those problems. In particular they sought answers to the following questions:

- . What support services exist for home tutors and students?
- . How are support services delivered?
- . Upon what do the existence and effectiveness of support services depend?
- . What is the availability and quality of communications upon which the delivery of support services depend?
- . How well do these support services meet the expressed needs of the home tutors and students?

### THE ROLE OF THE HOME TUTOR

2.4.3 While successive drafts of the questionnaire were being prepared, field trips (refer Table 1.1) were undertaken for the combined purposes of collecting data for the first phase of the project and to validate the instruments being developed for the second phase. Schools of the air in Western Australia (Carnarvon, Kalgoorlie, Kimberley, Meekatharra and Port Hedland), New South Wales (Broken Hill) the Northern Territory (Katherine and Alice Springs), and the four decentralised correspondence units (Bourke, Cobar, Nyngan and Walgett) were visited. Limitations of time and money precluded visits to schools of the air in Queensland. During those visits extensive discussions were held with teachers at the schools and parents, home tutors, employed governesses and children in their homes. 'Air' lessons and schoolroom activities were observed both in the homes and at the schools. A major outcome was an appreciation that the presence of a home tutor was necessary not only to ensure eligibility for enrolment, but also, and perhaps more importantly, for the effective and efficient education of the isolated child.

2.4.4 The importance of the home tutor's role is highlighted in these extracts from publications obtained from schools during the preliminary fieldwork:



With all the correspondence work, and usually during radio lessons, it is necessary for an older person to supervise the child - to explain instructions, encourage ideas, and mark some of the completed work.

(School of the Air, Alice Springs, NT)<sup>1</sup>

The part played by a supervisor is a very vital one...The teacher then teaches the child working through the supervisor...teachers are obliged to call enrolments into question if...a pupil is not making progress because of inadequate supervision.

(The Correspondence School, NSW)<sup>2</sup>

But within our limited sphere of influence we find four relevant variables that affect the education of isolated children - their environment, their teacher, their course materials and their supervisor. The effectiveness of the first three depend on the interest, initiative and integrity of the supervisor... The supervisor, then, is the catalyst that initiates the education process.

(School of the Air, Katherine, NT)<sup>3</sup>

From the supervisor's comments, the teacher will know whether remediation or extension programs are necessary, and can individualise a program to suit the student's needs.

(Distance Education Centre, WA)<sup>4</sup>

2.4.5 The fieldwork revealed that the home tutor was, in most cases, the mother of the pupil. However, in some instances an employed person, usually a 'governess' was responsible for the daily implementation of the correspondence lessons. The specific tasks carried out by home tutors depend upon the age of the child, the nature of a particular teacher/learning activity, and the capacity of the child to work alone. The home tutor fulfils, however, the primary function of ensuring that the child's learning progresses according to the directions of the school. This might entail an involvement in the organisation of the child's work program, in the teaching (that is instructing, questioning,

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1. Alice Springs School of the Air, school publication, 1983, p.2.
  2. Guide Book For Supervisor's, The Correspondence School, Sydney, New South Wales Department of Education, 1983, pp. 17-19.
  3. Parents' Handbook, School of the Air, Katherine, NT, 1st edition, 11/82, p.20.
  4. A Guide For the Supervisor (Primary), Distance Education Centre, Department of Education, WA, 1983, p.9.

prompting, extending, reinforcing, interpreting, participating, judging, assessing, responding, and so on) of the child, and in communicating regularly with the school teacher. The home tutor mediates, therefore, between the school and the child by interceding in the child's learning as directed by the correspondence lesson or where she (or, rarely, he) judges it to be necessary according to her assessment of the child's performance on a given task. It is this latter function which determines that her role is more closely associated with that of a tutor than with that of a supervisor or overseer of a program of work. The direct responsibility for the provision of educational services rests with the teachers and the school, but the home tutor facilitates the effective, non-contiguous teaching of the child in the distance education mode. For this reason the term 'home tutor' rather than 'home supervisor' or 'supervisor' is used consistently in this report.

2.4.6 The home tutor clearly plays an essential role in the implementation of the education program of the geographically isolated child. The least well explained tasks, and perhaps the most contentious, are the teaching duties required of the home tutor. During the fieldwork a range of viewpoints were encountered. Most were supportive of the notion that home tutors perform some, if not all, of the teaching duties engaged in by the professionally trained 'classroom' teacher. A conflicting viewpoint, expressed by a few, indicated that the home tutor did not have a teaching role in primary distance education. Schools' publications, many addressed specifically to the home tutor, failed to state clearly the policy of the school in this regard. In them can be found some advice on teaching activities. However much of this is presented incidentally, generally a point at a time, relating to a specific subject (for example, reading, creative writing) or expressed in very general terms (for example, encourage the pupil, show interest, give praise). Nevertheless there seemed little doubt that the home tutor is expected to perform at least some of the tasks of a professionally trained teacher, especially in the exercise of judgements about the child's learning performance. This issue is discussed further in chapter 5 which argues for a cooperative working partnership based upon a mutual understanding of the individual and interrelated roles of the home tutor and the distance education teacher.

2.4.7 The ability of a home tutor to meet the school's requirements and to cater for the child's needs will influence the effectiveness of the child's learning. A report by the Research Branch of the Education Department of Western Australia (1975)<sup>1</sup> on the education of the isolated child concluded

Just as the quality of the education of a child in a conventional school depends to a large extent on the teacher, so the education of an isolated child depends on the quality of the supervisor.

The report identified several of the difficulties experienced by home tutors - conflicting domestic roles, financial constraints, lack of teacher training - which might adversely affect the quality of supervision. It may not be the case that all home tutors are naturally capable of performing their tasks free from difficulties of a personal or domestic nature. It follows, therefore, that in order to maximise the isolated child's educational opportunities distance primary schools must address not only the learning requirements of the child, but also they must provide the home tutor with as much support as possible in overcoming both general and, to some extent, personal problems. That support may be integral to the course work that is directed to the child, or it may exist in a separate form designed especially for the home tutor's real and potential requirements and difficulties.

2.4.8 Various support services have been implemented. These range from longer-term annual conferences/seminars and home visits to weekly, personalised audio-tape messages and heavily subsidised telephone services. But how effective are they? An evaluation of educational provisions for isolated children enrolled with the Primary Correspondence School in Queensland was conducted by the Research Branch of the Queensland Department of Education in 1978/1979<sup>2</sup>. The study focussed 'mainly on the provisions and services of the agencies

1. The Education of Isolated Children in Western Australia, Research Branch, Education Department of WA, 1975, pp 34-36.
2. Evaluation of Educational Provisions for Isolated Children Enrolled with the Primary Correspondence School in Queensland. Evaluation Series, Research Branch, Department of Education, Queensland; 1979, p.35.

concerned' but also drew on the views of a small sample of home tutors and parents from a pilot study conducted in 1976. The report concluded that the effectiveness of the provisions and services available for children and home tutors '...is a function of both the quality and scope of provisions, and the ability of families to utilise the services effectively'. It recommended that further studies seek to determine the factors, particularly those associated with the home tutor and the home setting, which may '...inhibit the effective use of services'.

2.4.9 If the education of the isolated child is to be enhanced by improvements to the delivery of educational services to the home, then the home tutor as well as the child is deserving of some important consideration. Jan Gall, a home tutor from Queensland, in a paper on home tutors' difficulties in coping with curriculum, presented at a National Workshop on Distance Education (1983)<sup>1</sup> emphasised the need for efficient but effective personal support.

Good communication is of the utmost importance. While new modes of delivery to speed it up would be desirable, they will be to no avail if the content of the communications delivered does not meet the needs of the clients. Personal support is essential, whether it goes directly to the pupils, or indirectly by helping the home tutors.

It is not sufficient to think solely in terms of speeding up the support services. It is necessary also to consider the nature of those services, the interests which they are serving and their relevance and effectiveness, from the viewpoints of the users of those services.

#### REVISED OBJECTIVES (PHASE 2)

2.4.10 Because of this revised perspective the objectives of the second phase changed. The survey attempted to determine:

- (i) the expressed needs of home tutors both in the longer term and in the shorter term. These were to be determined from an indication of:

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1 Coping With Curriculum. National Workshop on Distance Education Perth, July 13-15, 1983. Papers and Proceedings, p.62. National Centre for Research on Rural Education, University of Western Australia.

- (a) problems and concerns currently experienced; and
  - (b) perceptions of the requirements of the teaching role;
- (ii) the effectiveness of current support provisions, with particular attention to specific support, in meeting the needs of home tutors.

Therefore the questionnaire used in the survey sought the following information:

- . the availability of support provisions;
- . the methods of obtaining support from the child's school;
- . the availability and quality of the means of communications upon which the delivery of support provisions depend;
- . the extent to which available support provisions are perceived by home tutors to meet their expressed needs; and
- . the extent to which home tutors feel they have been encouraged and enabled to make contact with the school for support.

Measurement of effectiveness would include home tutors' perceptions of usefulness, helpfulness, relevance and satisfaction with available support provisions, and the useability of general services upon which the support services depend. (A copy of the questionnaire is contained in Appendix B.)

## THE SURVEY

2.4.11 All geographically isolated families, resident or travelling within Queensland, New South Wales, Western Australia and the Northern Territory and with at least one child enrolled in primary distance education were sent one questionnaire. A total of 1800 questionnaires were distributed and a total of 1,274 returns were received. The figures in Table 2.1 summarise the return rate after adjusting for non-valid addresses and returns (for example, undelivered, duplications, blanks, refusals). Further details are available in Appendix C.

2.4.12 Considering the active involvement of individual schools in the promotion of the survey it appears that there is a relationship between the response rate and the school type. Families enrolled in regional schools (that is schools of the air and correspondence units) demonstrated a much higher rate of return (87 per cent) compared with families enrolled in metropolitan correspondence schools (59 per cent). Within the regional schools 88 per cent of schools-of-the-air families



returned a completed questionnaire compared with 73 per cent of families with children enrolled in a correspondence unit. The schools of the air, which use daily transmissions to contact their families, effected the highest rate of return of completed questionnaires. The correspondence units, which are located to enable ready access for their families, effected the second highest rate of return. Finally, the metropolitan schools, which are remote from their families and which rely almost totally on the postal services to contact them, effected the lowest rate of return. There was virtually no difference in the return rates of the travelling and non-travelling families in the metropolitan schools. Factors associated with a higher response rate from regional schools might include more effective means of communication between home and schools (for example daily radio contact) and better relationships between home tutors and teachers.

TABLE 2.1: Response to Survey

SCHOOL TYPES	DISTRIBUTED	RETURNED	RESPONSE RATE
<u>Regional</u>			
Schools of the Air (QLD*, NSW, WA, NT)	785	690	88%
Correspondence Units (NSW)	<u>74</u>	<u>54</u>	<u>73%</u>
Sub-total	859	744	87%
<u>Metropolitan</u>			
(QLD*, NSW, WA)			
Non-Travellers	601	354	59%
Travellers	<u>221</u>	<u>128</u>	<u>58%</u>
Sub-total	822	482	59%
<hr/>			
TOTAL SURVEY (adjusted)	1681	1226	73%

\*In the case of Queensland it should be noted that all families are enrolled in the metropolitan based Primary Correspondence School from which the correspondence lessons are issued and to which they are returned for correction. In addition some of these families have children enrolled in a school of the air (see Section 2.2). The returns of this latter group are included in Table 2.1 in the schools-of-the air category.

The overall (adjusted) return rate was 73% (1226/1681).



2.4.13 The information provided from the questionnaires was analysed under four sections:

- (i) an estimate of the numbers of children enrolled in primary distance education at the time of the survey, based on the mean number of children in the respondents' families;
- (ii) aspects of the family home which might have some bearing on the availability and quality of the support services;
- (iii) the home tutor: who she (he) is and how much experience she (he) has had together with her (his) personal concerns, the problems she (he) faces in performing her (his) role and her (his) relationship with the school;
- (iv) the general and tutorial support services in terms of their availability and effectiveness.

# Chapter 3: THE PUPIL POPULATION

## 3.1 Enrolments of Distance Primary Schools

3.1.1 A fundamental proposition which justified the first phase of this research was that reliable information about the numbers of primary pupils enrolled with correspondence schools and schools of the air might inform decisions about policy. In this chapter evidence from the two sets of data gathered, enrolments as at February 1983 and by month for 1982, are considered jointly to indicate the apparent trends. The information presented suggests that the question 'how many pupils?' can be answered only in qualified terms of 'when' and 'where'. They indicate that enrolments change each month and from one year to the next. The turnover is continuous across all levels of primary schooling. The rate of change is not constant, however. Relative stability, in terms of mean lengths of enrolment, varies according to the type of school and the residential status of pupils.

### TOTAL ENROLMENTS

3.1.2 In February 1983 there were some three thousand pupils enrolled with primary correspondence schools and schools of the air in New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory (see Table 3.1). These excluded pre-school children and adults, but included the other general categories of school-age children described in chapter 2 (see para 2.2.1) according to their eligibility for enrolment, namely children who are resident or travelling within Australia and who do not have reasonable daily access to schools because of distance and difficulties of transport (that is geographically isolated children); children suffering from disabilities which prevent their attending normal schools; and children who are temporarily resident overseas.

### THE TARGET POPULATION OF THE STUDY

3.1.3 Since the focus of this research was strategies which might improve the delivery of distance education services, in particular those

**TABLE 3.1: Total Enrolments of Distance Primary Schools:  
February 1983<sup>(a)</sup>**

	Geographically Isolated (Target Population)	Overseas	Medical	Total Enrol
<u>New South Wales</u>				
. Correspondence School (Primary Department)	440 (71%)	170	6	616
. School of the Air (Broken Hill)	141 (100%)	0	0	141
. Correspondence Units (combined)	88 (100%)	0	0	88
<b>New South Wales State Total</b>	<b>669 (79%)</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>845</b>
<u>Queensland</u>				
. Non-School of the Air	586 (83%)	105	15	706
. Schools of the Air (combined)	776 (100%)	0	0	776
<b>Queensland State Total (Primary Correspondence School)</b>	<b>1362 (92%)</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1482</b>
<u>Western Australia</u>				
. Distance Education Centre (Primary Department)	176 (72%)	62	5	243
. Schools of the Air (combined)	184 (100%)	0	0	184
<b>Western Australia State Total</b>	<b>360 (84%)</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>427</b>
<u>Northern Territory</u>				
. Katherine School of the Air	175 (99%)	1	0	176
. Alice Springs School of the Air	89 (100%)	0	0	89
<b>Northern Territory Total</b>	<b>264 (99%)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>265</b>
<b>TOTAL (all States plus Northern Territory)</b>	<b>2655 (88%)</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>3019</b>

(a) excluding pre-school and adult pupils

which might derive from the application of communications technology, it was decided to disregard those children who were overseas and those enrolled for medical reasons. Clearly the first would not benefit directly from a domestic satellite system. The second were few in number (26 in all) and were enrolled in metropolitan correspondence schools. The group most likely to benefit is that identified in Table 3.1 as 'geographically isolated'. In February 1983 this group comprised 87.9 per cent of the total enrolments of distance primary schools. This group was treated as the target population for investigation.

#### **DEFINITION OF GEOGRAPHICALLY ISOLATED**

3.1.4 The term 'geographically isolated' has specific meaning in the context of education regulations of the states and in Commonwealth government programs for benefits to students. Generally, and depending on age, a student is regarded as isolated if the home is more than three or five kilometres from an appropriate school. For the purposes of the Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme a geographically isolated student is one whose home is 'at least 16 kilometres from the nearest appropriate government school and at least 4.5 kilometres from the nearest transport to that school'.<sup>1</sup> Such precise meaning was not intended here. The nomination of a pupil as geographically isolated was a decision of the teacher after considering information available to them about the occupation of parents, purposes and lengths of enrolment, previous enrolments, numbers of schools attended, and so on. In some instances the judgements may have been subjective, but they were based on the best information available. Children whose postal addresses were in the metropolitan areas were excluded. In the main, the target population was composed of those who were permanently resident or travelling in country areas. The residential status of the target population is discussed later.

### **3.2 Distribution of the Target Population**

3.2.1 The distribution of the pupils in the target population across the several levels of primary schooling as at February 1983 is summarised in Table 3.2. The meaning of the levels in terms of the

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1. Assistance for Isolated Children. Policy Guidelines. para 1.6.2.1. Department of Education and Youth Affairs, Canberra.

**TABLE 3.2: Distribution of the Target Population Across Levels of Primary Education - February 1983**

AGE	NEW SOUTH WALES			QUEENSLAND			WESTERN AUSTRALIA			NORTHERN TERRITORY		
	CS	SOTA	DCU	YEAR	PCS NON SOTA	SOTA	YEAR	DEC	SOTA	YEAR	ASSOTA	KSOTA
5	67	32	11	1	116	128	1	25	37	T	10	21
6	62	19	16	2	58	127	2	15	24	1	17	24
7	67	20	11	3	74	109	3	32	29	2	10	31
8	63	21	19	4	79	148	4	23	21	3	12	19
9	66	12	12	5	89	106	5	26	20	4	14	18
10	50	17	7	6	86	81	6	19	29	5	10	17
11	48	14	7	7	84	77	7	23	23	6	10	16
12	13	1	2				R	13		7	6	16
M	4	5	3				M		1	S		13
TOTAL	440	141	88	TOTAL	586	776	TOTAL	176	184	TOTAL	89	175
		669			1362			360			264	

New South Wales : Correspondence School (CS); Broken Hill School of the Air (SOTA); combined Decentralised Correspondence Units (DCU)

Queensland : Primary Correspondence School (PCS): pupils enrolled in a school of the air (SOTA), pupils not enrolled in a school of the air (NON SOTA)

Western Australia : Distance Education Centre (DEC); combined schools of the air (SOTA)  
R = pupils enrolled under a special category of remediation

Northern Territory : Alice Springs School of the Air (ASSOTA)  
Katherine School of the Air (KSOTA)  
T = Transition class  
S = Special class for 'students who are significantly above or below average for their age and grade' (ref. personal correspondence with School of Air, Katherine, principal)  
M = Missing cases due to computer processing error.



chronological age of the pupils and their educational achievement differs in detail among the states. Ages of entry and points of transfer from primary to secondary differ by regulation, and various organisational structures are preferred by particular schools and systems. Some of these have been discussed previously (see chapter 2.2). Inferences cannot be drawn from the single set of information presented here. It is raw data only which represents a cross-section of the target population at one time. It is presented as the starting point for the data analysis in the ensuing sections. More detailed information is contained in Appendix D where data for individual schools by state and the Northern Territory are discussed.

### **3.3 Residential Status of The Target Population**

3.3.1 The residential status of the target population as at February 1983 was analysed according to whether pupils were permanently resident or travelling (see para 2.3.7). Because some of the information about the families and the location of the family homes of particular pupils was incomplete, it was not appropriate to distinguish between workers and holiday makers in the peripatetic population. Since the numbers were small, the two groups travelling for work (TW) and travelling for pleasure (TP) were collapsed into a single category.

3.3.2 The proportions of the target population in each category are summarised in Table 3.3. Quite clearly the permanently resident group was the larger. The one in six who were travelling have important implications for the manner in which education services might be delivered, however.

3.3.3 Again, there are important differences among the states and the types of schools within them. Summary information is presented in Figure 3.1. The proportions of permanently resident and travelling pupils are given as percentages of the target populations of correspondence schools and schools of the air. The differences in the balance of residential status are obvious, but there are some noteworthy similarities. Of the 2655 pupils in the four authorities who were enrolled in primary distance education during February 1983, 83 per cent were permanently resident in rural areas. However, in each of the states, the pupil populations of the schools located in rural areas,

**FIGURE 3.1: Residential Status - Target Population, February 1983**

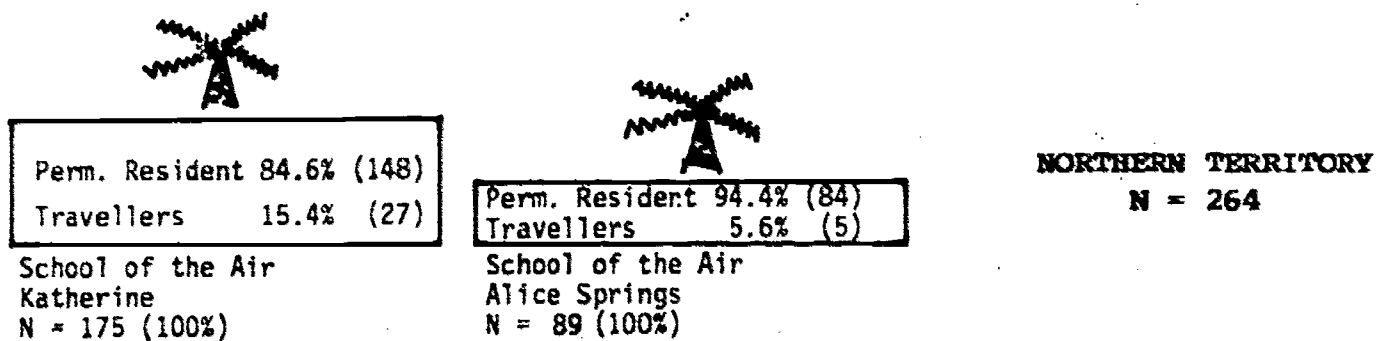
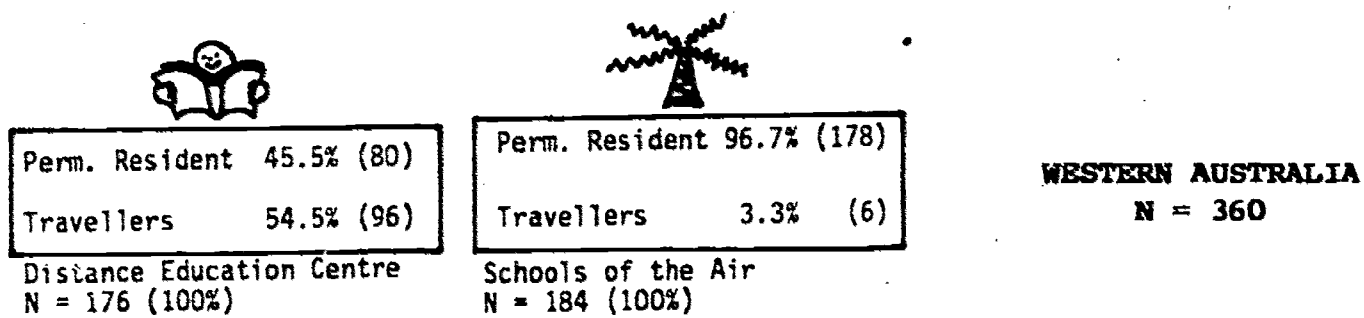
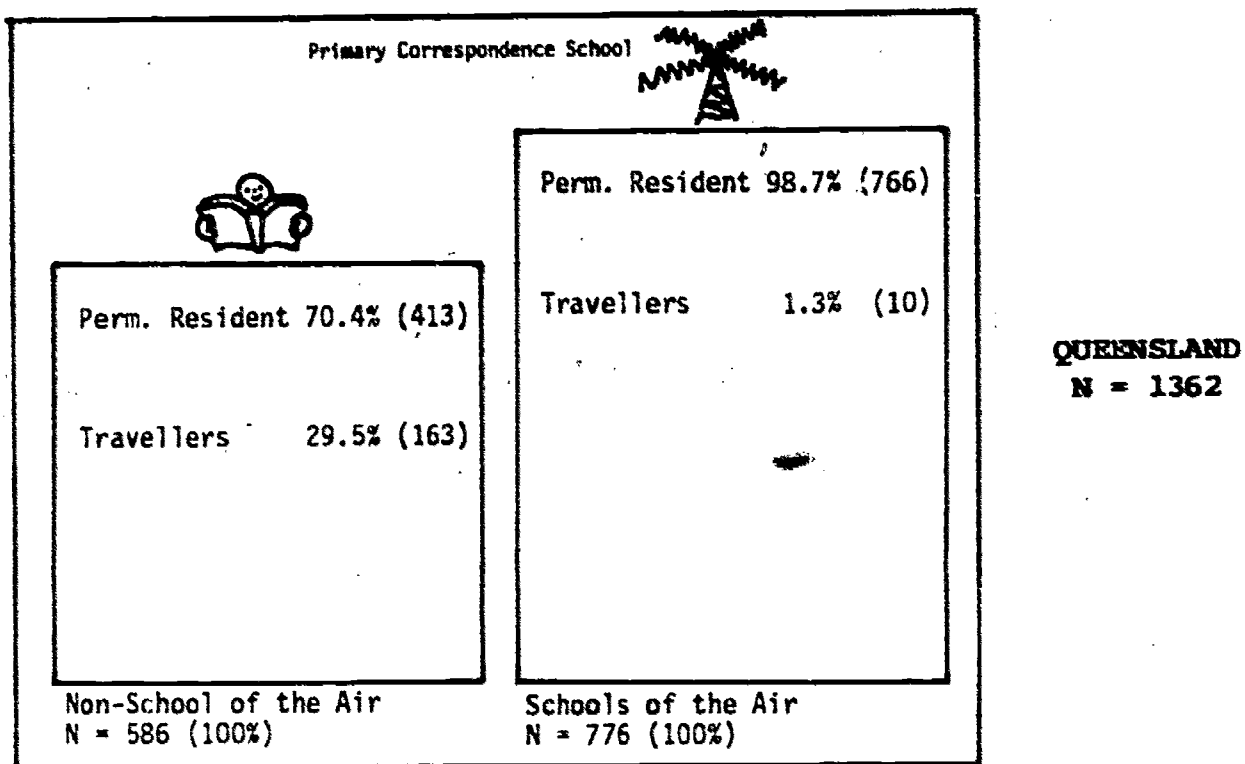
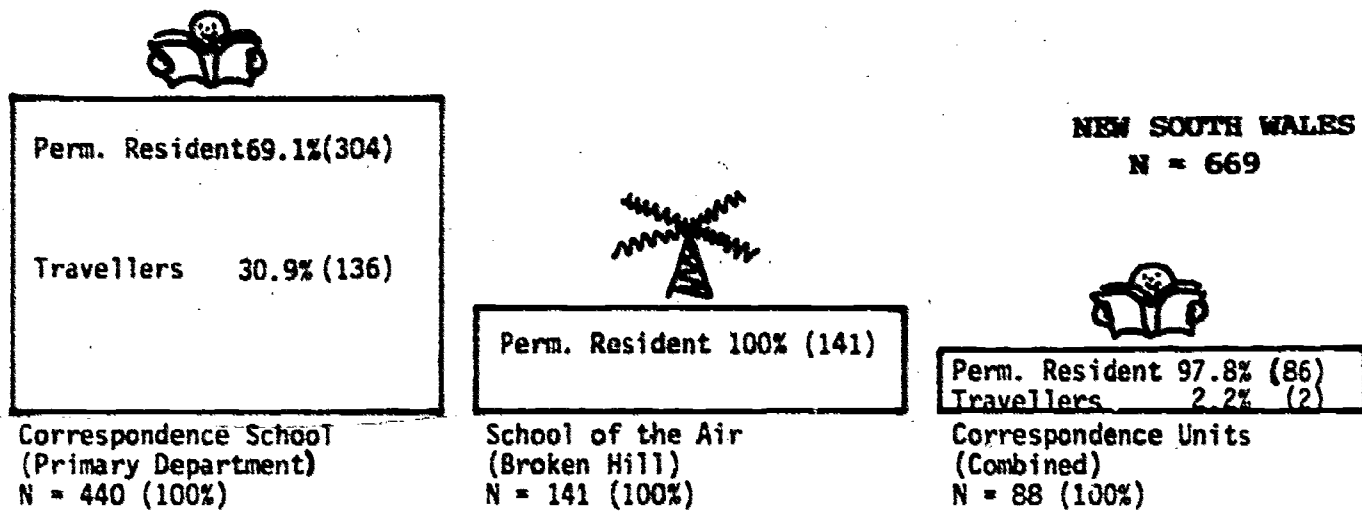


TABLE 3.3: Residential Status of Target Population - February 1983

	Permanently Resident Pupils	Travelling Pupils	Total
New South Wales	531 (79%)	138 (21%)	669
Queensland	1179 (87%)	183 (13%)	1362
Western Australia	258 (72%)	102 (28%)	360
Northern Territory	232 (88%)	32 (12%)	264
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2200 (83%)</b>	<b>455 (17%)</b>	<b>2655</b>

NOTE: Percentages are of Totals in each row of the table.

that is the schools of the air and the decentralised correspondence units in New South Wales, were comprised almost wholly of permanently resident children. All of these schools had less than four per cent of travellers in their enrolments. In the metropolitan correspondence schools, on the other hand, this group represented from one-quarter to slightly more than a half of the enrolments. In the Northern Territory, where the schools of the air function as comprehensive centres for distance education (that is the schools provide some pupils with correspondence courses but not air lessons), travellers formed a larger proportion of total enrolments than in their counterparts in the states. Some explanation of the number in the Katherine School of the Air is offered in Appendix D. In brief, that school served nearly all of the travellers in the Northern Territory. The majority of them were enrolled for less than fifteen months.

3.3.4 These findings about the relationship between residential status and types of school are not surprising. It is a reasonable expectation that parents will enrol their children with a school in their region. Hence it is predictable that schools of the air and the decentralised correspondence units will cater for families resident in their locality. Conversely, the correspondence schools located in the capital cities will enrol more itinerants. The alternatives for people who are travelling are constrained by the nature of primary distance education and the logistics of postal and telecommunications services. Only in Queensland do parents not have a choice about distance primary school.

Under the terms of the Education Act (s 31)<sup>1</sup> those who are exempt from attendance at their nearest schools because they are too distant are legally obliged to enrol with the Primary Correspondence School, Brisbane. For those within range of transmission from the schools of the air the choice is whether to enrol with them also. In February 1983 more than half of the pupils were enrolled in both. In the Northern Territory the choice is constrained by geography and the location of the schools. There is no primary correspondence school, and Alice Springs serves the population in the southern half and Katherine the north. In New South Wales and Western Australia children may be enrolled with either a correspondence school or a school of the air if they are within range of a school's radio transmissions.

3.3.5 These factors might, in turn, influence the curricula and methods of distance education considered appropriate for particular schools. The initial application of modern communications technology might be possible only where the population is relatively stable and where families have easy access to suitable equipment and telecommunications services. Where a large portion of pupils is itinerant the conventional correspondence education modes might continue in the short term to be the most efficient. Similarly, unpredictable or unpredicted fluctuations of population might frustrate efforts for educational innovation. In order to test these factors affecting the practicability of innovations in distance education, the population data for February 1983 were analysed for the stability of enrolments.

### **3.4 Mean Length of Enrolment of the Target Population**

3.4.1 Because reliable data for a complete generation of primary distance education (that is for seven years of primary schooling) were not available, indicators of stability were derived from information about current (February 1983) pupils. Each pupil's length of enrolment was calculated from the date of entry, and the total population was then analysed for continuity, duration and mean lengths of enrolments.

3.4.2 A theoretical maximum length of enrolment was calculated for each year level (or age level in the case of New south Wales). This repres-

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1. Education Act 1964-1970: Queensland, S.G. Reid, Government Printer, Brisbane: Section 31, p.12.

ents a projection for a theoretically stable population containing only pupils in each successive year level (or age level) who have been enrolled since the commencement of their primary schooling. Hence pupils in New South Wales enrolled continuously since age 5 had a theoretical maximum length of enrolment of 90 months if they were aged 12.6 years in February 1983. In schools which are organised on a year-level basis the theoretical maximum for continuously enrolled pupils in year seven, in February 1983, was 74 months (see Appendix D for details). These pupils are termed 'continuous enrolments'. For the target population of each distance primary school mean lengths of enrolment were calculated for each year level (or age level). These were standardised so that the effects of different ages of commencement were minimal (see Appendix D for details). The resulting comparisons between the theoretical maximum and the mean lengths of enrolment, presented diagrammatically in Figure 3.2, provide a measure of the absolute stability of each school<sup>1</sup> together with a measure of the relative stabilities of distance primary schools with respect to one another. The straight line graph represents the theoretical maximum length of enrolment for pupils at each level of schooling; the greater the divergence between it and the mean length of enrolment the less stable is the school's population.

3.4.3 In all cases there was a general divergence of the mean lengths of enrolment from the theoretical maxima. They were smallest in the regional schools (schools of the air) and largest in the metropolitan schools. This latter aspect means that the most stable populations of geographically isolated pupils are contained in the regional schools. The general divergence implies a decrease in the proportions of 'continuous enrolments' in the higher levels of all schools. Each of these findings is treated separately in the following sections.

3.4.4 The relative stability of the enrolments of the regional distance primary schools in relation to the metropolitan distance primary schools may be confirmed by a comparative analysis of the proportions of each school's enrolments comprising 'continuous' enrolments. The proportions

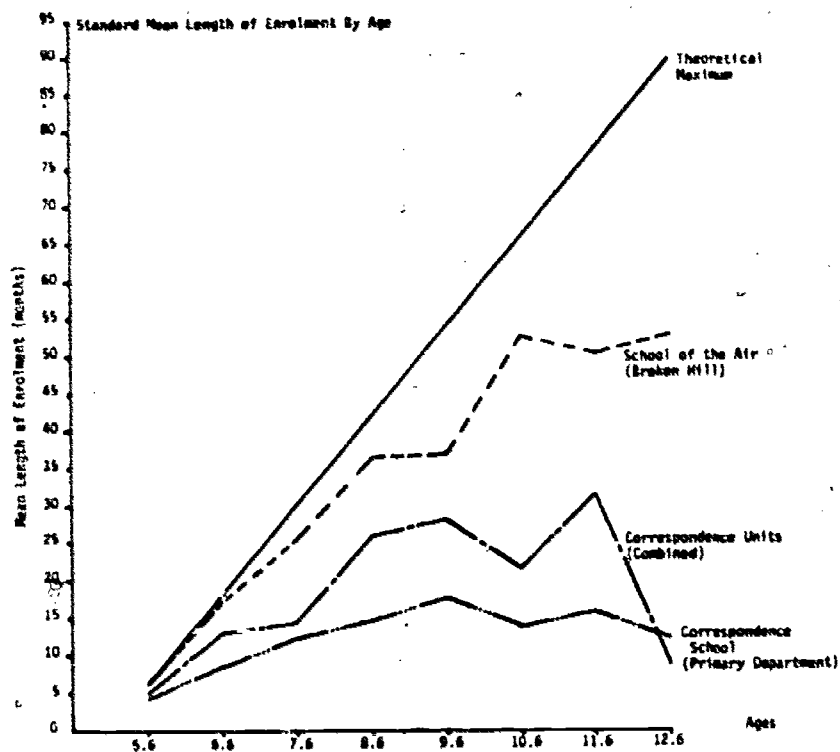
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1. In the case of the Primary Correspondence School in Queensland comparisons are made with the two groups - pupils enrolled in schools of the air and pupils not so enrolled - comprising the target population of that school.

