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*Read report*

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*J.H.S.*



HANDBOOK

FOR

SECONDARY STAFF

10/70

The Correspondence School, Sydney

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## TEACHING BY CORRESPONDENCE

*The Role of the Correspondence Teacher*

Correspondence teaching involves the adaptation of educational principles to a system of instruction by the written word. The leaflets in each subject give information, explanations and instructions, direct reading and organize ideas; the stimulus to make the best use of this material and to enlarge upon it by research must come mainly from the teacher. Teachers are, therefore, more than markers and they must strive to obtain from the pupil more than the reproduction of the contents of the leaflets. They must stimulate and extend interests, form habits and develop desirable attitudes to the work required. No weakness should go unaided, no slackness unchallenged, no effort unrewarded.

The manner in which the pupil carries out instructions and his obedience in following rules reflect reactions towards authority. The way work is done and returned indicates the pupil's attitude. Neatly written, well set out work, regularly posted, indicates a systematic mind, good habits of study and training in punctuality. These are the ideals which the teacher must inspire in his pupils. In so far as these ideals are attained by the pupil, there is evidence of character building.

The correspondence method is individual, that is, it involves the teacher communicating with one pupil at a time and this has certain obvious advantages because the pupil can proceed at the rate best suited to his temperament and ability. However, it also has certain disadvantages, notably: (i) that the pupil lacks the companionship and competition of other pupils; (ii) that the teacher is limited to the written word as virtually this is the only means of communication with the pupil who may well be a reluctant reader, making the correspondence teacher's task even more difficult.

Two specialised skills required by the correspondence teacher, in addition to many of the skills required in general teaching, are: (i) ability to convey precisely, in writing, one's message to children of varying abilities, backgrounds and interests; (ii) ability to build up an accurate impression of a child from the evidence available in the file and from further evidence emerging from the child's responses to questions and instructions. Correspondence is a challenge to "learn" one's pupil as well as teach him.

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### Teachers' Comments and Corrections

The value of personal example cannot be overstressed. As these comments are seen and not heard and are of a somewhat permanent nature, correct expression, good penmanship and careful direction of the pupil's efforts are most important.

Many of the pupils taught are isolated or handicapped. Correction and comment should always aim at drawing these children closer to society, enriching their lives and widening their horizons.

When correcting pupils' work teachers should be -

- (i) conscious of the capabilities of the pupil;
- (ii) alert to detect any careless or indifferent work;
- (iii) thorough in all corrections;
- (iv) specific with all instructions given;
- (v) firm in insisting that instructions should be implicitly obeyed;
- (vi) vigilant to recognise work of better than average quality and quick to commend it;
- (vii) ready to suggest further developmental activities to better pupils, and to give added assistance to weaker pupils;
- (viii) careful to foster special talents or aptitudes displayed by a particular pupil.

Corrections and comments on pupils' exercises should be done in red ink and placed as close as possible to the errors themselves. To be most effective, they should be economical, direct, and pitched to the level of the pupil's understanding. Broader comments upon the whole exercise should be written at the end of the question.

Teachers will find it easier to correct and comment on work if they insist on the pupil using a wide margin and leaving three to five blank lines below each exercise or part of each exercise.

### The Title Page

While some of the general comment may be written at the end of the work, the significant summing-up and impressions should be carried forward to the new title page. In this position they will be noticed by

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the supervisor, forced upon the attention of the pupil and seen again by the teacher when the title page returns to him with new work. The new title page is the connecting link between the work corrected and the pupil's response to the corrections as evidenced in his new work. It is thus the main line of follow-up. The summing-up should contain encouragement (even when the work may appear undeserving), suggestions for improvement, praise for good work, tactful reproach for recurring or careless errors.

Careful thought should always be given to the presentation of the new title page. The following are some of the purposes that can be realised by an effective title page.

- (i) To sum up the work corrected and give an overall impression of it.
- (ii) To enumerate clearly the exercises required to be repeated, revised, improved.
- (iii) To present one or more feature lessonettes based upon errors diagnosed in the corrected work and related to the pupil's capacity to profit.
- (iv) To suggest remedial measures.
- (v) To preview the work to come, adding some or other encouraging remark or exhortation.

The corrections and comments made on the pupils' work and on the title pages are a reflection of the personality of the teacher.

They reveal -

the method of dealing with the individual pupil  
familiarity with the school instructions, not only to teachers, but also to pupils  
knowledge of individual pupils and the conditions under which they work  
ability to discern where praise, or censure, should be bestowed  
teaching skill, particularly as regards diagnosis and correction of errors and weaknesses, remedial exercises and follow-up.

