The First Correspondence Schools that Offered Advertising

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Abstract

This paper examines several correspondence schools that developed courses in advertising for young men and women who were interested in learning about the subject but who were not necessarily interested in attending a college or university. In addition, the paper discusses the founding of the National Home Study Council, which developed standards for correspondence schools.

Introduction

Before advertising was ever taught in a classroom, people learned about it on the job. For instance, in the 1800s department stores hired experienced copywriters to train selected employees about developing advertisements for newspapers. However, learning to write and illustrate successful advertisements for businesses and products took time. Even John E. Powers, one of the best copywriters of the late 1800s, experimented to determine which advertisements worked. In short, professional copywriters, not just those they trained, learned about advertising each day they developed one or more advertisements.

Quentin J. Schultze wrote,

> Advertising instruction in the last decade of the 19th century was a combination of self-teaching and inchoate methods of formal instruction, including agency apprenticeships, on-premise retail advertising training and trade journal and textbook instruction.[1]

In the late 1800s, primarily because of the Industrial Revolution, more young men and women left farms and moved to cities. As a result of population growth, there were

more newspapers. In addition, there were several magazines that appealed to the masses. Advertising by retailers and manufacturers increased. Retailers and other businesses, including advertising agencies, hired more people who knew how to advertise. Subsequently, demand for individuals who understood advertising increased. According to Frank Gordon Coolsen, "Since the public and endowed institutions were not willing or able to provide instruction, the field was left open for exploitation. The correspondence schools rose to meet the occasion and developed creditable courses in advertising."[2]

Academicians and others have classified correspondence schools using different criteria. However, one of the most popular classifications employs ownership or control:

(1) Public correspondence schools—those connected with universities;

(2) Private;

(3) Quasi-public—those associations or organizations that represented businesses, industries, or utilities.[3]

Introduction of Correspondence Education

In the United States, Caleb Phillips, a teacher of shorthand, placed an advertisement in the *Boston Gazette* in 1728. According to the advertisement, Phillips offered to teach shorthand to any person by mail. Whether the advertisement was successful is unknown.

Later, other individuals grew interested in teaching people by correspondence. In 1873, for instance, Anna Eliot Ticknor founded the Society to Encourage Studies at Home in Boston. The society's purpose was to have women educate women. According

to Harriet F. Bergmann, "Ticknor and her friends wanted to give away what men had long refused to allow women to buy: a liberal education."[4]

Ticknor's father, George Ticknor, had been a professor at Harvard University before he died. Ticknor had access to his private library. Ticknor's mother was related to Charles William Eliot, the president of Harvard University, and Samuel Eliot, a former professor and president of a college. Ticknor encouraged Samuel to serve as the chairman of the society, which he did.

Ticknor recruited female friends to help manage the society, which started with six departments: Art, English, French, German, History, and Science.

Interested female students had to be at least 17 to enroll. They also had to pay a fee that covered the costs of the materials, postage, and other expenses. Although examinations were required, the results were used to evaluate the instruction, not reported to the students. Students wrote about the materials that were mailed to them and then mailed what they had written to their instructors or correspondents.

The society held an annual meeting in Boston. Although students were invited, many could not. Those who attended generally met several members of the society, heard a prominent guest speaker, and had a tour of Boston.

The society became known outside Boston, especially after William Dean Howells mentioned it in the *Atlantic* in 1875 and George William Curtis mentioned it in *Harper's* in 1876. Indeed, almost 1,000 young women were enrolled in 1882.

Although Ticknor and her female friends continued to educate young women over the years, Ticknor died in 1896. Unfortunately, the society dissolved a year later.[5]

In 1874 the Chautauqua Institution, which was originally the Chautauqua Lake Sunday School Assembly, was founded by John Vincent and Lewis Miller near Chautauqua Lake in southwestern New York State. The institution was founded as an educational experiment that grew in popularity. In 1878 the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle (CLSC) was started to provide a college education via correspondence courses to those who could not enroll in a college or university. According to John S. Noffsinger, "It should be noted that while the work bore the name of Chautauqua, it was really in the hands of individual instructors, who conducted the correspondence and received all the fees."[6] To help students succeed, the institution encouraged them to form local CLSC reading groups. At the end of their four years of study, students were invited to attend the graduation ceremony at the institution.