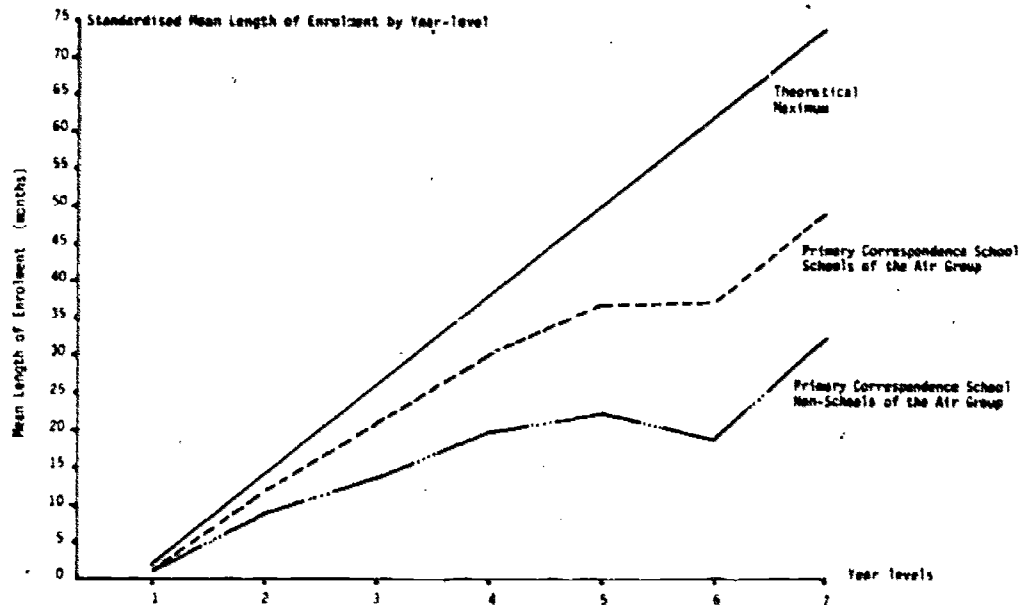


**FIGURE 3.2 : Standardised Mean Length of Enrolment - Target Population February 1983**

**NEW SOUTH WALES**

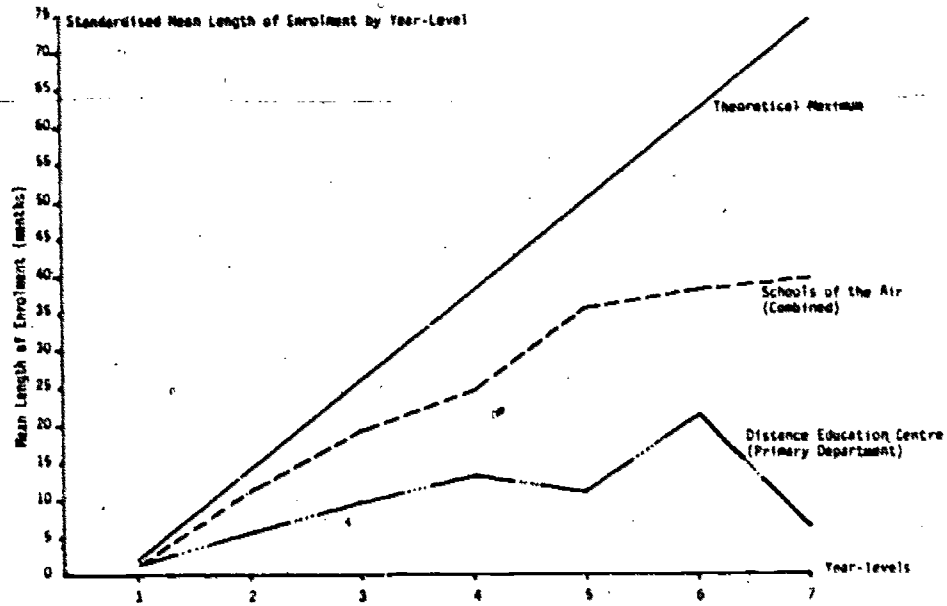


**QUEENSLAND**

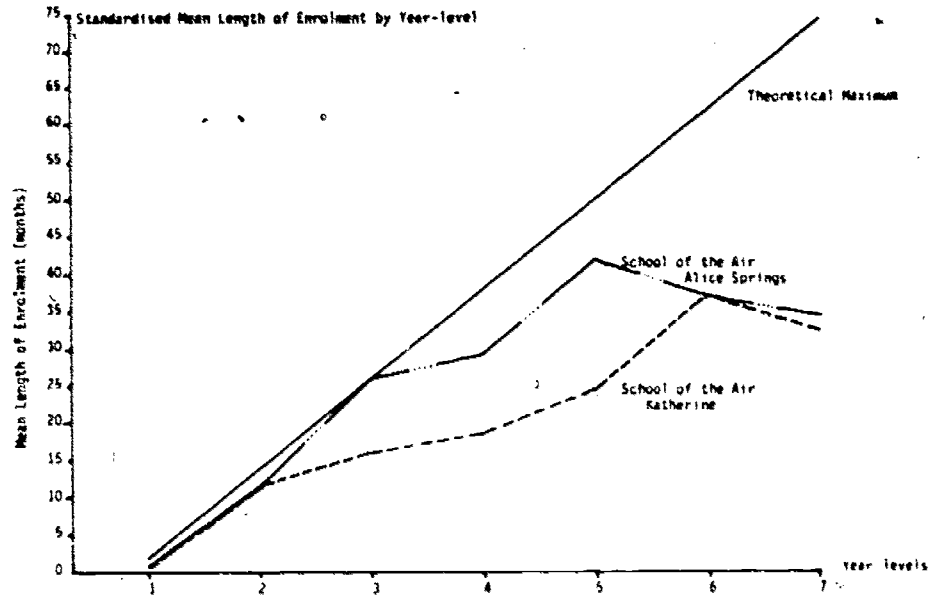


**FIGURE 3.2 : Standardised Mean Length of Enrolment - Target Population February 1983**

**WESTERN AUSTRALIA**



**NORTHERN TERRITORY**



of the target population who were continuous enrolments in years 2 to 7 (or from age 6.0+ years onwards in New South Wales) are summarised in Table 3.4 (see Appendix D for details). These were pupils who had been enrolled for the theoretical maxima for their year levels and ages. There are notable differences between the school-of-the-air pupils and those in correspondence schools. Continuous enrolments as a proportion of the target population in the latter ranged from 11 per cent (Distance Education Centre, Perth) to 26 per cent (Primary Correspondence School, - non school-of-the-air group - Queensland). That is from one-in-ten to one-in-four pupils had been with these schools for the whole period of their primary schooling. This compared with an average of one-in-two in the schools of the air. The two exceptions among the regional schools were Katherine School of the Air and the Correspondence Units of New South Wales.

TABLE 3.4: Continuous Enrolments in the Target Population:  
February 1983

	Target Population	Continuous Enrolments (Years 2-7)
<u>New South Wales</u> (Ages 6.0+ years)		
Correspondence School (Primary Department)	440	51 (12%)
School of the Air (Broken Hill)	141	60 (43%)
Correspondence Units (combined)	88	16 (18%)
<u>Queensland</u> (Years 2-7)		
Non-Schools of the Air	586	151 (26%)
Schools of the Air (combined)	776	436 (56%)
<u>Western Australia</u> (Years 2-7)		
Distance Education Centre (Primary Department)	176	20 (11%)
Schools of the Air (combined)	184	83 (45%)
<u>Northern Territory</u> (Years 2-7)		
Katherine School of the Air	175	48 (27%)
Alice Springs School of the Air	89	37 (42%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2655</b>	<b>902 (34%)</b>

3.4.5 In the Northern Territory the Alice Springs School of the Air appears to have had a more stable population than Katherine School of the Air. The fluctuations of enrolments in the latter are explained, in part at least, by the composition of the population referred to previously (see para 3.3.3). Even so, the proportion of continuous enrolments at Katherine is greater than for the metropolitan correspondence schools in other states.

3.4.6 The data for the decentralised correspondence units in New South Wales produced an apparently anomalous result. Even though most of the children were permanently resident (see Figure 3.1), they emerged as predominantly shorter-term enrolments. This apparent instability was most likely due to the small populations involved and the recent establishment of two of the four units (Bourke 3 years, Cobar 5 years). Because the numbers were small, variations in enrolments appear to be disproportionately large when expressed as percentages of the total. It is to be expected that the pupil populations will stabilise as each of the units grows. Walgett is a good example. After seven years of operation the mean length of enrolment is almost identical to that of Broken Hill School of the Air.

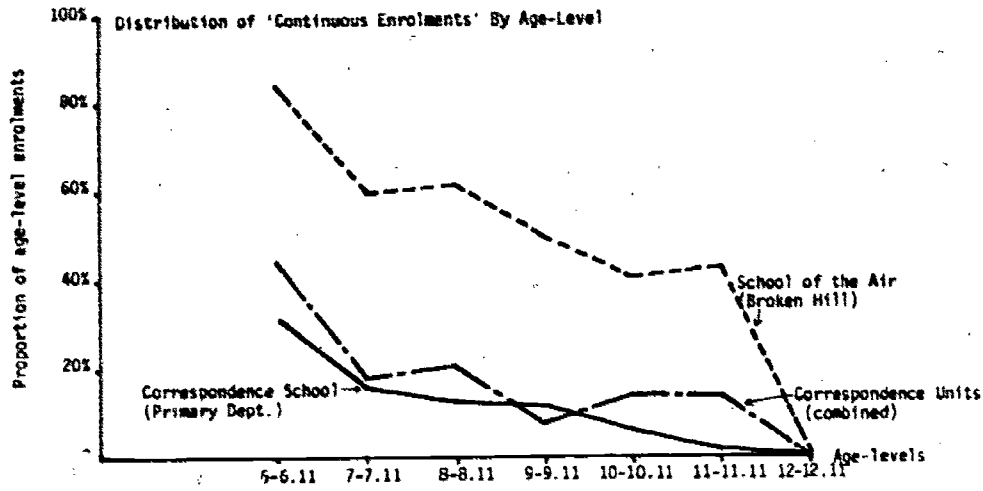
3.4.7 The general decrease with time in the size of the 'permanent core' of pupils in all schools may be confirmed by an analysis of the distributions of continuous enrolments throughout the levels of each school.<sup>1</sup> The distributions of continuous enrolments by age level (6.0+ years) in New South Wales and by year-levels (years 2-7) in the other states are presented in Figure 3.3. They are irregular, but confirm a general decline through the successive levels in the proportions of pupils enrolled continuously since the commencement of their primary schooling. Furthermore, in conjunction with the marked drop in numbers between years one and seven shown in Table 3.2, it can be concluded that the number of continuous enrolments generally decreases with time for each school.

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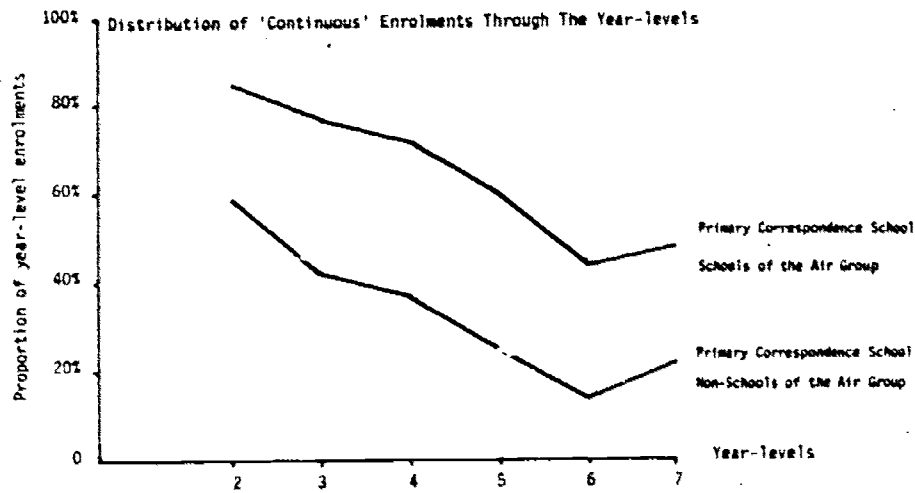
1. In the case of the Primary Correspondence School in Queensland the comparisons are made with the two groups - pupils enrolled in schools of the air and pupils not so enrolled - comprising the target population of that school.

**FIGURE 3.3: Distribution of Continuous Enrolments - Target Population February 1983**

**NEW SOUTH WALES**



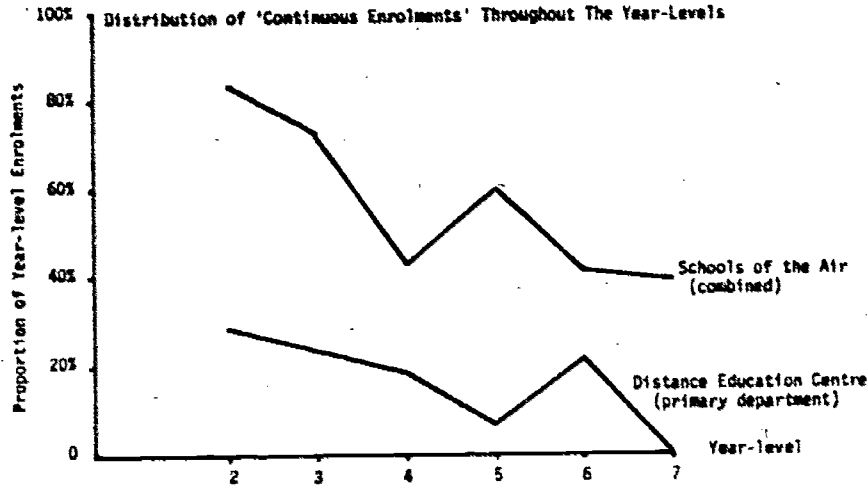
**QUEENSLAND**



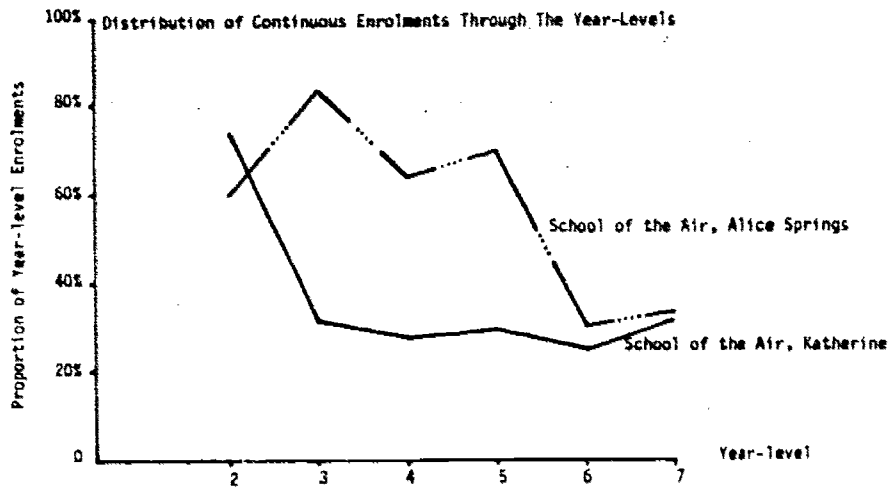


**FIGURE 3.3: Distribution of Continuous Enrolments - Target Population February 1983**

**WESTERN AUSTRALIA**



**NORTHERN TERRITORY**



3.4.8 Since these data relate to a single population only it is not possible to make confident generalisations from them. Particular changes at one place or at one time might explain apparent aberrations in the distribution. Even so the trend over a whole period of schooling must be taken into account when planning curricula and services. If it is confirmed that large numbers of pupils transfer from distance education to conventional schools, curricula for the two must be compatible. It would be instructive to obtain similar data for the enrolments of conventional primary schools in order to provide a basis for the comparison of pupil population stabilities with the distance primary schools.

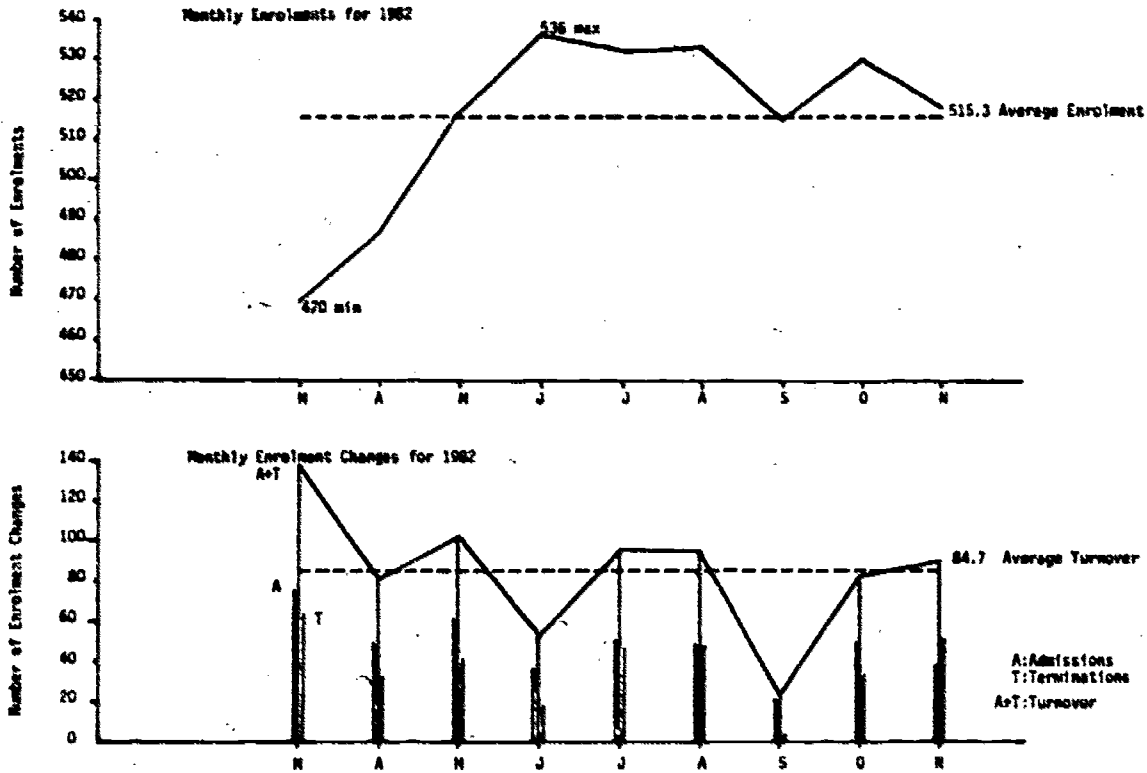
#### TURNOVER OF TOTAL ENROLMENTS

3.4.9 Some appreciation of the degree of instability and the rates of turnover of enrolments is offered by the monthly data for 1982. They are displayed diagrammatically in Figure 3.4 (see Appendix D for details). Because of the nature of individual schools' enrolment records, as discussed in chapter 2.3, it was not possible to obtain these data specifically for the target population in the metropolitan correspondence schools. The data presented here reflect, therefore, the total enrolments of each school and include pupils enrolled as 'overseas' and 'medical'. As indicated in Table 3.1, however, these pupils are few in number (only 12 per cent of total enrolments in February 1983) and due to the nature of their enrolments it is anticipated that any contribution made by this group to fluctuations in the enrolment numbers of the target populations during the year may be considered as insignificant.

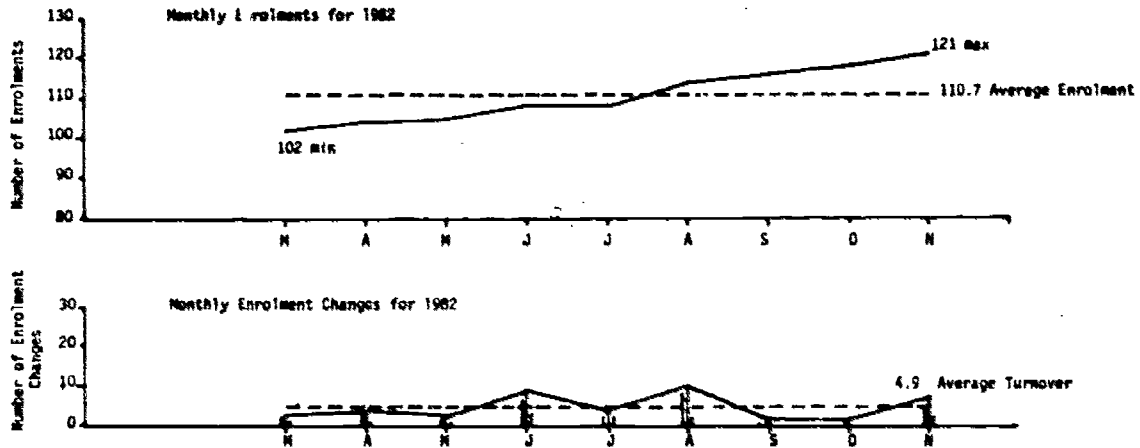
3.4.10 The variations in pupil enrolments each month means that it is not meaningful to express total enrolments as an absolute number (compared with the Annual Census Returns for each state and territory education department). It proved more informative to consider an average total enrolment about which the monthly total enrolments fluctuate to varying degrees depending on the type of school. In order to avoid variations in total enrolments which are usual at the beginning and end of each school year, only the period March to November was treated for detailed analysis. Thus in New South Wales the average total enrolment at the infant and primary departments of the

**FIGURE 3.4: Total Enrolment and Enrolment Changes, 1982  
NEW SOUTH WALES**

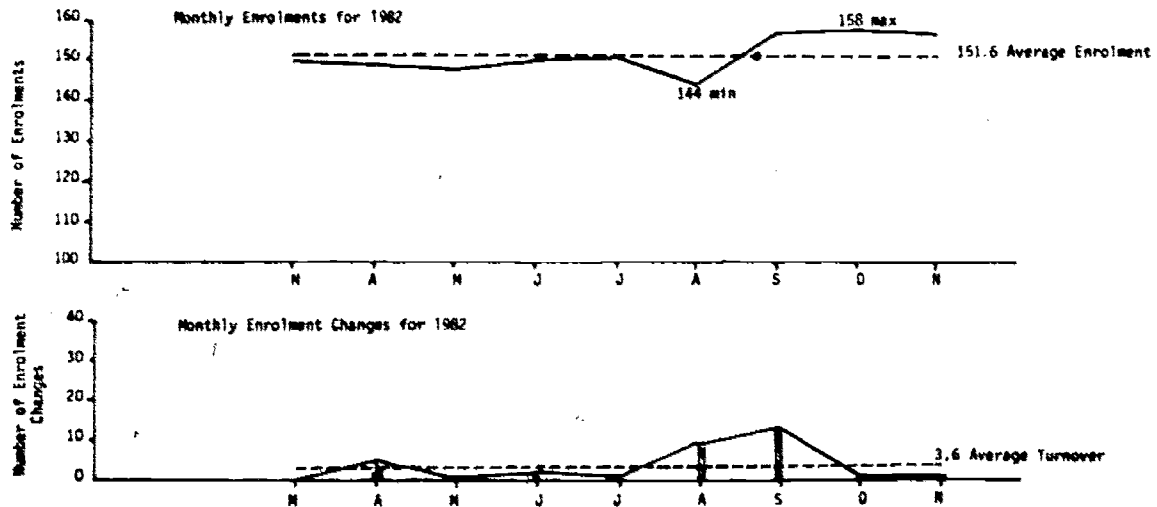
**The Correspondence School (Primary Department)**



**Correspondence Units (Combined)**

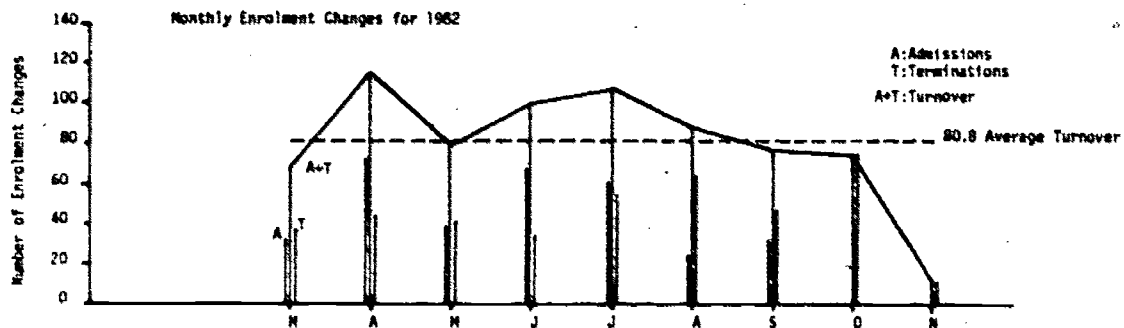
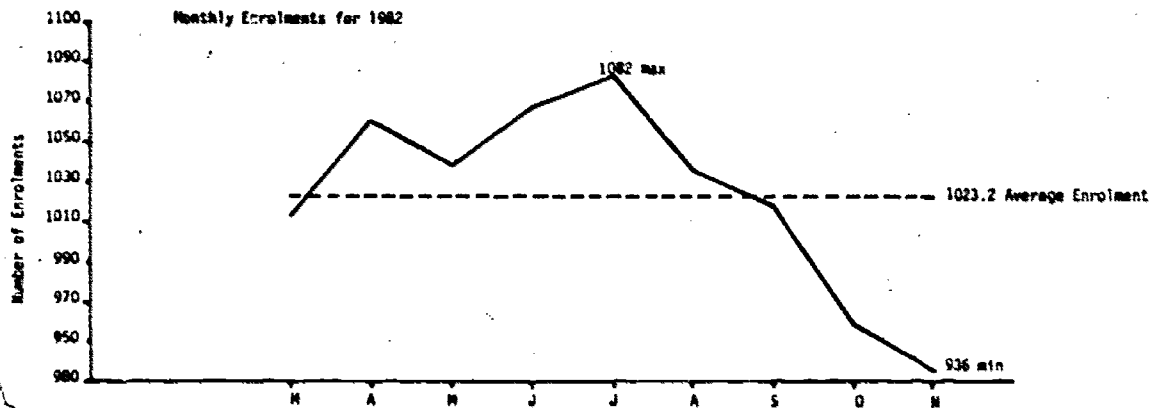


**School of the Air, Broken Hill**

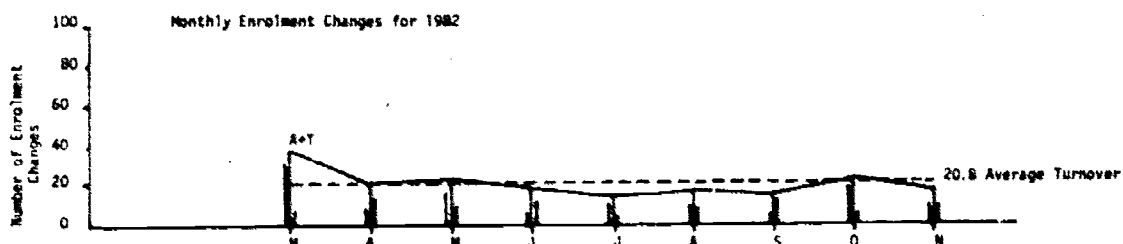
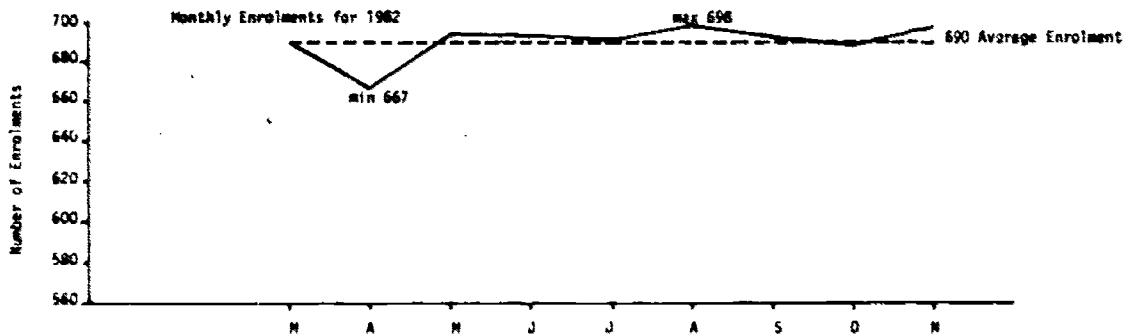


**FIGURE 3.4: Total Enrolment and Enrolment Changes, 1982  
QUEENSLAND**

**Primary Correspondence School, Non-School of Air Group**

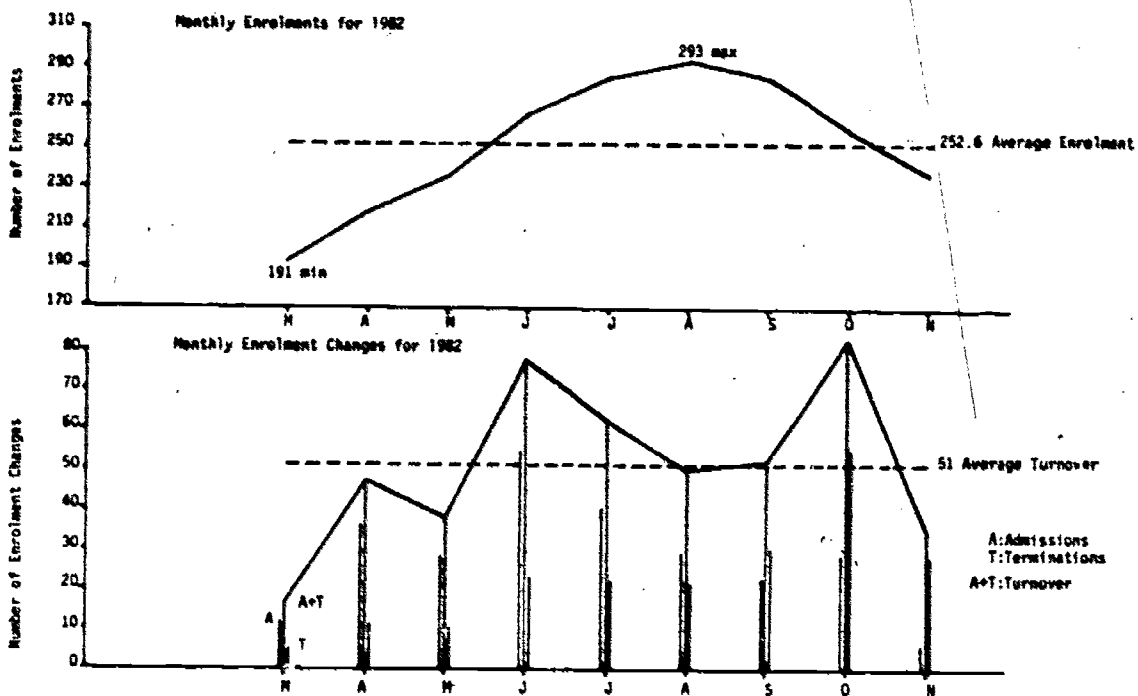


**Primary Correspondence School, Schools of Air Group**

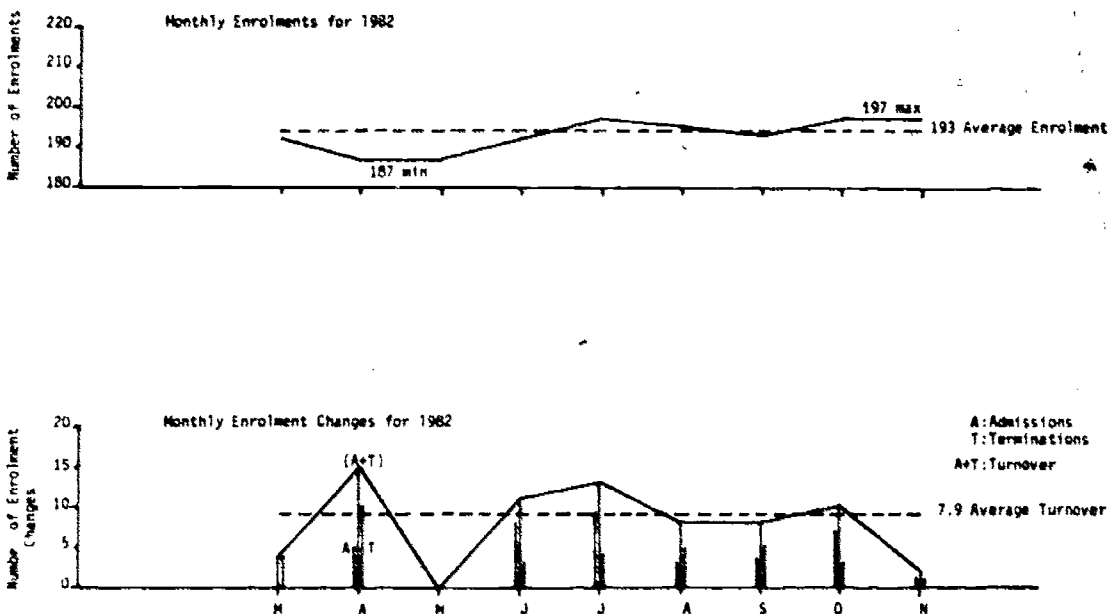


**FIGURE 3.4: Total Enrolment and Enrolment Changes, 1982  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

**Distance Education Centre (Primary Department)**



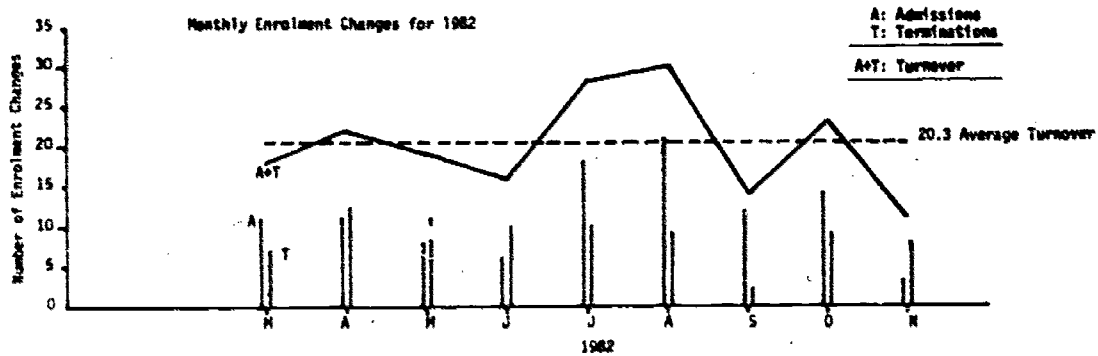
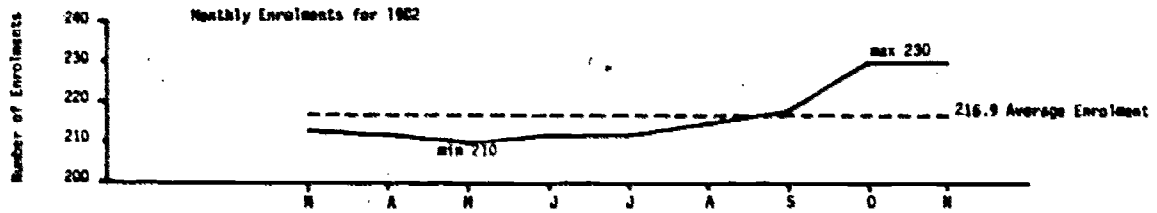
**Schools of the Air (Combined)**



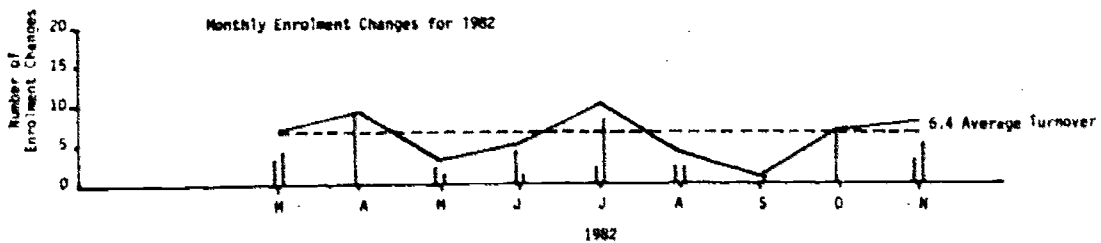


**FIGURE 3.4: Total Enrolment and Enrolment Changes, 1982  
NORTHERN TERRITORY**

**School of the Air, Katherine**



**School of the Air, Alice Springs**



correspondence school was 515.3. This was more than three times larger than the average total enrolment for Broken Hill School of the Air, and more than four times larger than that of the combined decentralised correspondence units. In Queensland the average total enrolment of the Primary Correspondence School for the period was 1713.2. Of these an average of 690 were also enrolled with schools of the air. In Western Australia the schools were much smaller. The average total enrolment at the primary department of the Distance Education Centre was 252.6 pupils, and the combined schools of the air 193 pupils. In the Northern Territory the average was 420 pupils. Of these about 37 per cent were enrolled at Alice Springs and 63 per cent at Katherine.

