



The Australian Journal of **INDIGENOUS EDUCATION**

This article was originally published in printed form. The journal began in 1973 and was titled *The Aboriginal Child at School*. In 1996 the journal was transformed to an internationally peer-reviewed publication and renamed *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*.

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Teachers and administrators will need to be enthusiastic and to exhibit favourable attitudes and expectations towards Indians. They will need systematic pre-service and in-service training in cultural awareness, linguistics and the study of Indian history and culture. The staff turnover rate must be reduced. Experimental classes need to be established to develop suitable teaching methods. Indian teachers and teacher aides will play a greater role, especially in language programs.

Schools must learn to cope with the language problem. Some form of bilingual education seems the most promising procedure at present. There is a need to develop suitable curriculum materials, especially for the teaching of Indian culture and history. Special attention must be paid to the high school curriculum.

The Indian voice should grow stronger with respect to education at local, state, and national levels. For too long Indians have been denied the right to be wrong. Flexibility and responsiveness to the heterogeneity of the Indian community are essential.

President Nixon has stated the theme. Let Navajo, Jack Jackson, state the dilemma.

"We are searching for how to change without destroying ourselves."
(p.268)

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Banks, J.A. and Joyce, W.W. (Eds); *Teaching Social Studies to Culturally Different Children*. Addison-Wesley Publishing Co, 1971. (396 pages)

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I was impressed by this book. It fills a very real need in that it focuses attention on problems that are present in our schools. The problems discussed have universal applications though the empirical material and case studies are restricted to the United States system specifically.

Case studies of the American Indian child have real relevance in that they can be applied with a great deal of transference to the Australian Aboriginal child. The discussions on the problems experienced by children from low socio-economic backgrounds are applicable to the Australian urban scene - particularly in areas with high migrant populations. Further there is an identifiable similarity between the case studies of children in rural areas, particularly the Mexican-American child, and the Australian child

of mixed descent.

The first section, *Problems and Issues*, emphasises the need for the teacher to widen his or her horizons - to go beyond the ethnocentric values of the middle class white culture that forms the basis of the curriculum offered and provides the field of reference within which the teacher assesses the child and his progress. This is very necessary in the light of the fact that Australian teachers are drawn from a relatively narrow socio-economic range, whereas the school population ranges over the whole spectrum.

Section 2, *Teaching Strategies*, is more applicable to the lower secondary school than the primary in Western Australia. Inter-racial problems are less accentuated in Australia; consequently the introduction of the techniques suggested * would draw unnecessary attention to problems that are in the most part dormant, and do not appear until the child reaches adolescence.

Our curriculum stresses child oriented research in social studies, and I have yet to detect any strong interest in, or awareness by the children, of ethnic or class conflict. This is possibly due to the relatively small numbers of culturally different children in any one class - though this varies considerably with locality.

Section 3, *Prologue to Change*, has very limited application to the West Australian system, although the concluding contribution, *"Imperatives in Urban Education"*, summing up as it does the first section, has a great deal of merit.

I would recommend the book as essential reading for every teacher's professional development. It has a place on the shelves of every Teachers' College library, and would be valuable supplementary reading for a sociology of education course.

* Chapter headings in this section are: *Developing Inquiry and Problem Solving Skills, Simulation, Role-Playing and Sociodrama, Teaching Different Cultures and Groups, Teaching Black History.*

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White, W.F.; *Tactics for Teaching the Disadvantaged*. McGraw Hill, 1971. (274 pages)

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The author shines through as a dedicated educationalist, who has attempted, very strongly, to place the economically deprived child in correct perspective. He points out the danger of regarding the culturally disadvantaged child as being an inferior type or a