



The Australian Journal of **INDIGENOUS EDUCATION**

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cut off from both worlds, but hold them in both hands. An education that will balance a community relating to its environment in local education.

Question: After the students finish at Dhupuma, what effort is made in the local community to see that they are employed and that they stay employed?

Gatjil: Firstly, it is a question of education for what? What will the end result be? The community at Yirrkala is keen to co-operate with Dhupuma and Yirrkala School in providing employment. Employment is always there, the problem is that we don't have enough people to work.

We are living in a competitive society, which is not to say that we want to compete with you or live like you, but we need skills. Otherwise we are looked down upon by the outside world; they say we have no qualifications so we are not the right people to do the job. We need tools, which are embodied in education, to help us do the work.

Question: Would the 'community feeling' you refer to at the outstations be possible in the existing community?

Gatjil: I believe nothing is impossible. It is just people that make it impossible.

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ABORIGINAL STUDIES COURSES -

A NEW ERA IN TERTIARY EDUCATION

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Aboriginal Studies at the Canberra College of Advanced Education has achieved a reputation as being one of the most favoured series of units available. Although it has immense popularity within Teacher Education, Aboriginal Studies also attracts a large number of students from other schools at the college. Its level of appeal is reflected in the content of the two units available. Unit 1 of the course aims at introducing students to a pre-contemporary understanding of the Aboriginal, his kinship, religion, habitat, livelihood, art, music and pre-history. Coincidentally, Unit 2 examines problems of Aboriginal-White contact in our society, its associated prejudices and cultural conflicts.

Why is it that such a large number of students are seeking enrolment in Aboriginal Studies? I think interest predominates all other motives. In my case, as an undergraduate, this course filled a chasm in my education: it introduced me to an in-depth cultural and social analysis of a race different from my own. The urge to learn more about the Aboriginal, his culture and contact with white society, overshadowed the usual ambition of 'study to pass'.

It was this interest that generated an inner feeling of awareness for Aboriginal culture and a self-realization of my attitudes toward Aborigines. People I talked with had similar experiences, and it was agreed that this was a latent function of the course.

Even more was offered in the course with a series of lectures from Archie Kalokerinos, 'Chica' Dixon, Bobbie Sykes, John Moriarity, Elizabeth Sommerlad, Professor John Mulvaney and others. Such personalities illuminated various aspects of the Aboriginal individual and his culture which were previously not known nor sought after, but having been extolled, they proved to be of great interest.

Completing this course in Aboriginal Studies added a new era to my education, perhaps my only regret being that I had to wait until now to experience it. On the same point, it would be gratifying to see Aboriginal studies offered as a subject in the primary and secondary schools with the same interest and singularity.

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Editorial Note

We intend, in a later issue, to focus on the subject of Teacher Training for Teachers of Aborigines, and invite articles or comments from readers on any aspect of this subject. Articles from teachers who undertook courses in Aboriginal Studies during their training would be especially welcome.

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