3.4.11 The extent of variations in total monthly enrolments is summarised in Table 3.5. The rate of change in the population was estimated using the formula explained in paragraph 2.3.12. The mean turnover of total enrolments each month was calculated by expressing the sums of the monthly admissions plus terminations as percentages of the mean total enrolments. The turnover figures give an indication of the magnitude of the fluctuations relative to each school's<sup>1</sup> average total enrolment for the year of 1982.

3.4.12 The results provide a comparative numerical analysis of the enrolment stabilities of both school types and individual schools throughout the course of an entire school year, namely 1982. They also contribute to the reliability of the findings from the analysis of the target pupil populations for February 1983 which concluded that the regional distance primary schools have more stable enrolments than do the metropolitan distance primary schools.

### **3.5 Enrolment Type of the Target Population**

3.5.1 It may be useful for future planning to be able to identify those groups of pupils who are likely to contribute to the instability of the enrolments of distance primary schools. The data obtained on the target population in February 1983 were therefore analysed according to

- 
1. In the case of the Primary Correspondence School in Queensland the comparisons are made with two groups - pupils enrolled in schools of the air and pupils not so enrolled - comprising the target population of that school

TABLE 3.5: Total Enrolment Changes: March-November 1982<sup>(a)</sup>

	Mean Total Enrolment	Mean Turnover
<u>New South Wales</u>		
. The Correspondence School <sup>(b)</sup> (Primary Department)	515.3	16.4% per month
. School of the Air (Broken Hill)	151.6	2.4% per month
. Correspondence Units (combined)	110.7	4.4% per month
<hr/>		
. New South Wales State Total	777.6	
<hr/>		
<u>Queensland</u>		
Primary Correspondence School		
. Non School of the Air <sup>(b)</sup>	1023.2	7.9% per month
. Schools of the Air (combined)	690.0	3.0% per month
<hr/>		
. Queensland State Total (Primary Correspondence School)	1713.2	
<hr/>		
<u>Western Australia</u>		
. Distance Education Centre <sup>(b)</sup> (Primary Department)	252.6	20.2% per month
. Schools of the Air (combined)	193.7	4.1% per month
<hr/>		
. Western Australian State Total	446.3	
<hr/>		
<u>Northern Territory</u>		
. Katherine School of the Air	216.9	9.4% per month
. Alice Springs School of the Air	116.8	5.5% per month
<hr/>		
. Northern Territory Total	333.7	
<hr/>		
<u>TOTAL</u> (all states plus Northern Territory)	3270.8	

(a) excluding preschool pupils

(b) includes 'overseas' and 'medical' pupils

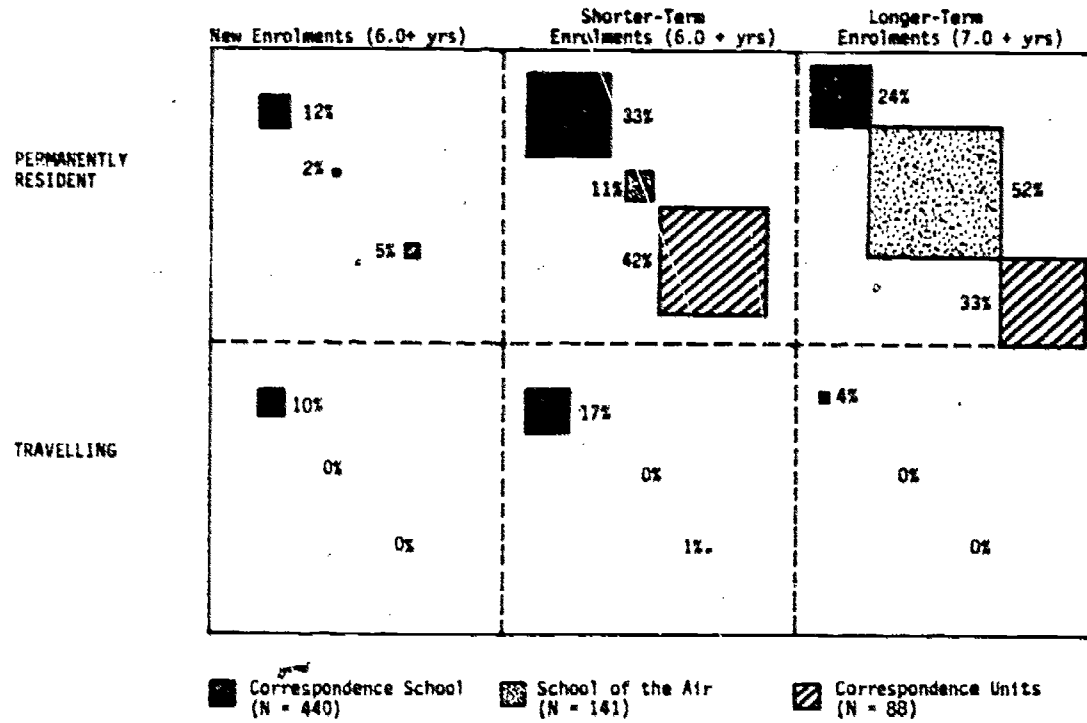
'enrolment type'. Pupils were classified according to the three groups described in chapter 2 (para 2.3.8) - newly enrolled, enrolled in the shorter-term, and enrolled in the longer-term. Because the focus of this analysis was on those pupils who had been enrolled during the school year prior to February 1983 (for up to 14 months) but not as a result of enrolling at the conventional time (that is at the beginning of their first year of primary schooling) pupils in year one (or 5.0 - 5.11 years in New South Wales) were excluded together with those pupils in year two (or 6.0 - 6.11 years in New South Wales) classified as 'longer term' enrolments. This method is deficient in its screening to the extent that some year two pupils who enrolled at the conventional time have been included in the 'shorter term' category (that is those enrolled for between 11 and 14 months). However this number is small and does not appreciably affect the overall results. The remainder of the pupils, irrespective of their ages and year levels, were nominated in one of three groups according to the duration of their enrolments. Thus, pupils who were new enrolments had joined their schools at the beginning of 1983 and had been enrolled for less than two months; shorter term enrolments had been with their schools in the preceding year (1982) and had been enrolled from 3 to 14 months; and longer term enrolments had been with their schools for more than fourteen months. The proportions of each school's adjusted population for years 2 to 7 comprising the three enrolment types are summarised in Appendix D.

#### ENROLMENT TYPE AND RESIDENTIAL STATUS

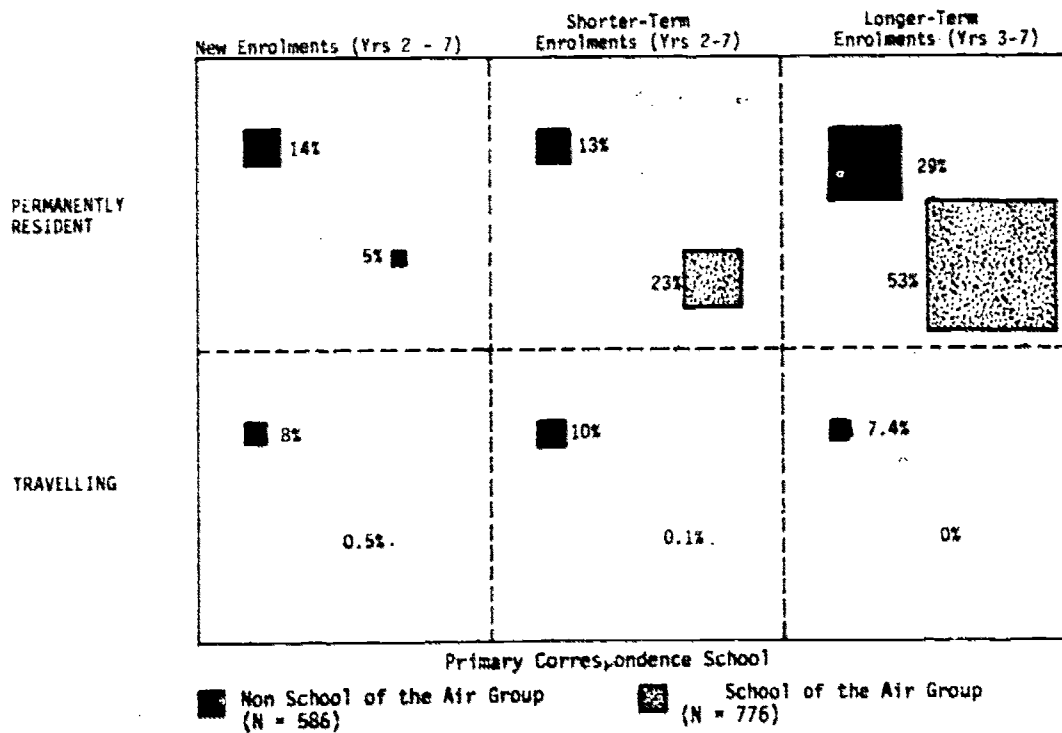
3.5.2 A cross tabulation of the two variables 'residential status' and 'enrolment type' was subsequently performed. The results are presented diagrammatically in Figure 3.5 (see Appendix D for details). They indicate that most (81%) of the travelling pupils in years 2 to 7 (ages 6.0+ years in New South Wales) were enrolled during the 14 months prior to, and including, February 1983. The absence of most travellers from the 'longer term' enrolments category implies that these pupils are associated mostly with enrolments of a short-term nature (up to one school year) and that in distance primary schools, where their numbers form a large proportion of the enrolments (namely metropolitan

**FIGURE 3.5: Residential Status and Enrolment Type - Target Population February 1983**

**NEW SOUTH WALES**



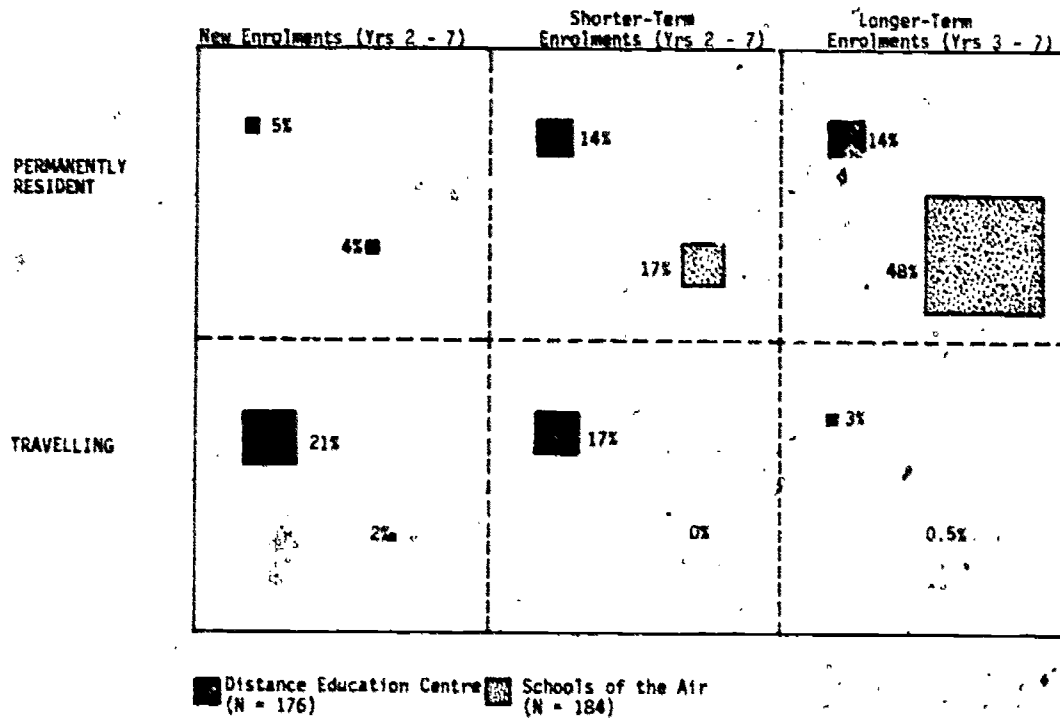
**QUEENSLAND**



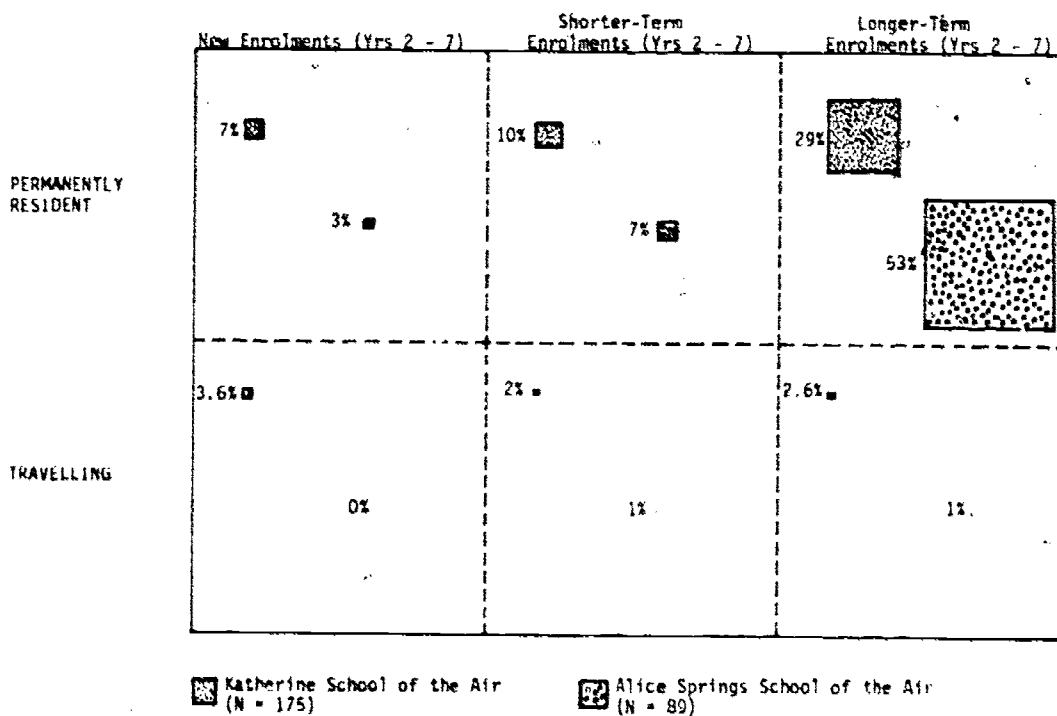


**FIGURE 3.5: Residential Status and Enrolment Type - Target Population February 1983**

**WESTERN AUSTRALIA**



**NORTHERN TERRITORY**



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correspondence schools)<sup>1</sup> the contribution to the enrolment instability (or turnover) will be significant. Some contribution to enrolment instability (or turnover) will also be made by 'permanently resident' pupils. In the metropolitan distance primary schools<sup>1</sup> 54 per cent of permanently resident pupils in years 2 to 7 (ages 6.0+ years in New South Wales) had been enrolled during the 14 months prior to and including February 1983. In the regional distance primary schools the proportion was, however, only 34 per cent.

## SELF-EVALUATION

3.5.3 Evidence from the self-evaluation phase (see Appendix E for details) provided by principals and teachers-in-charge of distance primary schools support these findings. Most of the enrolment 'turnover' was attributed to the 'travellers' whose mobility may be affected by seasonal factors and employment opportunities. Typical of these families are itinerant workers, road construction/maintenance gangs, fishermen, stationhands on stations which close during the wet season, gas pipeline engineers, and so on. A further aspect concerning the nature of 'travellers' is that many of them may be normally metropolitan dwellers who are taking an extended travelling vacation and are therefore to be associated with short-term enrolments only. Of the 455 travelling pupils in the February 1983 enrolments, an estimated 38 per cent were 'travelling mainly for pleasure' within Australia. School principals also indicated that a small proportion of their 'permanently resident' pupils contributed to the enrolment instability although, in the main, this group was generally very stable. Factors associated with changes in these enrolments included changes in government policy or funding for regional development and economic and market factors particularly with respect to pastoral properties and the mining industry. One other factor which was elaborated by one school principal in the Northern Territory in particular was concerned with the difficulties experienced by some families new to 'the outback':

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1. In the case of the Primary Correspondence School in Queensland the comparisons are made with the two groups - pupils enrolled in schools of the air and pupils not so enrolled - comprising the target population of that school.

There is almost certainly a number of families, particularly where Mum is required to be the supervisor of the children, where the demands of supervision are found to be too great, or where children with town backgrounds find the isolation of the Outback to be an unhappy and lonely experience so that the families return to the towns or to the southern states because Mum can't cope or because the children can't cope.

(Refer Appendix E: Self Evaluation)

### 3.6 Future Enrolments

3.6.1 It must be noted that the findings so far have been based on measurements taken during two isolated periods (February 1983, and the year of 1982). It is important to determine, as far as possible, the applicability of these findings (vis a vis numbers of enrolments, proportions of pupil-types and relative stabilities of enrolments) to the future if they are to have any significance.

3.6.2 One immediate point to consider is the number of geographically isolated pupils. In February 1983 there were 2655 such enrolments throughout New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory. Enrolments at the beginning of the year tended to be lower than in mid-year, as shown in Figure 3.4. This growth was most marked in metropolitan distance primary schools<sup>1</sup> which may have increases of up to 53 per cent (Distance Education Centre, Perth) in their total enrolments. Regional distance primary schools experienced smaller increases - up to 19 per cent (combined correspondence units, New South Wales) in their total enrolments.

3.6.3 School principals of the regional distance primary schools indicated that the proportions of travellers and permanently resident pupils comprising the February 1983 enrolments were fairly representative of their pupil populations in pre-1982 years, and that this pattern was likely to continue ("status quo maintained") into the foreseeable future. In some cases, the Distance Education Centre (Western Australia) in particular, it was felt that the proportion of

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1. In the case of the Primary Correspondence School in Queensland the comparisons are made with the two groups - pupils enrolled in schools of the air and pupils not so enrolled - comprising the target population of that school.

travellers had increased during 1982/1983 and early 1984 and that this trend was likely to continue. In general, however, principals of distance primary schools, in particular the metropolitan correspondence schools, were unable to be precise in their statements concerning enrolment trends in previous years and were reluctant to discuss current and future trends for their particular schools. Undoubtedly the nature of the enrolment records maintained by individual schools during 1983 which resulted in the difficulties of access to data experienced in this research study (see chapter 2, paras 2.3.2-2.3.6) were instrumental in obscuring information about short-term and long-term changes in the enrolments of individual distance primary schools. Unpredictable factors such as drought, unemployment, fluctuations in mineral prices and production and government policy on issues such as tourism and regional development, may have a direct bearing on the populations in the regions served by distance primary schools.

### 3.7 Summary

The following major points arose from this phase of the study:

1. Geographically isolated pupils (target population of study)
  - formed the large majority of pupils in primary distance education;
  - were comprised of 'permanently resident' and 'travelling' (within Australia) pupils;
    - 1a. permanently resident pupils
      - comprised the large majority of geographically isolated pupils;
      - were associated mostly with enrolments of a longer-term duration, especially in schools of the air (or associated mostly with those pupils in the Primary Correspondence School in Queensland who were also enrolled in schools of the air);
    - 1b. travelling pupils
      - comprised a small minority (1 in 6) of geographically isolated pupils;
      - were associated mostly with enrolments of a shorter-term duration;
      - were mostly enrolled in metropolitan correspondence schools (or associated mostly with those pupils in the Primary Correspondence School in Queensland who were not also enrolled in schools of the air);

## 2. distance primary schools

- were of two major school-types: metropolitan correspondence schools and regional schools. The regional schools comprised two distinct school-types: schools of the air and the decentralised correspondence units of New South Wales.

### 2a. metropolitan correspondence schools

- total enrolments comprised a range of pupil-types: overseas, medical, geographically isolated, adult;
- geographically isolated pupils formed the large majority of total enrolments and comprised a mix of 'permanently resident' and 'travelling' pupils;
- had the least stable geographically isolated enrolments, as indicated by the small proportions of 'continuous' enrolments in comparison to the schools of the air.

### 2b. regional schools

- total enrolments comprises a single pupil type: geographically isolated (except for Katherine School of the Air with some 'overseas' pupils) most, if not all, of whom were 'permanently resident';
- the schools of the air had the most stable enrolments in terms of enrolment 'turnover' and proportions of 'continuous' enrolments (with the exception of Katherine School of the Air) in comparison to those of the metropolitan correspondence schools.<sup>1</sup>
- the decentralised correspondence units (combined) had a proportion of 'continuous' enrolments comparable with those of the metropolitan correspondence schools, but experienced a 'turnover' of enrolments comparable with those of the schools of the air.

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1. In the Primary Correspondence School in Queensland comparisons are made with the two groups - pupils enrolled in schools of the air and pupils not so enrolled - comprising the target population of that school.



# Chapter 4: THE SURVEY OF ISOLATED FAMILIES

## 4.1 Educational Needs and Services

4.1.1 This phase of the project involved a questioning of parents and home tutors of geographically isolated children enrolled in distance primary schools in New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory. This was accomplished by means of a postal survey conducted during the months of October to December, 1983. The focus of the survey was support for the home tutor.

4.1.2 Preliminary fieldwork suggested that the home tutor's role was essential to the functioning of primary distance education, that the teaching role of the home tutor was poorly specified and that services to support the home tutor were uneven in their availability. Hence the survey sought to determine the perceived needs of home tutors, particularly in relation to their teaching roles, the availability of support services and their effectiveness as perceived by home tutors, and those factors affecting the availability and utilisation of these services.

4.1.3 Support may take two major forms. General support, such as pre-service and in-service training, curriculum guides, and the publication of handbooks and newsletters, might meet long-term or general needs. Tutorial support, on the other hand, might be of a 'user demand' kind which responds to a request by a home tutor whenever a particular need arises, or which might be initiated by the distance education teacher in response to the detection of a need which is unperceived by the home tutor. Such short-term needs might relate to aspects of the teaching function, a specific learning task, or an aspect of the child's learning which requires immediate advice. They might be met by provisions that enable ready access to the school.

4.1.4 The availability of support services might depend upon factors such as the family's geographic location and the means of communication between home and school. The utilisation by home tutors of available

support services might depend on factors such as costs in money and time, the operation of 'bush' telephone services and appropriate power supplies, and an appreciation of the purpose of the services and the advantages to be gained from their use. Access to an appropriate medium that would enable regular communication, perhaps even on a daily basis (for example, telephone or radio) is not, therefore, a sufficient condition to ensure effective support. It is necessary also for the school to encourage home tutors to make contact with the school whenever they feel that support is needed. Furthermore the school must be able to respond to the expressed need. In other words, the home tutor's short-term needs may be met if the school encourages and enables effective exchange between home tutors and distance education teachers, and if the home tutor has ready access to reliable means of communication for that purpose.

4.1.5 For these reasons the effectiveness of a comprehensive range of services was evaluated. The results are presented in four sections: the family home and the facilities available; the home tutor and the teaching function; the correspondence lessons and their audio visual supplements; and support services provided in the package of primary distance education. The effectiveness of the services was evaluated in terms of their usefulness (relevance, appropriateness, helpfulness) and availability or accessibility.

## **4.2 The Family Home**

4.2.1 Information about the size of the population surveyed and the rate of response to the questionnaire was presented in Table 2.1. In brief, there were 1226 valid returns. Between them these families had 2072 children enrolled in correspondence schools or schools of the air. The data are summarised in Table 4.1. They do not include other children who may be under school age, enrolled in secondary school by correspondence or otherwise, or above school age. They represent the pupil (target) population of primary distance education at the time of the survey (October to December, 1983).

### **4.2.2**

The families who responded to the questionnaire had an average of 1.7 children each enrolled in correspondence schools or schools of the air.

The numbers shown in Table 4.1 represent the total responses in the three states and the Northern Territory at the time of the survey. An extrapolation indicates an actual population of about 2840 geographically isolated children in 1680 families in November/December 1983.

TABLE 4.1: Children in Primary Distance Education

Number of Children per family	1	2	3	4	5	Unknown	Total
Number of families	567	456	127	33	2	41	1226
Number of children	567	912	381	132	10	70*	2072

(\*41 families with a mean number of 1.7 children/family)

4.2.3 In general the differences among the schools demonstrated in the previous chapter are confirmed here. The school of the air families are residentially the most stable. The data presented in Figure 4.1 indicate that a large majority are resident in permanent dwellings and have resided there for more than three years. The two exceptions are Katherine and the schools of the air in Western Australia. The former has been referred to several times previously. It has a greater proportion of itinerant families. The evidence for the Western Australian schools does not offer an obvious explanation. Nine out of ten families live in permanent dwellings, but slightly less than half have lived in their present homes for more than three years. These data are supported by the turnover rate shown in Figure 3.4. It is higher than schools of the air elsewhere. Part of the reason is the small number of actual enrolments. As with the decentralised correspondence units in New South Wales, because the numbers are small the transfer of one or two families into or away from the schools represents a disproportionately large adjustment in the total enrolment. The itinerancy of a large part of the population is an almost universal feature of the demography of sparsely populated areas. In Australia the pastoral economy of those regions has created a stable core of property holders and managers, but the workforce tends to be itinerant. This is compounded in areas like those of Western Australia where the exploitation of minerals responds to fluctuations in commodities

FIGURE 4.1: The Family Home: Type of Dwelling and Duration of Residence

NEW SOUTH WALES



Permanent	59%
Mobile	24%
Temporary	14%
Missing	2%

Correspondence School N = 189



Permanent	100%
Mobile	-
Temporary	-
Missing	-

Broken Hill School of Air  
N = 86



Permanent	92%	Mobile	4%
Temporary	4%	Missing	0%

Correspondence Units  
N = 54



Up to 1 year	20%
1 to 3 years	27%
3 to 10 years	29%
More than 10 years	15%
Missing	9%



Up to 1 year	9%
1 to 3 years	19%
3 to 10 years	44%
More than 10 years	28%



Up to 1 year	7%
1 to 3 years	22%
3 to 10 years	31%
More than 10 years	35%
Missing	4%

QUEENSLAND

Primary Correspondence School



Permanent	60%
Mobile	29%
Temporary	9%
Missing	2%

Non-Schools of the Air  
N = 201

Permanent	93%
Mobile	2%
Temporary	5%
Missing	0%

Schools of the Air  
N = 379



Up to 1 year	35%
1 to 3 years	22%
3 to 10 years	23%
More than 10 years	16%
Missing	4%



Up to 1 year	12%
1 to 3 years	16%
3 to 10 years	37%
More than 10 years	33%
Missing	2%

FIGURE 4.1: The Family Home: Type of Dwelling and Duration of Residence

WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Permanent	35%
Mobile	58%
Temporary	1%
Missing	3%

Distance Ed Centre: Primary  
N = 92



Up to 1 year	59%
1 to 3 years	11%
3 to 10 years	17%
More than 10 years	10%
Missing	3%



Permanent	91%
Mobile	8%
Temporary	1%
Missing	0%

Combined Schools of Air  
N = 106



Up to 1 year	25%
1 to 3 years	23%
3 to 10 years	32%
More than 10 years	19%
Missing	1%

NORTHERN TERRITORY



Perm.	81%	Mobile	13%
Temporary	4%		
Missing	2%		

Katherine School of Air  
N = 69



Perm.	91%	Mobile	8%
Temp.	0%	Missing	2%

Alice Springs School of Air  
N = 50



Up to 1 year	32%
1 to 3 years	35%
3 to 10 years	23%
More than 10 years	9%
Missing	1%



Up to 1 year	16%
1 to 3 years	24%
3 to 10 years	33%
More than 10 years	27%
Missing	0%

markets. For the schools it means a higher rate of turnover than might otherwise be anticipated.

4.2.4 The transient population in both the regional schools and the metropolitan schools poses vexing problems for innovative applications of communications technology to distance education. Data in Table 3.3 showed that 17 per cent of the geographically isolated children enrolled in February 1983 were travellers, either for work or pleasure. Here the data reveal that 21 per cent of all the respondents lived in mobile or temporary homes, and 22 per cent had lived in their present homes for less than twelve months. About one in five of all geographically isolated families involved in primary distance education may be regarded as peripatetic. Their access to appropriate telecommunications equipment or its installation in their mobile or temporary dwellings is problematical.

4.2.5 The logistical problems are made more difficult by the sparse distribution of the schools' populations over large geographic areas. The data summarised in Table 4.2 indicate the distances between homes and schools. If they are considered in terms of access to a school they assume even more critical importance. It is reasonable to assume that in ideal conditions on all weather roads, to travel 200 kilometres would require between two and three hours driving time, 500 kilometres from five to eight hours, and 1000 kilometres in excess of ten hours. Therefore, on the evidence in Table 4.2, 81 per cent of the families whose children are enrolled at a decentralised correspondence unit in New South Wales are reasonably accessible to their schools. They are within two or three hours' driving time away. The schools of the air are less readily accessible with the majority of families living more than 200 kilometres from the schools. Road travel frequently is more difficult for them because of the conditions of road, terrain and weather. The metropolitan correspondence schools are the least accessible to their clients, both permanently resident and travelling. For the latter the distances vary continuously depending on their reasons for travelling (for example, itinerant workers and holiday makers) and the extent of their mobility (for example, interstate and intrastate). The permanently resident families, in the main (83%), reside more than 500 kilometres from their schools. In short, for most families occasional visits to their schools are difficult. Similarly,



TABLE 4.2: Distance from Home to School

	Mean Distance (km)	Less than 200	201 to 500	501 to 1000	Greater than 1000	Missing <sup>(a)</sup>	Total (No)
(Number of Families per School)							
<b>METROPOLITAN CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS: PERMANENT RESIDENTS</b>							
NSW	641	9	41	64	14	23	151
QLD <sup>(b)</sup>	1098	20	34	113	284	83	534
WA	753	5	10	8	20	5	48
TOTAL		34	85	185	318	111	733
PER CENT		5%	12%	25%	43%	15%	100%
<b>METROPOLITAN CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS: TRAVELLERS</b>							
NSW	927	2	5	2	13	16	38
QLD	1051	2	2	9	18	15	46
WA	1015	1	2	2	23	16	44
TOTAL		5	9	13	54	47	128
PER CENT		4%	7%	10%	42%	37%	100%
<b>DECENTRALISED CORRESPONDENCE UNITS: NSW</b>							
COMBINED <sup>(c)</sup>	135	44	9	1	0	0	54
PER CENT		81%	17%	2%	0	0	100%
<b>SCHOOLS OF THE AIR</b>							
BROKEN HILL	439	16	43	22	4	1	86
WESTERN AUSTRALIA <sup>(d)</sup>	359	25	58	16	3	4	106
KATHERINE	434	7	43	14	2	3	69
ALICE SPRINGS	366	17	22	9	2	0	50
TOTAL		65	166	61	11	8	311
PER CENT		21%	53%	20%	4%	2%	100%

(a) Many of the travellers gave 'varies' as their distance from home to school.

(b) The Primary Correspondence School, Brisbane, includes children enrolled in schools of the air.

(c) The decentralised correspondence units in New South Wales were combined.

