



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.

ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER VIEWS



YIRRKALA : ABORIGINAL STUDIES

Daynawa Nurruwutthun

Daynawa Nurruwutthun is 20 years old and a teacher at Yirrkala Community School. She belongs to the Munyuku clan and is of the Yirritja Moiety and Narritjan sub-section.

She attended school at Yirrkala and started teaching in 1975. During 1976 and 1977 she completed the 1st Year of the On-site Teacher Training Program at Yirrkala.

After attending the Bilingual Conference in Darwin in 1976 and talking with other Aboriginal teachers she returned to Yirrkala determined to begin an Aboriginal Studies Program for the Infant School.

After discussions with other Aboriginal teachers, four areas of study were developed. These have now been extended to the six following areas: bush food and sea food; natural science; Homeland Centres; old ways; bush medicine; culture, i.e. social organisation and behaviour.

In our Aboriginal Studies we teach the children how to find our own bush food, how to hunt animals and also how we can cook in our own ways. We have six different things that we have found, and that we as Aboriginal teachers will teach the children. I talk to these other Aboriginal teachers and show them some of the work that I've been doing with the kids, and how I prepare my lesson. Each teacher has one topic, and we tell children about these things, like in bush medicine she explain them about the medicine how to put the thing on person's sore or to heal sick person. Or else take them around the area and show the kids what kind of leaves we use or tree or medicine. The other teacher talks about Homeland Centre and the other one is Natural Science and Old Ways, these are the topics for our teaching. If we get tired of doing the same thing we change them around with other teachers.

In natural science we talk about different animals on sea and land, we tell how they walk, where they live, what they eat, and what they look like, and also we eat some animals, these are the things we teach them. And in Homeland Centre she talks about some of the outstation areas what tribe of the people live there and what language they speak, and also how they make their shelters.

In Old Ways we also teach them how to cook food and kangaroos and any animals that we eat. Also how to make a fire, how to make spears, dilly bags, yam sticks and many other things. So these are the main things that we teach the children - our own cultural things so that when they grow up they might know many things from us. Not only they learn in school but they learn at home with their mother and father because this is the way we must teach the children to do things in our own way and to speak their own language when they grow up. Sometimes the teacher finds it hard in their preparing a lesson and don't know what to do, so they just come and ask me what to do and I help them. Anyway these are the things that we do in our Aboriginal studies, and we are still doing it now.

.....

References (continued from p.28)

Trifonovitch, G.J.: On cross-cultural orientation techniques.
Topics in Cultural Learning. East West Centre, Honolulu,
1973.

Beattie, J.: *Other Cultures*. Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd.
Broadway House, London, 1964.

Permission to publish from students' work received from:
J. Jabarula, Elaine Ngalingali, Peter Jabarula, Jessie Yarmirr, .
Milark Winunguj, Madge Rosas (all A.T.E.C. students, 1978).

.....