

# Developing A Group Correspondence Course

## A GCC Overview

EGA's Group Correspondence Courses are paper or electronic texts in which the student is expected to stitch the item without additional outside sources. The unique feature of this program allows the student to send the piece to the teacher for a critique.

The following information is provided so that prospective teachers will understand the steps required to produce a Group Correspondence Course before starting work on the proposal. For the purposes of this summary, it is assumed that the teacher has not already created and stitched a design but rather is considering writing a course.

### Where To Start?

As a first step in developing a course, a prospective teacher should contact either the Group Correspondence Course Chair or the GCC Development Assistant for a prospective GCC teacher packet. That packet includes this Overview and a brief outline for submitting your proposal. Also included is an Information Sheet for Prospective GCC Teachers.

### Creating a Design or Adapting a Text

The prospective teacher's next step is to create an **original** design for the GCC program. Designs for a GCC must be the original design of the teacher, not an adaptation from another medium (such as a greeting card or magazine photo). The reason for this is the possible copyright infringement. However, this is not to say that a teacher may not derive inspiration from another medium.

EGA values texts that have been written for our National Seminars. We realize many of these, especially the 4-day classes, are not taught very often after a seminar. The Education Department will consider these texts for adapting to Encore GCCs.

### Developing the Proposal

After the design is created, the teacher develops a course proposal explaining the specific items that the course will cover, for instance, interesting stitches, compensation, knowledge of special threads, stitching techniques, and skill level.

### Submitting the Proposal

For the next step, the teacher submits a short course proposal and a design sketch or photograph of the project that is then reviewed by members of the Education Department for preliminary approval of the course. This submission may be submitted as an Online attachment or in the regular mail; check first with the GCC Chair. Submitting a proposal prior to stitching the project has some advantages. The Education Department may request changes to the design that, if already stitched, would necessitate the teacher's re-stitching all or a portion of the project. The text and the course photograph or photocopy must match exactly.

After returning the Teacher Information Sheet and the proposal information to the GCC Chair, if several proposals are offered, the prospective teacher is contacted to discuss which of their preferred techniques would be the best to pursue. The GCC Chair may suggest that the teacher develop a course in a technique where the correspondence school is lacking courses or where we would like to replace older ones.

Once the proposal is approved by the GCC Chair, the Administrator of Education Programs and the Director of Education, a *Contract for the Development of an EGA GCC* is issued for signatures.

### **Writing the Course Text**

After the contract is signed, the teacher will stitch the course piece (if this has not already been done) and write the course text following the *Guidelines for Writing a Group Correspondence Course*, which will be included in the teacher's packet for the development of an approved GCC. Following the *Guidelines* will reduce the amount of editing required. These guidelines cover a variety of topics, such as what information is to be included as well as tips on the text presentation. The text must include instructions that allow the student to reproduce the course piece (using the same threads, stitches, etc.); this applies even if the course encourages the students to develop their own designs.

The GCC texts need to be as clear as possible, i.e., the text is the teacher and should not require any outside information sources. For instance, if the student will need to block their work, then the text must include directions on how to do this, rather than refer them to a needlework reference book. Unlike a member of a chapter group, the student may be stitching alone as a Lightning Round participant and may not have access to other stitchers for assistance.

### **Piloting the Course**

After completing the text preparation, the teacher will submit electronically the text to the GCC Chair. The GCC Text Editor reviews the text for any pre-piloting editing that is deemed necessary. When the teacher finishes this editing, the teacher sends the text electronically to the GCC Chair and the GCC Development Assistant. Upon acceptance of the text, the GCC Development Assistant arranges to pilot the course.

Prospective courses are usually piloted by one group of four stitchers who (ideally) hold stitching meetings and work the course as it is meant to be done. In addition, four individual stitchers, geographically separated from each other, also stitch the piece. In that way, we hope to provide suggestions on how to make the course more stitcher-friendly for those members who will be stitching it alone.

The pilot group is given eight to twelve weeks to stitch the course piece and make suggestions and corrections to the text. Ideally, they would completely stitch the piece; however, if that is not possible, they are asked to stitch a representative portion of each part of the instructions. After completing their pieces, the stitchers send their edited texts and their pieces to the Development Assistant. The Development Assistant sends the stitched pieces to the teacher for critique and the edited texts to the Text Editor.

The teacher has two weeks to evaluate the stitching and then return the pieces and the written student evaluations to the GCC Development Assistant. We advise the teacher to take notes while doing the evaluations because a common problem that was not recognized by the pilot stitchers may become evident. This may require the teacher adjust portions of the text. If the teacher is new to this GCC process, the GCC Chair will review the evaluations. The GCC Chair may make suggestions for changes in the way the teacher has approached the evaluations, or the format chosen to present them. The Development Assistant returns the pieces and the evaluations to the pilot stitchers.

The Text Editor compiles the edited texts into one document and sends it to the teacher. Working together the two finalize the text. Additional rounds of revision may be necessary before a text is ready to be submitted to the Education Department for final editing and approval.

### **Final Approval of the Text and Contracts**

After the teacher submits the text for final approval, the teacher will compile the course information and photographs necessary for the EGA website and *Needle Arts* and send these

to the GCC Chair. These items may be sent to the GCC Chair at any time during the course development process, but the Chair must have them before a contract may be signed.

After the Director of Education approves the text, a Teacher Contract is circulated electronically for signatures by the teacher, the Administrator of Education Programs, the Director of Education, and the EGA President. The contract, the text, course information and photographs are sent to EGA HQ. EGA will then pay the teacher for developing the course.

The EGA webmaster will post the course information and photos on the website. The GCC Chair also sends the course information and photographs to the *Needle Arts* editor for inclusion in the next magazine issue.

GCC Chair also advises the teacher as to the registration process and the types of records they need to retain. The teacher also receives two GCC Evaluation Forms (one for the individual student and one for the group leader) and a supply of Certificates of Completion.

The teacher's course piece (or one stitched by a student) is to be exhibited as part of the annual Education Exhibit, which is held during national seminars. This exhibition is an important advertisement for the course.

All GCCs are posted on the EGA website and are available for registration by groups for a minimum of three years; however, the contract may be extended. During this time, the course will occasionally be offered as a Lightning Round opportunity for individual members. When the course is retired, the text becomes the property of the teacher.

### **A Few Last Notes**

Course proposals are accepted, and piloting is arranged year-round. Because of publishing deadlines, it may take from 15 to 18 months for a course to go from proposal to being listed in *Needle Arts* and posted on the website. Six to nine months are usually required from the time of submission of a text for piloting to the signing of contracts.

The GCC Chair and Development Assistant are always available and ready to answer questions or do anything to help achieve a wonderful new GCC project.

Shipping texts and completed pieces can be risky at times. People travel and are not always home to receive packages. Additionally, we are now becoming global with teachers from outside the U.S. writing texts. We must take into consideration the additional cost of foreign postage and exchange values. All the teachers must communicate with the GCC team and their students via email. The teacher and group leader/individual will email each other with a date on which the packages will be sent. This ensures that someone will be home to receive the package. Otherwise, an alternate shipping date is arranged. Teachers may also allow students to send photographs of their pieces electronically for evaluation.

For more information, please contact the Group Correspondence Course Chair through the EGA website listing or via this email address: [gcc@egausa.org](mailto:gcc@egausa.org)