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### Use of Lesson Leaflets

Correspondence teachers should be thoroughly familiar with the subject matter of the leaflet courses from which they are teaching. Every teacher should have available for ready reference a full set of leaflets together with a complete index of topics covered and a key to all exercises. Whilst it is obviously impossible for every teacher to write his own leaflet course, it remains the right of each correspondence teacher to make comments and suggestions on the courses in use. These comments should be recorded on the reference set of leaflets and drawn to the attention of the master when the leaflet course falls due for reprinting. In special cases, supplementary, or explanatory or revisionary sheets may be printed, provided they have been authorised by the master for use by all teachers teaching a particular course.

Correspondence leaflet courses are devised and printed for use by Correspondence School pupils and teachers only. They are not to be taken out of the school nor are they to be issued to unauthorised persons.

### Table Organization

The principles of table organization are based upon the notion that, in the event of a teacher's absence, a relieving teacher should be able to locate his work, records, summary sheets, notes, etc. and be in a position to commence work.

- (i) Lesson record cards should be adequately labelled, front and back. Name tags are recommended.
- (ii) Cards should be in alphabetical order.
- (iii) The work awaiting correction should be arranged in order of priority.
- (iv) When a new pupil is enrolled, all title pages required for the first group of postings should be prepared in readiness although they may not necessarily all be required immediately.
- (v) The top drawer should be reserved strictly for papers and materials directly related to the work.

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### Records

Lesson record cards are official documents, and, as such, should be meaningful to everyone, not merely to an individual using his own "private" code of entries.

The accepted manner of making entries on cards should be ascertained by reference to the Secondary Procedures Booklet.

In addition to the minimum record as required on the cards the following extra elements of record are strongly recommended for consideration.

- (i) A weekly assessment. A mark based upon a 1 to 10 scale should be awarded for each set of work and recorded in the column provided on the card, but not necessarily made known to the pupil.
- (ii) A Follow-up Book. Effective teachers are seldom satisfied with the lesson record card alone for weak or difficult pupils. Some form of additional record is essential at least for pupils such as those needing remedial work, and therefore, detailed records, or for those showing persistent indifference to instructions or readiness to lose or ignore instructions.
- (iii) A Summary Card. It is suggested that each teacher design, for his own particular class, a summary card that will provide readily such statistical information as -

number in class  
 number of boys/girls  
 number of sets corrected during week  
 class regularity  
 number of students in various categories.

Such information is frequently called for and may require considerable time when least convenient if it has to be collected from the individual cards each time.

### Lesson Record Cards

Relevant details from the pupil's file (including the Application for

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Enrolment, "Getting to Know You" and the Pupil Information Sheet) should be transferred to the lesson record card. Such details should include information regarding -

previous schooling  
 medical disabilities (if any)  
 home background  
 interests or hobbies  
 special abilities  
 textbooks, equipment, library facilities available  
 study conditions  
 study attitudes  
 educational aims and ambitions.

Other information which may help to give a wider knowledge of the pupil should be added from time to time as it becomes available from correspondence, notes on title pages or the pupil's responses to his correspondence lessons.

In addition to the despatch and receipt of work, lesson record cards should also show -

number of title pages on issue  
 marks awarded for each assignment  
 comments on each corrected assignment  
 details of correction exercises set  
 enclosures or supplementary material  
 action taken regarding unsatisfactory work  
 action taken regarding unsatisfactory attendance  
 examination marks, assessments, awards and comments.

The lesson record card is the subject teacher's constant point of reference for information about his pupils.

#### Summary

Success in correspondence teaching is dependent upon the following factors.

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- (i) A broad, enlightened outlook regarding education and the special needs of correspondence pupils.
- (ii) Knowledge of the Correspondence School Organization.
  - Familiarity with the details of organization and co-operation in giving effect to them.
  - Promptness and punctuality in carrying out correspondence duties and procedures.
  - The accuracy, neatness and accessibility of records.
  - Willingness to place any special knowledge or skill at the service of the staff.
- (iii) Teacher/Parent/Supervisor Relationships.
  - Knowledge of the individual pupils and of the environmental conditions under which they work.
  - Good relations between the Correspondence School teacher, pupils and home or school supervisor.
  - Sympathy with retarded and handicapped children and skill in securing a satisfactory rate of progress.
  - Skill shown in developing the pupil's special interests.
- (iv) Quality of Corrections and Comments.
  - The thoroughness with which all errors are corrected and constructive exercises given.
  - The discrimination shown in correction and the ability to plan remedial measures.
  - The constructiveness of criticism and comment on the lessons returned by the pupil.
  - The skill shown in writing appropriate censure without repressing the spirit of the pupil.
  - The quality of the writing and the English shown in corrections.
  - "Example is much better than precept."

