



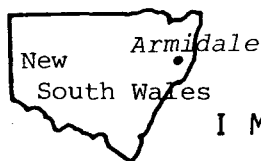
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I MADE IT -- HOW I GOT THROUGH COLLEGE

* D.Paron

Well, to begin with, I wasn't accepted into teacher's college because of the grades I scored in the Higher School Certificate. In point of fact, I failed this examination miserably. I've always had a great fear of examinations and as a result of this I'd usually do poorly.

Before I was accepted into teacher's college, I had to write an essay on a topic of my choice. This in turn was followed by an interview at the college. I would not have graduated from college this year if I had not been supported by the Aboriginal Study Grant, because my family just couldn't give me this financial support over the three years.

I've always had the 'dream' of becoming a school teacher. I come from a large family and have had children around me constantly. I love spending time with children because they're so innocent. I enjoy watching them as they gradually take one step at a time and come to learn about life and what it's all about.

When I was a child I would play 'schools'. You couldn't have guessed but I was always the school teacher and my sister and cousins would be the children in my class. I'd never really thought of pursuing any other career but a teacher's.

I worked through my college years because I had no choice! I came to realise that if I was to succeed, I had to put a great deal of effort into these three years and it didn't take me very long to reach this conclusion.

Unfortunately, I wasn't one of those gifted students who could prepare a seminar in one night and satisfactorily present it to the group the following day. If this were the case I'd have long finger nails today.

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A number of people also helped me to 'make it' through college. Number one was my family, and in particular my mother. Mum was a great encouragement! She drove me back and forth to and from college many a time, for my interview and when I was to begin my course. I arrived thinking my accommodation had previously been arranged but it hadn't so I had to go home again. Mum helped me to find somewhere to stay - then she drove me back to college once more. My brother also sent me his car in my second and third years of college so that I could go home whenever I felt I needed to. This was a great help to me.

On numerous occasions, particularly in first year, I rang Mum - crying over the phone and telling her I wanted to leave. She always seemed to be able to talk me into staying until the holiday break which I couldn't wait for.

I missed home terribly because I have a close family. It felt strange being away from them - so empty. The distance which separated us didn't help the situation because no matter how much I missed them I couldn't do a thing about it.

I felt insecure and lacked confidence in myself. I was also made very much aware of people's prejudicial attitudes and as a result of this, I would talk very little about my family except to those people who became my friends. Mum was proud of me because I was going through college. This was something which neither she nor her family had the opportunity to do. I didn't want to let her down because I knew how much she wanted me to continue on and I knew what she went through to get me into college.

Besides my family, the educational advisor for Aboriginal students, at the time, and my college friends helped me immensely. They understood my feelings and gave me the support and help I needed to 'stick it out'.

When I look back over these three years of college I have to laugh at myself. This is an experience which I'll never forget. To many people it was a 'rage' but to me it was more of an ordeal. Still I am thankful for it and those people who helped me to achieve what I have. I feel I have grown and matured in many ways, (even though some may disagree). It has sensitised me towards Aboriginal children and in fact any one else who comes from a minority group. Because I can relate to their experiences and feeling, I think I will be able to help meet their needs more satisfactorily than those teachers who come from the majority group.

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