



The Australian Journal of **INDIGENOUS EDUCATION**

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individual borrower. If your budget cannot stand these losses - and at Oodnadatta, incidentally, these are less than those experienced by the State Library in Adelaide, due largely to the program developed by the library to instil in all the love for books - then maybe cheaper books are your answer. However, never sacrifice quality and your other criteria just for the sake of saving a few dollars.

By relating these above factors the librarian has clear guidelines on the type of material to place in the library. Clearly to fit all the criteria would mean a very limited selection of material but the teacher/librarian should endeavour to be reasonably selective according to the criteria laid down by the circumstances of the borrowers. By having a reasonable collection of suitable books for your potential borrowers, that you are fairly certain will be popular, you will soon find the demand for books generally will increase.

While Oodnadatta School still has a reasonable collection of books on subjects preferred by Aborigines, we have branched out into much broader fields of fiction and non-fiction. We still, however, take into account the basic fact that our readers are still developing their skills in reading; but we are working at that too.

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DEVELOPING A SET OF READERS FOR ABORIGINAL CHILDREN

G.R. Jaunay, Principal,
Aboriginal School,
Oodnadatta S.A.

Most teachers of Aboriginal children are well aware of the difficulties they have in identifying with the characters of most classroom readers. Obviously, publishing companies have to consider their market when preparing series of readers on a viable commercial basis, and hence the characters and their situations reflect the life-styles of the bulk of Australian citizens who live in large urban sprawls, and enjoy a reasonable standard of living which is reflected in their material possessions.

A different language background also makes the task of using the conventional classroom reader difficult. Children with an

Aboriginal language, or even Aboriginal English as their first language, need greater emphasis placed on certain patterns found in standard English. I feel this is especially important, as the bulk of material any person can read will inevitably be in standard English form.

At Oodnadatta School we are overcoming these problems by the development of our own sets of readers. Some are purely experiential and have a limited life equal to the need to relate to that experience, while others are based on certain language patterns we feel need specific development in our program. To work out these patterns, we have used ideas formulated by the Van Leer Foundation Experimental Reading Project in Queensland.¹

We feel the presentation of these readers is important. Each book must be well produced. It must have an attractive book-like appearance. Text must be well thought out within the limitations of the expected readers' abilities. Pictures to which the students can relate should be used extensively.

The production side of the readers at Oodnadatta may interest you and, for a small outlay, could be adopted by your school.

The bulk of our readers to date employ 20.3 x 25.4 cm. (8"x 10") photographs which are bound within a commercially available cover by the school. The text is placed directly on to the photo or the back of the previous photo, using a lettering machine. While we specifically purchased the equipment for reader production, most of it can be usefully applied in numerous ways within the school. This applies especially to photographs which are enriching our social studies and science courses at this moment.

For people unfamiliar with the techniques involved in photography, there are several good books available which give straightforward instructions, and these often include good ideas on conversions of bathrooms, cupboards etc. into darkrooms. At Oodnadatta we were fortunate enough to have a small, windowless, cleaner's store-room (1 metre x 1.5 metres); complete with a mop sink, which we converted, at no cost, into a permanent darkroom. This was done by installing storage shelves and a workbench, and by changing the existing globe for a safe-light globe. The staff also found it beneficial to gain practical experience in the processes involved and, despite our remoteness, we were able to have a workshop session in techniques during a vacation period when we were all in the city. Thus, for a reasonable capital outlay and small on-going cost, we

are able to produce worthwhile sets of readers which suit perfectly the needs of our students. And, as I mentioned, the equipment lends itself to use in many fields within the school.

EQUIPMENT NECESSARY TO PRODUCE READERS

1. Photographic Equipment (basic)

35 mm SLR Camera
B&W 35x24 mm. Enlarger
Daylight Developing tank (suitable for 35 mm)
Enlarger Easel (suitable for 10" x 8")
3 Developing Trays (suitable for 10" x 8")
Thermometer
Safe Light Globe

(Approx. total cost \$240.00)

2. Photographic Consumables (bulk for economy)

35 mm film (100' bulk)
Film Developer (1 litre)
Film Fixer ($\frac{1}{2}$ kgm)
Photographic Paper (Box of 100)
silk or matte
Paper Developer (5 litre)
Paper Fixer (5 litre)
Indicator Stop Bath (500 ml)

(Approx. total cost \$ 65.00)

3. Other Equipment and Materials

Heat Binder (GBC Copy bind)
Covers (Box of 100)
Lettering machine ("Unimark")

(Approx. total cost \$250.00)

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FURTHER READING

1. Van Leer Foundation Project Handbooks, Department of Education, P.O.Box 33, North Quay, Brisbane 4000, for lists and prices of publications.