#### PASTORAL CARE

##### The Class Teacher

Responsibility for pastoral care of pupils falls primarily on the class teacher who must attend to the general administration of pupils' courses.

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The special duties of the class teacher include the following:

- notifying subject teachers of details concerning new enrolments.
- despatch of initial postings
- checking on textbooks
- circulation of pupils' files
- circulation of correspondence
- checking on regularity in attendance
- attention to posting arrangements and problems
- circulation of pupil movement forms
- posting of certain school forms and circulars
- compilation of reports
- attending to visiting pupils
- reviewing progress of unsatisfactory students
- attention to individual problems or requests
- maintaining pupils' files.

Class teachers should bring to the notice of class masters "problem" cases such as continued irregularity in attendance, repeated subject omissions, constant neglect of instructions.

#### Pupils' Files

The class teacher must maintain a file for each of his pupils. Pupils' files contain information of educational significance such as evidence of character, of home and school background and the quality of the supervision. The following documents are kept in each file:

- completed enrolment form
- "Getting to Know You"
- Pupil Information Sheet
- all correspondence relating to the pupil.

As files may need to be consulted at any time they should be kept up to date, with documents arranged in chronological order; they should be firmly stapled and be always readily accessible to masters or teachers.

#### The Subject Teacher

Subject teachers should co-operate with class teachers in all matters

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affecting the administration of pupils' correspondence courses. They should consult with class teachers regarding the work and progress of unsatisfactory pupils, cases of irregular attendance, repeated subject omissions and other posting problems. In addition, subject teachers should bring to the class teacher's notice any information they may receive that is of interest to other teachers.

#### Incoming Letters

Where necessary, teachers should remind supervisors and pupils that all letters dealing with school matters should be addressed:

The Principal,  
Correspondence School Sydney,  
52-58 William Street,  
Kings Cross, N.S.W. 2011.

All letters concerning school matters become official letters and are to be treated as such. Matters contained therein must receive prompt attention in the department concerned and, if necessary, replies must be written. Important letters from supervisors or parents regarding individual pupils should be circulated by the class teacher to subject teachers concerned before being placed on the pupil's file. If received by the subject teacher, such letters should be forwarded to the class teacher for action. Letters of general importance received from a particular school should be circulated by class teachers to all teachers instructing pupils at that school.

#### Outgoing Letters

All official communications must be authorised by the master of the section or department before being forwarded in manuscript form to the Typing Department. The reference should include the master's initials and the pupil's class number. Normally two file copies are made, one for filing in the department from which the letter originates, and one for the information of other departments concerned. Masters wishing to vary the number of copies made should indicate this in red on the manuscript. On being returned to the section from the Typing Department, letters should be proofed and then forwarded to the Deputy Principal.

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Letters regarding minor matters may be handwritten on official paper with school letterhead provided they are authorised by the master. They should be signed with the Principal's name per (teacher or master) and should bear the pupil's class number.

Letters should never be enclosed in pupils' work.

The need for the exercise of tact in all communications is stressed.

#### Visits by Pupils

All correspondence pupils are welcome to visit the school whenever it is convenient to do so, with the permission of parents or supervisors. Pupils about to enrol with the Correspondence School should be specially encouraged to visit the school with parents in order to discuss courses, textbooks and posting arrangements.

Generally, visiting pupils should be directed in the first place to the class teacher. It is the responsibility of the class teacher, after completing his own interview with the pupil, to make out a travelling sheet and introduce the pupil to the first subject teacher; it then becomes the duty of each subject teacher to introduce the pupil to the next teacher on the list until all subject teachers have interviewed the pupil. In special cases pupils and parents should be directed to the Principal or Deputy Principal.

All full-time pupils in Forms 5 and 6 who are studying Science and are without adequate laboratory facilities are invited to attend the Correspondence School at regular intervals in order to do practical Science work and carry out Geology and Biology excursions. Board is arranged for those who cannot stay with relatives or friends. The Department of Education bears the cost of rail travel. These pupils are afforded the opportunity of interviewing their other subject teachers, if time permits.

#### LEAFLET WRITING

Leaflet-writing is an accepted part of the duties of correspondence teachers though the selection of the teacher best fitted to undertake a specific leaflet-writing assignment rests with the subject master or special master concerned. It is difficult to overemphasize the value of a well devised and

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well presented leaflet course. Such a course may well remain in use for a considerable period of time, be studied by a large number of different students, be appraised with interest by parents, supervisors, teachers and inspectors and be carried in the mail to every corner of the Commonwealth and indeed of the globe.