The Chautauqua Institution became so successful that "Daughter Chautauquas" or new Chautauquas opened across the country. However, these saw a decline in interest in the mid-1920s.[7]

Several colleges and universities offered correspondence courses, too. For instance, Illinois Wesleyan, a small private liberal arts college, began to offer correspondence courses in 1877. However, primarily because of concerns over quality, the college stopped offering correspondence courses in the early 1900s.

The Correspondence University was founded in Ithaca, New York, in 1883. Basically, the university was an association of faculty members who taught at various colleges and universities. They were selected because of their experience, teaching ability, and their desire to teach a correspondence course. The university existed primarily to offer various subjects that could be taught by correspondence. According to

information published by the university, those who could benefit from the courses included:

> (1) persons engaged in professional studies which can be taught by correspondence;
>
> (2) graduates doing collegiate or advanced work;
>
> (3) under-teachers in the various schools and colleges;
>
> (4) those preparing for college . . . ;
>
> (5) members of cultivated families . . . ;
>
> (6) officers and men in the United States army or navy;
>
> (7) persons who intend to try any of the civil service examination;
>
> (8) young men and women in stores or shops, or on farms, who are desirous to learn . . . ; and finally, those in any walk of life who would gladly take up some study under competent private guidance.[8]

Unfortunately, the Correspondence University had a brief life.

When the University of Chicago was founded in 1890, Dr. William Raney Harper, the president, primarily because of his experience of teaching correspondence courses, made certain that an extension service be part of the institution.

During the first year, 82 students enrolled in 39 correspondence courses taught by 23 instructors. At the time of Dr. Harper's death in 1906, there were more than 1,500 students enrolled in almost 300 correspondence courses being taught by more than 100

instructors. In 1929-30, there were more than 6,000 students enrolled in more than 450 courses being taught by more than 140 instructors.[9]

In 1891, the University of Wisconsin offered correspondence courses through its extension service. However, faculty interest in teaching correspondence courses eventually declined. Although the service was discontinued in 1899, correspondence courses were offered again several years later. In fact, the university became known for its extension service, which offered numerous courses.

Other colleges and universities, especially state colleges and universities, offered correspondence courses. Some colleges and universities stopped offering correspondence courses, while many continued to offer such courses. The First National University Extension Conference was held in 1915. Representatives of 28 leading colleges and universities organized what would become the National University Extension Association.[10] According to W. S. Bittner, "The association is composed of the general extension divisions . . . and is not concerned with agricultural extension, which had developed independently."[11]

Learning Advertising by Correspondence

The Large Schools

International Correspondence Schools

Thomas J. Foster published the *Colliery Engineer and Metal Miner,* a journal, in Shenandoah, Pennsylvania, for men who worked in coal mines. Realizing that miners had dangerous jobs and needed to be informed about safety, Foster started a column on mining methods and mining machinery.[12] In 1891 the journal included an editorial

announcing that Alexander Dick, an experienced mining engineer and colliery manager, would manage a school of mining. Miners were encouraged to enroll in the school. Foster believed that miners could learn about mining from correspondence courses.

First called "The Colliery Engineer School of Mines," the school eventually became the International Correspondence Schools (ICS) of Scranton, Pennsylvania, after it was incorporated by the International Textbook Company in 1894.[13]

As a result of the growing enrollment, ICS added more courses. Like the courses in mining, these courses were written in plain English and presented only the necessary material. James D. Watkinson wrote, "Within eight years, over 190,000 students had enrolled in courses."[14] Lee Galloway wrote, "In one year alone, there were as many as 125,000 new enrollments."[15]

ICS offered students choices for paying fees. Students could pay in advance or on a 60-days-same-as-cash basis. Or they could pay using the installment plan.[16]

