



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*.

In 2022 *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education* transitioned to fully Open Access and this article is available for use under the license conditions below.



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.

"If he is allowed to follow his own path of learning he can make use of the cooperative methods to which he is accustomed rather than the competitive ones of the examination system with its inbuilt fear of failure."

The suggestion is a valuable one but is concerned mainly with teaching method.

What of her more fundamental criticism of the actual institution of school? In a rare instance of imprecise prose Lippman states, in regard to education for Aboriginals,

"As with the Australian education system as a whole, it is not so much a question of repairing an antiquated edifice by patching it with more of the same bricks but by taking an analytic look at the structure as it stands and using it to the greater advantage of the individual student."

Is she suggesting a real alternative? What does she mean by an "analytic look"? The findings of her own research suggest, that, from an Aboriginal point of view, the building is not to be looked at but demolished. What to put in its place is the real question. One possibility is an Aboriginal community "school" where Aboriginal culture and history could be taught. The idea has already been suggested by urban Blacks and could work if the initiative was Aboriginal.

Words or Blows is a sensitively written book. One hopes that Lorna Lippman's concern and obvious respect for the Aboriginals she writes about rubs off on her readers.

.....

Banks, J.A. and Joyce, William W., : *Teaching Social Studies to Culturally Different Children*. Addison Wesley, 1971.

D.J. Prideaux,
Capricornia Institute of
Advanced Education, Q'ld.

One of the major problems facing the teacher of the culturally different child is the child's lack of a positive "self-image". The task of remedying this falls heavily on the Social Studies teacher. In the words of Banks and Joyce,

"Perhaps more than any other educators, Social Studies teachers bear the major responsibility for equipping poor children with the skills they need to devise effective strategies, gain power, and help build the truly multi-racial and multi-cultural society to which we are verbally committed." (p.182)

Part Two of Banks and Joyce's book is concerned with teaching strategies to achieve this end.

No longer can we afford to shield culturally different children from the harsh realities of their position in the society at large. The contributors to Chapter Six of the above book ask teachers help culturally different children to be "social critics and problem solvers". While some of the contributions such as James A. Bank's article on *Social Research: Studying Racial Behaviour* may only apply to the secondary school, others such as Lippett et al : *Children Look at Their Own Behaviour* are applicable at lower levels.

Chapter Seven is devoted to *Simulation, Role-Playing and Sociodrama*. While these techniques have become accepted in modern social studies programs, the contributors to this section argue that they are even more important in the culturally different situation. While not accepting them as a universal panacea for teaching culturally different children, one can fairly say that the contributors demonstrate the success of these techniques in specific situations. Evidence such as that found on page 237 that "children from low income families respond more fully to action than to talk", cannot be ignored.

Chapter Eight centres on *Teaching Different Cultures and Groups*. Although this chapter discusses Negroes, Indians, Mexican-Americans and Puerto-Ricans, some lessons can be drawn for the Australian setting. Some of the advantages to be gained from teaching about different cultural groups to *all* school children apply equally to teaching about Aboriginal culture in the Australian situation. Anyone who has read about Aboriginals in Australian Social Studies textbooks would appreciate the comments on the teaching of Indian Studies made by William Crowder on page 293, when he claims that in traditional Indian Studies "a child would come away thinking all Indians lived in teepees, walked in soft-soled shoes on beautiful green meadows, beat their drums, etc."

The last chapter concerns the teaching of *Black History* and much of the section is a debate about the "objectivity of history". While there is a differing set of conditions in the Australian context, some of the ideas in teaching a Black History could be applied to the teaching of an "Aboriginal History".

In summary, while the authors, both practising teachers, could perhaps sometimes be criticized for their "missionary zeal", they nevertheless offer a great deal of information for the classroom teacher of social studies.

.....