



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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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)

J.A. Carter,
Cooktown State School Q.

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

lower class of human being.

The book was written to present some of the creative attempts at new strategies as well as to give evidence of successful contemporary programs for economically deprived children.

White perceives the teacher of the disadvantaged child as a very special kind of teacher with special skills and specific accountability. However, one of the main difficulties for teachers is that their backgrounds are dissimilar to the severely poveritous group they may be teaching. In any programs teacher characteristics and teacher processes will play the determining roles.

The author discusses fully the reasons (other than economic) for the child's disadvantaged state. He maintains that there is a danger that equality of educational opportunity will continue to be a myth and speaks of the "*pecking order*". Points brought out as a result of research show that :

- (1) though the thinking patterns of deprived children are different, this does not mean that they cannot think;
- (2) scores from I.Q. tests place the deprived child only in context with the white, middle class, Anglo-Saxon world;
- (3) the reading levels of children with limited experience are 2/3 years below actual Grade level.

A number of programs are examined -(*Title I, Follow Through etc.*) some involving billions of dollars but the point is made that too often programs are designed and implemented so quickly that control is set aside in the sincere interest to do something for deprived children.

Other chapters of interest to Australian teachers of indigenous children deal with small group processes and improving language skills of children with deprived backgrounds.

Some sections of the book were heavy going but I am of the opinion that it makes a definite worth-while contribution in explaining and offering solutions to many of the problems that teachers of indigenous children in Australia face.

One thought of White's that I particularly liked, that I think, carries a message for us all was: "*the emotion of fear must be reduced and the emotion of hope must be reinforced.*"

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