ICS continued to add more courses, which attracted more students. In the early 1900s, the school offered one of the most comprehensive correspondence courses in advertising. Although George F. Lord, the company's advertising manager, initiated the first courses in advertising, S. Roland Hall wrote many of the courses, including several books in the *International Library of Technology* series. For instance, he wrote *The Advertiser's Handbook: a Book of Reference Dealing with Plans, Copy, Topography, Illustration, Mediums, Management, and Other Details of Advertising Practice*; *Advertising as a Vocation*; *Fundamentals of Advertising Campaigns: Prepared Especially for Home Study*; *Advertising as a Business Force: Prepared Especially of Home Study*; *Advertising Fields and Agencies*; and *Writing of Copy: Prepared Especially*

for Home Study, among others. Hall's work was comprehensive. Indeed, his concepts were used by others who wrote books about advertising, especially books about writing copy and designing advertisements.

In order to attract more students, ICS signed contracts with large corporations that granted their employees to enroll in courses at reduced costs.[17]

By 1925, there were more than 300 proprietary correspondence schools in the United States. In addition, as mentioned, colleges and universities had created extension departments or divisions and were offering correspondence courses, too. Although ICS had competition, the school had a cumulative enrollment of over 2,500,000 by 1925.[18]

Watkinson wrote, "The tremendous success of ICS was the result of demand, an excellent product, a superb organization, prescient marketing and advertising, as well as a few happy coincidences."[19] Indeed, ICS continued throughout the 1900s.

American School of Correspondence (now American School)

R. T. Miller founded the American School of Correspondence in Boston in 1897. The school created departments based on major areas of study, including electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, steam engineering, civil engineering, sanitary engineering, architecture, textile manufacturing, mathematics, and mechanical drawing, among others. Correspondence courses were developed for prospective students interested in any of these fields.

Miller founded the American Technical Society, which published instructional materials for the school, a year later. Miller moved both companies to Chicago in 1902.[20]

In addition to having the departments mentioned above, the school created a Department of Commerce, Accountancy, and Business Administration in 1909. One of the courses offered was Accountancy and Business Administration, which included 49 textbooks that discussed different topics pertaining to accounting and/or business administration. One of these textbooks was *Advertising and Sales Organization*, which was written by James B. Griffith, who was the managing editor of the numerous volumes and who chaired the department. Griffith consulted several well-known individuals, including Sherwood Cody, who worked in advertising and sales; E. St. Elmo Lewis, who was advertising manager at the Burroughs Adding Machine Company; L. W. Lewis, who was advertising manager at The McCaskey Register Company; William Schutte, who was manager of advertising at the National Cash Register Company; and C. H. Hunter, who was advertising manager at Elliott-Fisher Company.[21]

In 1980, the American Technical Society was purchased by the American Technical Publishers, Inc. Profit Sharing Retirement Plan and Trust. As a result, the society became the Technical Foundation of America, which is an educational foundation.

Today, the American School of Correspondence is known as the American School.[22]

The Sheldon School

Born in Michigan, Arthur F. Sheldon moved to Chicago after his formal education. He worked as a sales manager for several years. Then he founded the Sheldon Publishing Company, which published *The Business Philosopher*, a magazine.

In 1902, in addition to his publishing company, Sheldon founded a correspondence school that ultimately became known as The Sheldon School. The school offered courses in salesmanship and business. However, Sheldon's courses were unique for the time because each employed the scientific method to selling and business and ethical behavior. In addition, his courses focused on the student's overall well-being, not just the course's primary subject.[23]

In 1904, Sheldon published *The Science of Successful Salesmanship; a Series of Lessons Correlating the Basic Laws Which Govern the Sale of Goods for Profit*, which was one of the first courses offered by the school. Certain courses included several major sections or textbooks and numerous lessons. This course, for instance, included the major section "Advertising: Its Relation to Scientific Salesmanship" by William C. Hunter of the Boyce Company.