(d) The schools of the air in Western Australia were combined.

visits to homes by teachers are expensive both in terms of time and direct costs of travel. For these reasons telecommunications, whether transmitted through terrestrial or satellite systems, are an appealing alternative.

4.2.6 The appeal might be deceptive. A telephone was claimed to be available by 85% (1039/1226) of home tutors who were comprised of:

- 66% (85/128) of travellers in metropolitan schools;
- 85% (623/733) of permanent residents in metropolitan schools<sup>(a)</sup>
- 90% (279/311) in schools of the air; and
- 96% (52/54) in the correspondence units.

For a minority of families a telephone is not readily available for distance education. The problems of access for travellers have been alluded to previously. For some permanently resident families it is because of the inadequacy of their local telephone service, and for others it is because of their isolation. The data in Tables 4.1 and 4.2 indicate the nature of that isolation. The pattern of land use and the shift away from a labour intensive rural economy, particularly in the pastoral zones, has given rise to a nucleated pattern of settlement. That is, single families reside on agricultural or pastoral holdings. Their children enrol with correspondence schools or schools of the air. The isolation means that it is feasible to provide only essential services and, for some, a telephone is not one of them.

4.2.7 Even the availability of a telephone does not mean that it is used for distance education purposes. Of the 1039 families, above, for whom a telephone was available, only 51 per cent (526/1039) used it to contact the school. The users were comprised of:

- 87% (45/52) in correspondence units;
- 58% (163/279) in schools of the air;
- 52% (44/85) in metropolitan schools (travellers); and
- 44% (274/623) in metropolitan schools (permanent residents)<sup>(a)</sup>.

Its use is greatest among those in the regional schools. In metropolitan schools the pattern of use is anomalous. Travelling home tutors, for whom the telephone is least accessible, indicated a greater usage than those permanently resident and for whom it is more readily available. It is interesting to note also that in schools of the air,

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(a) Including SOTA families in Queensland.

where an alternative means of communication, that is the radio transceiver, is readily available, a larger proportion of home tutors use the telephone to contact their schools than do home tutors in metropolitan schools.

4.2.8 Home tutors who use a telephone to contact their schools were asked to indicate any restrictions they experienced. Others, who have access to a telephone but do not use it for distance education purposes, were asked to indicate their reasons. Tables 4.3 and 4.4 summarise the responses. They indicate that:

- . for permanently resident home tutors the main restrictions on use were costs and technical problems associated with the service, including 'difficulties in hearing or being heard clearly', 'difficulties in using a party line' and 'delays in being connected by the operator';
- . for travelling home tutors the main restrictions were difficulties of access and cost;
- . for home tutors in the correspondence units and metropolitan correspondence schools a telephone was not used mainly because there was no perceived reason to do so; and
- . for home tutors in schools of the air the radio transceiver was preferred.

4.2.9 It is interesting to note the proportion of non-users who gave as their reason 'I don't feel a need'. One interpretation of this might be that they have no difficulties which can be resolved immediately over the telephone. Another is that they do not consider the telephone as having a function in distance education. There is no direct evidence here to support either proposition, but given the popular perception of 'correspondence' education as that which is transacted by mail, it might be a reasonable supposition that the latter explanation is strong. It is corroborated by the evidence to be discussed later which shows that 81 per cent of home tutors who contacted the school for help with problems did so by means of written correspondence.

4.2.10 Because of its reliance upon conventional 'print and post' media, primary distance education is dependent upon a reliable mail service for regular correspondence between home and school for delivery of educational resources, including audio and video cassettes. A mail

TABLE 4.3: Restrictions in the Use of the Telephone

	Travellers (N=526)	Permanent Residents (N=482)		
		SOTA's (N=163)	Corresp. Units (N=45)	Metrop Schs (a) (N=274)
1. 'difficulties in access'	34%	10%	2%	11%
2. 'the cost...'	30%	16%	24%	25%
3. 'hearing clearly'	16%	38%	42%	40%
4. 'difficulties of party line'	9%	29%	29%	31%
5. 'delays by operator'	5%	26%	42%	17%
6. 'limits on length of call'	2%	17%	9%	7%

NB: Percentages do not add up to 100% as respondents may have given more than one restriction each.

(a) The Primary Correspondence School, Brisbane, includes children enrolled in schools of the air.

TABLE 4.4: Reasons for Non-Utilisation of the Telephone

	Travellers (N=512)	SOTA's (NSW,WA,NT) (N=116)	Corresp. Units (NSW) (N=7)	Metrop. Schs
				(a) (QLD, NSW,WA) (N=349)
1. 'I don't feel a need'	71%	26%	57%	63%
2. 'prefer radio transceiver'	NA	59%	NA	NA
3. 'the cost...'	34%	19%	0	21%
4. 'difficulties in access'	27%	21%	29%	14%
5. 'delays by operator'	2%	20%	0	9%
6. 'difficulties of party line'	5%	20%	14%	19%
7. 'hearing clearly'	7%	23%	14%	25%

NB: Percentages do not add to 100% as respondents may have given more than one reason each.

(a) The Primary Correspondence School, Brisbane, includes children enrolled in schools of the air.

service with normal, 'good weather' frequency of delivery and collected at least once a week was available for 69 per cent (88/128) of travelling families and 90 per cent (993/1098) of those permanently resident. Most of the remainder received mail once per fortnight, and only 9 per cent of travellers and one per cent of those permanently resident received their mail once a month.

4.2.11 It must be noted that mail may not be delivered directly to a family home, but sometimes is left in a post office in the nearest town, requiring a vehicular journey by the family for collection. Adverse weather conditions can delay normal delivery or collection, especially when seasonal weather-affected roads and airstrips are unusable or when stormy seas are uncrossable by small boats and ferries. The mail services were claimed to be affected by 'bad' weather by:

- 21% (23/109) of travelling families; and
- 64% (666/1038) of permanently resident families.

For the latter, mail deliveries may subsequently take:

- . longer than three weeks for 71% (470/666) of them; and
- . longer than four weeks for 44% (291/666) of them.

Hence, while most families normally receive their mail at least once a week 'bad' weather affects this service for nearly two-thirds of permanently resident families and one fifth of travelling families. In adverse weather conditions mail deliveries take longer than three weeks for most of the respondents affected.

4.2.12 Apart from these difficulties, and considering the logistics of mail deliveries and the isolation of some of the families, the average rate of turn-around of lesson materials exchanged between home and school is relatively quick. Some 59 per cent (727/1226) of all respondents who answered the question 'How long does it normally take from the time you mail work to the school for marking until you receive it back?' reported that the rate of return was no longer than fourteen days. This was notably consistent for all families, regardless of type or location of school (see Table 4.5) except for those in the correspondence units of New South Wales of whom 87% received their work within two weeks.

**TABLE 4.5: Rates of Return of Correspondence Lesson Material Exchanged Between Home and School**

	Mean up to Time 7 days 8-14 days 15-28 days 28+ days					Missing	Total
	(days)	(days)	(days)	(days)	(days)	(Number of Families per School)	(No)
<b>METROPOLITAN CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS: PERMANENT RESIDENTS</b>							
NSW	17	18	65	60	3	5	151
QLD (a)	16	58	262	193	14	7	534
WA	16	5	25	16	0	2	48
TOTAL		81	352	269	17	14	733
PER CENT		11%	48%	37%	2%	2%	100%
<b>METROPOLITAN CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS: TRAVELLERS</b>							
NSW	16	2	11	22	3	0	38
QLD	16	11	20	9	3	3	46
WA	14	6	24	12	1	1	44
TOTAL		19	55	43	7	4	128
PER CENT		15%	43%	34%	5%	3%	100%
<b>DECENTRALISED CORRESPONDENCE UNITS: NSW</b>							
COMBINED (b)	13	14	33	7	0	0	54
PER CENT		26%	61%	13%	0	0	100%
<b>SCHOOLS OF THE AIR</b>							
BROKEN HILL	16	5	46	33	1	1	86
WESTERN AUSTRALIA (c)	18	8	44	46	4	4	106
KATHERINE	18	5	30	31	2	1	69
ALICE SPRINGS	14	9	26	14	0	1	50
TOTAL		27	146	124	7	7	311
PER CENT		9%	47%	40%	2%	2%	100%

(a) In Queensland the exchange of correspondence lesson materials is with the Primary Correspondence School in Brisbane.

(b) The decentralised correspondence units in New South Wales were combined.

(c) The schools of the air in Western Australia were combined.



4.2.13 The other utility in the home which might affect the utilisation of existing or future educational services delivered through electronic media is a reliable power supply. An unrestricted supply of electricity which may be used for educational purposes (for example, viewing broadcast or recorded educational television programs) may be deemed to be available if the home is serviced by a public system or a generator run continuously or on demand. An unrestricted 240 volt supply was reported to be available by:

- . 63% (81/128) of travelling families; and
- . 73% (807/1098) of permanently resident families.

Restrictions on the use of a generator to particular times such as the evening only, an inappropriate supply such as 32 volt batteries only, or no electrical supply at all because other sources such as gas power are used, were indicated by the remainder. If one in four of permanently resident families and one in three of travellers do not have a reliable source of electrical power, the efficacy of electronic media for primary distance education must be questioned.

### 4.3 The Home Tutor

4.3.1 The observation in the introduction (para 2.45) that the home tutor is usually the mother of the child is borne out in the responses to the questionnaire. Information about the home tutors is summarised in Table 4.6. Over all 81 per cent (989/1226) were the mothers of the pupils; 15 per cent (184/1226) were employees, usually governesses; and the remainder included fathers (20), siblings (7) and grandparents and so on (24). This varied among schools and according to the residential status of the families. Nine out of ten mothers in travelling families took on the role of home tutor. They are the least experienced group, but their children tend to be enrolled for relatively short periods, usually less than a year and frequently less than six months. School-of-air mothers, on the other hand, as a group are the most experienced, but those families employ more governesses and tutors (see Table 4.6:157 out of the total number of 184 employed.)

4.3.2 A good many of the home tutors are inexperienced in their teaching functions. This is indicated in Figure 4.2 where the distribution of experience among permanent residents and travellers is

TABLE 4.6: The Home Tutor, Relationship and Length of Experience

	Relationship to Child			Length of Experience				m <sup>(a)</sup>	Total (No.)
	Mother (no. of tutors)	Employed	Other	0-12 (months)	13-24	25-60	60+		
METROPOLITAN CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL - PERMANENT RESIDENTS									
NSW	129	10	12	68	34	32	17		151
QLD <sup>(b)</sup>	137	7	11	66	26	34	29		155
WA	41	4	3	25	3	10	9	1	48
TOTAL	307	21	26	159	63	76	55	1	354
PER CENT	87%	6%	7%	45%	18%	21%	16%		100%
METROPOLITAN CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL - TRAVELLERS									
NSW	36	0	2	29	1	6	2		38
QLD	39	0	7	28	10	5	3		46
WA	42	0	2	34	4	4	2		44
TOTAL	117	0	11	91	15	15	7		128
PER CENT	91%	0	9%	71%	12%	12%	5%		100%
DECENTRALISED CORRESPONDENCE UNITS: NSW									
COMBINED <sup>(c)</sup>	45	6	3	19	9	15	11		54
PER CENT	83%	11%	6%	35%	17%	28%	20%		100%
SCHOOLS OF THE AIR									
BROKEN HILL	73	13	0	21	14	31	20		96
QUEENSLAND <sup>(b)</sup>	276	92	11	124	59	98	96	2	379
WESTERN AUSTRALIA <sup>(d)</sup>									
AUSTRALIA <sup>(d)</sup>	82	24	0	48	19	17	22		106
KATHERINE	57	10	2	31	12	12	14		69
ALICE SPRINGS	32	18	0	26	9	12	3		50
TOTAL	520	157	13	250	113	170	155	2	690
PER CENT	75%	23%	2%	36%	16%	25%	22%	1%	100%

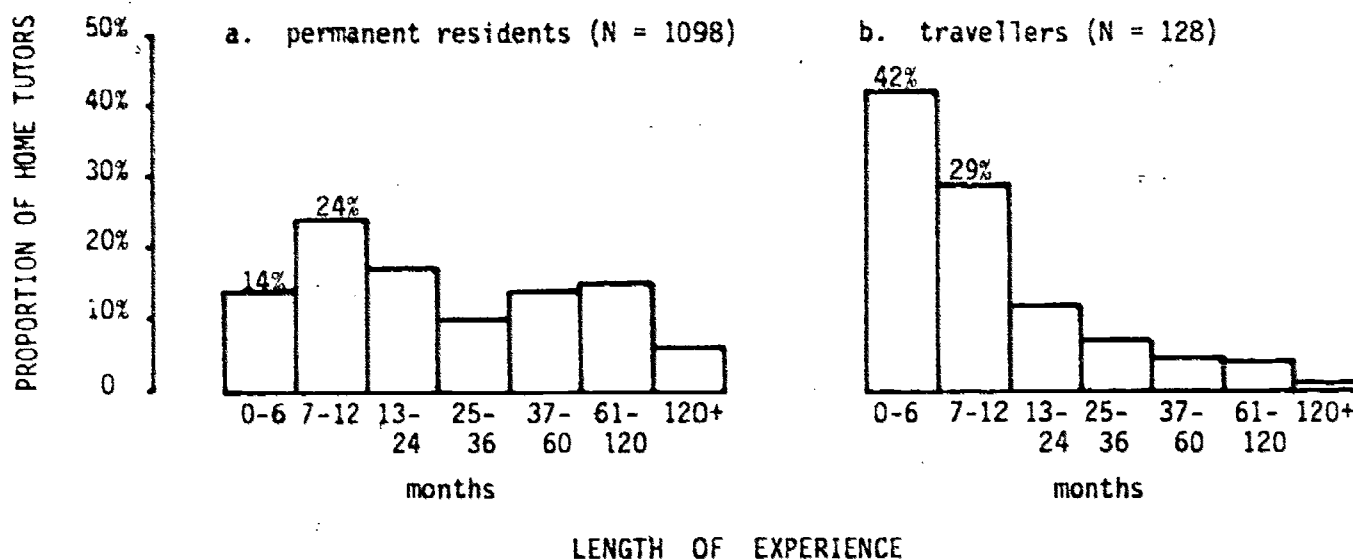
(a) There were three cases for which there were no data on length of experience.

(b) In the Primary Correspondence School, Brisbane, comparisons are made with the two groups - pupils enrolled in schools of the air and pupils not so enrolled - comprising the target population of that school.

(c) The decentralised correspondence units in New South Wales were combined.

(d) The schools of the air in Western Australia were combined.

FIGURE 4.2: Home Tutors: Length of Experience



represented diagrammatically. Thirty-eight per cent (418/1098) of permanent residents and 71 per cent (91/128) of travellers had up to twelve months experience only. It was not possible to establish whether there was any relationship between the home tutor's experience and the quality and rate of the child's learning. However, many indicated that they were troubled about adverse effects of their performance. This expressed itself in tension about the dual role they fill in their children's lives, concern about conflicting responsibilities associated with the home and the family's livelihood, and self-recrimination over perceived failures to perform their teaching function adequately. Their concern focussed on the following issues:

'Being both parent and home tutor'

29% : worries me a little;

20% : worries me a lot;

'Finding sufficient time to supervise the child's learning'

31% : worries me a little;

26% : worries me a lot;

'I tend to blame myself when the child is slow to learn'

46% : applies to some extent;

10% : applies to a large extent.

4.3.3 Clearly some of their concerns relate to personal and domestic problems. Others are more directly related to their teaching functions. Home tutors were asked to indicate the extent to which certain aspects of the task caused them worry. The results are summarised in Table 4.7. Only one, 'Knowing how much time to spend on each activity', was not a concern for the majority of home tutors. Clearly, the others are

essential tasks associated with the teaching function - assessment, diagnosis, remediation - which are troublesome for many professional teachers. It is not surprising, therefore, that they should emerge as concerns here.

4.3.4 For home tutors they are heightened by isolation. There are indications that a lot of home tutors and teachers do not engage in frequent or regular exchange of information. Almost half of the home tutors indicated that they did not have the opportunity to share their concerns outside of their families. The statement 'I feel isolated with my supervising worries' applied to 47 per cent (580/1226) of them. Many are uncertain what the school expects of them and others felt that

TABLE 4.7: The Home Tutors' Problems in the Teaching Task

Problem	Extent of Concern				Total
	Worries me a lot	Worries me a little	Does not worry me	Missing	
judging the standard of schoolwork	15%	45%	38%	2%	1226
recognising a learning difficulty	13%	38%	46%	3%	1226
judging the seriousness of learning difficulties	18%	40%	39%	3%	1226
how to help overcome a learning difficulty	23%	43%	32%	3%	1226
how much help to give the child	14%	42%	42%	2%	1226
knowing what to expect of the child	18%	46%	33%	3%	1226
how much time to spend on activities	6%	27%	64%	3%	1226

teachers have little appreciation of factors which influence their lives. Seventy-three per cent (893/1226) felt that their teachers were 'largely unaware of the home circumstances', and over a quarter (29%) indicated that 'I am not certain what the school expects of me as a home tutor'. Despite these indications of their difficulties, very few were

critical of their schools. Although most experienced some problems with correspondence lessons, the great majority of home tutors indicated that the support services available at the schools were adequate.

#### 4.4 Correspondence Lessons

4.4.1 Correspondence lessons form the basis of all primary distance education throughout Australia. They comprise printed materials which are sent from home to school, and return, through the mail services. Certain audio-visual supplements, including audio-cassette tapes and, more recently video-cassette tapes, may accompany the printed materials. In some states (for example New South Wales) audio tapes always accompany the weekly lessons and serve as the major means of exchanging information between home and school. The correspondence lessons are evaluated here in terms of the problems experienced by home tutors. The supplementary components of these lessons are evaluated in terms of their availability and the home tutors' assessment of their usefulness.

4.4.2 The daily interaction with the child working through the correspondence lessons constitutes the major workload of the home tutor. They were asked to indicate which, if any, of a number of problems concerning the correspondence lessons applied to them. The results are summarised in Table 4.8. There was a marked consistency in their responses, regardless of their residential status or whether their children were enrolled with regional or metropolitan schools. Slightly more than one in three claimed to have no problems, and among the others the most common were 'making [the correspondence lessons] interesting for the child' (42%) and access to learning materials (23%).

4.4.3 Corrected lessons returned by the correspondence teacher to the home are the principal means of providing feedback to the child and home tutor about general progress in the course. This provision is universal but the rate of return is variable. It was demonstrated earlier (see para 4.2.12 and Table 4.5) that 59 per cent of families usually receive work back within two weeks and 88 per cent within three weeks. Hence, while it is the principal feedback from teacher to pupil, it is essentially 'delayed feedback'. There is always a lag between the child's performance of a learning task and the teacher's judgemental and motivational response. The variable rates of return result from factors

TABLE 4.8: Problems in Supervising Correspondence Lessons

	REGIONAL	METROPOLITAN SCHOOLS (a)		TOTAL
	SCHOOLS	Permanent Residents	Travellers	
	%	%	%	%
I don't have any problems	36	46	38	38
Explaining them to the child	17	18	13	17
Making them interesting	48	34	30	42
Adapting them to the child's ability	18	15	15	17
Understanding them myself	13	12	17	14
Carrying out the instructions	7	8	3	7
Getting the required materials	24	20	23	23
Other problems - general	17	19	28	19
TOTAL	774	354	128	1226

NOTE: The column percentages exceed 100 because respondents nominated more than one problem.

(a) In the Primary Correspondence School Brisbane, comparisons are made with the two groups - pupils enrolled in schools of the air and pupils not so enrolled - comprising the target population of that school.

TABLE 4.9: Usefulness of Corrected Correspondence Lessons (N = 1226)

	Very Useful	Useful	Not Useful	Missing
Keeping the child interested	60%	28%	8%	4%
Helping overcome learning difficulties	44%	38%	12%	6%
Advice about supervision	36%	37%	19%	8%
Providing a reward for the child	71%	22%	4%	3%
Informing about child's progress	56%	31%	9%	4%



beyond the control of the schools and include the logistics of postal deliveries, distance and the locations of family homes.

4.4.4 Home tutors were asked to comment on the usefulness of corrected lessons. Their responses are summarised in Table 4.9. A large majority found them 'useful' for providing general advice and informing them about their children's progress. But perhaps the main strength of this feedback is for the child. Most home tutors found the return of corrected lessons to be 'very useful' for motivating the children and for providing them with a sense of achievement.

4.4.5 Teachers' comments on the corrected correspondence lessons may be in written form and/or recorded on audio-cassette tape. Audio tapes may also be used to supplement other parts of the course (for example, stories, music) to provide instruction for children, and to provide the correspondence teacher with an indication of a child's reading fluency. Home tutors may be required to record their views on their children's progress for the benefit of their correspondence teacher. The availability of audio-cassette tapes and home tutors' assessment of their helpfulness are summarised in Table 4.10. In brief, audio-cassette tapes were claimed to be available by most families and nearly all (95%) home tutors find them helpful in supervising their children's learning.

TABLE 4.10: Audio/Video Cassette Tapes: Availability and Helpfulness

	Availability			Helpfulness		
	CS N=482 %	DCU N=54 %	SOTA N=690 %	Very Helpful %	Helpful %	Not Helpful %
Audio tapes <sup>(a)</sup>	87	96	83	58	37	5
Video tapes <sup>(b)</sup>	35	96	91	67	29	4

NOTE: CS = Correspondence Schools; DCU = Decentralised Correspondence Units; SOTA = Schools of the Air

(a) The Primary Correspondence School Brisbane, includes pupils enrolled in schools of the air.

(b) In the Primary Correspondence School, Brisbane, only those pupils enrolled in schools of the air receive video tapes.

4.4.6 Another, more recent, means of supplementing the correspondence lessons is the video-cassette recorded television program. These have been made available by cooperation between the Commonwealth and state governments through the "Loan Video Scheme". Certain eligibility requirements apply and even though they differ in detail among the states they tend to relate to residential status and the geographic location of the family home. Hence, the data in Table 4.10 indicate that their availability is greatest in the regional schools.

4.4.7 The video tapes usually contain general educational programs for family viewing and special interest programs which are age-related or topic related. Of the 849 home tutors whose children received video tapes 67 per cent (567/849) found them to be 'very helpful' and only 4 per cent (40/849) found them to be 'not helpful'. Although this is a relatively new innovation in primary distance education, and there might be some novelty effect of educational television in homes which do not have general access to broadcast television services, the high rating accorded it by home tutors indicates that it has promise. More detailed evaluation of the Loan Video Scheme is being undertaken by state education authorities.<sup>1</sup> Their findings might be more valuable than the observations here for future directions of development.

## 4.5 Support Services

4.5.1 The main support services in primary distance education were indicated in the comments on the organisational structure of the schools (see chapter 2.2). It was proposed earlier (see para 4.1.3) that support for the home tutor may be of two kinds. The first is aimed at the longer-term needs of a wide audience, providing information and guidance in a general sense. It may be provided specifically for home tutors (for example, home tutor training and publications such as handbooks and regular newsletters) or it may be obtained indirectly from services intended principally as benefits to pupils (for example, school functions such as camps, mini-schools and activity days). Some

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1. For example see: Video in the Outback, Education Department of Western Australia, December 1983; and An Evaluation of the Northern Territory Home Loan Video Scheme, Northern Territory Department of Education, 1984.

services, for example home visits, are designed to provide dual assistance for the pupil and the home tutor.

4.5.2 Tutorial support, on the other hand, is responsive to the shorter-term needs of individual home tutors. It may be provided in response to a home tutor's expressed needs or in response to needs that have been identified by a teacher. This support may be obtained by consulting a teacher in the following ways:

- . telephone contact with the correspondence teacher;
- . written correspondence (including audio-cassettes) usually accompanying the child's schoolwork sent to the correspondence teacher for assessment;
- . 'on-air' sessions, for home tutors in schools of the air;
- . school visits, particularly for those in close proximity to their school.

4.5.3 There may be some common ground covered by both general support and tutorial support services. During training, home visits and school functions home tutors may consult a teacher on an individual basis with regard to their child's learning needs, efforts and achievements. However the main criterion for distinguishing between them is that a tutorial support service is essentially based on the 'user demand' principle. This means that a home tutor's request for assistance (alternatively a need for assistance perceived by the correspondence teacher) may be satisfied shortly after it is made.

#### GENERAL SUPPORT SERVICES

4.5.4 In this section the indicators of availability do not suggest the existence or otherwise of particular services. They relate more directly to their accessibility for general and particular populations. Some of the services categorised here as 'general' and directed toward a wide audience are, in fact, provided selectively. Home tutors' responses to questions relating to these aspects of general support are summarised in Table 4.11 and 4.12 (see Appendix B for a copy of the questionnaire).

4.5.5 In general the families enrolled with the schools of the air in all three states and the Northern Territory and the decentralised

correspondence units in New South Wales have better access to these general services than those enrolled with the metropolitan correspondence schools. Part of the reason is the additional resources provided through the Country Areas Program of the Commonwealth Schools Commission. For example, in Queensland and Western Australia home tutor training, school camps and seminars and itinerant teacher services of various kinds are funded through the Country Areas Program (or Priority Country Areas Program as it is called in those states). Priorities for the support of projects under that program are at the recommendation of local and state advisory committees and there is not a universal provision. Elsewhere the allocation of resources to support educational services is at the decision of relevant state and Territory authorities.

4.5.6 The data indicate that most home tutors had a handbook on supervision. It offers them general guidance about the school's requirements for pupils and home tutors, and provides teaching guides for specific subjects. Nine out of ten home tutors also receive from the schools regular printed information in the form of newsletters and so on. Most considered them to be helpful and about one-third found them to be 'very helpful' in relation to their children's learning. School camps, mini-schools, activity days and so on were available mostly to families in regional schools. They were rated highly with nearly two thirds of home tutors regarding them as 'very helpful'.

TABLE 4.11: General Support Services: Availability

	Type of School		
	CS <sup>(a)</sup> N=482	DCU N=54	SOTA <sup>(a)</sup> N=690
Home tutors' guidelines	80	52	86
Regular printed information	89	89	78
School camps, mini-schools, etc	30	91	90
Home visits 1983	15	30	84
Home tutor training 1982/83	7	46	46

NOTE: CS = Correspondence Schools; DCU = Decentralised Correspondence Units; SOTA = Schools of the Air

(a) In the Primary Correspondence School, Brisbane, comparisons are made with the two groups - pupils enrolled in schools of the air and pupils not so enrolled - comprising the target population of that school.

4.5.7 Availability of home visits and home tutor training is also related to the types of schools with which children are enrolled. Eighty-four per cent of families in schools of the air had been visited at least once during 1983, while the same proportion in metropolitan distance primary schools had not been visited at all. This was not at their own request. In fact very few stated that they did not want to be visited. The main reasons offered were:

- . 'none was organised' 54% (288/531) of all responses;
- . 'recently enrolled' 19% (103/531) of all responses;
- . 'other reasons' 36% (44/122) of traveller responses.

This last group was excluded from home visits mainly for reasons associated with their travelling, such as planning and coordination, and time and distance.

TABLE 4.12: General Support Services: Usefulness/Helpfulness

	Very Helpful %	Helpful %	Not Helpful %	Total
Home tutors' guidelines	34	57	9	988
Regular printed information	33	55	12	1060
School camps, mini-schools, etc	64	26	10	818
<u>Home Visits</u>				
Advising about supervision	40	40	20	658
Informing about child's progress	51	37	12	683
Giving support	57	32	11	676
<u>Home Tutor Training</u>				
Meeting other home tutors	64	32	4	370
Learning what to expect of child	40	41	19	365
Understanding aims of lessons	37	46	17	366
Techniques for supervision	49	41	10	373
Making confident as home tutor	42	44	14	370
Register opinions about lessons	46	46	8	370

4.5.8 During the two year period 1982-1983 less than one-third of home tutors had some formal training for their task. Those who had comprised only 2 per cent of travellers, 9 per cent of those permanent residents enrolled with metropolitan schools, and 46 per cent of those in regional schools. Of those who had not attended some form of training in the period 1982-83, the main reasons given were:

- . 'none was organised' 32% (266/832) of all responses;
- . 'wished to attend but was prevented by circumstances' (for example illness, weather) 23% (163/707) of permanently resident families; and
- . 'other reasons' (including distance, time) 54% (68/125) of travelling families.

Non-attendance due to 'cost' (18%) and 'not wanting to' (14%) were not given as main reasons.

4.5.9 Home tutors who had attended training sessions in 1982/83 were very appreciative of the advice and support they received. They also valued the opportunity of being able to provide teachers with some feedback on their views about the correspondence course. The extent to which home tutors' opinions subsequently affected curriculum development in primary distance education was not explored in this study. It should be noted, however, that home tutors may have a valuable contribution to make in this regard and that avenues such as those afforded by home tutor training provide curriculum developers with a unique opportunity of stimulating debate about the practicalities of the correspondence lessons in the home setting. The aspect of training sessions which attracted the most favourable reaction from home tutors was, however, 'meeting other home tutors with concerns similar to mine'. Almost two-thirds found this to be a 'very useful' part of these sessions.

4.5.10 In Queensland and Western Australia home visits are made usually by an itinerant teacher who is not the child's regular correspondence or school-of-the-air teacher. In the Northern Territory and in New South Wales school-of-air teachers visit their pupils as part of their scheduled 'patrol' duties. Of the respondents who had been visited at home by a teacher in 1983, 63 per cent nominated a visit by an itinerant teacher, 23 per cent the regular correspondence teacher and 14 per cent some other persons such as a special education advisory teacher. About half rated home visits by a teacher as 'very useful'. In particular



home tutors valued support similar to that provided by home tutor training. Concerns about methods of tutoring and levels of achievements were regarded as being most satisfactorily met by each of these services. Home visits were rated highly especially for providing general support to home tutors; 57 per cent found them 'very useful' for this purpose.

#### GENERAL SUPPORT SERVICES—SUMMARY

4.5.11 In summary, although there was notable unevenness in the availability of general services there was widespread approval of the support they offered. In particular, those services which depend upon direct personal interaction, in contrast to printed materials, were rated highly. Recurring themes in the assessments of the usefulness or helpfulness of aspects of home visits and home tutor training were the value of advice about reasonable expectations to be held for a child's performance on school learning, and their importance for reassuring the home tutors about their own performance in the teaching function. These were rated 'very useful' or 'very helpful' by a consistently high proportion of respondents. They echo the major concern expressed by half of the home tutors that 'I feel isolated with my supervising worries' (see para 4.3.4). Their isolation is not merely that of distance and geographic location, but bears strongly upon the inaccessibility of appropriate people to advise and guide them. Their responses to the questionnaire suggest a strong need for direct human support. Taken with the high value accorded such things as opportunities of 'meeting with other home tutors with concerns similar to mine' at home tutor training sessions, and of home visits 'giving you a feeling of support', they suggest that home tutors value most highly the support available through personal contact, in short someone with whom their concerns can be shared and who can offer them direct advice or reassurance.

#### TUTORIAL SUPPORT SERVICES

4.5.12 Requests for specific support, other than that offered in corrected lessons returned from the schools and in home visits by teachers, generally are initiated by home tutors seeking advice about teaching or learning difficulties and organisational problems. Some 59

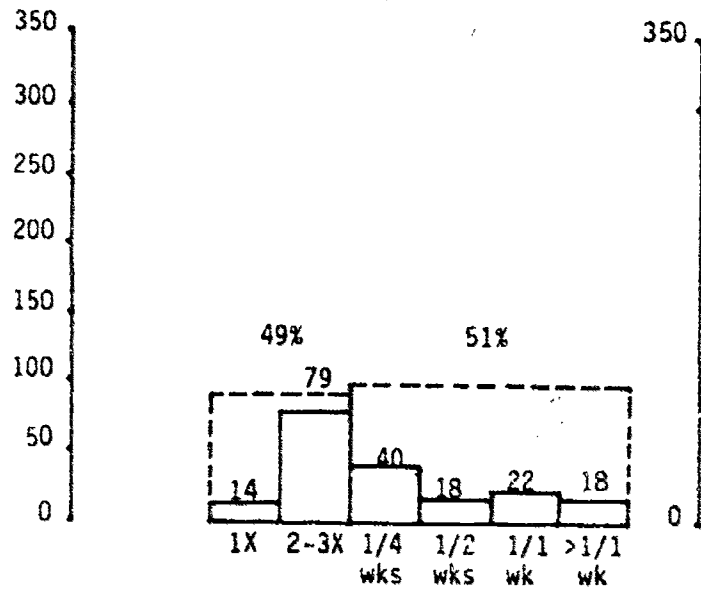
per cent (723/1226) of respondents made contact with their correspondence teachers for such purposes in 1983, but the means of contacting the teacher differed in correspondence schools and schools of the air. So too did the incidence of contact. The 723 home tutors who stated that they had requested help over some aspect of correspondence lessons were comprised of:

- . 70% (256/365) in regional schools;
- . 55% (405/733) of permanent residents in metropolitan correspondence schools;
- . 48% (62/128) of travellers.

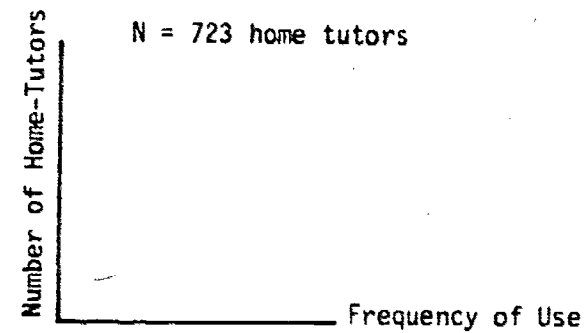
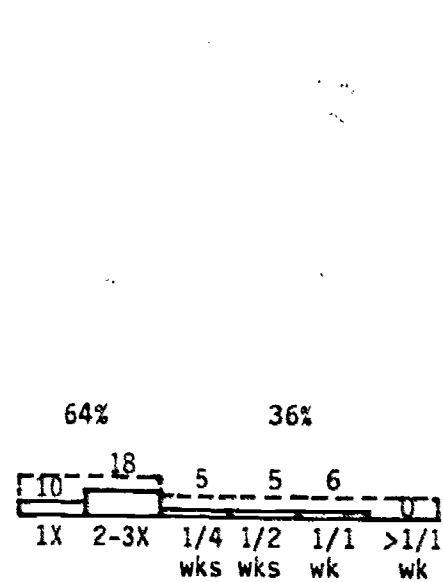
4.5.13 Home tutors who consulted the correspondence teacher did so most frequently for advice about teaching, a child's learning difficulty, or problems in particular lessons (82%; 593/723). Fifty-seven per cent (409/723) sought advice on organisational problems such as arrangements for travel, or the non-arrival of lesson materials. Obviously there was overlap between the two. Of equal importance for this study, however, was the number who did not initiate contact. Some 39 per cent had not sought advice or help in 1983, and of those more than three-quarters (368/473) felt that they did not need assistance. This reaffirms the response to the previous questions about home tutors' problems when supervising lessons (see para 4.4 and Table 4.8: 'I don't have any problems with correspondence lessons' 38%; 478/1226). It should not be assumed, however, that home tutors who do not initiate contact with their correspondence teacher never require tutorial assistance. They might either be reluctant to do so (for example cooperative working partnership unestablished) or be simply unaware that they require assistance (that is unable to make sound educational judgements about their own or their child's performance).

