



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.

REPORT....

Worldwide, education authorities are concerned about the problem of relevance of courses for secondary school students. Many systems are trying to develop job-relevant experiences for youth.

Two recent reports have considered the issues involved in work experience courses. Extracts from the Queensland State Education Department's Research and Curriculum Branch - Education Abstract (No.216, March 1974 & No. 217, April 1974) are reproduced below for your interest.

How relevant are the issues raised to the educational program you are seeking to develop in your school?

OBSTACLES IN WORK EXPERIENCE COURSES

Education (A.E.C.) 2 November 1973

With the raising of the leaving age in England, it is probably inevitable that the demand for work experience courses will increase. Such courses involve the releasing of pupils from school to attend work situations for short periods.

At present, the development has tended to be rather haphazard. The National Association of Careers Teachers has sponsored a survey to ascertain what teachers think of work experiences and the problems associated with this arrangement.

The replies showed there were wide divergences in the practice and goals of work experience. Some teachers saw the arrangement as a means of giving the students a general introduction to the working world while others saw it as strictly vocational.

The survey further showed that schools divide fairly evenly between those that make the contacts and arrangements on their own through the careers teacher or principal and those that depend on the youth employment service.

The length of attachments seem to vary from a series of half days to three full weeks. But the most usual is one week

which seems to cause the least disruption to pupils, schools and firms concerned.

The careers teachers pointed out that once a firm has been found and pupils, parents and teachers are in favour, they still have the problems associated with the factory management and the trade unions. However, the problem of insurance which must be met by the schools causes the greatest concern.

The reaction of pupils is reported to be 'generally favourable'. Complaints like travelling distances and lack of payment tend to be of a minor nature. The main problem with students, however, is their failure to clock in - either because they suddenly lose interest or because the work experience clashes with school commitments.

Such problems are causing many teachers and industry officials to ask whether large scale work experience is practical and economic and whether it should be replaced by special careers conferences and school-based courses.

MANY COUNTRIES WORRIED ABOUT SCHOOL LEAVERS

The South Australian Teachers Journal 13 March 1974

As secondary education becomes more universal, many countries fear that it is not leading to its logical goal - for each product of the system, a useful job which he or she is qualified and happy to fill.

This anxiety lies behind the rethinking of secondary education which 400 specialists from 93 countries undertook during a recent International Conference on Education in Geneva.

Many developing countries have as many as 70 percent of their children unable to go to school at all. The problem here is to produce secondary school leavers who are job-makers rather than job-seekers.

An aim which is common to all countries and which brings the most severe difficulties in its train is the democratisation of education.

As the Director-General of Unesco, Mr Rene Maheu, reminded the delegates :

"In the past, secondary education was relatively elitist, and its products were absorbed without much difficulty by the middle class professions. Today, with the extension of compulsory schooling ... secondary education takes in a growing number of adolescents who can no longer enter the professions of the conventional type because they have not acquired the necessary skills."

To meet this situation, delegates recommended a number of steps to end segregation between the academic, technical and vocational forms of education. The three should be integrated into a harmonious system which allows students to move from one stream to another.

The U.S. delegation spoke of the introduction of "career education", a concept intended to shape schooling from the beginning, not only by informing students about the range of jobs but by equipping them with skills to perform satisfying work.

If such education is to be successful the U.S. delegates believed it is imperative that expert guidance, beginning as early as primary school and continuing as an integral part of normal school life, must be provided.

Employers, trade unionists and others from the working world should be involved in this guidance. One of the problems associated with this "career education" was the apparent divorce between what the child is taught at school and what he needs to know about the society in which he will earn a living.

Many countries including Cuba and Guinea conduct their secondary education in such a way that some time is spent on productive labour. These manual activities, thought to be so important by the conference delegates, must be part of the school curriculum and be taught by teachers who had learned by experience. In developing countries, however, the difficulty in finding technical instructors along with the greater costs involved, meant that there are fewer vocational schools.

In their final recommendation, delegates urged that teachers whose job it is to fit children for a process of life-long education should themselves be trained on a continuing basis. Their training in fact, should keep them in constant touch with society and the labour market.