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ACROSS AUSTRALIA , , , , ,

FROM TEACHER TO TEACHER



A TEACHING PROGRAM FROM MORNINGTON ISLAND

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AIM : The aim of the program is to integrate school life and community life as much as possible.

STUDENTS :

There is a mixed group of boys and girls with ages ranging from 15 to 18 years with a wide range of abilities.

TEACHING ACCOMMODATION:

Because of the lack of accommodation in the school, we (the Home Economics teacher and myself) operate from the Shed - a large (19m x 12m) unlined, unceiled, galvanised shed. The main area has a dirt floor. The Home Economics teacher's area is partitioned off and has a concrete floor. In the wet, during heavy rain, an over-head projector is a must for communication with the students.

EQUIPMENT:

We have at our disposal, or are able to make use of, quite a number of modern teaching aids such as slide projectors, an over-head projector, listening posts, a cassette player, a movie projector, a spirit duplicator and a heat copier.

WORK PROGRAM:

Basically my work program is divided into two sections - the core course and project activities.

In the core course, areas dealt with are mathematics, language arts, art, science, health and cultural activities.

Instruction in cultural activities - dancing, handcraft and language, is given throughout the school by indigenous people from the community. Both boys and girls take part in these activities. There has been reluctance especially on the part of the boys to take part in dancing activities, probably due to their age and their self-consciousness in performing in front of others.

Work in the language arts area is dealt with mainly through the thematic approach. Areas such as mathematics, art and science are incorporated in the theme wherever possible. Examples of themes covered this year are as follows :

Baboons: This theme was used because we were working on the area of baboons in M.A.C.O.S. (*Man a Course of Study*) which is a program involving the living habits, social relationships, behaviour and growth patterns of baboons.

Senses: Sight - hearing - touch - taste. This allowed close correlation with talks on health.

Under-water: Fish - fishing - submarines - under-water exploration - scuba diving - story of *Atlantis* - map reading - ocean depths - music *Atlantis*.

Ships: Parts of the ship - types of ships through the ages - stories related to the sea - rafts as a means of transport in the early days of Mornington Island. This led to the testing of a raft made for the Handcraft Store, and the making of a story sequence by taking photographs with the polaroid camera. Then to modern day raft expeditions, for example, Kon Tiki, Ra I and II, and the theories related to the settlement of parts of the world. Plotting the voyage of the Kon Tiki, co-ordinates and map reading were also done. Art activities - constructing model rafts. A raft race on the dam - compiling a sequence of pictures with the polaroid camera and writing about them.

Camping: Equipment - drawing up a menu and costing - knots - first aid and bandaging. The highlight was a three day camp on a near-by island. Students were involved in setting up camp, camp duties, awareness of keeping the camp clean, compiling a pictorial record of the camp, writing about it, mapping skills to show where we went, and the use of a key to indicate points of interest.

*Movies:** Making charts of movie stars - listing names and simple categorizing; parts of the movie camera; people involved in making a movie and the mechanics involved in movie films - sequencing and creative writing - adventures of a movie camera; inviting a local identity to the classroom to retell an island legend, and then writing a script for a movie of the legend; story boarding of scenes - length of shots - camera description of action and other incorporated ideas were the main activities involved in this theme. We are currently shooting scenes of this film.

GIRLS

Girls are involved in Home Economics during the week. Areas dealt with include cooking, sewing, food and nutrition, and mothercraft. This is the first year that the girls have had the opportunity of being involved in such work on a concentrated level and their response has been terrific.

Other areas of involvement by the girls are work at the clothing store and hospital. The girls work in pairs and operate on a roster basis.

Hospital: The girls observe and are instructed to carry out practical work in the following areas: sores, ears, chests, weight charts for babies, handwashing, bandaging, temperature and pulses, urine testing and baby bathing. An individual record sheet is kept on each girl by the sisters at the hospital and reports from the sisters have praised the girls' efforts.

Clothing Store: Involvement of the girls at the clothing store commenced last year and has been carried over this year on a reduced basis to allow girls from another class to share the experience. Activities which the girls are involved in include unpacking goods, restocking shelves, marking on prices, getting change from the bank, checking off orders, serving and maintaining the store, for example, sweeping.

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- * Movies are shown twice a week during the dry season and are a very important part of the life of the community as they are the main source of entertainment on the island.

BOYS

Whilst the girls are involved in the Home Economics program, the boys are engaged in working with tools at the Mission workshop, and have been involved in constructing such things as a tray with a handle; a small set of shelves; a toy truck; a set of benches for the preparation of food; shelving and a wood sawing trestle for Home Economics; abaci for Grade I; plastic model aeroplanes and a rubber-powered aeroplane.

Other projects include building a small foot bridge; road signs for the community; erecting a telephone line from the Principal's office to the Mission office; a jetty survey involving the recording of tide heights and wind direction for the Mission manager, which is to be passed on to the Department of Harbours and Marine; a survey of the dugong status for the Mission manager, which is to be passed on to the Department of Zoology of the James Cook University.

Another field of interest for the boys has involved working in the Mission garage for half a day per week on a roster basis. Also a course of basic mechanics - examining the various components of a motor vehicle - has been commenced. We have purchased working plastic model kits of a V8 motor and chassis which we will assemble this term.

A project on which boys and girls have combined has been the distribution to people in the community once a month of magazines supplied to the D.A.I.A. library. This project was initiated because the magazines were not being utilized as there is no where for the people to have access to them. People are now encouraged to come and read in a small room attached to our teaching area, where novels and other books are stored, but this has met with only limited success to date.

PROPOSED THIS TERM (3rd)

It is hoped to attach the boys for a period of one week, on a roster basis, to the stock team and the Mission food store, to share experiences involved in working in these fields.

Another project in which both boys and girls will combine is one involved in keeping and maintaining a home. Permission has been obtained to make use of a house in the village. Activities of cleaning, lining walls and ceilings, measuring, making front steps,

painting the interior, building a laundry and toilet, laying water pipes, digging a soakage pit for waste water, and erecting a clothes line, have been planned. This project will require close co-operation with the Home Economics teacher.

These are some ideas about a teaching program, but it is my sincere belief that to establish rapport and to achieve response, one must strive to incorporate practical activities relating to the interests of the students and to community life.

At the commencement of the year I was a little apprehensive owing to the fact that I have had no experience in dealing with students of this age group. However, after two terms of working with the group, I have found it very fruitful and have encountered some of the most rewarding experiences in my teaching career.

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A LEARNING EXCURSION

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On June 5th, Infant B, consisting of sixteen children, went on an excursion to Rocky Point.

Prior to departure we prepared a picnic lunch which involved counting how many sandwiches we would need, how many cups we had to take if each child was to have his/her own cup, and how much cordial we would have to prepare. We also counted out enough biscuits to give each child two and enough apples to give each child one.

Also, before boarding the bus, we gave each child a certain responsibility - for example, one child carried the cordial container, another the apples, and so on.

Throughout the 10 kilometre trip from Weipa South to Rocky Point the children sang songs and talked excitedly about where they were going.