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ACROSS AUSTRALIA

FROM TEACHER TO TEACHER



8 MM. FILM PROJECT

C. Russo,
Yalata School, S.A.

Mr. Russo from Yalata has written about a project which he is initiating at his school; one two-minute movie film has already been made. Other teachers might like to follow his lead.

Basically my idea was to take a movie of certain aspects of the present way of life of the Yalata people with some reference to the past. Examples include:

- life stories of noted people,
- carving boomerangs and wombats,
- cooking of different foods.

It was envisaged that the films would be taken by me initially and perhaps by the people and children themselves, after some teaching in night classes in movie taking.

It was felt essential that agreement of the School Council be obtained before the project was undertaken and that final edited film should be presented to the Mission and School Councils for preview, review and a final decision about its distribution. The people should not only be informed and participate but also be given the opportunity to take some (if not all) of the responsibility for the presentation of the material.

With the permission of the Superintendent and two Aboriginal people a short two minute movie film was made. It was divided into two parts. The first part concerned David Edwards, a Reserve foreman and his work and the other showed Mervyn Day, an Aide in the school, taking a craft class.

To further aid my presentation before the School Council and the community (shown at a local film evening) an English and Pitjantjatjara dialogue made with the help of Mervyn Day was played.

After the film showing, I spoke to the council about the value this type of film would have for their children.

The council agreed that the project would have benefits and thought it was a good idea, especially since the film would remain the property of the school.

Meetings were then held at the camp and in the compound and the people were invited to put forward their ideas on what they thought the film should include. They also elected actors for the specific scenes. It was interesting to note the quantity and variety of ideas put forward by the people.

For convenience, I have divided the ideas obtained into four basic units:

1. Introduction - camp life - the Yalata people - general activities.
2. Camp activities.
3. Mission activities.
4. School activities.

The last three of these units are broken down into specific sub-units dealing with particular organizations, people or occupations

A common theme throughout the units is a comparison of the old and the new.

The scheme has many functions and will be developed to perform those listed below (not necessarily stated in order of importance).

1. It basically deals with the people and the children of a particular closed community and thus holds much value as a source of motivation for the children to write, read, look, mime and do.
2. It provides readily available local material in pictorial form, accompanied by both English and Pitjantjatjara commentary.
3. It can be used as an important aid in the teaching of oral and written Pitjantjatjara as well as English.
4. The material collected could be a source for making Pitjantjatjara and English readers or laboratories and aids in the development of new schemes in Aboriginal schools.

5. It involves the community and thus brings the school and its functions into reality in the minds of the people. They are actually contributing to what is being taught to their children.
6. People develop more pride in themselves if they are made to feel important and useful to others (especially those whom they hold in high esteem). A pride in the people and the psychological effect this will have on the children and the people cannot be under-estimated.
7. Materials collected represent a visual history of some aspects of the Yalata Aboriginal culture. It may be stored for future reference.
8. The film could be shown to interested groups in the community at large to promote the Aboriginals and represent them in their true perspective.
9. It could be used as an introduction to teachers intending to teach in Aboriginal schools.
10. A.V.E.C. may be able to use up-to-date information on a specific Aboriginal community for general school distribution.
11. It could provide a lead up to using a video movie unit in the near future.

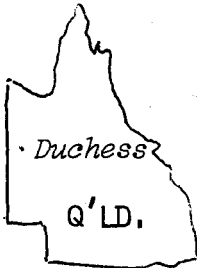
At the end of each film unit, I expect to have the following material to accompany the film:

1. Two readers with appropriate illustrations, one for the lower school in Pitjantjatjara, one for the upper school in English.
2. A list of oral and written language activities associated with the making of books and films, for example, writing and presenting Pitjantjatjara and English dialogue.
3. A list of activities to accompany film studies which could be tackled in other subject areas; for example, words study in Pitjantjatjara and English, comprehension sheets, suitable music, art, drama, poetry and social studies activities.

I envisage that the material provided should enable children to work on a film study for between two to four weeks depending on how subject areas are integrated.

Because of several restricting factors, for example, time available for filming, weather, ceremonies and availability of actors, I am planning to have the first unit with its accompanying material ready by the end of the year. Should time permit I will start a second unit.

I hope to write a final review on the project after it has been completed, looking at the values it holds for the children, parents, community and education to see if my objectives were realized.



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EDUCATION FOR WHAT?

J. McMaster,
Duchess, Q'ld.

Let me first explain my situation. All the people in Duchess are involved in some way or another with the Queensland Railways. Duchess is a railway town, supported by the Queensland Railways and existing only because of them. The majority of settlers are Islanders, with a few Aborigines. These people live harmoniously side by side. All the fathers have jobs. The children thus have the necessary monetary backing to encourage development. These people are not poor, though their conditions may indicate otherwise. All the children are clothed reasonably well, and fed reasonably well. Most of the children are scrupulously clean.

It is wise to keep in mind the fact that regardless of what my successes and failures are, each one of us has a special situation, which differs vastly from everyone else's. It is therefore necessary for us to be continually trying, adapting, and changing, in order to achieve any measure of success.

In the small school, the teacher is faced with a number of problems which perhaps appear unique or magnified by virtue of the fact that he is on his own. Multiple grades, voluminous workloads, multiple cultures, remoteness and lack of finance are amongst the greatest problems facing me personally, and no doubt many of you at present. But the small school also offers unique opportunities to teachers to experiment and implement new ideas and methods.