



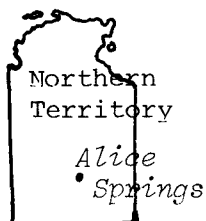
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PRE-EMPLOYMENT AT YIRARA

*R. Nixon

Yirara College, for the past five years, has given students in their final two years (Years 10 and 11) the opportunity to prepare themselves for entry into employment or further education. This is called our Pre-Employment Course. The aims of this course of study are:

- * to enable students to experience the various types of work that could be realistically available at the conclusion of their schooling at Yirara College;
- * to ensure that students will, at the conclusion of the course, be prepared and confident to decide upon and enter the academic or vocational area which they have found most suitable for their needs.

The students may enter the Pre-Employment course at the conclusion of their general education course (Years 7 to 9). The students in the "A" stream usually continue their academic classroom work until the conclusion of Year 10, then enter Pre-Employment at Year 11 for one year. Students in the "B" stream usually enter Pre-Employment at the conclusion of Year 9 and work in this area for two years.

The course design for Pre-Employment in Year 10 is half vocational, i.e. technical (consisting of manual arts and home economics) and vocational courses outside the college. Students leave the college for two week blocks of work experience, technical courses at the Community College of Central Australia (C.C.C.A.), and community help programs. Pre-employment Year 11, work experience and block courses at the Community College play an even greater role as does employment counselling. A brief course breakdown is as follows:

- a) In *English and Maths* the emphasis is on the required level to sit the Northern Territory Apprenticeship entrance examination. The students who are not capable of reaching the desired level are taught the necessary skills to enable them to survive in employment areas in which they may find themselves. These employment areas are predictable
- b) The *Technical Studies* area provides an opportunity to learn skills of a semi-vocational nature. The vocational area is restricted because of the availability of both staff and facilities. Therefore

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only a few areas can be covered and these include motor mechanics, welding and woodwork for the males, and mothercraft, cooking and dressmaking for females.

c) *Employment Counselling and Vocational Study* give the students the opportunity to see the types of employment available to them and what is required of them to enter the various types of employment.

d) *Community Service* plays a role in Pre-Employment - to develop an awareness of using known skills to help others. To give two instances of this - the boys helped in a building project at Hamilton Downs Youth Camp and the girls assisted in cleaning and painting Amoonguna Pre-School.

e) The Community College of Central Australia runs *Block Release Courses* in motor mechanics, welding, pottery and building construction. Of these, the building has continued successfully for three years under the guidance of Chris Walsh, C.C.C.A. lecturer, and students have gained many skills which have proved very beneficial in later employment. The other courses have been too intermittent, through lack of staff at the C.C.C.A., to enable them to continue regularly.

f) *Work Experience* has improved in leaps and bounds since it began four years ago. It is operating with support from many sectors of the Alice Springs community. Many employers, both government and private, have given students opportunities to experience many different jobs. We have now reached a stage where available employers outnumber students. The types of work experience now available are as follows:

Male

Building Construction
Motor Mechanics
Electrical (N.T.E.C.)
Refrigeration Mechanics
Police Force
Tyre Trade
Air Conditioning Mechanics
Fire Fighting Auxilliary

Female

Shop Keeping
Pre-School
Primary Schools
Nursing and Health Work

The students attend work experience for blocks of two weeks, (mornings only), in Year 10. In Year 11, the duration increases from two weeks in first term to four weeks in second and six weeks in third term. All are full working days. Work experience has been successful because of the attitude of employers and the motivation of the students.

The success of Pre-Employment can be gauged by the increasing numbers of senior students returning to Yirara to take part. They are motivated by their families or communities, by the success of previous students who have moved into the workforce, and by a developing desire to increase their education with a clear employment target in view. Through Pre-Employment two students entered an apprenticeship with the Northern Territory Electricity Commission, and are now in their second year of a three year apprenticeship. Three students have joined the Northern Territory Police Cadet Course (two years) and one student has entered the Northern Territory Nurses' Aide Course. Several students have commenced further education at Batchelor to become teachers. Still others have found relevant employment in their own communities. The employers in Alice Springs have contributed greatly by being supportive of our work experience, and have shown concern for the students in their care. Employment opportunities are now surfacing as a direct result of this. Employment at home communities is also becoming more available to the students who have participated in Pre-Employment. Yirara holds the employers' viewpoints in high esteem and liaises constantly to find out employers' needs, and to inform them of the abilities and skills the students have shown.

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ABORIGINAL EDUCATORS' TRAINING PROGRAM 1981-82

*D. Tournier

Every Wednesday we have a training program for Aboriginal educators in Swan Hill, which is situated on the New South Wales and Victorian border near the Murray River. The Aboriginal educators involved in this program are: Jon Kirby, Caroline Steel, Lynette Bugeja and myself. This program is co-ordinated by our resource teacher - Jill Pattenden.

In 1981 we covered such subjects as reading and writing skills, communication, teaching techniques, lesson planning, Aboriginal history, child psychology, counselling, lessons in organising, oral history, community and alcohol, public speaking, submission drafting, study of Aboriginal spirituality.

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Swan Hill, Victoria.