4.5.14 The frequency of consultations and means of communication used by home tutors are summarised in Figure 4.3. More than one means of communication was used by many. Written correspondence is used most commonly (81% ; 585/723), followed by telephone calls (51%; 369/723), and visits to the school (44%; 319/723). Using the radio transceiver is a very popular means (88%; 191/216) for those families in schools of the air. There is a relationship between requests for help, the type of school, residential status of families and the means of communication. The data are summarised in Table 4.13.

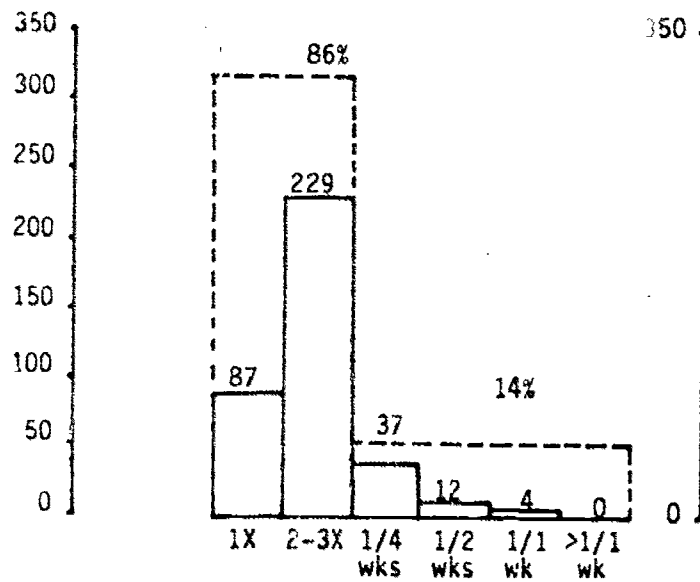
SCHOOL OF AIR TRANSCEIVER  
(191 home tutors)



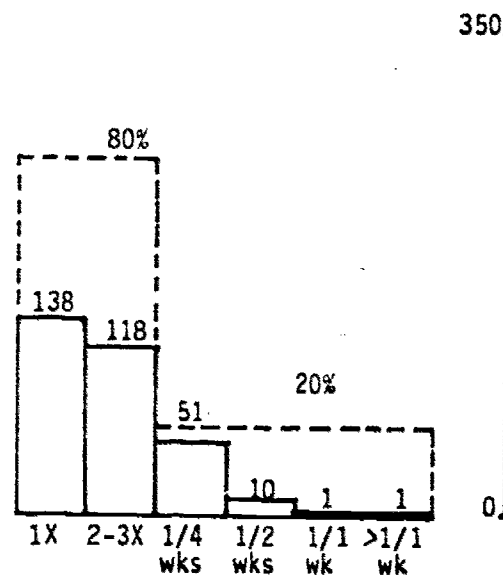
OTHER MEANS eg. audiotapes  
(44 home tutors)



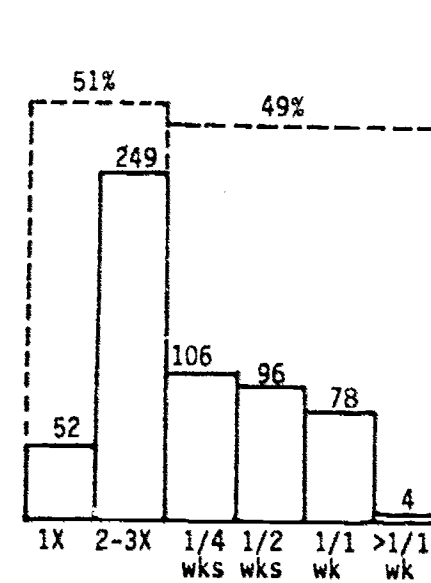
TELEPHONE  
(369 home tutors)



VISITED SCHOOL  
(319 home tutors)



WROTE LETTER/NOTE  
(585 home tutors)



4.5.15 Written correspondence is the most available but least direct means of communication in this regard. It is also the most frequently used; almost half of its users do so at least once a month (see figure 4.3). Its use is most widespread in the metropolitan schools and, even though it is least popular in the regional schools, nearly two-thirds of those home tutors used it to consult with their correspondence teacher in 1983.

TABLE 4.13: Tutorial Support: Means of Communication

	Type of School				Total N=723
	DCU N=40	SOTA N=216	Permanent Res. N=405	C.S. (a) Travellers N=62	
	%	%	%	%	%
Written Correspondence	65	75	87	76	81
Telephone Calls	85	50	47	56	51
School Visits	85	74	27	24	44
Radio calls	NA	88	NA	NA	NA
Other means (e.g. audio tape)	10	4	7	6	6

DCU = Decentralised Correspondence Units in New South Wales

SOTA = Schools of the Air in NSW, WA and NT.

C.S. = Correspondence Schools

NB: Column percentages do not add to 100% as more than one means was indicated by many home tutors.

(a) The Primary Correspondence School, Brisbane, includes pupils enrolled in schools of the air.

4.5.16 The use of the telephone was considered earlier (see paras 4.2.6 to 4.2.9). Its use is most popular in the decentralised correspondence units. Although the travelling home tutors have, in general, the least availability of telephone services they are proportionally the second largest group of users of the telephone for requesting assistance from their correspondence teacher. Despite its popularity among these two small user-groups most of the home tutors who use the telephone for this purpose do so only between one and three times year. Overall its use is relatively unpopular and infrequent.

4.5.17 School visits are generally available only for those who reside within a reasonable distance of their schools. Accordingly a much larger proportion of the home tutors in the regional schools sought assistance by visiting their correspondence teachers compared with those in the metropolitan schools. Apart from a small minority (12%) of those with good access to their schools (see para 4.2.5, Table 4.2), most home tutors who visited their schools for this purpose did so only between one and three times in the year. School visits are marginally less popular than telephone calls.

4.5.18 The responses of correspondence teachers to requests for assistance by home tutors were generally very satisfactory, as indicated by the data in Table 4.14.

TABLE 4.14: Tutorial Support: Helpfulness

	A lot of help %	A little help %	No help %	Total N
Teaching/learning	69	26	5	593
Organisational	74	22	4	409

Of those with organisational problems, nearly three-quarters received a 'lot of help'. Over two-thirds of those who requested assistance with teaching/learning difficulties also received a 'lot of help'. A little less than a third of all requests, however, met with little or no help at all.

4.5.19 Most of those home tutors in schools of the air who contact their correspondence teacher for assistance use the radio transceiver. Its frequency of use, with half of its users doing so at least once per month, is matched only by the frequency of use of written correspondence.

4.5.20 Consultation 'air' sessions for home tutors are held regularly by most schools of the air. The home tutor may consult with her child's

correspondence teacher or (particularly in the case of Queensland) air lessons teacher. Discussion with other home tutors may also be possible. Of the 561 home tutors for whom this service is available, over half (56%) regarded it as 'very helpful' to them with regard to the supervision of their children's learning.

4.5.21 An indication of the availability of this service may be gained from a consideration of the quality of reception of radio transmissions. Home tutors were asked to comment on three aspects of reception during 'air lessons' as follow:

- (a) How often can the child hear the school of the air clearly?
- (b) How often can the school of the air hear the child clearly?
- (c) How often can the child hear most of his/her classmates clearly?

The responses to these questions are summarised in Table 4.15.

TABLE 4.15: Schools of the Air: Clarity of Radio Reception

	Always %	Usually %	Sometimes %	Rarely/Never %	Missing %	Total N
(a) Child hears SOTA	29	64	4	-	3	690
(b) SOTA hears child	19	70	7	1	3	690
(c) Child hears child	6	51	28	12	3	690

On the assumption that the clarity of reception for the home tutors is the same as that for their children (there may be an age-related factor but it is assumed to be very small) these figures may be taken to indicate the reception of transmissions during consultation 'air' sessions, from the viewpoints of the home tutors.

4.5.22 Ninety-three per cent of home tutors usually would be able hear clearly their teacher's transmissions. Fifty-seven per cent usually would be able to hear clearly most of the other home tutors' transmissions. The remaining 40 per cent would be able to hear clearly most of the other home tutors' transmissions only sometimes, rarely or never.



4.5.23 Having daily contact, by means of radio, with their school of the air is regarded as beneficial in a number of respects by most home tutors. These benefits, together with the values attributed them by home tutors, are summarised in Table 4.16.

TABLE 4.16: Daily Contact with Schools of the Air:  
Benefits to Home Tutors

	Large Benefit %	Some Benefit %	No Benefit %	Total N
Contact with other home tutors	32	51	17	498
Advice on supervision	42	49	9	603
Information on other activities	38	52	10	596
Contact with correspondence teacher <sup>(a)</sup>	66	31	3	271
Contact with a teacher <sup>(b)</sup>	61	35	4	360

(a) for Schools of the Air in NSW, WA, NT

(b) for Schools of the Air in QLD.

4.5.24 In spite of the problems of reception experienced by many, this particular service was regarded most highly by almost two thirds (63%) of home tutors who indicated that this was a 'large benefit' for them. In particular, advice on aspects of the supervision of the correspondence lessons was beneficial for a majority of home tutors with just under a half (42%) of those who received this service regarding it as a 'large benefit'.

4.5.25 Discussions between home tutors or participation in group meetings, however, are not feasible for at least 40 per cent of home tutors for whom most other home tutors' transmissions are only sometimes, rarely or never heard. Of those who do have this service, almost a third (32%) found it to be a 'large benefit' to them.

4.5.26 In summary, therefore, a majority of home tutors felt a need to contact their correspondence teacher for assistance at least once in 1983. Those in regional schools are more likely to initiate such contact than those in metropolitan schools. The means of communication are related to school type. Written correspondence is still very popular among a majority of home tutors, especially permanent residents in metropolitan schools. School visits are popular for most of those in the decentralised correspondence units and for many in schools of the air. The radio transceiver is very popular and frequently used by many home tutors in schools of the air. The telephone is widely available but generally underutilised, with home tutors in the correspondence units being, proportionally, the largest users. Although some received only a little or no help most home tutors who requested assistance, particularly concerning organisational problems, received very satisfactory responses from their correspondence teachers. Further benefits accrue to home tutors in schools of the air, especially in regard to being in contact with a teacher on a daily basis which enables them to participate in supervisors' air sessions and to receive advice on aspects of supervision. Participation in group discussions is limited, however, by technical constraints associated with reception of radio transmissions.

#### **4.6 Results of the Survey—Summary**

4.6.1 The survey supported the findings of Chapter 3 regarding the nature and composition of the population served by distance primary schools. The regional schools, including schools of the air and the decentralised correspondence units of New South Wales, were the most stable in terms of the types of dwellings and lengths of residence of their families, almost all of whom were permanent residents. The correspondence units are situated in close proximity to most of their families and are therefore the most accessible for school visits and home visits. The schools of the air are less accessible in these respects but provide daily contact with a teacher for nearly all of

their families<sup>o</sup> by means of a radio transceiver. The metropolitan schools with their mixed pupil populations have the least residentially stable families and are least accessible, particularly for their travelling families.

4.6.2 Home tutors, most of whom are the mothers of their pupils, experience difficulties which may affect the quality of their supervision. Many, particularly among the travelling families, are inexperienced and most are concerned about issues such as their dual (mother/home tutor) roles, finding enough time for supervision, and self-doubts over their children's learning performances. These concerns also extend to their teaching tasks where the lack of skills and knowledge relating to aspects such as assessment, diagnosis, remediation and standards of achievement are the source of worry for a majority. Most had not received any training in recent years and for many personal dialogue with their correspondence teacher was restricted or non-existent.

4.6.3 In good weather conditions completed correspondence lessons take, on average, two weeks to return to the home after being mailed to the teacher for correction and assessment. Adverse weather conditions may cause delays of several weeks for a majority of families. The feedback from the teacher, even though delayed, was regarded as being most useful for stimulating the children and maintaining their interest in their schoolwork, a task which many home tutors find problematical. Supplementary to the correspondence lessons are audio and video tapes. The former are in widespread use, while the latter are the subject of eligibility criteria favouring families in regional schools. Both were regarded highly by a majority of home tutors with video tapes being the more popular, however.

4.6.4 Support services for the home tutor were uneven in their availability, mostly favouring those in regional schools. Those in receipt of general support services, including printed materials, school functions, home visits and training, regarded as most useful those which were based on direct personal interaction (face-to-face meetings) with teachers and other home tutors. These services afforded home tutors the opportunity to seek solutions to the difficulties they experienced in

the isolation of their homes, especially those concerned with their teaching tasks. About half rated highly the assistance obtained.

4.6.5 Tutorial support, on a daily or weekly basis, was most available to those families in regional schools. The survey revealed that a large majority of these home tutors consulted their correspondence teachers during the course of the year, using a wide range of means including school visits, telephone and radio calls and written correspondence. By contrast, just over half of those in metropolitan schools consulted their teachers, mainly by means of written correspondence but with some use of the telephone and even less use of school visits. Assistance with teaching tasks was mostly sought and the help given by teachers was highly valued by most home tutors. Home tutors in schools of the air were especially advantaged as a result of the benefits to them, of daily radio contact with a teacher and subsequent advice on supervision. This contact was rated highly by a majority of home tutors.

4.6.6 Written correspondence and the radio transceiver were used most frequently. The telephone was widely available but under-utilised. The main reason for not using it was that home tutors did not perceive a need to do so. Other reasons included preference for the radio transceiver, costs of calls, and service difficulties. Restrictions in its use were mainly due to difficulties of access (travellers), cost of calls, and service difficulties. The use of the radio transceiver for participation in group discussions was limited for many home tutors by poor reception of other home tutors' transmissions.

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NB: In the Primary Correspondence School, Brisbane, comparisons were made with the two groups - pupils enrolled in schools of the air and pupils not so enrolled - comprising the target population of that school.

# Chapter 5: SOME DIRECTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

## 5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The traditional model of primary distance education, with its reliance on the home tutor as the facilitator of the teaching process, will continue to operate, at least in the shorter-term, in order that the best interests of a wide range of isolated families be served. It may eventually be replaced, however. New forms of communication will enable the distance education teacher to be involved more closely with the daily lessons of the isolated child. Such an approach might mean that the teaching role of the home tutor is greatly reduced. However, even though trials of new forms of communications are currently under way in several Australian states and the Northern Territory, it is not envisaged that the emergence of new approaches will take place overnight. There will probably be a period of transition. There are problematical issues to be resolved. Travelling families, for example, present special difficulties for the delivery of services other than by print and post.

5.1.2 The continued operation of the traditional model will require that distance primary schools continue to provide support to the home tutor. The following section of this report considers the improved delivery of services within the framework of the traditional model. The requirements for an effective working relationship between the home tutor and the distance education teacher are discussed. Proposals are then made for the increased availability and effectiveness of existing services. Their educational implications are listed. The major purpose of the several proposals is to draw attention to a range of options for improving services within the framework of the traditional model. Because of the diversity of organisational structures for distance education in Australia it is not feasible to prescribe a single strategy which will be acceptable to all of them. On the other hand it is useful to consider alternative ways of redressing the present imbalance in the availability of services, and to consider their educational implications. The proposals presented here are not a set of

recommendations for a future single course of action. They are a set of options which might assist those involved in planning for the future.

5.1.3 A new approach to primary distance education using 'electronic mailing' techniques is the subject of the final section. The wide-ranging implications of its adoption are mentioned only briefly. It is highly likely that this approach will require the modification of some existing services. The premises upon which they were designed, particularly those associated with the role of the home tutor, will be invalidated. Therefore an essential part of planning for the future must be a consideration of the options available and their application to approaches which take advantage of new forms of communications technology.

## **5.2 The Traditional Model**

### **TEACHING THE ISOLATED CHILD**

5.2.1 A cooperative working partnership between the home tutor and the distance education teacher is essential for the effective education of the isolated child. The research indicated that some problems exist with both the establishment and maintenance of this partnership. They are exacerbated by the unavailability for home tutors of appropriate services, and by an exchange of information between home and schools which is restricted because of inefficient means of communication and/or infrequent direct contact between the home tutor and the correspondence teacher.

5.2.2 For many home tutors, especially those with metropolitan distance primary schools, direct contact with their school is limited to written or audio-tape correspondence sent through the postal services. They are unable to visit the school or to attend home tutor training courses. They rely largely on printed materials such as handbooks, newsletters and curriculum materials to advise them about teaching methods and expectations for their children's performance. The opportunity to meet with their child's distance education teacher rarely or never occurs. They share their children's isolation from the school and from the distance education teacher.



5.2.3 Distance education teachers rely on information provided by home tutors to assist them in monitoring the isolated child's progress and in the selection of subsequent activities suited to the child's abilities and progress. For the home tutor the recording of this information may be a demanding task, to be performed after the event. Difficulties experienced by the child may be attributable to poor teaching techniques used by home tutors. With little or no training many home tutors may find it difficult to assess their effect on the child's learning. This may be compounded by curricula which place a greater emphasis on personal development and which require the home tutor to structure the child's lessons and to promote a spirit of inquiry, discovery and self-expression. This may present many of them with challenges and demands which they are ill-prepared to meet.

5.2.4 The effectiveness of the working partnership between the home tutor and the distance education teacher depends upon communication between them. Problems with selection, adaptation and implementation of curriculum materials may arise if there is restricted dialogue. The evidence of this research indicates that such limitations are inherent in written correspondence. The isolation of the family from the school and the teacher from the child and the home tutor endures, and is exacerbated by this means of communication. Even so, written correspondence remains the most popular means for home tutors to request assistance, especially in the metropolitan distance primary schools. Nevertheless over half of the home tutors who wrote to their distance education teachers did so very infrequently (between one and three times a year).

5.2.5 By contrast, the school of the air teacher is much closer to the point of learning, at least in terms of time. The daily exchange between the teacher and the isolated child, by means of an interactive 'air' lesson, provides both the teacher and the child with direct information about the child's progress. These exchanges are brief and generally supplementary to the correspondence lessons. However, a weekly 'on-air' tutorial service is provided which enables the child, the home tutor and the distance education teacher to discuss their respective problems. A much more frequent exchange of information relating to the child's learning endeavours takes place than is the case in the metropolitan distance primary schools.

5.2.6 In New South Wales the establishment of correspondence units in areas where significant clusters of isolated children have been identified has enabled greater accessibility to distance education teachers. A range of alternative means of contacting their schools is available. The incidence of school visits and telephone calls is much higher than the use of written correspondence for requesting assistance from their teachers.

5.2.7 The relationships between the distance education teacher, the home tutor and the child are of fundamental importance. The success of the isolated child's education depends as much on the effectiveness of the working partnership between the home tutor and the distance education teacher as it does upon the exchange of the curriculum materials between home and school. Frequent communication is essential to the operation of an effective working partnership. Special emphasis should therefore be given to the mechanism for enabling a frequent exchange of information to assist in establishing and maintaining such a relationship.

5.2.8 To ensure an effective working partnership between the home tutor and the distance education teacher much more than efficient means of communication is required, however. One of the dangers of isolation is for either or both parties to lose sight of their interrelated roles. Consequently each party lays claim to the major responsibility for teaching the child. The home tutor may feel that the child's learning takes place largely in her presence; the distance education teacher may evince professional training as a justification for making the same claim. The expression of this dilemma by either party implies a lack of understanding of the essential contribution of both the home tutor and the teacher in the effective education of the isolated child.

5.2.9 A fundamental requirement for avoiding this situation is the fostering of a mutual understanding of their individual and interrelated roles in the education of the isolated child. There is an outstanding need for the formulation of appropriate policy. Such policy would assist in the development of curriculum materials and in the provision of support services. It should be based on the premise that the home tutor and the distance education teacher have equally important, interrelated but essentially different roles.

5.2.10 The formation of policy is essential in order not only to alleviate difficulties currently being experienced by home tutors (and, by implication, by distance education teachers) but also to preserve the integrity of the tenuous human relationships in an education system whose major feature is the remoteness in both space and time of its users and providers. Such policy is especially important in view of the potential impact of technological innovations designed to 'speed up' delivery systems for the exchange of information and to assist with the management of learning. Without this policy the danger exists for 'technological determinism' to guide curriculum development at the expense of those whose interests the technology is designed to serve. In this case the 'plug-ins' and 'add-ons' may assume a dominance in the minds of curriculum developers whose enthusiasm for their introduction may be based on the naive belief that the 'tyranny of distance' may be conquered by the construction of 'technological bridges'. This may be only partly true.

5.2.11 The basic requirements for establishing and maintaining an effective working partnership between the home tutor and the distance education teacher include, therefore, a mutual understanding of their individual and interrelated roles, a frequent exchange of information and the provision of appropriate support services. For the home tutor support should be readily available and its utilisation should be unconstrained by distance, cost, means of communication or facilities in the home setting.

#### OPTIONS FOR HOME TUTOR SUPPORT SERVICES

5.2.12 Strategies for the improved delivery of support services depend on the future role of the home tutor. In the traditional model of primary distance education the pursuit of the principle of 'equality of support' will require the increased availability of services. Economic and logistical constraints will probably be the major obstacles to the achievement of their 'universal' availability. Education authorities will have to decide on those options which are most appropriate to their individual circumstances. To assist with planning for future services the findings of this study have been used to suggest changes in the availability and effectiveness of existing support services. The advantages and disadvantages are listed.

## PROPOSAL ONE: TRAINING COURSES

Training courses for home tutors be held both at the commencement of a child's enrolment (pre-service training) and at regular intervals throughout the enrolment (annual in-service training). All monetary expenses incurred by home tutors attending training courses to be met.

For permanently resident families training courses to be held in regional centres; for those travellers commencing their journeys from a capital city, training courses be held prior to departure in a metropolitan centre; for persons seeking employment as a home tutor (for example, governesses, trained teachers without first appointments) training courses be held prior to, or shortly after, taking up an offer of employment, followed by familiarisation at the appropriate regional school, if applicable.

### Advantages:

- (i) an excellent opportunity to establish and reinforce an understanding of the individual and interrelated roles of the home tutor and the distance education teacher, particularly in respect of the teaching tasks at the 'point of learning' and the need for a regular exchange of information;
- (ii) an opportunity (perhaps the only one) for direct personal contact between the home tutor and the distance education teacher, assisting with the establishment of a cooperative working partnership;
- (iii) the preparation of home tutors by their attainment of the essential knowledge and skills necessary for the organisational and teaching tasks, the anticipation of future difficulties and the means of obtaining tutorial assistance if and when required;
- (iv) an opportunity to meet other home tutors and to share personal experiences and to establish 'self-help' groups;
- (v) a forum for evaluation of curriculum materials and innovations (for example, educational television);
- (vi) costs in time incurred by home tutors in attending a training course may be more acceptable if there are no additional monetary costs;

- (vii) travelling families, especially those who originate from metropolitan areas, may be unable to participate in 'in-service' training, but would benefit from 'pre-service' training before departure;
- (viii) persons seeking employment as home tutors, many of whom may originate from metropolitan areas and be unfamiliar with rural life and social isolation, may benefit from a training course which focusses on the necessary social 'survival' skills as well as preparing them for the role of home tutor.

#### Disadvantages

- (i) the service will continue to be 'distance-dependent' for the more remote permanently resident families, especially with respect to costs in time for travelling and participation in residential training courses;
- (ii) other rural-based travelling home tutors may be unable to coordinate their movements to attend training courses wherever they are held.

#### **PROPOSAL TWO: DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION**

Information detailing proposed curriculum changes and providing guidance on organisational and teaching matters be sent regularly to all families. This should be available in both the conventional printed form and in recorded video format. In the latter case, pre-recorded material may be sent through the mail services or the information may be transmitted by broadcast television services (via the Australian satellite) and viewed 'live' by home tutors or recorded on home-based video facilities for later viewing.

The information might be presented in the form of a supplementary training program for home tutors.

#### Advantages

- (i) home tutors would be kept up to date with curriculum planning and may be able to contribute their viewpoints in the formative stages of curriculum development;



- (ii) an understanding of the individual and interrelated roles of the home tutor and the distance education teacher could be maintained;
- (iii) the provision of information in both printed and recorded video format would cater to all home tutors, the former being most suitable for 'travelling' families without video replay or broadcast television reception facilities and for families without access to a 240 volt supply of electrical power;
- (iv) home tutors unable to attend training courses, especially those who are travelling or are permanently resident in very remote areas, could be kept informed about organisational and teaching matters;
- (v) the use of recorded video material would enable home tutors with appropriate facilities to view them at the most opportune times, with minimal disturbance to their daily work schedules.

#### Disadvantages

- (i) this means of obtaining information is not necessarily a substitute for that which involves personal interaction with other home tutors and teachers. Its form, whether printed or video recorded may require little more than passive reception;
- (ii) families without an unrestricted supply of 240 volt electrical power and those ineligible for participation in the Loans Video Scheme may be unable to enjoy the benefits of recorded video programs. This includes many travelling and permanently resident families;
- (iii) direct broadcast television programs would, unless recorded on home-based video facilities, disrupt the home tutor's daily work schedule and compete for her already limited time;
- (iv) the receipt of recorded video programs sent through the mail services is dependent on the efficiency of these services. Delays of two weeks would be common.

#### **PROPOSAL THREE: LOAN VIDEO SCHEME**

The Loan Video Scheme be continued after its current three year trial period and the eligibility criteria be extended to enable the participation of all families with at least one child enrolled in primary distance education.



## PROPOSAL FOUR: ELECTRICAL POWER SUPPLIES

Those families for whom participation in the Loan Video Scheme is restricted or impossible because of their lack of appropriate electrical power be provided with the required power supply as part of the normal equipment on loan from the school.

### Advantages

- (i) home tutors would be able to participate in supplementary training programs and receive information on organisational and teaching matters, including tutorial support from the distance education teacher. Programs may be delivered by broadcast television or in pre-recorded video format through the mail services;
- (ii) participation of children in educational television programs, the possible advantages of which are the subject of reports<sup>1</sup> from the various state and territory departments of education.

### Disadvantages

- (i) some home tutors, especially those in travelling families, may not be able to transport video replay and television reception facilities due to space restrictions in vehicles or the inability of equipment to withstand the physical rigours of harsh environmental conditions.
- (ii) delays in receiving materials through the mail services - two weeks would be common.

## PROPOSAL FIVE: HOME VISITS

All families be visited in their homes by their children's teachers at regular intervals throughout their enrolment. Special visits be arranged for those families where unresolved problems are known to exist.

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1. Video in the Outback, Education Department of Western Australia, December 1983; An Evaluation of the Northern Territory Home Loan Video Scheme, Northern Territory Department of Education, 1984.

## Advantages

- (i) an excellent opportunity for the home tutor and the distance education teacher to reinforce their working partnership in relation to the education program of the child, especially if this is the major means of direct contact between them. The inevitable social interaction associated with many of these visits is very conducive to the development of amicable relationships;
- (ii) in the absence of regular direct contact with the school (for example school visits, radio or telephone calls) the home tutor may, during a home visit, personally consult a teacher over a broad range of issues concerning the child and the education program;
- (iii) a teacher may gain a first-hand impression of the peculiarities of the home setting and the environment, and their influence on the way in which both the child lives and learns and the home tutor performs her role;
- (iv) personal contact between the child and the distance education teacher may enhance their teacher-pupil relationship by means of involvement in activities imported by the teacher (for example, craft, drama, games) and by means of the child introducing the teacher to aspects of his/her personal world (for example, pets, hobbies, favourite places);
- (v) the teacher may provide access to educational resources not normally available in the family home. For example both the home tutor and the child might gain valuable experience in the use of microcomputers and their educational 'software'.

## Disadvantages

- (i) this is a 'distance-dependent' service with high costs of money and time for the providers, resulting in a very restricted number of visits per family per year;
- (ii) as the major means of personal consultation with a teacher the main weakness for the home tutor is therefore the infrequency of contact;
- (iii) as a major means of diagnosing and assessing an unresolved teaching problem (of the home tutor) or learning problem (of the

- child) this is an inefficient method for the distance education teacher, especially if another teacher is to conduct the visit and relay the information;
- (iv) the use of itinerant teachers requires an efficient communications network if the information gained during a visit to a particular family is to be of comprehensive benefit to all involved teachers (especially in Queensland where children may have separate 'air' teachers, correspondence teachers and itinerant teachers). This problem is further compounded if teachers from other services such as Special Education are involved;
  - (v) home visits are unreliable. The vagaries of the weather may force the cancellation of teachers' visiting schedules thereby disrupting a year's program and further restricting the number of visits per family. This situation is exacerbated in those schools which rely on conventional two-wheel drive vehicles;
  - (vi) families are not obliged to accept a request from a teacher for a home visit. This may frustrate a teacher's attempts to elicit further essential information about a child's poor performance as witnessed in his/her completed and returned schoolwork;
  - (vii) travelling families may find it difficult, if not impossible, to coordinate their movements so that a planned meeting with a teacher 'in the field' occurs. Interstate travellers would need to be serviced by teachers from distance primary schools in other states.

#### PROPOSAL SIX: TELE-TUTORIAL SUPPORT

Home tutors be provided with a tutorial support service which will enable them to consult personally with their teacher over any aspect of the education program if and when the need arises.

This service be telephone-based for home tutors in metropolitan distance primary schools and decentralised correspondence units. Home tutors in schools of the air be afforded the option of privacy by enabling them to use the telephone for this service.

#### Advantages

- (i) a more efficient exchange of information can occur between the home tutor and the distance education teacher concerning

- organisational and teaching matters, resulting in home tutors having their short-term needs met. Problems associated with a particular lesson, which relate to teaching methods or learning processes and outcomes may be resolved by contacting the teacher as they arise. Adjustments can then be made at the point of learning rather than on receipt of the teacher's comments accompanying the child's corrected schoolwork some weeks later;
- (ii) the distance education teacher is able to initiate direct contact with the home tutor if he/she detects a problem in the performance of the child or the home tutor. This may enable the teacher to elicit further essential information for a comprehensive diagnosis. Effective action, whether an adjustment to the child's individual curriculum or advice to the home tutor, may then be quickly taken;
  - (iii) home tutors in schools of the air who are reluctant to use the radio transceiver to consult their teachers because of the lack of privacy of their conversation may be more willing to use a private telephone service for this purpose;
  - (iv) home tutors may be able to more quickly notify their schools about their non-receipt of resources essential to the effective implementation of the correspondence lessons;
  - (v) teachers may be able to more readily determine the enrolment status of a particular child by contacting the home tutor directly (or vice versa) rather than waiting for a particular number of 'non-returns' of completed schoolwork through the mail services.

#### Disadvantages

- (i) for many home tutors this service will be 'distance-dependent' to the extent that unacceptable monetary costs might be incurred in making long-distance telephone calls;
- (ii) home tutors in travelling families will make limited use of this service due to their restricted access to telephone services;
- (iii) many permanently resident families will be unable to utilise this service due to not having access to a telephone service or because of technical difficulties associated with telephone services in need of modernisation;

- (iv) many home tutors may not appreciate the advantages to be gained by using such a service due to their traditional practice of using mainly written correspondence to consult with their correspondence teacher;
- (v) the lack of an established working relationship between the home tutor and the teacher may inhibit the home tutor from using this service. She may either be inclined not to utilise the service or may experience difficulties in expressing her needs clearly (articulating over a telephone is not a particularly easy task in favourable circumstances);
- (vi) restrictions placed on the service by schools, such as use for 'major problems' only, use during very limited hours, and use for incoming calls only, or difficulties for the home tutor in gaining access to the appropriate teacher, may discourage home tutors from using the service for fear of 'wasting' their schools' money and their teachers' time. Distance education teachers may also be unable to take action in the short-term to contact a home tutor over a child's learning problem which was apparent in his/her completed schoolwork. All round, correspondence using the postal services would therefore continue to be used as the major means, and in many cases the only means, of exchanging information between home and school.

#### PROPOSAL SEVEN: TELE-TUTORIAL SUPPORT: CONDITIONS

To ensure effective use and maximum availability of a telephone-based tutorial support service the following conditions must be met:

1. all permanently resident families should have ready access to a modern telephone service. This requires the installation of a telephone service in the homes of those isolated families with at least one child enrolled in primary distance education and who are without a telephone service (currently about 170 families), or whose use of it is restricted by technical difficulties associated with the service (currently about 450 families);

- 
1. These figures are estimates for mid-year 1984 based on the permanently resident families in the survey without a telephone service (134) or with a telephone service which has technical problems restricting their use of it (306), and on the maximum number of permanently resident families (1412) in mid-1983 in NSW, QLD, NT, WA.

2. subsidised use of the telephone service should ensure that it is not 'distance dependent' to the extent that costs incurred in its use should not be related to the distance from home to school;
3. a cooperative working partnership between the home tutor and the distance education teacher must be established and maintained. A clear understanding of their individual and interrelated roles, the need for a regular exchange of information, and the means by which this can be achieved are essential to this process;
4. an active campaign must be mounted by schools to both inform and encourage home tutors to make use of this service;
5. the school should ensure that it has an established policy on the use of this service and that both teachers and home tutors are informed of it. There should be no undue restrictions which might inhibit its effective use by either party.

5.2.13 Existing support services have been introduced into primary distance education on the basis of satisfying needs arising from the traditional practice of the home tutor implementing the education program in the home-setting on behalf of the distance education teacher. Most, if not all, information exchanged between them has been sent by means of the mail services. Making these support services more available by reducing their 'distance dependence' and by improving the efficiency and diversity of their delivery may provide solutions for some, but not all, families.