The effectiveness or otherwise of a leaflet course is dependent upon diverse factors too numerous to discuss in a booklet of this nature. It is sufficient here to sound one note of warning about the danger of pupils' misconstruing the meaning of the printed word which of course must form the basis of all correspondence courses.

We are all aware that even carefully worded documents may fail to convey the meaning hoped for: this should alert a correspondence leaflet writer to the considerable difficulty of "getting through" to the pupil. There is no possibility, as there would be in speaking to a pupil, of observing his reaction and trying a change of "tactics", if necessary, to hold his interests and ensure understanding. It is quite clear that in the leaflet writing situation, perfection in saying a little is better than saying too much and perhaps defeating one's own purpose. It is implied that every sentence in a leaflet should be reread and checked and that, if there is still doubt about the pupils' ability to understand it, the sentence should be rephrased.

#### AUDIO-VISUAL AIDS

In many subjects printed leaflets are now supplemented by audio-visual aids which include audio tapes, gramophone records and photographic colour slides or transparencies.

#### BROADCASTS AND TELECASTS

School broadcasts form an integral part of the correspondence Music course. Pupils are also encouraged to listen to other school broadcasts and telecasts on topics related to subjects being studied.

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## STAFF RULES

## Hours of Work

9 a.m. - 1 p.m.  
1.45 p.m. - 3.45 p.m.

A morning tea break of fifteen minutes is allowed. The tea is delivered to the different floors at different times between the hours of 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. daily.

Teachers must adhere strictly to the times listed above. Punctuality in commencing work for the day and in resuming after recesses is expected from all members of staff.

## Leave of Absence

An attendance book is kept in each department. Leave of absence forms may be obtained from the subject master or special master in charge of the section or department and should be returned to the master when completed. Teachers absent because of illness or any other reason are requested to notify the master by telephone, if possible before 9.30 a.m. on the first day of absence. The likely duration of the absence should be stated, if known.

## Use of School Telephones

Private calls may be made from section telephones or from the two telephones in the corridor on the first floor under the following conditions:

- (i) Private calls should be restricted to a minimum and should be made in cases of urgency only.
- (ii) It should be realised that the telephones are intended primarily for official use and should not be used as public telephones.
- (iii) When using section telephones, it is expected that each member of the staff will use the telephone in his or her own section to make private calls and not use telephones in other sections.

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- (iv) In order to give reasonable access to outside lines to all staff members, calls should be as brief as possible.
- (v) When making private calls from either section telephones or the telephones on the first floor, teachers must dial 9, give their name, extension number and the exchange number required.
- (vi) The switch operator should not be requested to look up exchange numbers.
- (vii) Calls may be made at the following times:
 

8.30 a.m. to 8.55 a.m.
1.00 p.m. to 1.40 p.m.
3.45 p.m. to 4.15 p.m.
- (viii) If circumstances make it impossible to put through an essential call at the above times, arrangements may be made through the master to put the call through in working hours as at present.
- (ix) Permission must be obtained from the Principal to make trunk calls.
- (x) Under no circumstances may calls be made through S.T.D.
- (xi) The school telephones must not be used to call taxicabs.

Under the arrangements as set out above it should not be necessary for staff members to go to the switchboard room on any matters relating to telephone calls.

## Car Parking

The parking of cars in the school grounds is strictly limited. Teachers must not park cars within the grounds without the permission of the Principal. Where authority to park is given the car must be left only in the positions marked out for this purpose.



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**Funds**

Remittances enclosed in letters or with pupils' work and any other money received must be handed to the Accounts Clerk. A receipt will be issued for despatch to the sender. Balance from over payments will be placed in the School Account pending instructions from the parent.

**Collections**

Teachers desiring to organize collections for presentations to colleagues on occasions such as retirement, resignation, marriage must first gain permission from the master in charge of the section or department. For collections extending beyond the section, the permission of the Principal must be obtained. It is to be understood that donations to all such collections are purely voluntary; the collections are to be made in such a way that the donors remain anonymous.

**"Outpost" Material**

"Outpost" is the official magazine of the Correspondence School. In each department a teacher is appointed to receive material thought suitable for publication in "Outpost". This material should be available to the editor when required, usually during July. Teachers should watch for suitable material in pupils' weekly assignments and hand selected items to the "Outpost" representative in the section. News of ex-pupils and other items should be noted from letters and further information sought, if necessary. Selected pupils should also be encouraged to submit articles specifically written for consideration for publication in "Outpost".