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REVIEW :

A Guide to Resources for the Teaching of Studies about Aborigines and Islanders. R. Bostock, Aboriginal Advisory Teacher, Department of Education, Brisbane, Qld, 1982

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A Guide to Resources for the Teaching of Studies about Aborigines and Islanders, published this year and distributed to all Queensland schools, fulfils a need that has existed in this area since the present Social Studies syllabus introduced teacher autonomy to Queensland's Social Studies a decade ago, and has increased with growing teacher autonomy in other subject areas.

Since then, mainstream culture teachers *en masse* have not been in a position to discriminate between good Aboriginal and Islander resources and those that are otherwise, and much resource material available in Queensland school libraries falls into the latter category. The Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Consultative Committee (Q.A.T.S.I.C.C.) in its first report to the Director-General (1978:23) noted the need for a review of the suitability of all books and kits used in Queensland schools for teaching about Aborigines and Islanders, and in their 1980 report drew up guidelines for use, and criteria for selection of material for Aboriginal and Islander studies. In this latest publication, Ms Bostock, a member of Q.A.T.S.I.C.C., has provided the busy classroom teacher with a ready guide to recommended material on Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, and therefore fills a decade-long need for guidance in this area.

Ms Bostock clearly states her evaluative criteria which is similar to that used in the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies publication, (Hill, M & Barlow, A, 1978: *Black Australia - an annotated bibliography and teacher's guide to resources on Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders*, Humanities press Inc. New Jersey, USA.). As well as the general criteria normally applied to both literary and non-literary resources, such as assessment of total Aboriginal content, suitability, appropriateness and quality, Ms Bostock uses the special criteria necessary in a review of material in the area of Aboriginal Studies, and clearly spells out this criteria. For the first time

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many mainstream culture teachers will suddenly be aware of stereotyping, derogatory labels, social Darwinism, negative stress, neglect and omission, ethnocentrism, both overt and covert racism, inappropriate terminology, and the many exotic emphases that have been used and, to a lesser degree, continue to be used in publications about Aborigines and Islanders. In elaborating on these special criteria, the book provides each and every classroom teacher with a skeletal guideline for the acceptance or rejection of those books not covered in the booklet, and food for thought about their past, present and future Aboriginal Studies program, and therefore a tool for self-evaluation in this area.

The book is divided into both European and Aboriginal content areas, such as Art, Music, History, Oral Tradition, Biographies and Poetry. Each publication recommended is also categorised for grade level suitability, thus providing a readily available guide for the busy classroom teacher at Infants, Primary, Secondary and Tertiary level, so that it not only provides ease of selection, but assists in the preparation of inter-disciplinary studies. Ms Bostock herself points out (p.5) the desirability of an inter-disciplinary approach to Aboriginal Studies.

In the Social Studies area this grading will assist teachers in planning the increasing growth of knowledge and concepts intended in the Primary Social Studies Syllabus based on Taba's spiralling curriculum model.

Written by an Aboriginal teacher, the book points out aspects of neglect and omission in texts and syllabi that escape the average mainstream culture teacher, and throughout Ms Bostock is conscious of the vast diversity in Aboriginal cultures and lifestyles in Australia, both pre-Cook and since, till the present day. As an Aboriginal teacher, Ms Bostock is particularly conscious of the need for schools to use material produced by the Aboriginal and Islander people being studied, and has consequently identified all material written by Aboriginal and Islander people. This is prevalent in the biography/autobiography area and provides a ready guide for the implementation of the Q.A.T.S.I.C. suggestion (1980:24) that teachers utilize case studies in Aboriginal Studies programs. In this way it is hoped that students come to know people as well as problems in Aboriginal Studies.

The publication suggests further reading and other informational sources for the teacher whose appetite for developing an Aboriginal Studies program rid of the false information, stereotyping,

derogatory statements, hidden curriculum and general overtones of the long-held notion of Anglo Saxon superiority, may be whet by this first publication designed to directly assist the classroom teacher in selecting lesson and resource material.

An appendix contains books definitely not recommended for use, using the evaluative criteria identified earlier, and a glance at some of these leaves little wonder as to why. This list and the evaluative criteria provide excellent guidelines for those wishing to remove unsuitable material from school library shelves but, as Ms Bostock herself points out, the book is neither exhaustive nor complete and will be updated as more materials are reviewed.

Mr W.L. Hamilton, Deputy Director-General of Education and Chairman of the Co-ordinating Committee of Aboriginal and Islander Education, points out in the foreword that -

All teachers have a fearful responsibility towards the future inter-relationships within our community. How these develop will be a continuing test of our teachers' perspicacity and integrity.

Now that we have, in all Queensland schools, a well-presented, easily referred to guide to complement available resource material in Aboriginal Studies, there is, as Mr Hamilton notes,

absolutely no excuse for any teacher in our schools to continue to teach the rubbish found in many text books.

In the interest of future community relations, the challenge for Queensland teachers is to realize that this "rubbish" is not sacrosanct, and to ensure that it is eradicated from utilized texts and syllabi content.

.....

Thus there have been three periods, three attitudes regarding black people, and we are in the third and last. To start with, exploitation; then condescending pity; then at last an understanding that leads one no longer merely to try and help them, to elevate and progressively to instruct them, but likewise to let oneself be instructed by them. Suddenly one realized that they, too, might have something to say to us, but that, in order to speak to us, we first must consent to listen. (Translation - from André Gide, in the first issue of *Présence Africaine*, Paris 1947)