In 1910, Sheldon published *The Science of Business Building; a Series of Lessons Correlating the Fundamental Principles and Basic Laws Which Govern the Sale of Goods and Services for Profit*, another course offered by the school. A year later he published *The Art of Selling For Business Colleges, High Schools of Commerce, Y.M.C.A. Classes and Private Students*. In 1912, he published *The Science of Efficient Service; or, The Philosophy of Profit-making*.

Although Sheldon moved his businesses to Libertyville, he had buildings constructed for his businesses in Rockefeller (now Mundelein) in 1908.

By 1915, the school enrolled more than 10,000 students. In 1917, Sheldon published *The Science of Business; Being the Philosophy of Successful Human Activity Functioning in Business Building or Constructive Salesmanship*, which was another

course offered by the school that included several textbooks and numerous lessons. One of the textbooks was *The Advertisement*, which was adapted for the school by Gerald R. McDowell. In short, this course, like the course titled *The Science of Business Building*, included a section on advertising.

When the United States entered World War I, many prospective students were recruited by the United States Army. Consequently, the school's enrollment declined.

In 1921, Sheldon sold his property to the Catholic Diocese and eventually moved to a ranch in Mission, Texas, where he died in 1935.[24]

La Salle Extension University

La Salle Extension University was a nationally accredited private institution in Chicago. Founded in 1908 by Jesse Grant Chapline, who served as president, the institution had other officers, a board of directors, an advisory board, and department managers. In addition, it had a director of its general educational organization.

The institution offered correspondence courses in business administration and other subjects. By 1911, more than 10,000 students had enrolled. In 1961, the Crowell-Collier Publishing Company acquired the institution. Later, primarily because of its advertising about its law program, it was sued by the Federal Trade Commission. As a result, the institution closed its law program in 1980. The institution closed two years later.

The institution provided many poor, working-class women, and ethnic minorities educational opportunities.[25]

The institution's "Business Administration Course and Service" was a two-year course about the major facets of business. Consisting of 18 sections, one section was devoted to advertising. This section was written by E. H. Kastor of the H. W. Kastor & Sons advertising company in Chicago and examined various topics, including the psychology of advertising, advertising policies, sales, "reason why" copy, "human interest" copy, advertising campaigns, illustrations, type, paper, spacing, positioning, various print media, testing advertisements, and advertising agents, to mention a few.[26]

Alexander Hamilton Institute

Joseph French Johnson, dean of the School of Commerce, Accounts and Finance, New York University, received letters requesting advice on what to read for business. After several years of receiving such letters, Johnson realized there was a "need for an organized, logical statement of the basic principles on which successful business is founded."[27]

Consequently, Johnson and several colleagues founded the Alexander Hamilton Institute in 1909 to offer such principles to those interested enough to learn. Titled the "Modern Business Course and Service," the course consisted of 24 subjects, including Marketing and Merchandising, Advertising Principles, and Advertising Campaigns. The courses were prepared by specialists in their fields under the guidance of the institute's advisory council and the administrative staff. The books written for the courses presented the subjects so well that several were adopted by faculty who taught at colleges and universities.[28]

For instance, the text about Marketing and Merchandising was prepared in collaboration with Ralph Starr Butler, who was the advertising manager of the United States Rubber Company and John B. Swinney, who was superintendent of merchandising for the Winchester Stores.

The text for Advertising Principles was prepared by Herbert F. DeBower, who was vice-president of the institute, and Bernard Lichtenberg. Mac Martin, who was president of the Mac Martin Advertising Agency, prepared the text for Advertising Campaigns.

In addition to the texts, the Institute provided Modern Business Talks, Modern Business Problems, Monthly Letter on Business Conditions, and Modern Business Reports, among other materials, to students.[29]

The course was two years in length.

The institute appealed to business executives and had enrolled more than 40,000 men within the first five years.

The institute died in the 1980s.

The Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) Schools

The Young Men's Christian Association was founded by George Williams and 11 friends in London in 1844. It crossed the Atlantic in 1851, when Thomas Valentine Sullivan, a retired sea captain in Boston who worked as a marine missionary, realized sailors and merchants needed a safe place to go while away from home as well. Volunteers started or worked at Y's across the United States, including those on college and university campuses. The Y started educational classes in the late 1800s. In 1893,

for instance, evening classes began at the Y in Boston. These classes were for young men who had to learn a particular skill or basic principles about business in their spare time.

In 1919 the United YMCA Schools, which was a federation of nearly 100 local YMCA Schools, aimed to develop a "continent-wide, standardized, Christian character-building program of education."[30] The United YMCA Schools organized the Extension Division the same year. Prior to this time educational programs could only be found in 400 of the larger towns and cities that had YMCA facilities.[31]

Through the Extension Division, the YMCA offered correspondence courses to those young men who desired to learn. This included "ex-servicemen who were receiving scholarship assistance from the War Work Council of the YMCA."[32]

J. Foster Hill, a graduate of Harvard University who had 25 years of experience as an educator, was responsible for the school. Hill organized a large staff of specialists who helped prepare 50 courses. The first student enrolled in 1920. By the end of the second year of the school's operation, more than 26,000 students had enrolled. By 1923, more than 275 courses had been prepared. These courses covered "elementary, high school, vocational, scientific, agricultural, engineering, language, and commercial subjects."[33]

The school was operated for service, not for profit. What students paid was "used in the maintenance of service."[34]

All the courses employed "the newest and best standard textbooks."[35] Instruction sheets and correspondence between the instructor and student supplemented the texts.

For the program "Business Building," S. Roland Hall, the author of the *Advertising Handbook*, one of the texts used in the course about advertising, had numerous years of advertising experience. R. Earle Williamson, the head of the "Business Building" program, also had numerous years of advertising experience. E. H. Lewis, the instructor of advertising, had years of advertising experience as well.[36]

The course in advertising covered the following topics in depth: advertising copy, typography, illustration, retail advertising, house organs, direct mail advertising, street-car advertising, outdoor advertising, and business English, among other subjects.[37]

The Small Schools

The Page-Davis School of Advertising

The Page-Davis School of Advertising was one of the first correspondence schools to offer advertising. Edward T. Page was a copywriter for a retailer and Samuel A. Davis was the manager of an advertising department at a wholesaler. Both of these businesses were in Chicago.

Page gave a series of lectures about advertising in Chicago, which he later had printed. In 1896, he and Davis established The Page-Davis School of Advertising and offered their advertising course. Page eventually wrote *Advertising: How to Plan, Prepare, Write and Manage*, which was published in 1903.[38]

The Page-Davis School of Advertising continued to offer its course for years.

The Chicago College of Advertising

The Chicago Correspondence College of Advertising started in 1901, with William K. Cochrane and Louis Leubrie in charge of it. Cochrane was the advertising manager at the Hub, a clothier, and Leubrie was the advertising manager at Siegel, Cooper and Company. The idea for the college originated with John Lee Mahin, who was president of the Mahin Advertising Company.

A year later Mahin and several other successful businessmen encouraged Cochrane to incorporate the college. In addition, they encouraged him to resign his position with the Hub and serve as president of the college, which he did. The college's name was changed to the Chicago College of Advertising.

In addition to Mahin, there were other successful businessmen behind the college: Leo Austrian, advertising manager at the *Abendpost*; Thomas Balmer, western manager at the *Delineator* and the *Designer*; Hugh W. Montgomery, publisher of the *Chicago Tribune*; Guy S. Osborne, representative of several metropolitan newspapers; J. E. Verree, representative of several leading newspapers; William L. Wilson, advertising manager at the *Chicago Inter Ocean*; and several others.[39]

The college offered the "Mahin Method" of advertising. A writer for *Advertising Experience* wrote,

> The Chicago College of Advertising gives in its course 'the concentrated effort of ten of the recognized advertising authorities of the West, whose exceptional ability is in evidence in every part of the United States and Europe.'[40]

Indeed, the men mentioned above and others served as the college's instructors. Consequently, the students learned about advertising from those who had worked in the profession for years.

