

The Classroom in a Box

If you enroll for one of the more than 300 courses offered by the independent study department of the Extension Division, your mailman may bring you a learning center.

Correspondence study has gone "multi-media." In the past, most of the courses involved a syllabus and a text or two. Now "learning experiences" are offered through a variety of media. Engineering drawing sets, microscopes, swatches of fabrics, LP records, and experimental kits for science courses are sent out to students from Arkansas to Zanzibar.

The MO-AV-PAK (Missouri Audio Visual Package) is standard equipment. In a case about the size of a portable typewriter are packed a cassette tape player, a miniature projector with slide and filmstrip adapters and tapes, slides and filmstrips. These packages of audio-visual equipment help students set up their own learning labs at home.

Doil Felts, director of Independent Study, is excited about the new emphasis on learning by doing, seeing and hearing. "In the future we will be the mechanics and the professors will be the professional intellectuals. Learning ought to dance and be exciting, thrilling and ro-

matic. We haven't quite gotten over the idea that learning should be boring. Lots of people pooh-pooh technology and still think that learning takes place best at the feet of the pedagogue, the great teacher. We have found that learning doesn't have to take place just in the presence of the teacher."

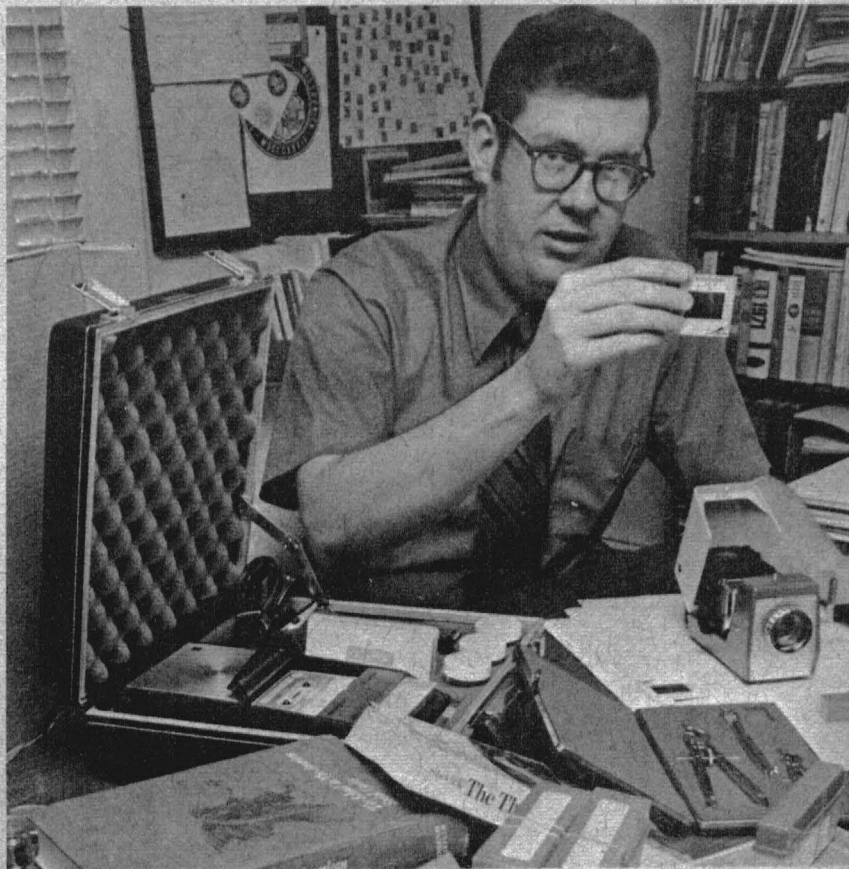
James Orey, who has his MA in curriculum design from Brigham Young University, helps professors who are preparing independent study courses. He tries to get the essence of that great teaching into boxes to send to students all over the world.

One professor thought for over a year about how to present a flower arranging course. He was trying to figure out how to teach long distance a course that uses demonstrations in front of students who are close enough to smell the rosebuds. Finally he put together 1,040 slides that show the student, step by step, how to do various arrangements. Lectures to accompany the slides are on tape.

This kind of "do-it-yourself" learning is growing more and more popular. This year, more than 6,500 new students enrolled in University independent study courses.



A broken pot to glue back together provides Museum Methods' students with a "real" artifact to reassemble.



Audio-visual equipment and packaged "learning experiences" supplement the texts. James Orey, assistant supervisor of instruction, checks the flower arranging slides.

There are courses for high school students, non-credit students, and undergraduates. And the University offers more courses at the graduate level than any other university in the nation. Many graduate courses are individual problems or readings courses "contracted" with professors. Each year eight to ten new courses are added to the independent study list.

