



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*.

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Audio-visual Resource Materials Relating to the Aboriginal Australians. W.G Coppel, Curriculum Development Centre, Canberra, 1978.

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Teachers looking for a variety of resource material on Aborigines will be delighted by the comprehensive range of this collection. Too often busy teachers are forced back on to old ground by the difficulty of finding A.V. resource listings, and though there may be some esoteric items missed from this compilation, for practical purposes you could regard it as complete.

After inclusiveness, the ease with which material can be located is of importance to teachers in a hurry, and here too Coppel has taken the trouble out of A.V. planning. The entries are categorized in ten sections according to the medium used, from Artefacts Collections to Video Tapes, and a well-organized subject index not only makes material easy to find, but is also useful in suggesting new approaches to a topic. A system of code symbols is used for technical information, and in addition AIAS Restricted classifications are noted whenever these apply.

Page layout has also been considerably arranged - the right-hand half of each page has been left blank for the notes you always wish you had kept from the last time.

This bibliography inevitably invites comparison with *Black Australia*¹, published last year and reviewed in Vol.7 No.1 of *The Aboriginal Child at School*. In fact, the Introduction suggests that the two books be used in conjunction. *Black Australia* concentrates on books, but wherever material in *Audio-Visual Resource Materials Relating to Aboriginal Australians* is also to be found in *Black Australia*, an asterisk indicates that reference to that entry may be found useful for evaluation. Actually the number of overlap entries between the two books is quite small, so that teachers will find

* *Black Australia, An Annotated Bibliography and Teacher's Guide to Resources on Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders.* Annotated, compiled and edited by Marji Hill and Alex Barlow. Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra. Humanities Press Inc., New Jersey, U.S.A., 1978.

Black Australia evaluations of limited help in selecting from unknown materials. Coppell explicitly states that he considers value judgments inappropriate in a work of this nature, the purpose of the book being to systematize available materials, and Skilbeck's foreword states that inclusion does not indicate that the Centre recommends or condones all or any of the materials.

In effect, this means that for most entries only a title or a descriptive summary of content (often from the publicity release) is available. Now if you are already an expert in A.V. resources, this is all you need, but what about ordering an unknown film, kit, or whatever - it is helpful to know a little more about it than just the topic covered. For example, one film listed in both bibliographies is *Floating*. Coppell mentions that it received three awards; Hill and Barlow rate it as "tedious and long"; these statements are not mutually exclusive, and leave the teacher who, like me, hasn't seen the film, in a bit of a quandary. Let's say I order the film, preview it and decide that it is "tedious". I note this beside the entry in *Audio-visual Resource Materials...*, and return the film, but as orders must be made well in advance for film rentals, there is no possibility of getting a replacement in time. In these circumstances, the temptation to go ahead and show it anyway is strong, especially if the children have seen the film arrive.

More seriously, the question of ethnocentrism arises. It is not likely that any of the items listed are overtly racist, but ethnocentrism of the "See the cute Aboriginal lady sewing - isn't it wonderful what they can be taught?" kind is not so unusual, and is at once more offensive, pervasive and damaging than open hostility. *Piccaninnies of Australia at School, at Work and at Play on a Mission Station*, may be excellent, but on the title alone I would not risk it. Teachers are understandably nervous about ethnocentric material and this, to some extent, negates the value of this book, if people continue to restrict their choices to known material. Even a one, two or three "star" award in the coding system - very easily added - would give teachers some feeling of support in moving off familiar ground.

Another piece of information that teachers would find useful - also very easily added - would be some indication of the level at which the material is intended to be used. For some, such as kits, a level is stated or strongly implied by the content, but in most cases the teacher is again going to have to gamble or make time-consuming enquiries from the supplier. Of course, much of the material would be suitable for a wide range of levels, but for teachers of lower primary classes in particular it would be helpful to have a

guide, such as a letter code for primary, secondary, etc., which would greatly extend teachers' effective freedom of choice.

However, this book is too valuable a resource to be neglected, and the few inconveniences will be more than compensated for by the increased ready access it will give to the very complex field of AV resources.

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Young Aborigines at Work. A Career Booklet. AGPS, Canberra, 1978.

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What do Lynette Atkinson - Recreational Officer, Peter Lenoy - Diesel Fitter, and Michelle Conway - Receptionist, have in common? They all appear in the most recent edition of the Commonwealth Employment Service's career booklet, *Young Aborigines at Work*.

The booklet presents excellent 'on the job' photographs of young Aborigines, accompanied by brief biographies giving details of each person's educational and vocational history.

From the booklet we learn that -

Marlene Mitchell is a Trainee Kindergarten Assistant at Mt Hawthorn Kindergarten in Perth, W.A. Aged 19 years, she attended Eastern Goldfields Senior High School until the completion of third year and then moved to Perth to begin her course on basic child care with the WA Pre-School Board. Marlene hopes to return to her people as a trained kindergarten assistant. (p.30)

and that

Timothy Manguarra, 26, was born at Roper River, N.T. and completed post-primary schooling at Numbulwar.