Other Small Schools

The Bond Institute of Mercantile Training, which was in New York and managed by Willard H. Bond, offered a course that focused on writing advertising copy. Bond compiled and edited *Window Trimming for the Men's Wear Trade*, which was published in 1905.

The Correspondence Institute of America, which was in Scranton, Pennsylvania, offered a course in advertising. Alt F. Clark was the institute's president.

The National Correspondence Schools of Indianapolis, Indiana, offered a course that focused on writing advertising copy.

The School of Modern Advertising of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, offered a so-called "practical" course in advertising.

Individuals Who Offered Advertising Courses

Wolstan Dixey

Wolstan Dixey worked in advertising at the National Cash Register Company and the Library Bureau before he offered a correspondence course in advertising in 1903. In fact, Dixey had years of experience in advertising, from writing advertising copy to managing advertising for companies.

His course taught students how to gather facts about the business or advertiser and the product or item being sold. Then it taught students how to write effective advertising copy. His course had students create advertisements and mail them to him. When he received them, he critiqued each one and mailed his critiques to the students.

In an interview, Dixey stated,

> The teacher's problem is to find out what the individual can do best, make him do it over and over again, and make him understand the how and the why. Advertising might be defined as a way—not *the* way—of approaching a reader with an exposition of certain goods or a certain business perspective.[41]

Dixey's course was instructive and challenging primarily because of what each lesson emphasized and the related assignment. Indeed, students learned not only from doing the assignments, but from his critiques.

George French

George French was the general editor of the New Jersey Neighborhood Newspapers company and had years of advertising and publishing experience. In addition, he had written *The Art and Science of Advertising*, which had been published in 1909 and *The Fundamentals of Advertising*, which had been published in 1914, before he developed a correspondence course in advertising.

The course contained 10 lessons that covered the product, the market, the psychology of selling, the media, and writing advertising copy, among other topics.[42]

According to French,

> Into these ten lessons I have put the results of many years' experience in advertising work, in business investigations, and in market analyses.
>
> They will give anyone the necessary basis for learning the business of advertising and learning it thoroughly; they will put him in the right way to become a success if he has the proper stuff in him and is willing to work and study.
>
> I know the lessons will do this. I know it from my own experience and from the letters that others have written about them. Every person who has them testifies to their worth to him.[43]

Each prospective student had to write a letter about his or her needs and ambitions and mail it to French. If he believed the prospective student would not benefit from the course, he would tell the student.

In addition to conducting the course, French continued to write books about advertising. For instance, he wrote *Advertising: the Social and Economic Problem*, which was published in 1915; *How to Advertise: a Guide to Designing, Laying Out, and Composing Advertisements*, which was published in 1917; *Advertising Campaigns*, which he wrote with Harry Tipper and which was published in 1923; and *Planned Advertising: the Planned Approach to Agency Efficiency*, which was published in 1927. French also wrote other books.

Elmer Helms

Before he developed a correspondence course in writing advertising copy, Elmer Helms had written advertisements for John Wanamaker, owner of the largest department stores at the time.

According to Helms, even though his course was taught by correspondence, it was one-on-one. That is, each student's assignment received constructive criticism from him, not from an assistant.[44] In addition, if a student had a question about any assignment, all the student needed to do was ask, and Helms would reply. However, according to the advertising for the course, Helms could only accept slightly more than 200 students at any given time.[45] In fact, his advertising generally stated the number of new students he was accepting.

Samuel Knopf

According to Samuel Knopf, he had more than 20 years of advertising and business experience before he developed a correspondence course in advertising.[46]

Similar to a few other individuals who offered correspondence courses in advertising, Knopf worked with each student. Consequently, he could only accept so many students:

> I am now teaching a number of men and women my art of advertising and business management. I can add a limited number of students—not many—as every student or client receives my personal attention. I write out every lesson myself, review and correct the work—answer every letter personally—therefore I

must limit the number of my student-clientele. But, from no other man or "school" or "college" can you get the knowledge that I can impart to you in a comparatively short time.[47]

Knopf promised, "I will continue to teach you as long as you are willing to learn—and, you'll enjoy every minute of it."[48]

E. St. Elmo Lewis

E. St. Elmo Lewis was born in Philadelphia and educated in law at the University of Pennsylvania. He edited at least two publications while enrolled at the university.

