



The Australian Journal of **INDIGENOUS EDUCATION**

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the needs of Aboriginal teacher trainees can best be met.

TEACHER EDUCATION OF NON-ABORIGINAL STAFF

5.1.6. The recommendations of the Advisory Group on the implementation of a bilingual education program require certain changes in the pre-service teacher education of non-Aboriginal staff. In particular, the teacher education program will need to equip trainees with:

- (a) special competencies in the teaching of English as a second language and a knowledge of the science of linguistics;
- (b) competencies and attitudes appropriate to their role as team members and as teacher educators of the Aboriginal members of the teaching team.

The usual objectives of teacher education programs will continue to be relevant also.

5.1.6.1. Discussions should be held with teacher education authorities, especially the Canberra College of Advanced Education, with a view to determining how these special objectives in the preparation of teachers for service in these Northern Territory schools can best be met.

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SCHOOLS IN AUSTRALIA, REPORT OF THE INTERIM COMMITTEE FOR THE AUSTRALIAN SCHOOL COMMISSION, MAY, 1973.

The Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission, in its Report in May 1973, considered the needs of disadvantaged schools. Many teachers in remote areas will not yet have had an opportunity to read this report and we felt that you would like us to make available to you some of the committee's comments on disadvantaged schools.

9.5... The Committee has chosen the term "disadvantaged" in relation to schools drawing a high proportion of enrolments from neighbourhoods having certain characteristics known to be generally associated with a low capacity to take advantage of educational facilities. This is not to say that all children coming from

such neighbourhoods achieve poorly in school. Low-income families may be emotionally richer than affluent ones. Nor can poor families be described as culturally or socially deprived in any general sense, for the cultural life of home and neighbourhood may be as sustaining, and the social experiences as broad, as those of any type of family. The poor are disadvantaged in their relative lack of power in society, in the absence of any cushioning against adversity, and in the paucity of the kind of experience which is helpful to success in school and society.

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9.7 The Committee's recommendations for supplementary recurrent and buildings grants for disadvantaged schools have three objectives. The first relates to equality of opportunity. Intensive effort to vary school programs in ways which will enable disadvantaged children to learn more successfully is an important aspect of creating more equal educational opportunity, as discussed in Chapter 3. This emphasis on reducing differences in the educational performance of socially disadvantaged children and the rest of the school population over the traditional gamut of schooling - which includes the expressive and practical arts as well as abstract skills - raises vexed questions about whether the goals of schooling should vary according to the differing valuations which particular sections of the community place on various activities, and according to the aspirations of the pupils being educated. The Committee believes, as indicated in Chapter 2, that all children should be assisted to gain the fundamental skills necessary to participate fully and equally in society, and to have the opportunity to share in its culture. Hence, up to a certain level of performance, the Committee believes that differences in means but not in ends are called for. It sees no conflict between prizing the needs and interests of individual children and emphasising the importance of skills and knowledge. To stress achievement as well as the uniqueness and entitlement to respect of every child is to require a nice balance

of values. But if his achievement is related to a previous level of mastery, and if the range of educational activities open is wide, the balance becomes less delicate to effect. Achievement is an important source of human satisfaction, and to be unconcerned about helping a child either to do as well as he is able or to extend his range of interests is to evince a fundamental lack of respect for him.

9.8 An acceptance of the view that the influence of schooling is limited does not imply that efforts to make schools more effective are futile, for it could be argued that we have not yet tried hard enough to assist disadvantaged children in their learning. But consternation should not be too great if improved learning does not flow immediately from the special programs, for quantifiable cognitive gains from many compensatory programs in the past have been slight and even ephemeral. However, if the ten years or more of life that a person spends in school can be lived in pleasant surroundings, in a satisfying community, and in a program of activities which is meaningful to its participants besides being relevant preparation for a later interest in work and learning, then this must justify the expenditure of additional resources. Schooling is a significant segment of life which for all children ought to be enjoyable and fruitful in itself, not merely a preparation for later life. This second objective might be considered a sufficient one to justify positive discrimination in the allocation of school resources.

9.9 The program has a third, more general, objective: the hope that some schools might evolve through successful interaction with their communities into new 'open' institutions, less alienated from their communities than is now generally the case in disadvantaged areas.

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