5.2.14 Providing that certain pre-requisite conditions for their use are met, curriculum information, tele-tutorial support and educational television programs can be delivered almost instantly to the homes of most permanently resident families by means of modern telecommunications services. Other support services involving the direct personal contact so highly valued by home tutors and which provide excellent avenues for the establishment and maintenance of the cooperative working partnership



between home tutors and their distance education teachers will, however, continue to be unavailable for many home tutors. Attendance at training courses and school functions, and visiting the school will continue to favour those home tutors with children enrolled in regional distance primary schools. So too will the provision of home visits by teachers.

5.2.15 The availability of existing support services may be increased, however, by a policy of decentralisation. This would provide regional distance primary schools in which all permanently resident isolated children would be enrolled. Many more of these families would have greater access to their schools and consequently more direct personal contact between distance education teachers and home tutors and isolated children could take place. For some very remote families, and for most travelling families, however, the distance from home to school may remain a barrier. An alternative approach may be to alter the traditional practices of primary distance education by enabling the distance education teacher to be involved more directly with the isolated child at the point of learning.

### **5.3 A New Approach**

5.3.1 Recent developments in communications technology may enable the distance education teacher to more closely manage the learning activities of the isolated child. There are a variety of means for achieving this. They involve the transfer of information as electronic signals with delivery times generally less than one second. These 'electronic mailing' systems may ultimately replace the conventional mail services for the exchange of lesson materials. The equipment required will depend on the particular system in use but may include one or more of the following devices: television monitors, personal microcomputers, facsimile machines, video and audio recording and playback facilities, electronic typewriting keyboards, and so on. Most of the systems being developed and trialled for use in distance education utilise the telephone services which provide connection by landline, microwave or radio relay facilities. For families living outside the range of these services the Australian satellite may provide the connection between home and school.

5.3.2 With the appropriate equipment installed in the family home whole pages of handwriting, typing, illustrations, and so on, may be transmitted and received almost instantly. An exchange of information between home and school may take place with a speed approaching that of a 'face to face' discussion between a teacher and a pupil in a conventional classroom. In this manner isolation in both space and time may be largely overcome for many children enrolled in distance primary schools throughout Australia. Even so, those families without adequate electrical power supplies and without ready access to modern telephone services may be unable to participate. They include many 'travelling' and 'permanently resident' families. In order to overcome these obstacles, at least for the latter families, the conditions described above by proposals four (electrical power supplies) and seven (tele-tutorial support: conditions) must be satisfied.

5.3.3 For the distance education teacher there may be a change in the nature of teaching and in the requirements for curriculum materials. The teacher could more closely manage the isolated child's learning activities by being more responsive in the short-term (perhaps on a daily or hourly basis). The teacher could send curriculum materials (assignment sheets, illustrations, tests, etc) to a group of isolated children simultaneously and receive responses from individual children on completion of the work. This work could be corrected and assessed and sent to the child shortly afterwards. In this way:

- . rapid feedback between home and school could enable short-term adjustments to be made to an individual child's learning;
- . diagnostic procedures could be administered to determine the nature of a child's learning difficulties;
- . a tutorial service could be provided for an individual child whose performance (well above or below average) warranted special intervention by the teacher at the point of learning;
- . computer-assisted learning programs could be provided as a supplement to daily lessons;
- . 'electronic libraries' containing reference materials in audio-visual, graphic and written formats could provide lesson-related learning resources which are otherwise unobtainable or difficult to obtain, with delays of some weeks while these materials are sent through the conventional mail services.

5.3.4 For the isolated child there may be a change in the style of learning with a shift away from the present degree of reliance on the home tutor for organisational and teaching support. Weekly or daily lessons could be received by 'electronic mailing' and the completed work returned in the same way. The child could be directed to make, or might initiate, contact with the distance education teacher or an 'electronic library'. The child could participate in daily 'air' lessons, exchanging both audio and visual information with the teacher. A continuous, short-term commitment (perhaps daily) to interact directly with the distance education teacher might result in the isolated child developing the attitude and skills of an 'independent learner' in the home-setting.

5.3.5 For the home tutor there may be a change in the nature of her role as the balance of the responsibility for teaching the child at the point of learning shifts to the distance education teacher. A closer management of the child's learning by the distance education teacher through 'electronic mailing' could relieve the home tutor of many of the concerns and worries associated with the teaching tasks. Lack of experience might become less significant and the difficulty of managing the learning activities of a number of children simultaneously may be reduced. The demands on her available time might also be lessened as the requirements for preparation and correction of lessons are minimised.

5.3.6 For distance primary schools the adoption of new forms of communication such as 'electronic mailing' will have implications not only for the delivery of educational services to isolated families but, more importantly, for the traditional practices of primary distance education. Changes to methods of teaching and learning are to be expected. Existing services may require rationalisation to ensure that they complement rather than duplicate the benefits of new forms of communication. However, there may be some aspects of existing services which cannot be duplicated. It is unlikely that electronic communications can provide home tutors and isolated children with the highly valued benefits of socialisation provided by school camps, home tutor training and home visits. On the other hand closer management of the child's learning activities by the distance education teacher, together with tutorial support services, may provide home tutors with

the assistance and advice which they might currently seek from school visits, home visits or through written correspondence. An essential task for educational research is, therefore, to assist curriculum planners to determine more precisely the impact of new forms of communications on the methods of teaching and learning and to assist in identifying the future needs which educational services must be designed to meet.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Pro-formas for data collection**

- 1. Pupil profiles, February 1983**
- 2. School enrolments, 1982**

1982

(YEARS 1-7)

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
ENROLMENT (E)												
ADMISSIONS (A)												
TERMINATIONS (T)												
TURNOVER (A + T)												

Enrolment: The number of pupils on the rolls at the end of each month

Admissions: The number of pupils enrolled/admitted during each month

Terminations: The number of pupils leaving/terminating during each month



ANALYSIS OF PUPILS WHO APPEAR ON THE ROLLS OF  
THE CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS/SCHOOLS OF THE AIR  
DURING FEBRUARY 1983

Purpose of information collection: to determine the number and nature of those pupils who:

- (i) appear on the rolls (from previous years) during February 1983
- (ii) enrolled/terminated during February 1983

Please answer all questions. If any information is not known write 'NK'.

This relates to information point No 7 on the next page

7. PUPIL'S RESIDENTIAL STATUS

Considering the occupation of parents, purpose for enrolment, length of enrolment, previous enrolments, number of schools attended, etc.

classify each pupil according to one of these categories:

- PR - Permanently Resident e.g. station manager/owner
- TW - Travelling but Mainly Working e.g. itinerant worker, plant operator
- TP - Travelling but Mainly for Pleasure e.g. long service leave, holiday trip
- O - Overseas
- M - Medical
- Other - please indicate
- DK - Don't Know

Thank you for your help.

Peter Taylor  
Research Officer  
National Centre for Research on Rural Education  
University of Western Australia  
1983

Teacher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Year Level(s)/Course(s) Taught: \_\_\_\_\_

	PUPIL	PUPIL	PUPIL
1. Pupil's Name Sex (M/F) Date of birth			
2. Address: Home location  Postal (if different)			
3. Year Level  Course (if applicable)			
4. Date of current admission			
5. Date of termination (if applicable)			
6. Previous enrolments (if applicable)  Date(s) Length(s) of enrolment(s)			
7. Pupil's Residential Status PR, TW, TP, O, M, Other (see front sheet)			

## **APPENDIX B**

**Copy of Questionnaire**

# National Centre for Research on Rural Education



University of  
Western Australia

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA  
NEDLANDS  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA 6009  
TELEPHONE (09) 380-3338 TELEX AA 92992



Government of  
Western Australia

October 31, 1983

Dear

The National Centre for Research on Rural Education is investigating possible changes in the delivery of distance education services. A study being conducted by Peter Taylor is considering how traditional primary-level correspondence school and school of the air lessons might benefit by being combined with itinerant teacher services and audio and visual lesson materials transmitted by newly developed communications technologies. The Departments of Education in New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory are cooperating in this project.

As part of the study we are seeking information in the participating states from all parents and home tutors/supervisors. That information will be helpful in providing answers about who is involved in distance education and what problems have to be met in educating children at home.

Information will be gathered from parents and home tutors/supervisors by means of a widely distributed questionnaire, a copy of which is enclosed. I should be very grateful if you will complete and return it to me in the envelope provided as soon as possible, and in any event by November 30 at the very latest.

I realise that some of the questions asked are sensitive and involve confidential information. Please accept my assurance that the questionnaires are completely anonymous and that the research team has absolutely no interest in the identification of individuals. I hope you will see that the information we are seeking is important and necessary, even if it is of a confidential nature.

Please regard the completion and return of this questionnaire as very important. If you have any questions at all please do not hesitate to write or telephone (reverse charges) me or Peter Taylor.

Yours sincerely

Derrick Tomlinson  
Director

Enc

# National Centre for Research on Rural Education



University of  
Western Australia

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA  
NEDLANDS  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA 6000  
TELEPHONE (08) 388-3838 TELEX AA 92982



Government of  
Western Australia

## SURVEY OF SUPPORT SERVICES FOR HOME SUPERVISORS/TUTORS

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

#### PLEASE READ CAREFULLY BEFORE YOU START

1. Part A 'The Family' and Part B 'The Family Home' are to be completed by the parent or guardian
  
2. Part C 'Correspondence Lessons'
  - 2.1 The person who regularly supervises correspondence lessons ('papers') completes Parts C1 & C2
  - 2.2 The person who regularly supervises School of the Air sessions (air lessons, assemblies, hobby or interest groups) completes Part C3

**PLEASE NOTE:** For Parts B & C: If there is more than one child being supervised then consider in your responses only the eldest child of primary school age who is receiving supervision

3. Place the completed questionnaire in the envelope provided, seal it and post it (if possible) before 30 November 1983. No stamp is required.

Thank you.

#### PLEASE NOTE:

All information supplied by you will be regarded as strictly confidential and will be used only for the purposes of this research.

PART A - THE FAMILY

This is to be completed by the parent or guardian

E

Columns 1-5

1. Please give the following information on those children who are at home and enrolled in the Primary Correspondence School.  
(please fill in the appropriate spaces)

	CHILD A	CHILD B	CHILD C	CHILD D	CHILD E
AGE (years & months)	__y __m	__y __m	__y __m	__y __m	__y __m
SEX (m - male f - female)	__	__	__	__	__
YEAR LEVEL (1 to 7)	__	__	__	__	__

OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Col 6  
card 1

Cols 7 - 26

m=1  
f=2

Cols 27 - 31

Cols 32 - 36

2. If your child is enrolled in a School of the Air please indicate by placing a tick in the appropriate space

School of the Air	CHILD A	CHILD B	CHILD C	CHILD D	CHILD E
Cairns					
Charleville					
Mt Isa					

(1) - (5)

Cols 37 - 41

Cols 42 - 46

Cols 47 - 51

3. Are you presently employing a supervisor (eg. governess) to help with your child's (children's) learning?

Yes  1  
No  2

Col 52

4. Are you presently employing a 'home-help' for the purpose of giving you more time to supervise your child's (children's) learning?

Yes  1  
No  2

Col 53



This is to be completed by the parent or guardian

D

1. Please give the following information on those children who are at home and enrolled in The Correspondence School (K to 6), Sydney  
(please fill in the appropriate space)

OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Cols 5,6  
card 01

	CHILD A	CHILD B	CHILD C	CHILD D	CHILD E
AGE (years & months)	__y __m	__y __m	__y __m	__y __m	__y __m
SEX (m - male f - female)	__	__	__	__	__

Cols 7-26

m=1  
f=2  
Cols 27-31

2. Are you presently employing a supervisor (eg. governess) to help with your child's (children's) learning? (please tick the appropriate box)

Yes

1

No

2

Col 32

3. Are you presently employing a 'home-help' for the purpose of giving you more time to supervise your child's (children's) learning?  
(please tick the appropriate box)

Yes

1

No

2

Col 33

This is to be completed by the parent or guardian

C

1. Please give the following information on those children who are at home and enrolled in a Decentralised Correspondence Centre or the School of the Air Broken Hill. (please fill in the appropriate spaces)

OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Cols 5,6  
card 01

	CHILD A	CHILD B	CHILD C	CHILD D	CHILD E
AGE (years & months)	__y __m	__y __m	__y __m	__y __m	__y __m
SEX (m - male, f - female)	__	__	__	__	__
YEAR LEVEL OF CORRESPONDENCE COURSE (K to 6)	__	__	__	__	__

Cols 7-26

m=1  
f=2  
Cols 27-31

Cols 32-36

2. In which school is (are) your child (children) enrolled? (Please indicate by placing a tick in the appropriate space)

2.1 Decentralised Correspondence Centres	CHILD A	CHILD B	CHILD C	CHILD D	CHILD E
Bourke					
Cobar					
Nyngan					
Walgett					
2.2 School of the Air Broken Hill					

(1) - (5)

Cols 37-41

Cols 42-46

Cols 47-51

Cols 52-56

Cols 57-61

a. which correspondence course: New South Wales?

1

Col 62

or South Australia?

2

b. where is the schoolwork marked: SOTA Broken Hill?

1

Col 63

or S.A. Correspondence School?

2

3. Are you presently employing a supervisor (eg. governess) to help with your child's (children's) learning? (please tick the appropriate box)

Yes

1

Col 64

No

2

4. Are you presently employing a 'home-help' for the purpose of giving you more time to supervise your child's (children's) learning?

(please tick the appropriate box)

Yes

1

Col 65

No

2

This is to be completed by the parent or guardian

Cols 1-4

A.

1. Please give the following information on those children who are at home and enrolled in the Distance Education Centre (Years 1 to 7) or a School of the Air (Years 1 to 7). (please fill in the appropriate spaces)

OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Cols 5,6 card 01

	CHILD A	CHILD B	CHILD C	CHILD D	CHILD E
AGE (years & months)	__ y __ m	__ y __ m	__ y __ m	__ y __ m	__ y __ m
SEX (m - male f - female)	__	__	__	__	__
YEAR LEVEL (1 to 7)	__	__	__	__	__

Cols 7-26

m=1  
f=2  
Cols 27-31

Cols 32-36

2. In which school is (are) your child (children) enrolled? (please tick the appropriate space(s))

	CHILD A	CHILD B	CHILD C	CHILD D	CHILD E
Distance Education Centre					
School of the Air:					
Carnarvon					
Kalgoorlie					
Kimberley					
Meekatharra					
Pt Hedland					

(1) - (5)

Cols 37-41

Cols 42-46

Cols 47-51

Cols 52-56

Cols 57-61

Cols 62-66

3. Are you presently employing a supervisor (eg. governess) to help with your child's (children's) learning?

(please tick the appropriate box)

Yes

No

1

Col 67

2

4. Are you presently employing a 'home-help' for the purpose of giving you more time to supervise your child's (children's) learning?

(please tick the appropriate box)

Yes

No

1

Col 68

2

PART A - THE FAMILY

This is to be completed by the parent or guardian

Cols 1-4

B

OFFICIAL USE ONLY

1. Please give the following information on those children who are at home and enrolled in a School of the Air (include those from Years 1 to 7 and in the Special Class (S.C.)). (please fill in the appropriate spaces)

Cols 5,6  
card 01

	CHILD A	CHILD B	CHILD C	CHILD D	CHILD E
AGE (years & months)	__ y __ m	__ y __ m	__ y __ m	__ y __ m	__ y __ m
SEX (m - male f - female)	__	__	__	__	__
YEAR LEVEL (S.C. or 1 to 7)	__	__	__	__	__

Cols 7-26

m=1  
f=2  
Cols 27-31

Cols 32-36

2. In which school is (are) your child (children) enrolled?  
(Please indicate by placing a tick in the appropriate space)

School of the Air	CHILD A	CHILD B	CHILD C	CHILD D	CHILD E
Alice Springs					
Katherine					

(1) - (5)

Cols 37-41

Cols 42-46

3. Are you presently employing a supervisor (eg. governess) to help with your child's (children's) learning? (please tick the appropriate box)

Yes   
No

1  
Col 47  
2

4. Are you presently employing a 'home-help' for the purpose of giving you more time to supervise your child's (children's) learning?  
(please tick the appropriate box)

Yes   
No

1  
Col 48  
2

PART B - THE FAMILY HOME

This is to be completed by the parent or guardian

If there is more than one child being supervised then refer in your responses only to the eldest child of primary school age who is receiving supervision

Cols 1-5

E				
---	--	--	--	--

1. Which of the following best describes your family home?  
(please tick the appropriate box)

- a. mobile dwelling   
(eg. caravan, boat, campervan)
- b. permanent dwelling   
(eg. homestead, house, flat)
- c. temporary dwelling   
(eg. shed, tent)

OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Col 6  
card 2

1

Col 7

2

3

2. How long have you lived at your present address?  
(please fill in the appropriate space)

- \_\_\_\_\_ years
- or \_\_\_\_\_ months
- or \_\_\_\_\_ weeks

Cols 8,9

Cols 10,11

Cols 12,13

3. How far from your home is... (please fill in the appropriate spaces)

	<u>by road</u>	OR <u>by air if this is your usual means of transport</u>
a. the school to which you send your child's correspondence lessons? (Primary Correspondence School)	_____ miles or _____ kms	_____ miles or _____ kms
b. the nearest government school offering courses at the appropriate level for your child?	_____ miles or _____ kms	_____ miles or _____ kms

Cols 14-16

Cols 17-19

Cols 20-22

Cols 23-25

4. Where in the home are correspondence lessons usually done?  
(please tick the appropriate box)

- a. in a special room used only for schoolwork (ie. schoolroom)
- b. in part of a room with a space set aside and furnished as a permanent schoolwork area (eg. child's bedroom)
- c. in part of a room at a table that is used for other purposes as well (eg. kitchen table)
- d. somewhere else (please describe \_\_\_\_\_)

1

2

3

4

Col 26

5. What is the main source of electrical power in your home?  
 (please tick the appropriate box)

- a. we don't have electrical power  1
- b. the State/Territory public 240 volt system  2
- c. 240 volt generator - running continuously during waking hours  3 *Col 27*
- d. 240 volt generator - operated mainly in the evening and morning, but whenever needed during the day  4
- e. 240 volt generator - operated only in the evening and morning  5
- f. other (please describe \_\_\_\_\_)  6

6. How often is your mail delivered to you or collected by you? (in good weather)  
 (please tick the appropriate box)

- a. every weekday  1
- b. 2 or 3 times a week  2
- c. once a week  3 *Col 28*
- d. once a fortnight  4
- e. once a month  5

7. How long does it normally take from the time you mail work to the P.C.S. for marking until you receive it back?

(please fill in the appropriate space)

\_\_\_\_\_ weeks OR \_\_\_\_\_ days *Cols 29-30*

7.1 What is the longest time it can take due to 'bad' weather?  
 (ie. the wet season, rain, flood, storms, etc.)

(please tick the box or fill in the appropriate space)

- a. does not take any longer  01 *Cols 31-32*
- b. \_\_\_\_\_ weeks OR \_\_\_\_\_ days

7.2 What is the town and postcode of your postal address?

eg. Dongara

6	5	2	5
---	---	---	---

 \_\_\_\_\_ 

--	--	--	--

  
 (town) (postcode) (town) (postcode) *Cols 33-36*



8. Is a telephone (your own or someone else's) available for you to use in connection with your child's correspondence education? ('telephone' includes: public or private telephone, radio telephone, outpost radio) (please tick the appropriate box)

- a. readily available - I can use it whenever I want to  1
- b. not readily available - I can use it but not always when I want to  2 Col 37
- c. not available  3

IF 'not available'  PLEASE GO TO PART C (page 5)

8.1 Do you use the telephone to contact the Primary Correspondence School? (please tick the appropriate box)

- Yes  1
- No  2 Col 38

IF 'No'  GO TO QUESTION 8.3. DO NOT ANSWER QUESTION 8.2

8.2 Is your use of the telephone to contact the P.C.S. restricted by any of the following? (You may tick more than one box)

- a. difficulties in getting access to a telephone (eg. distance to telephone, limits on use, etc.)  1
- b. the cost of a telephone call  2
- c. difficulties in hearing or being heard clearly  3
- d. difficulties in using a party line (eg. delays, privacy, etc.)  4 Col 39
- e. delays in being connected by the operator  5
- f. limits by the operator on the length of a telephone call  6
- g. other (please state \_\_\_\_\_)  7

NOW GO TO PART C (page 5)

8.3 Why do you not use the telephone to contact the P.C.S.? (You may tick more than one box)

- a. because I don't feel a need to  1
- b. because of the cost of a telephone call  2
- c. because of difficulties in getting access to a telephone (eg. distance to telephone, limits on use)  3
- d. because of delays in being connected by the operator  4 Col 40
- e. because of difficulties in using a party line (eg. delays, privacy, etc.)  5
- f. because I prefer to use the School of the Air transceiver  6
- g. because of difficulties in hearing or being heard clearly  7
- h. other reasons (please state \_\_\_\_\_)  8

PART C - CORRESPONDENCE LESSONS

C1 - Supervision

This is to be completed by the person who regularly supervises the correspondence lessons ('papers')

PLEASE NOTE: If you supervise more than one child then refer in your responses only to the eldest child of primary school age who is receiving supervision.

1. What is your relationship to the child you supervise?

(please tick the appropriate box)

- a. mother  1
- b. father  2
- c. brother/sister  3
- d. employed supervisor (eg. governess)  4
- e. other (please describe \_\_\_\_\_)  5

OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Col 41

2. For how long have you been supervising correspondence lessons?

(please fill in the appropriate space)

\_\_\_\_\_ weeks

Cols 42,43

or \_\_\_\_\_ months

Cols 44,45

or \_\_\_\_\_ years

Cols 46,47

3. How confident do you feel when supervising the child's learning?

- a. confident all of the time  1
- b. confident most of the time  2
- c. confident only some of the time  3
- d. never confident  4

Col 48

4. Supervising Tasks

4.1 How much does each of the following supervising tasks worry you?  
(please tick the appropriate boxes)

	WORRIES ME A LOT	WORRIES ME A LITTLE	DOES NOT WORRY ME	(1) (2) (3)
a. judging the standard of the child's schoolwork	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 49
b. recognising whether the child has a learning difficulty	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 50
c. judging the seriousness of any learning difficulty	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 51
d. knowing how to help the child overcome a learning difficulty	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 52
e. finding sufficient time to supervise the child's learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 53
f. judging how much help to give the child	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 54
g. knowing what to expect of the child for his/her age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 55
h. knowing how much time to spend on each activity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 56

4.2 How much does each of the following worry you?  
(please tick the appropriate boxes)

	DOES NOT APPLY TO ME	WORRIES ME A LOT	WORRIES ME A LITTLE	DOES NOT WORRY ME	(1) - (4)
a. not being trained to supervise	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 57
b. being both parent and supervisor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 58
c. not being regarded as a 'real' teacher by the child	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 59
d. having a teacher(s) who is (are) largely unaware of the home circumstances	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 60

4.3 To what extent does each of the following apply to you...?  
(please tick the appropriate boxes)

	APPLIES TO A LARGE EXTENT	APPLIES TO SOME EXTENT	DOES NOT APPLY	(1) (2) (3)
a. I feel isolated with my supervising worries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 61
b. I tend to blame myself when the child is slow to learn	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 62
c. I feel 'left out' of the teacher's comments on the child's work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 63
d. I feel that the P.C.S. does not adequately support me as a supervisor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 64
e. I am not certain what the P.C.S. expects of me as a supervisor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 65

4.4 Which (if any) of the following problems do you have when supervising the correspondence lessons? (You may tick more than one box)

a. I don't have any problems with the correspondence lessons	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
b. explaining them to the child	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
c. making them interesting for the child	<input type="checkbox"/>	3
d. adapting them to the child's ability	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
e. understanding them myself	<input type="checkbox"/>	5
f. carrying out the instructions/ processes	<input type="checkbox"/>	6
g. getting the required books and materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	7
h. other problem(s) (please describe	<input type="checkbox"/>	8
_____		
_____		
_____		

4.5 Comments - please use this space if you wish to make any further comments regarding problems of supervising the correspondence lessons

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**PART C - CORRESPONDENCE LESSONS**

**C2 - Support from the School**

This is to be completed by the person who regularly supervises the correspondence lessons.

**PLEASE NOTE:** If you supervise more than one child, then refer in your responses only to the eldest child of primary school age receiving supervision

**1. Making contact with the Primary Correspondence School**

1.1 Have you requested help from the P.C.S. this year (since January 1983) over some aspects of the correspondence lessons?

(Please tick the appropriate box)

Yes

No

1 Col 67  
2

IF 'No'  GO TO QUESTION 1.5 (page 9), DO NOT ANSWER QUESTIONS 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4

1.2 Please indicate the number of times you have made contact with the P.C.S. in each of the following ways... (since January 1983) (place a tick in the appropriate spaces)

	never	once	2 or 3 times	about once/month	about once/fortnight	about once/week	several times/week	(1) - (7)
a. visited the school								Col 68
b. wrote letter/note								Col 69
c. made telephone call								Col 70
d. used the School of the Air transceiver								Col 71
e. other (please describe _____)								Col 72
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	

1.3 How much help was the P.C.S. able to give you when you contacted it?  
(please tick the appropriate boxes)

	Did not request this sort of help	A lot of help	A little help	No help	(1) - (4)
a. <u>teaching/learning difficulties</u> (eg. unsuitability of correspondence lessons, child's learning difficulty, advice on teaching ideas, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 73
b. <u>organizational problems</u> (eg. arrangement for travel away, lack of books or materials to complete a lesson, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 74

1.4 Comments - please use this space if you wish to comment further on making contact with the P.C.S.

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**NOW GO TO QUESTION 2 (page 10) DO NOT ANSWER QUESTIONS 1.5, 1.6**

PLEASE ANSWER QUESTIONS 1.5 and 1.6 IF YOUR ANSWER TO QUESTION 1.1 WAS 'No'

1.5 Why have you not requested help from the P.C.S. this year?  
(you may tick more than one box)

- a. I did not need any help  1
- b. I received help from other supervisors  2
- c. it would take too long to get a reply from the school  3
- d. I felt that the school could not help  4
- e. the P.C.S. has not encouraged me to contact it for help  5
- f. other (please describe \_\_\_\_\_)  6

Col 75



1.6 Comments - please use this space if you wish to comment further on your answer(s) to question 1.5

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Cols 1 - 5

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2. Home Visits

2.1 How often has the child been visited at home this year (since January 1983) (OFFICIAL SCHOOL VISITORS ONLY)  
(Place a tick in the appropriate spaces)

Col. 6  
Card 3

	never	once	twice	3 times	more than 3 times	(1) - (5)
a. by the teacher who corrects the correspondence lessons?						Col 7
b. by the child's air-lesson teacher (School of the Air only)?						Col 8
c. by an itinerant teacher?						Col 9
d. by another teacher ?						Col 10

IF 'never'  FOR a, b, c, & d, GO TO QUESTION 2.4 (page 11)  
DO NOT ANSWER QUESTIONS 2.2, 2.3

2.2 How useful was (were) the home visit(s) for each of the following...  
(please tick the appropriate boxes)

	Very Useful	Useful	Not Useful	(1)	(2)	(3)
a. advising you on supervising the child?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 11		
b. informing you about the child's progress?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 12		
c. giving you a feeling of support?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 13		
d. assisting the child with schoolwork?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 14		
e. giving the child extra educational activities (eg. games, drama, crafts, physical education)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 15		
f. informing the teacher about the home environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 16		
g. establishing personal contact between the teacher and the child?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 17		
h. enabling the teacher to assess any learning difficulties?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 18		

2.3 Comments - please use this space if you wish to comment further on why you do/do not find home visits useful...

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NOW GO TO QUESTION 2.5 (page 11) DO NOT ANSWER QUESTION 2.4

PLEASE ANSWER QUESTION 2.4 IF YOUR ANSWERS TO QUESTION 2.1 WERE ALL 'never

2.4 You have not had a home visit since January 1983 because...  
(you may tick more than one box)

- a. you do not want one  1
- b. none was arranged  2
- c. it was not convenient  3
- d. the child has only recently been enrolled  4
- e. other (please describe \_\_\_\_\_)  5

Col 19

NOW GO TO QUESTION 2.5

2.5 Which type of teacher would you prefer for a home-visit? (Please consider the types of teachers and not individual personalities)  
(please tick the appropriate box)

- a. I do not want a home visit  1
- b. the teacher who corrects the child's correspondence lessons  2
- c. the child's air-lesson teacher (School of the Air only)  3
- d. an itinerant teacher  4
- e. another teacher (please specify \_\_\_\_\_)  5

Col 20

2.6 Comment - please use this space if you wish to comment on why you want/do not want a home visit

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3. Supervisor Training

3.1 Have you attended a supervisors' meeting, conference or seminar during the last two years (1982 and 1983)?  
(please tick the appropriate box)

- a. no  1
- b. once  2
- c. twice  3
- d. three times  4
- e. more than 3 times  5

Col 21

IF 'no'  GO TO QUESTION 3.4 (page 13) DO NOT ANSWER QUESTIONS 3.2 and 3.3

3.2 How useful was (were) the meeting(s) for each of the following...  
(please tick the appropriate boxes)

	Very Useful	Useful	Not Useful	(1) (2) (3)
a. meeting with other supervisors with concerns similar to mine	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 22
b. learning what to expect from the child for his/her age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 23
c. understanding the aims of the correspondence lessons	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 24
d. picking up techniques for supervision	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 25
e. making me more confident as a supervisor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 26
f. giving me the opportunity to register opinions about the correspondence lessons	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 27

3.3

Comment - please use this space if you wish to comment on why you did/did not find the meeting(s) helpful

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NOW GO TO QUESTION 4 (page 14) DO NOT ANSWER QUESTIONS 3.4, 3.5

PLEASE ANSWER QUESTIONS 3.4, 3.5 IF YOUR ANSWER TO QUESTION 3.1 WAS 'no'

3.4 Why have you not attended a meeting for supervisors during the last two years (1982 and 1983)? (You may tick more than one box)

- a. I did not wish to attend
- b. I wished to go but was prevented by circumstances (eg. illness, weather, etc.)
- c. none was organised
- d. I could not afford the costs
- e. other (please describe \_\_\_\_\_)

1  
2  
3  
4  
5

Col 28

3.5 Comment - please use this space if you wish to comment on why you would/would not like to attend a supervisors' meeting

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4. Corrected lessons returned by the P.C.S. (including written comments and teacher tapes)

4.1 How useful are the corrected lessons from the P.C.S. for...  
(please tick the appropriate boxes)

	Very Useful	Useful	Not Useful	(1) (2) (3)
a. keeping the child interested in his/her schoolwork?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 29
b. helping the child overcome any learning difficulties	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 30
c. advising you about supervising the child	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 31
d. providing the child with a reward for his/her achievement(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 32
e. informing you of the child's progress	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 33

4.2 Comments - please use this space if you would like to make any further comments on corrected lessons returned by the school

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5. Other School Services

5.1 How helpful are the following school services to you in supervising the child's learning  
(please tick the appropriate boxes)

	We do not have this	Very Helpful	Helpful	Not Helpful	(1) - (4)
a. set of supervisor's guidelines (eg. supervisors' handbook)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 34
b. regular printed information from the school (eg. P.C.S. newsletter)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 35
c. supervisors' air session (School of the Air only)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 36
d. school camps, excursions, mini-schools, activity days, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 37
e. video cassette tapes supplied by the school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 38
f. audio cassette tapes supplied by the school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 39

This is to be completed if the child is enrolled in a School of the Air, by the person who regularly supervises the air lessons.

PLEASE NOTE: If you supervise more than one child refer in your responses only to the eldest child of primary school age receiving supervision.

1. What is your relationship to the child?

(please tick the appropriate box)

- a. mother  1
- b. father  2
- c. brother/sister  3
- d. employed supervisor (eg. governess)  4
- e. other (please specify \_\_\_\_\_)  5

Col 40

2. Quality of radio reception during air lessons

(please tick the appropriate boxes)

- |  | ALWAYS                   | USUALLY                  | SOMETIMES                | RARELY                   | NEVER                    | (1) - (5) |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------|
| a. How often can the child hear the School of the Air clearly?             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Col 41    |
| b. How often can the School of the Air hear the child clearly?             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Col 42    |
| c. How often can the child hear <u>most</u> of his/her classmates clearly? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Col 43    |

2.1 Comments - please use this space if you would like to comment further on the quality of radio reception during contact with the School of the Air

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3. School of the Air Services

3.1 The School of the Air may provide the child with a number of services. How much benefit to the child is each of the following...? (please tick the appropriate boxes)

	NOT PROVIDED	LARGE BENEFIT	SOME BENEFIT	NO BENEFIT	(1) - (4)
a. daily contact with other children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 44
b. assistance with his/her correspondence lessons	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 45
c. worthwhile activities additional to correspondence lessons	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 46
d. participation in a hobby or interest group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 47

3.2 The School of the Air may provide the supervisor of the correspondence lessons with a number of services. How much benefit to the supervisor of the correspondence lessons is each of the following...? (please tick the appropriate boxes)

	NOT PROVIDED	LARGE BENEFIT	SOME BENEFIT	NO BENEFIT	(1) - (4)
a. radio contact with other supervisors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 48
b. advice or guidance on supervising the correspondence lessons	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 49
c. information about worthwhile activities additional to correspondence lessons	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 50
d. radio contact with a teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Col 51

4. Comments - please use this space if you wish to comment further on the services provided by the School of the Air

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## **APPENDIX C**

### **Response Rates to Survey**

Return Rate of Survey of Home Tutors - February 24, 1984

WESTERN AUSTRALIA	SENT	RETURNED
DEC PR	81	52 (64%)
DEC TR	69	56 (81%)
SOTA		
Carnarvon	22	18 (82%)
Kimberley	24	18 (75%)
Kalgoorlie	32	27 (84%)
Pt Hedland	14	14 (100%)
Meekatharra	34	30 (88%)
<b>WESTERN AUSTRALIA Total</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>216 (78%)</b>
NEW SOUTH WALES		
CS PR	199	161 (81%)
CS TR	83	45 (54%)
DCU Walgett	15	14 (93%)
DCU Cobar	20	13 (65%)
DCU Nyngan	10	5 (50%)
DCU Bourke	30	23 (77%)
SOTA Broken Hill	93	88 (95%)
<b>NEW SOUTH WALES Total</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>351 (78%)</b>
QUEENSLAND		
NON-SOTA PR	340	160 (47%)
TR	89	47 (53%)
SOTA's		
Cairns	150	116 (77%)
Charleville	200	180 (90%)
Mt Isa	115	84 (73%)
<b>QUEENSLAND Total</b>	<b>894</b>	<b>587 (66%)</b>
NORTHERN TERRITORY		
Alice Springs SOTA	71	50 (70%)
Katherine SOTA	109	73 (67%)
<b>NORTHERN TERRITORY TOTAL</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>123 (68%)</b>
<b>TOTAL SURVEY</b>	<b>1800</b>	<b>1276 (71%)</b>

Adjustments for non-valid returns, and errors in questionnaires sent:

$$\frac{\text{adjusted total return rate: } 1226}{1681} = 73\%$$

## **APPENDIX D**

### **Population Analyses, February 1983**

- 1. New South Wales**
- 2. Queensland**
- 3. Western Australia**
- 4. Northern Territory**

# 1. THE PUPIL POPULATION OF NEW SOUTH WALES

## 1.1 Total Enrolments

Data provided by each school indicate the total enrolments of the distance primary schools of New South Wales in July 1982. They are presented in Tables 1A, 1B and 1C.