This year new courses have been added in Comparative Political Systems, The 19th Century English Novel, The 18th Century English Novel; and Contemporary Europe. Among the courses now being developed are Industrial Management, Personnel Management and Business Law.

Still in production is an experimental multi-media course called Museum Methods. Alden Redfield, instructor in Anthropology and director of the Museum of Anthropology, wrote the course for students who are interested in working in museums.

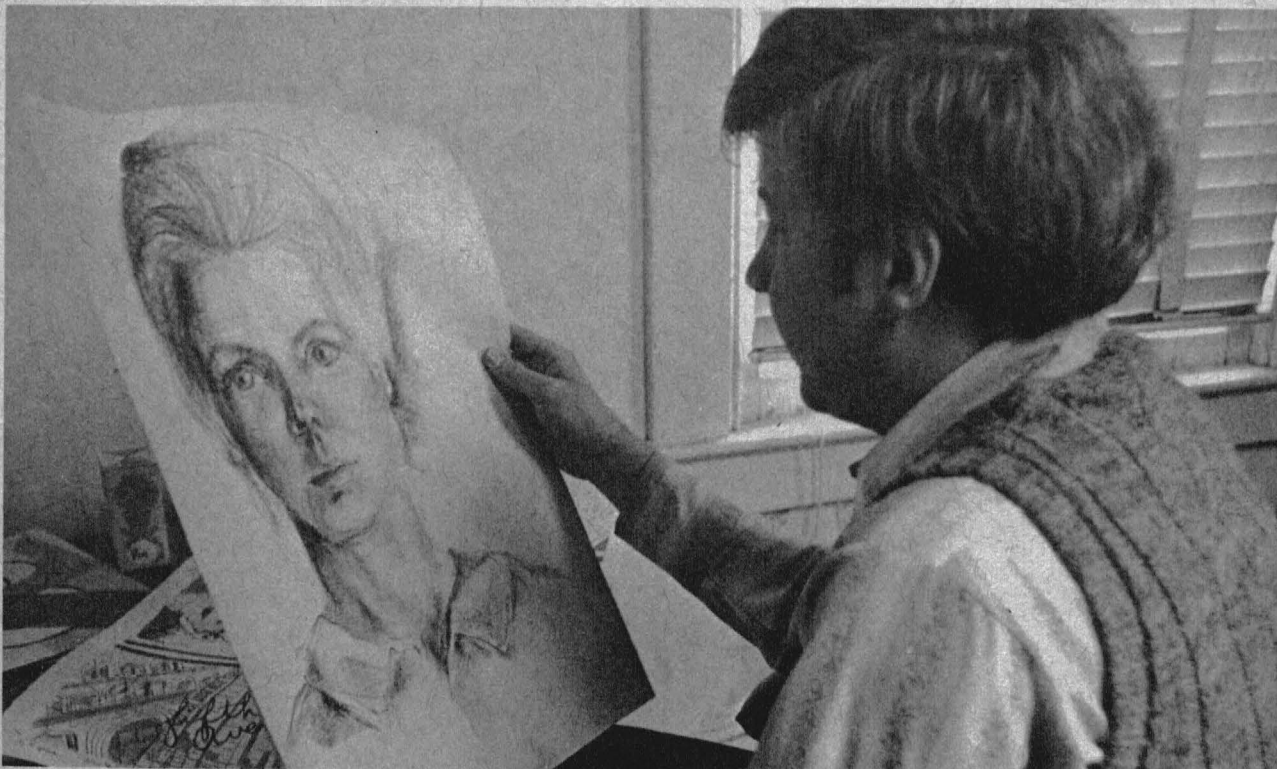
The mailman may stagger under the load of this learning center in a box. The student's package will include the MO-AV-PAK, two texts, a Museum Reader containing articles from magazines, a taped radio show to serve

as an example of good museum publicity, a syllabus containing many drawings, slides showing security measures taken by museums to protect their collections, and more slides of insect displays, Paul Revere's workshop and a model of the Boston area.

The student will need to provide for himself a t-square, drawing board and a small box of patching plaster. He will also need a collection of something. One of the assignments in the course is to build a display for a collection "of dolls or bottle caps or butterflies" and photograph it. For the student who doesn't have a collection, Redfield provides a "paper project," a display to plan on paper.

A section on graphic arts is included in the syllabus. Museum workers may have to make sketches, Redfield says. The student's box will also contain drafting tape, a pencil eraser, paper, pens, ink, an erasing shield, a triangle and a French curve.

The course also teaches the student how to repair or reconstruct broken or fragmentary artifacts. In the bottom of his box, the student will find in a brown paper bag, a smashed clay pot to reassemble. □



Student art projects are admired by Roger Olson, coordinator of publications. Qualified instructors evaluate all completed lessons.