After working in printing, he founded the Advertisers' Agency in 1896. Lewis established a branch office in Buffalo, New York, and, later, another in Detroit, Michigan.

In 1901, he was selected to conduct the Peirce School course in advertising. The Lewis Correspondence Course of Individual Instruction in Advertising was prepared by Lewis and limited to 100 students.[49] According to Lewis, several of the students who completed the course became successful advertising managers at different companies.[50]

The Advertisers' Agency became E. St. Elmo Lewis in 1901. However, the company dissolved five years later.

Lewis worked as an advertising manager at the National Cash Register Company. Later, he held the same position at the Burroughs Adding Machine Company. He also worked at *The Book-Keeper*, a journal.

In 1910, Lewis was a co-founder and first president of the Association of National Advertisers. Four years later he became a vice-president and general manager at a construction company in Jamestown, New York. A year later he joined the Campbell Ewald Company in Detroit, where he remained until 1926.

Lewis worked for several more firms before he retired. He and his wife moved from Detroit to St. Petersburg, Florida, where he died in 1948.[51] Lewis wrote several books, including *Financial Advertising; for Commercial and Savings Banks, Trusts, Title Insurance, and Safe Deposit Companies, Investment Houses* in 1908 and *Getting the Most out of Business* in 1915.

Lewis is credited for the advertising model AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action), which Edward K. Strong discussed in *The Psychology of Selling and Advertising* in 1925.

George H. Powell

George H. Powell worked in advertising for years before he offered a correspondence course in advertising. According to Jas. H. Collins,

> He is a past-master in mail order and medical advertising, has designed type faces and ornaments, been an advertising counselor, a contributor to advertising journals, a publisher and a business organizer.[52]

Powell's course featured more than 40 lessons, each of which had exhibit sheets with specimen advertisements that illustrated the lesson. Students did the assignments,

and Powell critiqued them in depth. The course focused on writing advertising copy. In fact, the typical student created more than 100 advertisements before he or she finished the course.

According to Powell, "I teach men how to write ads—and that's why I have ten times as many successful men in the field as any other instructor."[53]

Powell also had women enrolled in the course. Several who had finished had become successful writers of advertising copy.[54]

Powell wrote *Powell's Practical Advertiser: A Practical Work for Advertising Writers and Business Men, with Instruction on Planning, Preparing, Placing and Managing Modern Publicity*, which was published in 1905.

Wagenseller Advertising Course of Instruction

George W. Wagenseller had years of experience in advertising and publishing. According to Wagenseller, "It was during 1901 that I compiled an elaborate course of Advertising Instruction to be taught by mail . . . ."[55]

Although he had written the course for business colleges, he was informed his lessons were too difficult for the average business college student. As a result, he made the problems easier and subsequently put them in *The Theory and Practice of Advertising*, a textbook that was published in 1902. The book contained 50 lessons and problems. In addition, the book contained a coupon worth a dollar toward the cost of the course, for which Wagenseller encouraged the reader to send.[56]

Unfortunately, Wagenseller offered the correspondence course for only a short time primarily because he was publishing *The Post* in Middleburg, Pennsylvania. He

wrote, “I started an advertising writing school by correspondence, but it was of a short duration, as I could not attend to it without neglecting the *Post*.”[57]

Criticism of Correspondence Schools

Of course, other individuals who had some experience in advertising, offered courses in advertising. Some professionals who worked in advertising, particularly those who had agencies, criticized these schools. They believed that advertising, especially copywriting, could not be learned from such courses. Their views were expressed in various publications, including those that were read by numerous professionals. For instance, in the March, 1905, issue of *Profitable Advertising*, Earnest Elmo Calkins wrote,