TABLE 1A: The Correspondence School - Total Enrolments - July 1982

Pre-School	Infants Dept	Primary Dept	Total
54	230	280	564
	510		

TABLE 1B: Broken Hill School of the Air - Total Enrolments - Term 2, 1982

	Infants Dept	Primary Dept	Total
NSW Correspondence Course	66	42	108
SA Correspondence Course	14	33	47
Total	80	75	155

TABLE 1C: Decentralised Correspondence Units - Total Enrolments - July 1982

	Infants Dept	Primary Dept	Total
Bourke	24	21	45
Cobar	10	14	24
Nyngan	9	5	14
Walgett	14	11	25
Total	57	51	108

### Observations (Tables 1A, 1B, 1C)

1. There were 827 pupils enrolled in distance primary schools in New South Wales in July 1982.

2. Of these 827 pupils about 68 per cent (564 pupils) were enrolled in the Correspondence School, Sydney; 19 per cent (155 pupils) were enrolled in Broken Hill School of the Air; 13 per cent (108 pupils) were enrolled in the four decentralised correspondence units in the north of New South Wales.
3. Of the four correspondence units, Bourke had the largest enrolment of 45 pupils and Nyngan the smallest with 14 pupils.

### 1.2 Residential Status

Data from individual teacher returns indicate the residential status of pupils comprising the total enrolments of the distance primary departments of New South Wales in February 1983. These are presented in Table 2. For the terms used to characterise the residential status of pupils see chapter 2.

TABLE 2: Residential Status - February 1983

	Primary Department			Overseas	Special <sup>2</sup>	Total
	Permanently Resident	Travelling for work	Travelling for pleasure			
Correspondence School	304	56	80	170	17	627
		440				
Broken Hill School of the Air	141	0	0	NA <sup>1</sup>	NA	141
Correspondence Units						
Bourke	30	0	0	NA	NA	30
Cobar	25	0	0	NA	NA	25
Nyngan	8	1	0	NA	NA	9
Walgett	23	1	0	NA	NA	24
		88				

- NB: 1. NA: Not Applicable  
 2. Special: Medical, Adult, Other

#### Observations (Table 2)

1. Broken Hill School of the Air served a pupil population which was comprised entirely of 'permanently resident' pupils. Its target population was 141 pupils.
2. There was a predominance of 'permanently resident' pupils in the populations of the four correspondence units, with only two pupils being classed as 'travelling for work'. The target population of the combined correspondence units was 88 pupils.
3. The Primary Department of the Correspondence School consisted of 627 pupils of whom 440 pupils comprised the target population. Of these, 69 per cent (304 pupils) were 'permanently resident' and 31 per cent (136 pupils) were 'travellers'. The 'travellers' consisted of 56 pupils 'travelling for work' and 80 pupils 'travelling for pleasure'.



### 1.3 Mean Length of Enrolment

Data from individual teacher returns indicate the lengths of enrolment of pupils in the target populations of the primary departments of the distance primary schools of New South Wales in February 1983.

1.3.1 For purposes of comparison the 'mean lengths of enrolment' for each age-level in each school were calculated and standardised and a 'theroetical maximum mean length of enrolment' was projected. These analyses are presented in Tables 3A, 3B, and 3C and displayed in Figure 3.2 (chapter 3).

**Standardised Length of Enrolment.** Pupils in New South Wales are admitted to the infants department of primary schools in the month in which they turn 5.0 years of age. In the Correspondence School a pupil whose length of enrolment exceeds the time elapsed since s/he turned 5.0 years of age was necessarily enrolled in the pre-school class, prior to being assigned to the infants department. Calculations of mean length of enrolment per age-level for the Correspondence School have been standardised so that the maximum length of enrolment of any pupil refers to the time elapsed since that pupil was admitted to the infants department at age 5.0 years. Broken Hill School of the Air and the decentralised correspondence units do not have pre-school classes. Lengths of enrolment were therefore not standardised in these cases.

**Theoretical maximum mean length of enrolment.** This measurement reflects a theoretically stable school population containing pupils in each successive age-level who have been enrolled continuously (that is 'continuous enrolments') since reaching the age of 5.0 years. The following table demonstrates how it was projected.

Age-Level (in years)	5-5.11	6-6.11	7-7.11	8-8.11	9-9.11	10-10.11	11-11.11	12.12.11
Midpoint (Average age in years)	5.6	6.6	7.6	8.6	9.6	10.6	11.6	12.6
'Theoretical Max' (in months)	6	18	30	42	54	66	78	90

The resultant straight line graph of 'theoretical max' versus 'age level' indicates a stable pupil population and provides a benchmark against which the (standardised) mean lengths of enrolment of the various age levels of the schools may be compared.

**TABLE 3A: Correspondence School  
Mean Lengths of Enrolments - February 1983**

	No of Pupils	% of Target Population (440 pupils)	Mean Length of Enrolment (months)	Standardised Mean Length of Enrolmt (months)
5-5.11	67	15.2%	6.9	4.2
6-6.11	62	14.1%	8.9	8.5
7-7.11	67	15.2%	12.2	12.2
8-8.11	63	14.3%	14.7	14.7
9-9.11	66	15.0%	17.6	17.6
10-10.11	50	11.4%	13.9	13.9
11-11.11	48	10.9%	15.8	15.8
12-12.11	13	2.9%	12.2	12.2
M <sup>1</sup>	4	1.0%		
<b>Total</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>100%</b>		

**TABLE 3B: Broken Hill School of the Air  
Mean Lengths of Enrolment - February 1983**

	No of Pupils	% of Target Population (141 pupils)	Mean Length of Enrolment (months)
5-5.11	32	22.7%	5.9
6-6.11	19	13.5%	17.5
7-7.11	20	14.2%	25.9
8-8.11	21	14.9%	36.7
9-9.11	12	8.5%	37.1
10-10.11	17	12.1%	52.6
11-11.11	14	9.9%	50.6
12-12.11	1	0.7%	53.0
M <sup>1</sup>	5	3.5%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>100%</b>	

NB: M<sup>1</sup>: No data on lengths of enrolment.

Footnote: In Table 3A the 'standardised mean length of enrolment' differed from the 'mean length of enrolment' only for the age groups 5-5.11, 6-6.11. This indicates an absence of pupils in other age-levels who had been enrolled in the pre-school class suggesting that very few pre-school pupils continue their enrolments into the primary departments of the Correspondence School.

**TABLE 3C: Decentralised Correspondence Units (combined)  
Mean Lengths of Enrolment - February 1983**

	No of Pupils	% of Target Population (88 pupils)	Mean Length of Enrolment (months)
5-5.11	13	12.5%	4.9
6-6.11	16	18.2%	13.1
7-7.11	11	12.5%	14.5
8-8.11	19	21.6%	26.0
9-9.11	12	13.6%	28.2
10-10.11	7	8.0%	21.9
11-11.11	7	8.0%	32.7
12-12.11	2	2.3%	8.5
M <sup>1</sup>	3	3.3%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>100%</b>	

NB: M<sup>1</sup>: No data on lengths of enrolment

Observations (Tables 3A, 3B, 3C)

1. The largest divergence from the 'theoretical max' is shown by the Correspondence School. The divergence increases with the higher age levels, indicating that successively higher age levels comprise smaller proportions of pupils who have been enrolled continuously since the age of 5.0 years. A large 'turnover rate' of enrolments would be necessary to achieve this degree of instability in the pupil population of the Correspondence School.
2. The smallest divergence from the 'theoretical max' is demonstrated by Broken Hill School of the Air. Although the divergence increases with the higher year levels this may not be of significance due to the small number of pupils in the highest age levels. The pupil population of the school of the air is the most stable in terms of retention of 'continuously' enrolled pupils. This indicates a low 'turnover rate' of enrolments.
3. The pupil population of the combined correspondence units is indicated as being more unstable than that of the school of the air but less so than that of the Correspondence School. Ignoring the spurious effects of the 2% of pupils in age levels 12-12.11, there is evidence of a slightly increasing divergence with an increase in age levels. The correspondence units would require a 'turnover rate' in excess of that of the school of the air but smaller than that of the Correspondence School to create the apparent instability in its pupil population.
4. Generally Broken Hill School of the Air appears to retain its pupils for a longer time than the correspondence units which, in turn, generally retain their pupils for longer than the Correspondence School.

1.3.2 In order to confirm the findings about the relative stabilities of the target populations the number of 'continuous' enrolments was calculated for each age level. This analysis is presented in Table 4 and displayed in Figure 3.3, chapter 3. 'Continuous' enrolments are those pupils who have been enrolled at least since the age of 5.0 years.

TABLE 4: 'Continuous' Enrolments - February 1983

Age Level	Correspondence Sch.		Broken Hill School of the Air		Correspondence Units (combined)	
	Continuously Enrolled	Age Level Total	Continuously Enrolled	Age Level Total	Continuously Enrolled	Age Level Total
6-6.11	20 (32%)	62	16 (84%)	19	7 (44%)	16
7-7.11	11 (16%)	67	12 (60%)	20	2 (18%)	11
8-8.11	8 (13%)	63	13 (62%)	21	4 (21%)	19
9-9.11	8 (12%)	66	6 (50%)	12	1 (8%)	12
10-10.11	3 (6%)	50	7 (41%)	17	1 (14%)	7
11-11.11	1 (2%)	48	6 (43%)	14	1 (14%)	7
12-12.11	0	13	0	1	0	2
Total	51 (11.6%)	369 (440/100%)	60 (42.6%)	104 (141/100%)	16 (18.1%)	74 (88/100%)

NB: All percentages are of age level totals.

Observations (Table 4, Figure 3.3)

1. The pupil population of Broken Hill School of the Air comprised the largest proportion of 'continuous' enrolments compared with those of the Correspondence School and the combined correspondence units. The correspondence units contained only a slightly larger proportion of 'continuous' enrolments than the Correspondence School.
2. The 'continuous' enrolments were distributed throughout all age-levels (6.0-6.11 to 12.0-12.11) with the school of the air having consistently larger proportions of 'continuous' enrolments across all age levels.
3. The proportions of 'continuous' enrolments per age level generally decreases with an increase in the age levels for all schools.

It should be noted that the small numbers of pupils in the higher age-levels of the correspondence units reduce the significance of any differences with the other schools.

## 1.4 Turnover & Enrolments

1.4.1 Data from individual schools' enrolment records indicate the degree of stability of total enrolments of the distance primary schools of New South Wales during the year of 1982. The period March to November was chosen for analysis in order to avoid fluctuations in enrolments at the beginning and end of the year. Analyses of monthly enrolments and monthly enrolment changes are presented in Tables 5 to 7 and displayed in Figure 3.4 in chapter 3.

TABLE 5: Enrolments at the end of each Month - 1982

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Average Enrolment (Mar-Nov)
Correspondence School	535	458	470	487	517	536	532	533	515	530	518	519	515.3
Broken Hill School of the Air	125	150	150	149	148	150	151	144	157	158	157	124	151.6
Correspondence Units (combined)	94	101	102	104	105	108	108	114	116	118	121	106	110.7

### Observations (Table 5, Figure 3.4)

1. Between March and November 1982 the average enrolment of the Correspondence School (Infant + Primary Departments) was 515.3 pupils. This was more than three times larger than the average enrolment for the school of the air (151.6 pupils) and more than four times larger than that of the combined correspondence units (110.7 pupils).
2. During this period the enrolments of the Correspondence School varied to a much greater extent than those of the school of the air and the combined correspondence units. The enrolments of the latter two varied by similar but relatively small amounts.

The following terms have been used to characterise enrolment changes:

- 'Admissions' (A) - the number of pupils who were enrolled in (admitted) to the school during each month of 1982.
- 'Terminations' (T) - the number of pupils who left (terminated from) the school during each month of 1982.
- 'Turnover' (A + T) - the total number of admissions and terminations for the school during each month of 1982.

NB: Care must be exercised in the use of this term as a turnover figure may include a pupil who has been admitted and terminated and has consequently been counted twice. This may be the case more particularly when using an annual turnover figure.

**TABLE 6A: Correspondence School - Monthly Enrolment Changes - 1982**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Average Change Mar-Nov
Admissions (A)	-	78	75	49	61	36	50	48	21	49	39	59	47.6
Terminations (T)	96	58	63	32	41	17	46	47	3	34	51	60	37.1

**TABLE 6B: Broken Hill School of the Air - Monthly Enrolment Changes - 1982**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Average Change Mar-Nov
Admissions (A)	-	25	0	2	0	2	1	1	13	1	0	0	2.2
Terminations (T)	-	0	0	3	1	0	0	8	0	0	1	33	1.4

**TABLE 6C: Correspondence Units (combined) - Monthly Enrolment Changes - 1982**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Average Change Mar-Nov
Admissions (A)	-	9	2	3	2	6	2	8	2	2	5	5	3.6
Terminations (T)	-	2	1	1	1	3	2	2	0	0	2	20	1.3

**Observations (Tables 6A, 6B, 6C, Figure 3.4)**

1. The Correspondence School's admission rate, between March and November 1982, was eight times higher than that of the school of the air and the correspondence units combined.
2. The Correspondence School's termination rate, during the same period, was almost fourteen times higher than that of the school of the air and the correspondence units combined.
3. The correspondence units (combined) admission rate between March and November was slightly higher than that of the school of the air; the termination rates were almost identical.



The rate of 'turnover' of enrolments for the period March to November 1982 was calculated by expressing the sum of the average number of admissions and terminations per month as a percentage of the average enrolment. The resulting figures are then directly comparable between schools.

TABLE 7: Rates of Change of Enrolments - March - November 1982

	Admissions	Terminations	Turnover
Correspondence School	9.2% per month	7.2% per month	16.4% per month
Broken Hill School of the Air	1.5% per month	0.95% per month	2.4% per month
Correspondence Units (combined)	3.2% per month	1.2% per month	4.4% per month

Observations (Table 7)

1. The Correspondence School experienced a rate of 'turnover' of enrolments five times greater than that of the other schools/units combined. The explanation for such a large turnover rate may be that the Correspondence School attracts a much larger proportion of 'shorter-term' enrolments than the other schools.
2. The Correspondence Units, with a combined average enrolment about 75% that of the School of the Air, experienced a higher rate of change in their enrolments, between March and November 1982, than did the School of the Air.
3. The School of the Air therefore had the most stable pupil population during the school year of 1982. The Correspondence School had by far the most unstable pupil population of the three kinds of schools.

1.4.2 Data from individual teacher returns for February 1983 indicate the type of pupils, by both length of enrolment and residential status, who contribute to the instability of the enrolments of the target populations of the distance primary schools of New South Wales.

1.4.2.1 An analysis of the target population by 'enrolment type' was performed. This was based on the lengths of enrolment of pupils according to the following criteria:

- a. 'new' enrolment - the pupil had been enrolled in the school for 0, 1 or 2 months (December 1982 - February 1983);
- b. 'shorter-term' enrolment - the pupil had been enrolled in the school for between 3 and 14 months (December 1981 - November 1982);
- c. 'longer-term' enrolment - the pupil had been enrolled in the school for at least 15 months (prior to December 1981).

A summary of the analyses for a restricted target population is presented in Table 8.

TABLE 8: Enrolment Type - February 1983

	New Enrolments (6.0+ yrs)	Shorter-term Enrolments (6.0+ yrs)	Longer-term Enrolments (7.0+ yrs)	Target Population (5.0+ yrs)
Correspondence School	76 (17%)	174 (40%)	105 (23%)	440 (100%)
Broken Hill School of the Air	3 (2%)	15 (11%)	73 (52%)	141 (100%)
Correspondence Units (combined)	4 (5%)	38 (43%)	29 (33%)	88 (100%)

NB: Row percentages do not add to 100% because some age-levels have been omitted.

Observations (Table 8)

1. The target population of the Correspondence School was characterised by:
  - . a majority (57%) of 'new' and 'shorter-term' enrolments in age levels 6.0 plus years;
  - . a small minority (23%) of 'longer-term' enrolments in age levels 7.0 plus years.
2. The target population of Broken Hill School of the Air was characterised by:
  - . a majority (52%) of 'longer-term' enrolments in age levels 7.0 plus years;
  - . a small minority (13%) of 'new' and 'shorter-term' enrolments in age levels 6.0 plus years.
3. The target population of the correspondence units (combined) was characterised by:
  - . a predominance (43%) of 'shorter-term' enrolments in age levels 6.0 plus years;
  - . a larger proportion (33%) of 'longer-term' enrolments in age-levels 7.0 plus years than the Correspondence School despite a bias away from this category due to the recent establishment of two of the four correspondence units.

1.4.2.2 A cross-tabulation of the two variables 'enrolment type' and 'residential status' was performed for the restricted target population. These analyses are presented in Tables 9A, 9B and 9C and displayed in Figure 3.5 in chapter 3.

**TABLE 9A: Correspondence School - Residential Status by Enrolment Type  
February 1983**

	'New' Enrols (6.0+ yrs)	'Shorter-term' Enrolments (6.0+ yrs)	'Longer-term' Enrolments (7.0+ yrs)	Target Population (5.0+ yrs)
Permanently Resident	40 (12%)	104 (33%)	86 (24%)	440 (100%)
Travelling for Work	11 (3%)	28 (7%)	12 (3%)	
Travelling for Pleasure	25 (7%)	42 (10%)	5 (1%)	

**TABLE 9B: Broken Hill School of the Air - Residential Status by Enrolment Type  
February 1983**

	'New' Enrols (6.0+ yrs)	'Shorter-term' Enrolments (6.0+ yrs)	'Longer-term' Enrolments (7.0+ yrs)	Target Population (5.0+ yrs)
Permanently Resident	3 (2%)	15 (11%)	73 (52%)	141 (100%)

**TABLE 9C: Correspondence Units (combined) - Residential Status by Enrolment Type - February 1983**

	'New' Enrols (6.0+ yrs)	'Shorter-term' Enrolments (6.0+ yrs)	'Longer-term' Enrolments (7.0+ yrs)	Target Population (5.0+ yrs)
Permanently Resident	4 (5%)	37 (42%)	29 (33%)	88 (100%)
Travelling for Work	0	1 (1%)	0	

NB: Percentages do not add to 100% because some age levels have been omitted.

Observations (Tables 9A, 9B, 9C, Figure 3.5)

- The target population of the Correspondence School was characterised by:
  - nearly all of the 'longer-term' enrolments in ages 7.0+ years were 'permanently resident';
  - nearly all of the 'travellers' in ages 6.0+ years were 'new' or 'shorter-term' enrolments;
  - most of the 'new' and 'shorter-term' enrolments were 'permanently resident'.

2. The (target) population of Broken Hill School of the Air for ages 6.0+ years has been described earlier in section 1.421. It was homogenous with respect to 'residential status'.
3. The (target) population of the Correspondence Units for ages 6.0+ years was similarly homogenous, with only one exception.

## 2. THE PUPIL POPULATION OF QUEENSLAND

### 2.1 Total Enrolments

Data obtained from individual schools indicate the total enrolments of the distance primary schools of Queensland in July 1982. They are presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1: Distance Primary Schools  
Total Enrolments - July 1982

Pre-School Correspondence School	Primary Correspondence School							Total Enrolments
	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	Yr 6	Yr 7	
694	280	222	288	285	231	262	207	2436
	1742							

#### Observations (Table 1)

1. There were 2436 pupils enrolled in distance primary schools in Queensland in July 1982.
2. Of these 2436 pupils about 72% were enrolled in the Primary Correspondence School, Brisbane; 28% were enrolled in the Pre-School Correspondence School, Brisbane.

### 2.2 Residential Status

Data from the Primary Correspondence School indicate the status of pupils comprising the total enrolments of the primary department in February 1983. These are presented in Table 2. For the terms used to characterise the 'residential status' of pupils see chapter 2.

TABLE 2: Residential Status - February 1983

	Permanently	Travelling			Overseas	Special <sup>1</sup>	Total
	Resident	For Work	For Pleasure	By Boat			
Non School of the Air	413	99	37	37	105	25	716
		586					
Schools of the Air							
Cairns	267	1	1	0	NA <sup>2</sup>	NA	269
Charleville	326	5	0	0	NA	NA	331
Mt Isa	173	3	0	0	NA	NA	176
		776					
School of Air Status Unknown	52	5	4	3			64

NB: 1: Special - medical, other; 2: NA- Not Applicable

## Observations (Table 2)

1. The Primary Correspondence School consisted of 1556 pupils of whom 92 per cent (1426 pupils) comprised the target population and 8 per cent (130 pupils) were 'overseas' or 'special' cases.
2. Of the 1426 pupils in the target population 86 per cent (1231 pupils) were 'permanently resident' and 14 per cent (195 pupils) were 'travellers'. The travellers consisted of 113 pupils 'travelling for work', 42 pupils 'travelling for pleasure' and 40 pupils 'travelling by boat'.
3. Of the 1426 pupils in the target population 54 per cent (776 pupils) were also enrolled in schools of the air. The largest school of the air was Charleville with 331 pupils; the smallest was Mt Isa with 176 pupils.
4. The 586 pupils (41%) in the target population not enrolled in schools of the air comprised nearly all (173/195) of the travellers and about a third (413/1231) of the 'permanently resident' pupils.

### **2.3 Mean Length of Enrolment**

Data from the Primary Correspondence School indicate the lengths of enrolment of pupils in the target population in February 1983.

2.3.1 For purposes of comparison the 'mean lengths of enrolment' for each year level were calculated and standardised and a 'theoretical maximum' mean length of enrolment was projected. These analyses are presented in Tables 3A and 3B and displayed in Figure 3.2 in chapter 3.

**Standardised Length of Enrolment** - in Queensland 'normally a child is permitted to commence primary school at the beginning of the school year in which he will be aged five years before the last day of February. For some pupils in the Primary Correspondence School lengths of enrolment included time elapsed prior to the child commencing its enrolment at the beginning of the school year in which it turned five years. Lengths of enrolment have been adjusted so that for these particular cases the length of enrolment is taken to be the time elapsed from the December in the year preceding the child's commencement in year level one of the Primary Correspondence School.

**Theoretical Maximum Mean Length of Enrolment** - for an explanation of this measurement see the discussion for Western Australia in this Appendix.

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1. Primary and Secondary Education, Queensland (1981), Australian Bureau of Statistics, Brisbane. Catalogue No. 4204.3, p.1.



**TABLE 3A: P.C.S. Non-School of the Air**  
**Mean Lengths of Enrolment - February 1983**

Year Level	No of Pupils	% of Non-SOTA Target Population (586 pupils)	Mean Length of Enrolment (months)	Standardised Mean Length of Enrolment (months)
1	116	19.8%	3.4	1.1
2	58	9.9%	10.0	8.8
3	74	12.6%	14.6	13.6
4	79	13.5%	20.1	19.6
5	89	15.2%	23.9	22.3
6	86	14.7%	18.9	18.7
7	84	14.3%	33.2	32.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>586</b>	<b>100%</b>		

**TABLE 3B: P.C.S. Schools of the Air (combined)**  
**Mean Lengths of Enrolment - February 1983**

Year Level	No of Pupils	% of Non-SOTA Target Population (776 pupils)	Mean Length of Enrolment (months)	Standardised Mean Length of Enrolment (months)
1	128	16.5%	2.3	1.1
2	127	16.4%	13.0	11.9
3	109	14.0%	21.9	20.9
4	148	19.1%	31.0	30.2
5	106	13.7%	37.3	36.8
6	81	10.4%	37.2	37.1
7	77	9.9%	49.3	49.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>776</b>	<b>100%</b>		

Observations (Tables 3A, 3B, Figure 3.2)

1. Both school-types show increasing divergence from the 'theoretical max' with progression from year level one through to year level seven. This indicates that successively higher year levels contained smaller proportions of 'continuously enrolled' pupils.

2. The non-school of the air group of pupils shows a consistently larger divergence from the 'theoretical max' compared with the schools of the air group. This indicates that the former group contained a much smaller proportion of 'continuous enrolments' and therefore experienced a larger 'turnover' rate of enrolments.

2.3.2 In order to confirm the findings about the relative stabilities of the target populations the number of 'continuous' enrolments was calculated for each year level. This analysis is presented in Table 4 and displayed in Figure 3.3 in chapter 3. 'Continuous' enrolments are those pupils who have been enrolled at least since the beginning of year level one.

TABLE 4: P.C.S. 'Continuous' Enrolments - February 1983

Year Level	Schools of the Air		Non-Schools of the Air	
	Continuously Enrolled	Year Level Total	Continuously Enrolled	Year Level Total
2	108 (85%)	127	34 (59%)	58
3	84 (77%)	109	31 (42%)	74
4	107 (72%)	148	29 (37%)	79
5	64 (60%)	106	22 (25%)	89
6	36 (44%)	81	12 (14%)	86
7	37 (48%)	77	23 (27%)	84
Total	436 (56.2%)	648 (776/100%)	151 (25.8%)	470 (586/100%)

NB: All percentages are of year level totals

Observations (Table 4, Figure 3.3)

1. The 'schools of the air' group had a majority (56%) of their (target) population in years 2 to 7 enrolled 'continuously'. This contrasts with a small minority (26%) of that of the 'non-schools of the air' group.
2. The 'continuous' enrolments were distributed throughout all year levels (1 to 7) with the Schools of the Air group having consistently larger proportions of 'continuous' enrolments in year levels 2 to 7, compared with the corresponding year levels of the 'non-schools of the air' group.
3. The proportions of 'continuous' enrolments per year level generally decreases with an increase in the year levels for both groups of pupils.

## 2.4 Turnover of Enrolments

2.4.1 Data from the Primary Correspondence School and individual schools of the air indicate the degree of stability of total enrolments during the year of 1982. The period March to November was chosen for analysis in order to avoid fluctuations in enrolments at the beginning and end of the year. Analyses of monthly enrolments and monthly enrolment changes are presented in Tables 5 to 7 and displayed in Figure 3.4 in chapter 3.

TABLE 5: P.C.S. Enrolments at the end of each month - 1982

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Average Enrolment (Mar-Nov)
Non-Schools of the Air	1107	1023	1013	1060	1038	1067	1082	1036	1018	959	936	933	1023.2
Schools of the Air (combined)	563	660	690	667	694	693	691	698	692	688	697	640	690.0

### Observations (Table 5, Figure 3.4)

1. Between March and November 1982, the average enrolment of the Primary Correspondence School was 1713.2 pupils. The average enrolment of the combined Schools of the Air was 690 pupils, leaving an average enrolment of non-school of the air pupils of 1023.2.
2. During this period the enrolment of the non-school of the air pupils varied to a much greater extent than those of the schools of the air.

For the terms used to characterise the enrolment changes see the discussion for New South Wales in this Appendix.

TABLE 6A: P.C.S. Non-School of the Air  
Monthly Enrolment Changes - 1982

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Average Change (Mar-Nov)
Admissions (A)	-	27	32	72	38	67	60	24	31	0	0	0	36
Terminations (T)	-	80	36	43	41	33	53	64	46	76	11	0	44.8

**TABLE 6B: P.C.S. Schools of the Air (combined)  
Monthly Enrolment Changes - 1982**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Average Change (Mar-Nov)
<b>Admissions</b>													
(A)	92	70	31	8	16	6	10	9	3	18	9	0	12.2
<b>Terminations</b>													
(T)	1	4	7	13	8	12	4	8	12	5	8	59	8.6

Observations (Tables 6A, 6B, Figure 3.4)

1. The non-school of the air group experienced an average admission rate three times greater than the schools of the air group between March and November 1982.
2. The non-school of the air group experienced an average termination rate five times greater than the schools of the air group during the same period.

The rate of 'turnover' of enrolments for the period March-November 1982 was calculated by expressing the sum of the average number of admissions and terminations per month as a percentage of the average enrolment for the same period. The resulting figures are directly comparable between 'schools of the air' and 'non-school of the air' groups of pupils.

**TABLE 7: P.C.S. Rates of Change of Enrolment - March - November 1982**

	Admissions	Terminations	Turnover
Non-School of the Air	3.5% per month	4.4% per month	7.9% per month
Schools of the Air (combined)	1.8% per month	1.2% per month	3.0% per month

Observations (Table 7)

1. The non-school of the air group experienced a 'turnover' rate more than two and a half times greater than the schools of the air group. It may therefore be inferred that the non-school of the air group comprised a much larger proportion of 'shorter-term' enrolments compared with the schools of the air group.

2.4.2 Data from the Primary Correspondence School indicate the type of pupils, by both length of enrolment and residential status, who contribute to the instability of the enrolments of the target population.

2.4.2.1 An analysis of the target population by 'enrolment type' was performed - for the terms used to characterise 'enrolment type' see the discussion for New South Wales in this Appendix. A summary of the analyses for a restricted target population is presented in Table 8.

TABLE 8: P.C.S. Enrolment Type - February 1983

	New Enrolments (Yrs 2-7)	Shorter-term Enrolments (Yrs 2-7)	Longer-term Enrolments (Yrs 3-7)	Target Population (Yrs 1-7)
Non-Schools of the Air	125 (21%)	130 (22%)	208 (35%)	586 (100%)
Schools of the Air (combined)	45 (6%)	178 (23%)	411 (53%)	776 (100%)

NB: Row percentages do not add to 100% because some year levels have been omitted.

Observations (Table 8)

In the target population of the Primary Correspondence School

1. the 'non-school of the air' group was characterised by:
  - . a majority (43%) of 'new' and 'shorter-term' enrolments in years 2 to 7;
  - . a minority (35%) of 'longer-term' enrolments in years 3 to 7;
2. the 'schools of the air (combined)' group was characterised by:
  - . a majority (53%) of 'longer-term' enrolments in years 3 to 7;
  - . a minority (29%) of 'new' and 'shorter-term' enrolments in years 2 to 7.

2.4.2.2 A cross-tabulation of the two variables 'enrolment type' and 'residential status' was performed for the restricted target population. These analyses are presented in Tables 9A and 9B and displayed in Figure 3.5 in chapter 3.

**TABLE 9A: P.C.S. Non-School of the Air  
Residential Status by Enrolment Type - February 1983**

	New Enrolments (Yrs 2-7)	Shorter-term Enrolments (Yrs 2-7)	Longer-term Enrolments (Yrs 3-7)	Target Population (Yrs 1-7)
Permanently Resident	79 (14%)	72 (13%)	167 (29%)	
Travelling for Work	22 (4%)	31 (5%)	27 (5%)	
Travelling for Pleasure	10 (2%)	20 (4%)	2 (0.4%)	586 (100%)
Travelling by Boat	14 (2%)	7 (1%)	12 (2%)	

**TABLE 9B: P.C.S. Schools of the Air (combined)  
Residential Status by Enrolment Type - February 1983**

	New Enrolments (Yrs 2-7)	Shorter-term Enrolments (Yrs 2-7)	Longer-term Enrolments (Yrs 3-7)	Target Population (Yrs 1-7)
Permanently Resident	41 (5%)	177 (23%)	411 (53%)	
Travelling for Work	4 (0.5%)	0	0	776 (100%)
Travelling by Boat	0	1 (0.1%)	0	

NB: Percentages do not add to 100% because some year levels have been omitted.

Observations (Tables 9A, 9B, Figure 3.5)

In the target population of the Primary Correspondence School:

1. the 'non-school of the air' group was characterised by:
  - . nearly all of the 'longer-term' enrolments in years 3 to 7 were 'permanently resident';
  - . nearly all of the 'travellers' in years 2 to 7 were 'new' or 'shorter-term' enrolments;
  - . of the 'new' and 'shorter-term' enrolments in years 2 to 7 the majority were 'permanently resident'.



2. The 'schools of the air (combined)' group was characterised by:
- . all of the 'longer-term' enrolments in years 3 to 7 were 'permanently resident';
  - . of the few 'travellers' in years 2 to 7 all were 'new' or 'shorter-term' enrolments;
  - . nearly all of the 'new' and 'shorter-term' enrolments in years 2 to 7 were 'permanently resident'.

### 3. THE PUPIL POPULATION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

#### 3.1 Total Enrolments

Annual Census Returns submitted by the schools to the Planning Branch of the Western Australian Department of Education for (July 1) 1982 provided the data for the total enrolments of the distance primary schools. These are presented in Tables 1A and 1B.

TABLE 1A: Distance Education Centre - Total Enrolments - July 1982

	Pre-Primary Department	Primary Department (Year Levels)						Total Enrolments	
		1	2	3	4	5	6		7
D.E.C.	42	36	38	41	33	34	40	44	308
TOTAL	42				266				308

TABLE 1B: Schools of the Air - Total Enrolments - July 1982

	Pre-Primary Class	Primary Department (Year Levels)						Total Enrolments	
		1	2	3	4	5	6		7
Carnarvon	13	5	6	9	3	8	13	6	63
Kalgoorlie	9	6	9	5	8	4	6	1	48
Kimberley	10	9	6	6	0	4	5	2	42
Meekatharra	9	7	8	6	7	7	8	10	62
Pt Hedland	6	4	1	2	1	9	2	4	29
TOTAL	47	31	30	28	19	32	34	23	244
					197				

#### Observations (Tables 1A, 1B)

1. There were about 550 pupils enrolled in distance primary schools in Western Australia in July 1982.
2. Of these 550 pupils about 56 per cent were enrolled in the Distance Education Centre, Perth; 44 per cent were enrolled in the five schools of the air.
3. Of the five schools of the air, Carnarvon and Meekatharra had the largest enrolments and Port Hedland the smallest.