> I believe that these advertising schools have done a great deal of harm. They have turned loose upon the world thousands of young folks who firmly believe that they are qualified to do regular advertising work. So little do they know about it that they do not know that the course they have taken, instead of being a general advertising course, is only confined to one department of one branch of advertising work, that of writing advertising copy.[58]

On the other hand, correspondence schools, including those offering courses about advertising, were favored by some working for the press. In the September 24, 1902, issue of *Printers’ Ink*, a writer wrote,

> Without doubt the advertising schools will advance the cause, the business of advertising. No doubt these schools will elevate the quality of advertising, make it better rather than worse than it would be if the schools did not exist.[59]

However, Leverett S. Lyon, in *Education for Business*, was critical of correspondence schools, particularly private correspondence schools. He claimed these schools constituted "a vicious and inefficient system of education."[60] Then he listed the reasons:

> (1) Many of them are fraudulent.
>
> (2) The degree of efficiently, even among the technically honest firms, is not high.
>
> (3) The charges for tuition are too high.
>
> (4) An enormous amount is wasted in competitive advertising and canvassing.
>
> (5) A further criticism of private correspondence schools is that only a small percentage ever finish the courses that they begin.
>
> (6) Finally, correspondence school courses, even at their best, are a decidedly unsatisfactory means of education and should be used only as a last resort.[61]

Although the above criticisms concerning correspondence schools were written decades ago, similar comments have been made in academic publications today.

The National Home Study Council

Primarily because criticism concerning correspondence schools existed in the press and because several major correspondence schools realized the public's perception of individual study by correspondence may have changed as a result, the National Home Study Council (NHSC) was founded by several leading correspondence schools in 1926 primarily to promote education quality and ethical business practices for correspondence education programs.

The council was founded after a Carnegie Corporation report about correspondence education was released. The report discussed this form of education in depth and mentioned its shortcomings.

In 1955, the Accrediting Commission was established primarily to create and implement accreditation standards for correspondence schools. Eventually, the council was recognized by the Department of Education in 1959.

The council changed its name to the Distance Education and Training Council (DETC) in 1994. In 2001, the DETC was recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). In 2015, the name was changed to the Distance Education Accrediting Commission (DEAC).[62]

Final Comments

Several correspondence schools continued to offer one or more courses in advertising in the early 1900s. However, only two or three of these schools were approved by the National Home Study Council. See the *Home Study Blue Book*, complied by J. S. Noffsinger, which was published in 1931, and *The Manual of*

Standards and Directory of Private Home Study Schools and Courses, edited by J. S. Noffsinger, which was published in 1947, for instance.

Criticism of correspondence schools, especially those that offered only a course about writing advertising copy, continued in the press as well. Furthermore, young professionals who worked in advertising believed that advertising needed to be elevated to professional status. Consequently, they approached various institutions about offering courses in advertising.

Soon representatives of local advertising clubs from throughout the country formed the Associated Advertising Clubs of America (AACA). The organization developed a list of several purposes, including the elevation of the profession by encouraging formalized advertising education. Members of the organization disagreed, however, as to how advertising education should be handled. They agreed that professionals, not academicians, should be responsible for instruction in advertising. The organization's "Committee on Lectures" developed a "Standard Course" for local clubs to offer.

Within a few years, members of the AACA realized that courses in advertising were offered by various types of schools, including correspondence schools and colleges and universities. Yet, these courses differed greatly in content. Eventually, they agreed that colleges and universities should provide advertising education. Their idea was opposed by older professionals and numerous academicians, however. The latter group believed that advertising was not worthy of being in institutions of higher learning. Yet, a few departments or schools of commerce as well as journalism had been founded at several colleges and universities. Some of these departments or schools offered part of a

course or a course devoted to advertising. In addition, a course about advertising could be found in more than one department of psychology as well as other departments and schools at several colleges and universities. Advocates for advertising education believed that advertising should be housed in journalism because of its relationship to newspapers and magazines or in commerce because of its relationship to business.

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