### 3.2 Residential Status

Data from individual teacher returns indicate the residential status of pupils comprising the total enrolments of the distance primary departments of Western Australia in February 1983. These are presented in Table 2. For the terms used to characterise the residential status of pupils see chapter 2.

TABLE 2: Residential Status - February 1983

	Primary Department				Special <sup>1</sup>	Total
	Permanently Resident	Travelling for Work	Travelling for Pleasure	Overseas		
Distance Education Centre	80	58	38	62	8	246
		176				
Schools of the Air						
Carnarvon	35	1	0	NA <sup>2</sup>	0	36
Kalgoorlie	42	0	0	NA	0	42
Kimberley	33	0	0	NA	0	33
Meekatharra	46	0	0	NA	1	47
Pt Hedland	22	5	0	NA	0	27

NB: 1. Special: medical, adult, other

2. NA: not applicable

#### Observations (Table 2)

1. The Primary Department of the Distance Education Centre consisted of 246 pupils of whom 72 per cent (176 pupils) comprised the target population; 28 per cent (70 pupils) were 'overseas' or 'special' cases.
2. Of the 176 pupils in the target population 45 per cent (80 pupils) were 'permanently resident' and 55 per cent (96 pupils) were 'travellers'. The 'travellers' consisted of 58 pupils 'travelling for work' and 38 pupils 'travelling for pleasure'.
3. The schools of the air with a target population (combined) of 184 pupils served a predominantly (97 per cent) 'permanently resident' population. There were only 6 pupils 'travelling for work'.

### 3.3 Mean Length of Enrolment

Data from individual teacher returns indicate the lengths of enrolment of pupils in the target populations of the primary departments of the distance primary schools of Western Australia in February 1983.

3.3.1 For purposes of comparison the 'mean lengths of enrolment' for each year-level in each school were calculated and standardised and a 'theoretical maximum mean length of enrolment' was projected. These analyses are presented in Tables 3A and 3B and displayed in Figure 3.2 in chapter 3.

**Standardised Length of Enrolment.** Pupils in Western Australia may be admitted to the infants' department of primary schools at the beginning of the year in which they turn 6.0 years of age. In the schools of the air a pupil whose length of enrolment exceeds the time elapsed since being admitted to year level one at the beginning of that year was necessarily enrolled in the pre-primary class, prior to being assigned to the infants department. Calculations of mean length of enrolment per year level of the schools of the air have, therefore, been standardised so that the maximum length of enrolment of any pupil refers to the time elapsed since that pupil was admitted to year level one in the February of that year. Pupils enrolled in the pre-primary department of the Distance Education Centre are re-enrolled on transfer to the infants' department. Lengths of enrolment of these pupils were, therefore, not standardised.

**Theoretical Maximum Mean Length of Enrolment.** This measurement reflects a theoretically stable school population containing pupils in each successive year-level who have been enrolled continuously (that is, 'continuous enrolments') since the beginning of year level one. The following table demonstrates how it was projected.

Year Level	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
'Theoretical Max' (months)	2	14	26	38	50	62	74

(the enrolment date is taken as the December in the preceding year)

The resultant straight line graph of 'theoretical max' versus 'year level' in Figure 3.2 in chapter 3 indicates a stable school population and provides a benchmark against which the (standardised) mean lengths of enrolment of the various year levels of the schools may be compared.

**TABLE 3A: Distance Education Centre - Mean Lengths of Enrolment, February 1983**

Year Level	No of Pupils	% of Target Population (176 pupils)	Mean Length of Enrolment (months)
*Remedial Class	13	7.3%	11.2
Year 1	25	14.2%	1.4
Year 2	15	8.5%	5.5
Year 3	32	18.2%	9.5
Year 4	23	13.1%	13.2
Year 5	26	14.8%	10.9
Year 6	19	10.8%	21.1
Year 7	23	13.1%	6.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>100%</b>	

NB: \*Remedial Class: The mean length of enrolment of 11.2 months refers to the time spent enrolled since admission to the Primary Department of the DEC.

**TABLE 3B: Schools of the Air (combined) - Mean Lengths of Enrolment February 1983**

Year Level	No of Pupils	% of Target Population (184 pupils)	Mean Length of Enrolment (months)	Standardised Mean Length of Enrolment (months)
Year 1	37	20.1%	7.5	1.2
Year 2	24	13.0%	17.3	11.2
Year 3	29	15.8%	22.3	19.1
Year 4	21	11.4%	26.1	24.7
Year 5	20	10.9%	36.5	35.7
Year 6	29	15.8%	39.1	37.9
Year 7	23	12.5%	39.4	39.4
*M	1	0.5%		
<b>Total</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>100%</b>		

NB: \*M: no data on length of enrolment.

Observations (Tables 3A, 3B, Figure 3.2)

1. The divergence from the 'theoretical maximum length of enrolment' is greatest for the Distance Education Centre. The divergence increases with the year levels indicating that the higher year levels comprise pupil populations of which increasing proportions have not been enrolled continuously since the beginning of year level one.
2. The divergence is much less for the combined SOTA's although a similar trend is apparent with their higher year levels. Generally, the schools of the air appear to retain their pupils for a longer time compared with the Distance Education Centre.

3.3.2 In order to confirm the findings about the relative stabilities of the target populations the number of 'continuous' enrolments was calculated for each year level. This analysis is presented in Table 4 and displayed in Figure 3.3 in chapter 3. 'Continuous' enrolments are those pupils who have been enrolled at least since the beginning of year level one.

TABLE 4: 'Continuous' Enrolments. February 1983

Year Level	Distance Education Centre		Schools of the Air (combined)	
	Continuously Enrolled	Year level Total	Continuously Enrolled	Year level Total
Year 2	4 (28.6%)	15	20 (83.3%)	24
Year 3	7 (23.3%)	32	21 (72.4%)	29
Year 4	4 (18.2%)	23	9 (42.9%)	21
Year 5	1 (6.7%)	26	12 (60%)	20
Year 6	4 (21.1%)	19	12 (41.4%)	29
Year 7	0 (0%)	23	9 (39.1%)	23
Total	20 (11.4%)	138 (176/100%)	83 (45.1%)	146 (184/100%)

NB: All percentages are of year level totals

Observations (Table 4, Figure 3.3)

1. The combined schools of the air had a much larger proportion of their target population in years 2 to 7 enrolled 'continuously' compared with the Distance Education Centre. The combined schools of the air had, proportionally, four times as many 'continuous' enrolments in years 2 to 7 as the Distance Education Centre (11% DEC, 45% SOTA's).
2. The proportion of continuous enrolments per year level generally decreases with an increase in the year levels.



3. The individual year levels of the schools of the air contain, proportionally, two to three times as many continuous enrolments as the Distance Education Centre.

### 3.4 Turnover of Enrolments

3.4.1 Data from individual schools' enrolment records indicate the degree of stability of total enrolments of the primary departments of the distance primary schools of Western Australia during the year of 1982. The period March to November was chosen for analysis in order to avoid fluctuations in enrolments at the beginning and end of the year. Analyses of monthly enrolments and monthly enrolment changes are presented in Tables 5 to 7 and displayed in Figure 3.4 in chapter 3.

TABLE 5: Enrolments at the end of each Month - 1982

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Average Enrolment (Mar-Nov)
Distance Education Centre	171	186	193	218	236	267	285	293	285	259	237	229	252.6
Schools of the Air (combined)	196	196	192	187	187	192	197	195	193	197	197	196	193.7

#### Observations (Table 5, Figure 3.4)

1. Between March and November 1982 the average enrolment of the Distance Education Centre (Years 1 to 7) was 252.6 pupils, compared with a smaller figure for the combined schools of the air of 193.7 pupils (about 24% less than the D.E.C.).
2. During this period the enrolments of the Distance Education Centre varied to a much greater extent than those of the schools of the air. For the terms used to characterise enrolment changes see the discussion for New South Wales in this Appendix.

TABLE 6A: Distance Education Centre Monthly Enrolment Changes - 1982

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Average Change (Mar-Nov)
Admissions (A)	-	30	12	36	28	54	40	29	22	28	6	0	28.3
Terminations (T)	-	15	5	11	10	23	22	21	30	54	28	8	22.7

**TABLE 6B: Schools of the Air (combined) Monthly Enrolment Changes - 1982**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Average Change (Mar-Nov)
<b>Admissions</b>													
(A)	-	2	0	5	0	8	9	3	3	7	1	0	4.0
<b>Terminations</b>													
(T)	-	2	4	10	0	3	4	5	5	3	1	1	3.9

Observations (Tables 6A, 6B: Figure 3.4)

1. Between March and November 1982 the Distance Education Centre admitted 7 times as many pupils in years 1-7 as the combined schools of the air.
2. During the same period the Distance Education Centre terminated almost 6 times as many pupils in years 1-7 as the combined schools of the air.

The rate of 'turnover' of enrolments for the period March-November 1982 was calculated by expressing the sum of the average number of admissions and terminations per month as a percentage of the average enrolment for the same period. The resulting figures are then directly comparable between schools.

**TABLE 7: Rates of Change of Enrolments - March-November 1982**

	Admissions	Terminations	Turnover
Distance Education Centre	11.2% per month	8.9% per month	20.2% per month
Schools of the Air (combined)	2.1% per month	2.0% per month	4.1% per month

Observations (Table 7)

1. The Distance Education Centre (Years 1-7) experienced a rate of 'turnover' of enrolments about five times greater than the schools of the air combined.
2. The explanation for such a large difference may be that the Distance Education Centre attracts a much larger proportion of 'shorter-term' enrolments than the other schools.

3.4.2 Data from individual teacher returns for February 1983 indicate the type of pupils, by both length of enrolment and residential status, who contribute to the instability of the enrolment of the target populations of the distance primary schools of Western Australia.

3.4.2.1 An analysis of the target population by 'enrolment type' was performed. For the terms used to characterise 'enrolment type' see the discussion for New South Wales in this Appendix.

A summary of the analyses for a restricted target population is presented in Table 8.

TABLE 8: Enrolment Type - February 1983

	New Enrolments (Yrs 2-7)	Shorter-term Enrolments (Yrs 2-7)	Longer-term Enrolments (Yrs 3-7)	Target Population (Years 1-7)
Distance Education Centre	46 (26%)	54 (31%)	29 (17%)	176 (100%)
Schools of the Air (combined)	12 (7%)	32 (17%)	89 (48%)	184 (100%)

NB: Row percentages do not add to 100% because some year levels have been omitted.

Observations (Table 8)

- The target population of the Distance Education Centre was characterised by:
  - a majority (57%) of 'new' and 'shorter-term' enrolments in years 2 to 7;
  - a small minority (17%) of 'longer-term' enrolments in years 3 to 7.
- The target population of the combined schools of the air was characterised by:
  - a majority (48%) of 'longer-term' enrolments in years 3 to 7;
  - a small minority (24%) of 'new' and 'shorter-term' enrolments in years 2 to 7.

3.4.2.2 A cross-tabulation of the two variables 'enrolment type' and 'residential status' was performed for the restricted target population. These analyses are presented in Tables 9A and 9B and displayed in Figure 3.5 in chapter 3.

TABLE 9A Distance Education Centre: Residential Status by Enrolment Type - February 1983

	New Enrolments (Years 2-7)	Shorter-term Enrolments (Years 2-7)	Longer-term Enrolments (Years 3-7)	Target Population (Years 1-7)
Permanently Resident	9 (5%)	24 (14%)	25 (14%)	
Travelling for Work	18 (10%)	20 (11%)	3 (2%)	176 (100%)
Travelling for Pleasure	19 (11%)	10 (6%)	1 (1%)	

**TABLE 9B: Schools of the Air (combined): Residential Status by Enrolment Status - February 1983**

	New Enrolments (Years 2-7)	Shorter-term Enrolments (Years 2-7)	Longer-term Enrolments (Years 3-7)	Target Population (Years 1-7)
Permanently Resident	8 (4%)	32 (17%)	88 (48%)	184 (100%)
Travelling for Work	4 (2%)	0	1 (0.5%)	

NB: Percentages do not add to 100% because some year levels have been omitted.

Observations (Tables 9A, 9B; Figure 3.5)

1. The target population of the Distance Education Centre was characterised by:
  - . nearly all of the 'longer-term' enrolments in years 3 to 7 were 'permanently resident';
  - . nearly all of the 'travellers' in years 2 to 7 were 'new' or 'shorter-term' enrolments. Less than half of the 'travellers' were enrolled in these year levels, the majority being enrolled in year level one (refer Table 2);
  - . most of the 'new' and 'shorter-term' enrolments in years 2 to 7 were 'travellers'.
  
2. The target population of the combined schools of the air was characterised by:
  - . nearly all of the 'longer-term' enrolments in years 3 to 7 were 'permanently resident';
  - . of the few travellers in years 2 to 7 most were 'new' enrolments;
  - . nearly all of the 'new' and 'shorter-term' enrolments in years 2 to 7 were 'permanently resident'.

#### 4. THE PUPIL POPULATION OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

##### 4.1 Total Enrolments

Annual Census Returns submitted by the schools to the Northern Territory Department of Education for (May) 1982 provided the data for the total enrolments of the distance primary schools. These are presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1: Distance Primary Schools - Total Enrolments - May 1982

	Pre-School	Primary School (Year Levels)									Total Enrolments
		Tr <sup>1</sup>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	S <sup>2</sup>	
Katherine SOTA <sup>3</sup>	19	21	43	22	17	15	27	17	13	16	210
Alice Springs SOTA	25	9	13	15	16	11	14	9	7	NA	119
Total	44						285				329

NB: 1: Transition Class; 2: Special Class; 3: School of the Air

##### Observations (Table 1)

1. There were 329 pupils enrolled in distance primary schools in the Northern Territory in May 1982.
2. Of these 329 pupils 64 per cent (210 pupils) were enrolled in Katherine School of the Air; 35 per cent (119 pupils) were enrolled in Alice Springs School of the Air.

##### 4.2 Residential Status

Data from individual schools and teachers indicate the residential status of pupils comprising the total enrolments of the distance primary departments in February 1983. These are presented in Table 2. For the terms used to characterise the 'residential status' of pupils see chapter 2.

**TABLE 2: Residential Status - February 1983**

	Permanently Resident	Primary Schools (Years T, 1-7)		Overseas	Total
		Travelling for Work	Travelling for Pleasure		
Katherine SOTA (May 1983)	148	22	5	1	176
Alice Springs SOTA (Feb 1983)	84	5	0	NA <sup>i</sup>	89

NB: 1: NA - Not applicable

Observations (Table 2)

1. Katherine School of the Air comprised 175 pupils in the target population and 1 pupil 'overseas'. Of the 175 pupils 85 per cent (148 pupils) were 'permanently resident', and 15 per cent (27 pupils) were 'travellers'. The 'travellers' consisted of 22 pupils 'travelling for work' and 5 pupils 'travelling for pleasure'.
2. Alice Springs School of the Air comprised a target population of 89 pupils. Of these 94 per cent (84 pupils) were 'permanently resident' and 6 per cent (5 pupils) were 'travelling for work'.

**4.3 Mean Length of Enrolment**

Data from individual schools indicate the lengths of enrolment of pupils in the distance primary schools in February and May 1983.

4.31 For the purposes of comparison the 'mean lengths of enrolment' for each year level were calculated and standardised and a 'theroetical maximum mean length of enrolment' was projected. These analyses are presented in Tables 3A and 3B and displayed in Figure 3.2 in chapter 3.

**Standardised length of enrolment:** In the Northern Territory a child is admitted to the Transition class in the month in which it turns 5.0 years of age. For some pupils their lengths of enrolment exceed the time elapsed since they turned 5.0 years of age. This means that they were necessarily enrolled in the pre-school class prior to being admitted to the Transition class in the primary school. A 'standardised mean length of enrolment' would then refer to the length of enrolment coinciding with the time since the child turned 5.0 years of age; that is the admission to the Transition class would be the 'base-line' for lengths of enrolment. Other pupils admitted after turning 5.0 years of age would have their 'true' lengths of enrolment used in the calculation of 'mean lengths of enrolment' per age-level. However, it is not possible to perform these calculations for pupils in Katherine School of the Air because their birth dates were unavailable. Consequently, for purposes of comparison between the two schools, a year-level analysis has been performed and 'standardised mean lengths of enrolment' have been calculated using the commencement of year-level one (the December in the preceding year) as the 'base-line'. The disadvantage of this analysis is that, for some pupils, time spent enrolled in the Transition class is

ignored. This discrepancy is obvious when comparing the figures in the two columns (Tables 3A,3B) headed 'mean length of enrolment', and 'standardised mean length of enrolment.'

Theoretical maximum mean length of enrolment - for an explanation of this measurement see the discussion for Western Australia in this Appendix.

TABLE 3A: Katherine School of the Air - Mean Lengths of Enrolment - February 1983

Year Level	No of Pupils	% of KSOTA's <sup>1</sup> Target Popula- tion (175 pupils)	Mean Length of Enrolment (months)	Standardised Mean Length of Enrolment (months)
1	24	13.7%	11.5	1.7
2	31	17.7%	26.0	11.6
3	19	10.9%	23.5	16.0
4	18	10.3%	22.8	18.5
5	17	9.7%	29.5	24.4
6	16	9.1%	39.9	37.0
7	16	9.1%	37.3	32.4
M <sup>1</sup>	34	19.4%	-	-
Total	175	100%		

TABLE 3B: Alice Springs School of the Air - Mean Lengths of Enrolment February 1983

Year Level	No of Pupils	% of ASSOTA's <sup>1</sup> Target Popula- tion (89 pupils)	Mean Length of Enrolment (months)	Standardised Mean Length of Enrolment
1	17	19.1%	17.3	1.8
2	10	11.2%	17.3	11.6
3	12	13.5%	44.5	26.0
4	14	15.7%	38.5	29.2
5	10	11.2%	51.6	41.7
6	10	11.2%	39.8	36.8
7	6	6.7%	34.7	34.2
M <sup>2</sup>	10	11.2%	-	-
Total	89	100%		

NB: 1: SOTA: School of the Air:                      2: M: transition class missing



Observations (Tables 3A, 3B, Figure 3.2)

1. The divergence from the 'theoretical maximum length of enrolment' is greatest for Katherine School of the Air, especially in year levels 3 to 7. The divergence generally increases with an increase in the year levels indicating that higher year levels contain successively smaller proportions of 'continuous' enrolments.
2. The divergence is much less for Alice Springs School of the Air, especially for year levels 1 to 5, indicating a much more stable pupil population.

4.3.2 In order to confirm the findings about the relative stabilities of the target populations the number of 'continuous' enrolments was calculated for each year level. This analysis is presented in Table 4 and displayed in Figure 3.3 in chapter 3. 'Continuous' enrolments are those pupils who have been enrolled continuously at least since the beginning of year level one.

TABLE 4: 'Continuous' Enrolments - February 1983

Year Level	Katherine SOTA		Alice Springs SOTA	
	Continuously Enrolled	Year Level Total	Continuously Enrolled	Year Level Total
2	23 (74.2%)	31	6 (60%)	10
3	6 (31.6%)	19	10 (83.3%)	12
4	5 (27.8%)	18	9 (64.3%)	14
5	5 (29.4%)	17	7 (70%)	10
6	4 (25%)	16	3 (30%)	10
7	5 (31.3%)	16	2 (33.3%)	6
Total	48 (27.4%)	117 (175/100%)	37 (41.6%)	62 (89/100%)

NB: All percentages are of year level totals.

Observations (Table 4, Figure 3.3)

1. Alice Springs School of the Air had a much larger proportion (42%) of its target population in years 2 to 7 enrolled 'continuously' compared with Katherine School of the Air (27%).
2. The proportion of 'continuous' enrolments generally decreased with an increase in the year levels, with those of Alice Springs School of the Air (years 3 to 6) containing, proportionally, about twice as many as those of Katherine School of the Air.
3. Both schools contain similarly large proportions of 'continuous' enrolments in year level two.

It should be noted that the small numbers of pupils in the higher year levels reduce the significance of any differences between the two schools.

#### 4.4 Turnover of Enrolments

4.4.1 Data from individual schools' enrolment records indicate the degree of stability of total enrolments of the distance primary schools of the Northern Territory during the year of 1982. The period March to November was chosen for analysis in order to avoid fluctuations in enrolments at the beginning and end of the year. Analyses of monthly enrolments and monthly enrolment changes are presented in Tables 5 to 7 and displayed in Figure 3.4 in chapter 3.

TABLE 5: Enrolments at the end of each month - 1982

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Average Enrolment Mar-Nov
Katherine SOTA	194	211	213	212	210	212	212	215	218	230	230	225	216.9
Alice Springs SOTA	101	112	111	120	119	123	113	115	115	120	115	104	116.8

NB: 1. SOTA - School of the Air

#### Observations (Table 5)

1. Between March and November 1982 the average enrolment of Katherine School of the Air (pre school plus primary school) was 216.9 pupils, compared with a smaller figure for Alice Springs School of the Air of 116.8 pupils.
2. During this period the enrolments of Katherine School of the Air varied to a greater extent than did those of Alice Springs School of the Air.

For the terms used to characterise enrolment changes see the discussion for New South Wales in this Appendix.

TABLE 6A: Katherine School of the Air  
Monthly Enrolment Changes - 1982

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Average Change Mar-Nov
Admissions (A)	24	15	11	11	8	6	18	21	12	14	3	0	11.6
Terminations (T)	7	20	7	12	11	10	10	9	2	9	8	5	8.7

**TABLE 6B: Alice Springs School of the Air  
Monthly Enrolment Changes - 1982**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Average Change Mar-Nov
Admissions (A)	11	7	3	9	2	4	2	2	0	7	3	0	3.6
Terminations (T)	0	0	4	0	1	1	8	2	1	0	8	6	2.8

Observations (Tables 6A, 6B, Figure 3.4)

1. Between March and November 1982 both the admission and termination rates of Katherine School of the Air were about three times higher than those of Alice Springs School of the Air.

The rate of 'turnover' of enrolments for the period March-November 1982 was calculated by expressing the sum of the average number of admissions and terminations per month as a percentage of the average enrolment for the same period. The resulting figures are then directly comparable between schools.

**TABLE 7: Rates of Change of Enrolments - March - November 1982**

	Admissions	Terminations	Turnover
Katherine School of the Air	5.3% per month	4.0% per month	9.4% per month
Alice Springs School of the Air	3.1% per month	2.4% per month	5.5% per month

Observations (Table 7)

1. Katherine School of the Air experienced a rate of 'turnover' of enrolments about 1.7 times higher than Alice Springs School of the Air.
2. Katherine School of the Air therefore attracts a larger proportion of 'short-term' enrolments which results in a less stable pupil population than that of Alice Springs School of the Air.

4.4.2 Data from individual schools indicate the type of pupils, by both length of enrolment and residential status; who contribute to the instability of the enrolments of the target populations of the distance primary schools of the Northern Territory.

4.4.2.1 An analysis of the target population by 'enrolment type' was performed. For the terms used to characterise 'enrolment type' see the discussion for New South Wales in this Appendix. A summary of the analyses for a restricted target population is presented in Table 8.

TABLE 8: Enrolment Type - February 1983

	New Enrolments (Yrs 2-7)	Shorter-term Enrolments (Yrs 2-7)	Longer-term Enrolments (Yrs 3-7)	Target Population (Yrs T, 1-7)
Katherine School of the Air	19 (11%)	21 (12%)	54 (31%)	175 (100%)
Alice Springs School of the Air	3 (3%)	7 (8%)	43 (48%)	89 (100%)

NB: Row percentages do not add to 100% because some year levels have been omitted.

Observations (Table 8)

1. The target population of Katherine School of the Air was characterised by:
  - . a small majority (31%) of 'longer-term' enrolments in years 3 to 7;
  - . a small minority (23%) of 'new' and 'shorter-term' enrolments in years 2 to 7.
  
2. The target population of Alice Springs School of the Air was characterised by:
  - . a majority (48%) of 'longer-term' enrolments in years 3 to 7;
  - . a very small minority (11%) of 'new' and 'shorter-term' enrolments in years 2 to 7.

4.4.2.2 A cross-tabulation of the two variables 'enrolment type' and residential status' was performed for the restricted target population. These analyses are presented in Tables 9A and 9B and displayed in Figure 3.2 in chapter 3.

**TABLE 9A: Katherine School of the Air  
Residential Status by Enrolment Type - February 1983**

	New Enrolments (Yrs 2-7)	Shorter-term Enrolments (Yrs 2-7)	Longer-term Enrolments (Yrs 3-7)	Target Population (Yrs T, 1-7)
Permanently resident	13 (7%)	17 (10%)	50 (29%)	175 (100%)
Travelling for work	5 (3%)	2 (1%)	3 (2%)	
Travelling for pleasure	1 (0.6%)	2 (1%)	1 (0.6%)	

**TABLE 9B: Alice Springs School of the Air  
Residential Status by Enrolment Type - February 1983**

	New Enrolments (Yrs 2-7)	Shorter-term Enrolments (Yrs 2-7)	Longer-term Enrolments (Yrs 3-7)	Target Population (Yrs T, 1-7)
Permanently resident	3 (3%)	6 (7%)	42 (47%)	89 (100%)
Travelling for work	0	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	

NB: Percentages do not add to 100% because some year levels have been omitted.

Observations (Tables 9A, 9B, Figure 3.5)

1. The target population of Katherine School of the Air was characterised by:
  - . nearly all of the 'longer-term' enrolments in years 3 to 7 were 'permanently resident';
  - . most of the 'travellers' in years 2 to 7 were 'new' or 'shorter-term' enrolments. About half of the 'travellers' were in these year levels, the rest being enrolled in the transition class or year level one. (Refer Table 2);
  - . most of the 'new' and 'shorter-term' enrolments in years 2 to 7 were 'permanently resident'.
  
2. The target population of Alice Springs School of the Air was characterised by:
  - . nearly all of the 'longer-term' enrolments in year 3 to 7 were 'permanently resident';
  - . most of the few 'travellers' were enrolled in the 'transition class' or year level one. (Refer Table 2);
  - . nearly all of the small number of 'new' and 'shorter-term' enrolments were 'permanently resident'.

## **APPENDIX E**

### **Self-Evaluation**

- 1. Population Analysis -  
Responses from Schools**
- 2. Questionnaire Pilot Survey - Proformas**

**SCHOOL A**

In reply to your queries:

- A1. About 80-90%
- A2. 10-20% - not very significant.
- A3. a) Changes in government policy or funding regarding tourism, mining industry.
- b) General downturn in southern employment opportunities (i.e. we get more itinerants).
- c) In pastoral industry, many must now re-stock after disease eradication programmes, or extensive marketing of herds.
- Q4. Generally yes. Economic factors must be taken into account though.

**SCHOOL B**

The answers you requested are as follows:

1. Perhaps 25 to 30% of the turnover is attributable to travellers. The remainder is made up of 2 groups, firstly those who move out to bush locations in anticipation of a long stay and then find the going too rough, with the result that they return very quickly to the towns; secondly, seasonal workers, e.g. stationhands on stations which close during the Wet Season, road maintenance gangs, and fishermen.
2. In order to enrol with the school of the air, you must either be a permanent resident of the Northern Territory, or have moved to the Northern Territory with the intention of becoming a permanent resident. It is very difficult to determine what percentage of those who become short time enrolments as defined in the answer to question 1 above, who specifically came to the Territory for the purpose of living in the Outback (that is within the school of the air catchment area) or were already Northern Territory residents. File records suggest that the great majority of students enrolling at the school of the air have had at least some schooling in another school in the Northern Territory before enrolling with us.
3. There is almost certainly a number of families, particularly where Mum is required to be the supervisor of the children, where the demands of supervision are found to be too great, or where children with town backgrounds find the isolation of the Outback to be an unhappy and lonely experience so that the families return to the towns or to southern states because Mum can't cope or because the children can't cope.
4. Pre 1982 records appear to indicate that the turnover pattern is consistent.



5. As somebody once said 'The future is not ours to tell'. However it is true to say that, with the increasing number of good quality houses in the Northern Territory, plus a very go ahead government, the population is tending to become more stable. Whether this trend will affect the rural population remains to be seen, as conditions out there still tend to be very seasonal and very isolated.

#### SCHOOL C

In answer to your questions:-

1. School of the Air admissions and terminations for 1982 follow a pattern similar to previous years.
2. No expected alteration in pattern.
3. Main factors that contribute to turnover rate would be related to occupatin of parent/guardian - stability of employment, type of occupation, changing requirements of employer.
4. Approx. the same.

#### SCHOOL D

In reply to your questions:-

1. As I was not here prior to 1982 and the data for this period is limited it is difficult to answer as to the stability of the pupil population prior to 1982. Given the enrolment population of the School of Air, I would suggest that the 1982 stability would reflect the long term situation.
- Q2. I would anticipate the present pattern of stability to be maintained in - School of the Air. Since long term enrolments is a pre-requisite to issuing transceivers this promotes stability. In terms of length of stay on - School of the Air, I would asume a similar pattern to the present.
- Q3. 'Turnover rate' may be affected as a number of stations in - are up for sale. The increased mobility of families and economic environment may contribute to some rise in 'turnover rate'. I don't feel the proposed satellite in 1985 will have a marked effect either way on turnover rate.
- Q4. The proportion of pupils classed as 'permanently resident' and 'travellers' for February 1983 are approximately representative of the target population in mid 1983, though we did have a slightly larger number of travellers at the time. It is representative of our February enrolment where we have only one family which could be classed as a 'traveller'.

- Q1. During 1981 and 1982 we were at the worst part of a prolonged drought and many people left the west for that period. (Sold properties to neighbours etc.). Also as all the family was needed to help on the property, I think that some did not use School of the Air as it was more of a bind to call in at a certain time of each day. The rapid increase of enrolment I have put down to partly the breaking of the drought, and also the introduction of the Loan Video Scheme in Queensland. We are also offering more Clubs and extra activities on air too.
- Q2. I don't know what the future holds, but I would expect that our enrolment will continue to stay large, unless economics in the western areas go through a bad period again. The only development which could alter our enrolment greatly would be the Decentralisation of the Primary Correspondence School, and therefore more School of the Air Bases to be set up - it would therefore mean that some of our enrolment would be transferred to the new Bases. The most stable families on air are those who own or manage their properties or are on Light houses. All the others, e.g. station hands etc. are susceptible to move on.
- Q3. People move for these reasons: a) Drought b) Family sickness c) Transferred within Property Companies d) 'Old Families' finished educating their children e) Good seasons - therefore sometimes children go to Boarding school at a younger age, e.g. Year 5 level f) Home Tutor (Mother) not coping with the teaching of her children g) Quick succession of unsuccessful governesses.
- Q4. On School of the Air we do not have anyone enrolled who would fall into the travelling category. All are permanently resident.

NB: The identity of individual schools has been protected.

## 2. Metropolitan Distance Primary Schools

### Telephone conversations with principals

#### SCHOOL A

- Q1 'as far as I know...yes...there's no way of proving it.'
- Q2 'status quo maintained'
- Q3 'no comment'
- Q4 'fairly representative...about one to two'

#### SCHOOL B

- Q1 'travellers have increased during 1983 and 1984; the permanent group are very stable'
- Q2 'similar trend'
- Q3 -
- Q4 see Q1.

EVALUATION OF DRAFT QUESTIONNAIRE

(Home Tutors/Supervisors)

1. Did you find any difficulty in understanding any of the questions?

Yes   
No

If Yes  please indicate which question(s) and explain the difficulty.

---

2. Did you experience any difficulty in following any of the instructions

a. on the instruction sheet.

Yes   
No

b. during the questionnaire?

Yes   
No

If Yes  please state which instruction(s) and explain the difficulty

3. Was any assumption made or term used that was inappropriate for your particular

a. child's school enrolment.

Yes

No

b. home circumstances?

Yes

No

If Yes  please describe.

---

4. Did you feel that you were able to express fully your personal situation and concerns regarding the issue of support for the home tutor?

Yes

No

If No  please say why

5. Did you feel that any part of the questionnaire might present difficulties for another parent/home tutor?

Yes

No

If Yes  please say why.

---

6. Have you any comments or suggestions about the presentation of the questionnaire?

---

7. Any other comments?

Thank you for your assistance.

EVALUATION OF DRAFT QUESTIONNAIRE

(Principals of Schools)

1. Did you find any difficulty in understanding any of the questions?

Yes

No

If Yes  please indicate which question(s) and explain the difficulty.

---

2. Did you experience any difficulty in following any of the instructions

a. on the instructions sheet?

Yes

No

b. during the questionnaire?

Yes

No

If Yes  please state which instruction(s) and explain the difficulty.



3. Was any assumption made or term used that was inappropriate for your particular school?

Yes

No

If Yes  please describe

---

4. Do you feel that any part of the questionnaire might present difficulties for a parent/home tutor (supervisor)?

Yes

No

If Yes  please say why

5. Have you any comments or suggestions about the presentation of the questionnaire?

---

6. Any other comments?

Thank you for your assistance.

## APPENDIX F

Letter (part of) to Supervisors  
Correspondence School, Sydney  
(Types of videocassettes)

Dear Supervisor

Welcome to the Loan Video Program. These are the first of many videocassettes you will be receiving during your participation in the Program. In N.S.W. we are trying to make these videocassettes an integral part of your child's distance education program. There are four main categories of programs selected for use. Each category has been colour coded for easy reference.

COLOUR CODE

A. Basic Enrichment (K - 6)

A variety of educational programs designed for all primary age children and suitable for family viewing.

RED

B. Special Interest

These may be a series or group of programs on a theme appropriate to specific age groups, or for an area of particular interest to a child.

ORANGE

C. Lesson Support

These are programs that link particular leaflets developed by the Central Correspondence School, for the curriculum used in all Distance Education (K-6). These programs are to accompany leaflets selected by Class teachers.

BLUE

D. Local Content

These are programs produced at a local level which may be shared with other communities.

BLACK/WHITE

New material will be added from time to time from Department of Education resources.

Teachers will choose videocassettes and send them to students. 'A' videocassettes will be sent to the youngest member of the family for viewing by all members of the family. 'C' videocassettes will be chosen with relevant interest in mind. Tapes will be sent per student rather than per family. Because of the limited number of videocassettes initially available, not all interests will be able to be catered for.